



## **ACCADEMIC STAFF UNION OF POLYTECHNICS (ASUP)**

25<sup>th</sup> October, 2021

### **TEXT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF POLYTECHNICS AS PART OF THE ACTIVITIES IN THE ADVOCACY ROUNDTABLE ON THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA'S POLYTECHNIC SYSTEM**

Protocols.

Distinguished members of the press,

It is with yet another disposition to partnership that I on behalf of our Union welcome you all to this press briefing.

In less than 24 hours, the issue of the nation's Technical and Vocational Education subsector will be the subject of discussion as we continue the search for a path out of the current woods where our sector has been in for a while.

We will be welcoming critical stakeholders including policy makers, lawmakers, chief executives of Polytechnics in Nigeria, Chairmen of Governing Councils, industrialists as well as staff unions to an advocacy roundtable in search of a defined future for the Nigeria Polytechnic System with the theme: Repositioning Nigeria's Polytechnics for National Relevance and Global Competitiveness.

In putting this program together, we are driven by a sense of responsibility as a critical stakeholder group, and in response to the dwindling fortunes of the nation's Polytechnics in terms of relevance to the nation's development agenda.

The National Policy on Education captures Nigerian Polytechnics as sitting at the tertiary level of the technical and vocational education structure and established with the overriding aim of contributing to national development through the training and development of (high level) professional manpower relevant to the development course of the nation. With 38 and 49 of the Polytechnics currently under the proprietorship of the Federal and State governments respectively; and an additional 65 run as private polytechnics, we can hardly feel any sense of mandate fulfilment in the sector.

#### **SUB THEMES:**

In organizing this event, the following critical areas shall be reviewed with resolutions for a road map:

1. Certification of products of the sector.
2. Curricula
3. Research and Innovation culture
4. Funding
5. Industry linkage, employment and enterprise.

It is our conviction that these represent the most critical challenges in the sector leading to the de marketing of the nation's Polytechnics at this time.

The low appetite for polytechnics today is evidenced by the 1% approximate applicant figures for Polytechnics in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations in the last 5 years as young Nigerians continue to show their preference for the other tiers of tertiary education in the country.

Products of the sector have continued to bear the burden of the demeaning status of the Higher National Diploma certificate which currently represents the highest permissible certification in the sector; Curricula in the sector has consistently fallen short of industry requirements; Research and innovation are primarily primed to satisfy career progression needs of staff with little or no impact in society; Funding has been inadequate despite the huge infrastructure gaps; and connection with industry is virtually non-existent thereby increasing unemployment figures in the nation.

## **ROUNDTABLE GOALS**

It is our conviction that we have a role to play in reversing the negative indices associated with the sector by contributing to solutions as we seek a way out of the woods for Nigeria's Polytechnics.

The Roundtable shall generate policy and legislative instruments that will kick start a turnaround for the sector. We expect that views shall be collated, consensus positions identified, contentious positions resolved and a clear and definite path to renaissance for the sector in the foreseeable future laid out for the sector.

## **APPRECIATION**

We are indeed grateful to the Chairman of the occasion His Excellency, Distinguished Senator Ibrahim Shekarau, the Honorable Minister for Education and his team, President of the Nigeria Labor Congress, Chairmen of the Committees on Education in both chambers of the National Assembly, The Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education, heads of relevant agencies of government, captains of industry, chairmen of governing councils of Polytechnics, chief executives of our polytechnics (past and present), our resource persons, sister unions and polytechnic alumni association leadership for indicating their interest to participate in the programme.

We are therefore extending our usual hands of partnership to the media as well as other stakeholder groups in this effort as we strive to generate positions that will ultimately translate to policy/ legislative instruments that will chart a new course for our Polytechnics.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Anderson U. Ezeibe', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

***Anderson U. Ezeibe***  
***(President)***