

# OUR UNION, OUR STRENGTH

**BY**

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**PRESENTED TO**

**THE GENERAL MEETING OF  
AIR TRANSPORT SENIOR STAFF ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA  
(ATSSAN)  
FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA (FAAN)  
PORT HARCOURT BRANCH**

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## **□ INTRODUCTION**

My fellow comrades and co-travellers in the struggle for social justice and respect for dignity of labour. I consider it a great privilege to be invited to speak at your meeting. When Comrade Sir Vincent Nweke, asked me to come and address his congress, I thought about what to share with us. I ruminated on the recent happenings in the trade union landscape especially the complacency and carefree attitude of some of our members who really do not care about the union until they are in some kind of trouble. I also thought about the challenges we face as workers and as a union and how we can surmount them as a family. For instance the Federal Government is reported to have completed plans to sell the country's major airports namely Murtala Mohammed International Airport [Lagos], Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport [Kano], Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport [Abuja], Margaret Ekpo Airport, Calabar (Cross River), and Port Harcourt International Airport (Rivers)] to private investors to operate and maintenance under a public-private partnership agreement. It has similarly been reported that your association, has warned that, if the sale goes ahead, it will not hesitate to mobilise workers against the government. In fact the Workers of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), under the aegis of Air Transport Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSAN) and the National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE) stormed FAAN's headquarters in Ikeja, Lagos, on Thursday August 7 2009 in protest against this decision by the Federal Government.

**Obviously the challenges ahead of you are enormous as sales of such magnitude have huge and serious implications for labour .Moreover empirical evidence seem to suggest that nobody would adequately address your concerns before embarking on such sales/concession if he/she can afford to do so. I then shook my head as I meditated on the task ahead of your union especially in realisation that it is not just onerous but would require serious mobilisation of your members and sister unions including the labour centres. It would also require serious and coordinated campaigns by your unions to enable the general public appreciate your position on the issue. Experience has shown that in situations such as this, those who want the airports to be sold will blackmail your union and your efforts as selfish and parochial.**

Also just on Thursday August 13 2009, I had to accompany the State Chairman of the Rivers State Council of Trade Union Congress, Comrade Edward Orupabo, to a solidarity meeting with your members in Bristow Helicopters/Pan African Airlines who embarked on an industrial action because of the gross insensitivity of their management to Nigerian Staff welfare matters. During the meeting it became clear that the management of Bristow Helicopters / PanAfrican Airlines are abusing with impunity the rights of their Nigerian workers. For instance some 90% of the Nigerians working in both companies are casuals/contract staff with no condition of service. Some of these contract staff/casuals who attempted to join NUATE were laid-off unprocedurally for their roles in unionising the contract staff and casuals.

Last month a number of trade unions in Nigerian also embarked on industrial action in protest of one issue or the other almost at the same time. Some of them are still on strike till today.

**It is obvious that the challenges ahead of your association and the trade union organisations generally , in Nigeria are huge and tedious and we cannot afford to be found napping at this time at all.**

I also ruminated on the divisive actions of some of us which has led us to dissipate so much energy on intra-union squabbles rather than on how to advance our collective good. It then occurred to me that I should title the speech **"OUR UNION, OUR STRENGTH"**, with the hope that I will be able to make some attempts at waking us up to reality and also attempt some kind of revival of our members and our unions. **Yes! We need revival and our unions cry daily for revival.** We need change. Change in the way the members respond to the clarion call of our union and change in the way the leaders direct the ship of the union. We need positive change in our approach to issues that concern our unions. And there is no better time for that change than now!

My discussions with Comrade Nweke seem to suggest that the topic is timely as there is the need for us as members to realise the strategic roles we ought to play in our trade unions and for a revival amongst us. We also need to ask ourselves if indeed we have truly played such roles to the best of our abilities. We also need to reflect on the consequences of our actions on the future of our union. **Do we truly think if everyone behaves like us, we will still have a working union by this time next year? Anyway, let me leave each of us to our conscience.**

**Let me attempt to start by asking us a question. Each time we meet, we usually, as is often the case, sing our solidarity song. When we sing that song, I mean our Solidarity song, do we really take time to reflect on it? Do we take time to meditate on the lyrics? Or do we just mutter some words or join others without giving some thought to the words that we sing? For instance we sing:**

- A. **'Solidarity forever'**: This reemphasizes our mutual agreement to stand by our union and by one another at all times! It is a re-echoing of our firm and unrelenting determination to commit ourselves individually and as members of our union to the common good of all of us, to the good of each individual and to the good of our union. *We are after all responsible for one another and it is only when we demonstrate this in our actions that we can truly be called comrades. Only then can we bring life to our solidarity song and to our popular slogan- 'injury to one, injury to all'.*
- B. **'Forward ever, backward never'**: This is a restatement of our commitment to **progress** at all times and in all we do as a union and members of a great union. It is also a reminder that we will not accept any attempt to pull us back or take us back.
- C. **'The Union makes us strong'**: Our coming together as one body to advance our interests in terms of our welfare, conditions of service and our pursuit of social justice. This is in realization that the Union is more powerful than each individual member. **After all "one man can be ignored, but the entire workforce cannot be ignored" (Whitehead, 1977).** Moreover as noted by Rousseau (1762) "without freedom of mind and of association a man has no means of self-protection in our social order". **Therefore each of us need the Union more than we think the Union needs us.** This is the blunt truth!
  - i. But what we really need is a strong Union, and no one but us can make our union strong
  - ii. ***It is only when the Union is Strong that it can make us strong.*** Remember **"Nemo dat quod non habet"** meaning **"You can't give what you don't have"**

## ❑ THE ODDS AGAINST US ARE MANY

It is important we properly appreciate and know that **the odds against us and our unions are many** and can only be surmounted to the extent to which our union is strong. If we, out of carelessness and/or complacency and/or any other reason, have a weak union, we will not go far and the union will serve no useful purpose. **But what are some of these odds?**

1. **The imbalance of power between the employer and the employee.**
2. **The state of the Nigerian Economy , the global economic meltdown and the realities of the Nigerian labour market**
3. **The Profit motive is the overriding goal of the employer**
4. **Employers are making increasing use of outsourcing, temporary employment contracts and other forms of precarious work to undermine trade union rights.**
5. **We have seen those we thought were the favourites of the Master suffer greatly when push comes to shove**
6. **The common law principle of *Master and Servant Relationship* which is applied by the law courts in cases of termination/dismissals from employment in the so-called employments without statutory flavour is harsh ,unfair and inequitable as it does not take due cognizance of the circumstance of the Nigerian worker and the Nigerian working environment. The principle provides that in all employment governed only by the agreements of the parties, and not by statute, removal by way of termination/dismissal will be in the form agreed to ,which in most cases is as contained in the letter of appointment. Any other form connotes only wrongful termination or dismissal but not to declare such dismissal/termination null and void. The only remedy is a claim for damages for that wrongful dismissal (UBN Vs Oghoh (1995 2 NWLR Pt. 389). The principle even goes further to state that a master is entitled to dismiss his servant from his employment for good or for bad reasons or for no reason at all, and that such an action, even if unlawful, brings to an end the relationship of master and servant, employer and employee. More painful is that some of the wrongfully dismissed workers who went to the court to seek justice and redress only got to be told this harsh reality of the law by the Supreme Court after some 10years or so of litigations. Their legal counsels who should know did not tell them. Perhaps they were afraid of telling their clients the harsh reality of the law. *What can be more pathetic, heartbreaking and unfair than this in the current realities of the Nigerian labour market where Nigerians are FORCED by the realities of excruciating unemployment to sign any contract of employment just to have a job? The agreements were never entered on equal terms but were forced down the throat of the workers by the realities of the Nigerian labour market. Adeogun(1969) has also noted that 'the so-called bargaining power of the individual worker is of little importance in practice, especially in a country like Nigeria ,where there are more workmen than jobs available, and where the employer can chose freely***

*whom to employ and under what conditions they are to be employed'. The situation of the Nigerian labour market when Adeogun made this statement is many times better than the present position. Little wonder then, that all kinds of human rights abuses take place in the Nigerian workplace. This further underscores the importance of the right to freedom of association, trade unions and collective bargaining.* The courts can only order reinstatement of a sacked employee under the Nigerian labour laws in two cases. The first is where the employment has statutory flavour and the processes enjoined by the statutes for terminating employment were not followed, and the second is where the termination is a product of union activities on the part of the employee. Section 9(6) of the labour Act and section 42(1) of the Trade Disputes Act all frown at terminating employment because of participation in union activities. Let me quickly add that the contract of employment of a public servant does not enjoy automatic statutory flavour particularly where the employer is a statutory body. For an employment to be accorded statutory protection, the rules set-out in *Olaniyan & Ors Vs. University of Lagos & Ors* (1985 2 NWLR Pt.9) and *Shitta-Bay vs. Federal Civil Service Commission* (1981 1 SC 40) must be satisfied. The public servant must show that the conditions of service that regulate his employment are expressly set-out by statute or Statutory regulations made under subsidiary legislations. This was the position of the Supreme Court in *Idoniboye-Obu vs. NNPC* (2003 2 NWLR Pt. 805) where the apex Court held that the appellant employment with NNPC is one of mere Master and Servant relationship.

7. In case you do not know, **there are no employment protection laws in Nigeria** save for the case of 'employment with statutory flavour' as aforementioned in 6 above. It is sad and very unfortunate that a country like ours that has practiced constitutional democracy uninterruptedly for 10 years cannot put in place employment protection laws, especially when we recall that organized labour played a very crucial role in the struggle for this democracy. I hope the political class has not abandoned us to our fate. We therefore appeal to the National Assembly to enact laws that will protect the jobs of Nigerians as well as protect Nigerians from unlawful and wrongful terminations/dismissals. **We also appeal to the Federal Government to ratify ILO Convention 158 Concerning Termination of Employment at the Initiative of the Employer which came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1985 and domesticate or pass it into law in line with Section 12 of the 1999 Constitution. This will provide some succour to employees whose employments do not have statutory flavour.**
8. Even when you have a good case, **it could take you some 10 years to get justice** or for a wrong done by the employer to be reversed through the court process. Justice delayed they say is justice denied. This is if you even have the resources to pursue the case in the law courts. Litigation is an expensive project and the employers know this.
9. The **Court has ruled that ILO Conventions are International Treaties** and as such they are subject to Section 12 of the 1999 Constitution, and that for any treaty or ILO Convention to have force of law in Nigeria, it must first be ratified by the Federal government of Nigeria and secondly must be domesticated or passed into law by the National Assembly. See

Abacha vs. Fawehinmi ((2000) 6 NWLR (Pt.660)226) and more importantly MHWUN vs. Minister of Labour and Productivity& ors ((2005)17 NWLR (Pt.953). It would appear that Government is quick to apply this law when it concerns union and labour. For instance Government did not show any sign that it was in a hurry to apply this principle in the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroun. You would recall that up till today the constitution has not been amended in view of the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroun. Bakassi local government is still in our constitution as part of Cross River state of Nigeria.

**10. Our labour laws right from the colonial period** seemed largely designed to facilitate the commercial and economic objectives and interests of the Masters. For instance in spite of the fact that Britain proudly claimed to observe the Bill of Rights and the rule of law, labour leaders were targets of repression and oppression during the colonial era for no other justifiable reason than that they had the effrontery to demand for their rights. This attitude of the State and the Masters are still very much with us today. Some examples will help us appreciate this painful fact:

**A. Redundancy:** There is clearly a great difference between the legal position on Redundancy in Nigeria and that of other countries. For instance in India, Section 25(F)(c) of the Indian Industrial Disputes(Amendment) Act 1957 provides for a notice of retrenchment to be served on the state government not less than 21 days before the date of retrenchment and the courts in India have construed that requirement as mandatory, and where they are not complied with ,employees declared redundant in default would be reinstated with back wages(Workmen of Thondamuther Trading Co. Ltd Vs Thondamuther Trading Co. Ltd ,Coimbatore 1969 II L.L.J 685 Supreme court). However the case of Nigeria is different. The Appeal court in Nigeria have ruled in respect of redundancies that "it is crystal clear that from section 20(1) of the labour Act that the only rights conferred on a Trade Union is merely a right to be informed by the employer of a redundancy in his establishment. No sanction is provided for failure to do so. This section does not confer a right to sue in default of the employer notifying the trade union of a redundancy." Edozien JCA in National Union of Hotels and Personal Services Workers Vs. Imo Concorde Hotels Limited (1994 NWLR Pt. 320). This further shows the unfortunate position of a retrenched/redundant worker in Nigeria and the inadequacies of our labour laws. **The truth again is that the Nigerian worker is not in any way protected against redundancy and retrenchment.**

**B. Tax Reliefs in the Personal Income Tax laws are laughable:** For instance also, while governments at all levels in Nigeria are vigorously pursuing a policy of unprecedented increases in taxes and levies, including the introduction of new taxes and levies, they have closed their eyes to the reliefs in the Personal Income Tax Act which are outdated and laughable .It is unbelievable that in the present day Nigeria, the Personal Income Tax Act grants only a relief of N2,500 for each child per annum up to a maximum of four children and N2,000 per annum for each dependent relative up to a maximum of two . But that is the sad fact! **What hope and joy do workers and labour have where**

the maximum income tax concession they are given for taking care of four children and two aged parents is just N3500(three thousand five hundred naira) or about US\$20 for a whole year (i.e. 25% of N14,000)? This is very pathetic, ridiculous and preposterous and ought to be reviewed immediately in line with current economic realities especially when you consider that there has been a steady decline since 1990 in the standards and quality of public institutions that provide education, health and other basic amenities for the children and elderly. Workers and other Nigerians are therefore forced to patronise private establishments like schools, universities and hospitals whose costs are very exorbitant and prohibitive. The least government can do in the circumstance, in the interest of justice and equity, is to review the tax reliefs in the personal income tax laws in view of these harsh economic realities.

**C. Oil and Gas Free Zone Laws:** Also in *the present day Nigeria even after 10 years of uninterrupted constitutional democracy we still parade oppressive laws such as the Oil and Gas Export Free Zone Act (see sections 5 & 18)* which seeks among other things to abridge the constitutional right of workers to join a trade Union and bargain collectively. **This obnoxious law thus created a zone of evil where workers are treated as slaves and subjected to inhuman treatments even in a democratic Nigeria.** This is despite the fact that the operation and philosophy of the Onne Oil and Gas Export Free Zone are not in tandem with the philosophy and principles of Free Trade Zones as no oil and gas exploration, drilling, production and export takes place in the zone and Nigeria is the only country in the world with a Free trade Zone dedicated to Oil and Gas. **This is even when the right of workers to join a trade union and bargain collectively are guaranteed by the combined effect of Sections 1 & 40 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Article 10 of African Charter of Human and Peoples rights.** Regrettably some of the companies in the Zone , most of which are Multinational Enterprises (MNE) with their Head Quarters in OECD countries, prefer to abuse the rights of their workers rather than respect the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria ,Nigerian Extant Labour laws , ILO Conventions, International Labour Standards and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. **There are nearly 300 active trade unions in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) of Mauritius and the Ghana Labour Act (Act 2003/651) protects trade union members and their officers against discrimination in EPZs.**

**D. Consequently some MNEs in Nigeria do not conform to Global Labour standards:** the International labour standards especially where ratified by a country ought to be observed by Multinational Enterprises (MNE). Nigeria has ratified the core ILO conventions including conventions 87 and 98, but some of these MNEs take advantage of our weak labour laws to perpetrate in justices contrary to the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises. For instance the OECD guidelines require these MNEs to respect the right of their employees to be represented by trade unions and engage in constructive negotiations, with a view to reaching agreements on employment

conditions. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises also require Multinational companies to ensure that all their subsidiaries conform to global labour standards, including ILO Conventions 87 and 98.

E. **Petroleum Industry Bill**: To what extent does the proposed Petroleum Industry Bill take into consideration the interest and concerns of the Nigerian workers in the oil and gas industry? It is my plea that the Government pay close attention to the position being canvassed by PENGASSAN and NUPENG as a demonstration of their commitment to the welfare of the Nigerian workers in the oil and gas industry.

**We appeal to the National Assembly to review the Nigerian labour laws to give full effect to the ILO conventions ratified by Nigeria. They should also incorporate Article 4 of ILO Convention 158 of 03/11/2005 as part of our labour laws.**

11. In Nigeria, **the Government is both the regulator and the highest employer of labour**. This is a dual and conflicting position and history has shown that the neutrality of Government in regulating labour relations in Nigeria cannot be taken for granted. For instance, the right to strike is clearly recognised in international law and in the laws and constitutions of many countries of the world from Europe to USA, Africa and elsewhere. For instance, again, in Mauritius, the right to strike is recognised under the Industrial Relations Act (IRA). Ghana, South Africa, Benin etc laws also recognise the right to strike. But the case of Nigeria is different. The country clearly infringes its obligations under international law by failing to ensure a right to strike. Not only does Nigerian law not contain a positive expression of the right to strike, it subjects participants to severe penal sanctions and other liabilities. In addition ,the broad definition of essential services in Nigeria(which exceeds the ILO's definition) deprives a sizeable portion of Nigerian workers of this basic human right at work This is even despite the fact that Nigeria has ratified the entire core ILO Conventions, particularly Nos. 87 and 98, has enacted the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights into a law in Nigeria and is a signatory to the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and therefore bound by Article 2(1) to provide for the right to strike as enshrined in Article 8(1) (d), through legislative measures or by other appropriate means. ( See OKENE O.V.C,2007)

In addition to the above, the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) Act also prohibits strikes and lockouts for a period of 10 years after a company begins its activities in a given EPZ.

Moreover the use of Nigerian security forces to intimidate, harass and arrest strikers, often accompanied by the use of violence against trade unionists prior to or during strikes or protests, seriously undermines the right to strike and worsens the already precarious position of the right to strike in Nigeria.

The implication of the aforementioned on workers , their rights and unions are far reaching and little wonder then that **MacFarlane(1981) made it clear that "The right to strike is a keystone of modern industrial society. No society which lacks that right can be democratic.**



**Any society which seeks to become democratic must secure that right'** Let us use this opportunity to commend the judiciary for standing against injustice and oppression as evidenced by the recent Supreme Court ruling that the dismissal of five of the 49 lecturers of the University of Ilorin by the university management is illegal, null and void. Let me also observe that the employment of these lecturers seem to fall into the category of employment with statutory flavour.

12. **Evil has always been part of the human history** and in the absence of a means of counter-balancing power, it will be unleashed on the weaker members of the society. Even the Almighty God and Creator was deeply worried by this fact. 'And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. Gen 6:5 (KJV)'. Evil includes any abuse of power, position and/or human rights which inflicts pain, harm or misery on another human being. Examples includes corruption, oppression, repression, human rights abuses, victimization, injustice, tyranny, discrimination and cruelty. For instance 'many slaves died from disease and overwork, and wealthy planters continued to purchase more slaves from Africa... Because all slaves in the British colonies lacked individual legal rights or any form of self-government, they could assert themselves politically only through personal acts of resistance to the work demands of their owners' (Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009.). *Please find time and visit the Slave Trade Museum in Calabar to appreciate the terrible cruelty that is part of our history.*
13. **Evil seem to benefits those who perpetrate it** and therefore cannot be wished away in this world. It multiplies when people like us simply do nothing, and that is why as far as I am concerned, *doing nothing in the presence or midst of evil is greater evil.* This is because it simply feeds evil and encourages it to 'prosper'. Evil also eventually impacts negatively on the society including the perpetrators. Maltreated employees get demoralised, productivity falls and the organisation becomes less competitive. **Evil breeds sunflower management in corporate entities as every body is afraid to say the truth and confront the evil doers and the wrongs that they perpetrate. The result is that the company may fall like Enron and WorldCom. For the society, evil destroys the collective good of the people; it turns the society into a jungle and transforms ordinary citizens to deadly monsters. Patriotism and nationalism which are basic ingredients for national development are completely destroyed. In the end even the evil doers or their offspring are consumed by their evil deeds.** *If we must have a better society then WE MUST RESIST EVIL by deliberate and organised actions.*

## **☐ THE AFOREMENTIONED ODDS CAN BE SURMOUNTED BY OUR DETERMINATION AND UNITY:**

The challenges and problems faced at work, which arose out of the odds aforementioned, include job insecurity, injustice, discrimination, human right abuses, unsafe and inhuman conditions under which work is carried out, oppression and repression, profit before people etc. *These odds and the problems that have arisen from them are not insurmountable. All we need is to*

*appreciate that they exist and let that understanding fuel our passion and commitment for the unity and strength of our union. Let me remind us that it was the need to tackle these odds that led to the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> trade union in Nigeria in 1912, about a century ago.* Lozovsky (1972) has rightly noted that “the only social force possessed by the workers is their numerical strength.” Trade Unions are essentially organizations of workers' set up to address the challenges and problems aforementioned, leveraging on the numerical strength of the workers. Let me us remind us that we have a choice to either lie down resigned to fate ( which as aptly captured in Ola Rotimi’s ‘The Gods are not to blame ’ as ‘madness’ or face the challenge as a People united by history and circumstance.

Pope John Paul II had observed that ‘Freedom has continually to be won, it cannot merely be possessed. It comes as a gift but can only be kept with a struggle. Gift and Struggle are written into pages, hidden yet open’. See Stefan Wyszynski (1982). *The struggle for our Union is the struggle for our life and our freedom, as well as the freedom of our children and their future. It is a continuous struggle and we must not relent AT ALL. That is why we say and sing ALUTA CONTINUA and rekindle our believe that VICTORIA ACERTA!*

### **▣ THE OPTIONS AND WAY FORWARD:**

The first choice available to each and every one of us as workers is to unite and organise our ourselves into a Union. But having a Union is not enough. This because a weak union serves no useful purpose. **INFACT A WEAK UNION IS A DISASTER!**

*We must therefore proceed to the next level which is the preferred position. That is to ensure that our Union is stronger by day. We must ensure that our Union grows from strength to strength. That our Union is effective and efficient, attentive and proactive.*

*Remember no organisation is better than those who make it up and Unions are not exceptions. Our Union cannot be better than we make it. If our Union is made up of complacent and carefree people, the Union will be complacent and carefree.*

### **▣ HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR UNIONS STRONGER?**

- 1. As members, we must actively participate in ALL Union activities for which we entitled to or called to participate. We should also attend all union meetings and contribute honestly and constructively to the discussions.*
- 2. As leaders, we must carry the members along and always work for the collective good of the Union. We should avoid the temptation of using our position in the union for personal gains.*
- 3. All of us must give the best support and encouragement to the leaders, including prayers. The task of Trade Union leadership is a great one.*

4. *Provide timely and useful information to the Union*
5. *During elections, ensure that we vote according to our conscience and not based on sentiments or emotions. We must put the interest of the union above every other consideration in our decision as to who to vote for.*
6. *Avoid doing anything that will adversely affect the Unity and wellbeing of our Union*
7. *Always defend the collective position of the Union, even if it is at variance with your personal views*
8. *We must Protect the Union and support the leaders at all times.*
9. *Obey the directives of your union leaders; this is the greatest test of the strength of the union.*
10. *We must all be vibrant and committed to the course of the union, as well as defend the constitution of our union at all times.*
11. *The leaders should not abuse their position or power and must take deliberate and reasonable steps to ensure that.*

#### **☐ SUMMARY:**

Comrades, let me remind us again that our union cannot be stronger than we make it; and a weak union serves no useful purpose. **A weak union is a terrible disaster!**

Comrades, let me also remind us again that the struggle for our Unions is the struggle for our life .It is the struggle for our freedom and the welfare of the people of our nation. It is a struggle against evil and the greed and insensitivity of the privileged few. It is a struggle for equity and Justice. It is a continuous struggle and we must not relent AT ALL because those who benefit from evil, injustice and oppression are NOT relenting. That is why we say and sing ALUTA CONTINUA and rekindle our believe that VICTORIA ACERTA

Finally let me leave you with the following statement by Adewunmi.

*'The trade union remains the only organization that workers own collectively and it is the only body that can address their concerns; no other body or persons can do it for them. At every point in time what should be uppermost in the minds of union members and operatives is what can be done to strengthen the trade union organization and re-position the trade union movement in the overall interest of the working class. Nigerian workers should embrace the popular slogan adopted by the early union organizers that "an injury to one is an injury to all". This underscores the essence of solidarity as the foundation on which to build trade union unity' Adewumi, F. (2007)*

**Thank you for your attention.**

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