



INTERNAL MEMO

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To: Nigeria Governors' Forum
From: Director General
Date: 14th November, 2018
Subject: **Re: National Minimum Wage**

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Interview of the Chairman of the Tripartite Committee

Following the decision by the Federal Government to negotiate a new Minimum Wage with stakeholders, the chairman of the Tripartite Committee Ms Amal Pepple sat down with Mr. Aidoghie Paulinus of the Sunday Sun to discuss key issues that surrounded the committees work and how they arrived at N30,000.

NLC President reaction to the communique issued by the NGF on October 30th, 2018

The communique issued by the NGF after its meeting on 30th October Stating that the Governors can only pay N22,500 was met with a response from the President of the NLC Comrade Ayuba Wabba, MNI. Please find attached the speech by the President of the NLC Comrade Ayuba Wabba, MNI and the Communique issued by the NGF.

Please find attached reports for your information

A.B. Okauru, Esq.
Director General

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From AIDOGHIE PAULINUS, Abuja

AFTER the horse-trading between the government and Nigerian workers that took almost a year, the Chairman, Tripartite Committee on the New National Minimum Wage, Ms Amal Pepple, has said that the N30,000 arrived at by the committee cannot take care of a family in today's Nigeria.

Pepple, a former Head of Service of the Federation and former Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, however, said that the increase in the new minimum wage, which is about 60-something per cent, though small, is better than N18,000.

Pepple, who spoke exclusively with Sunday Sun in Abuja after the submission of the report of the committee also, said that the date for the eventual take-off of the new minimum wage depends on the National Assembly, which can also retain the figure, increase or decrease it.

Pepple said: "Definitely not! It is small, but it is better than the 18,000 that was the minimum wage. It is about 60-something per cent increase. You can't compare N18,000 with N30,000. I think there is still a little more. Things are hard.

"Everybody knows that if you have a family, you have to take care of all their needs. Those were the things we considered in deciding on a figure. You have to feed the children; you have to take them to school. If they are ill, you have to pay hospital bills for them. At least, it is better than N18,000. Much better!"

Amongst other issues, Pepple took *Sunday Sun* through the rigorous journey that culminated in the final decision that led to the cancellation of the total strike earlier planned by the Nigerian Labour Congress, which was to bring the nation to its knees. Excerpts:

Now that the N30,000 minimum wage has been agreed, how is it going to take effect since it is not captured in the budget?

I expect that government will provide for it. But they can't pay unless they send it to the National Assembly. You know we did a draft bill for the government to consider. So, I expect them to look at it and then, send it to the National Assembly. And the National Assembly will, maybe, call a stakeholders' meeting for people to come and talk about it and from there, they will promulgate an Act of the Assembly and fix the amount, may be the N30,000, may be less, maybe more; I don't know. But it has to go to the National Assembly first.

So, the issue of when it will take effect depends on the National Assembly?

That depends on the government because the president said as soon as possible; he will send the draft bill to the National Assembly so that they can start working on it.

That means the date is uncertain?

I can't say that. The committee's responsibility is to produce the report, which we have done and I have given it to the government. The rest, the processing, is for the government.

It means you can't tell Nigerians when it will



HOW WE ARRIVED AT NEW MINIMUM WAGE FOR NIGERIAN WORKERS

-Pepple, chairman, Tripartite Committee
 ■ ... Says N30,000 can't take care of a family in today's Nigeria

take effect?

I cannot, I cannot. That is the work of the government and then, if it is this year, they will find a way of making a supplementary budget to be able to pay that or they will put it in next year's budget, I don't know. But those are government's processes. It has nothing to do with the committee.

How did your committee arrive at that agreement considering government's initial position of N24,000?

We have been meeting. We were inaugurated on the 27th of November last year and then, we had a meeting in December. We had 14 meetings and we wrote to the governors. Twenty-one of them responded and 12 actually put a figure. But different figures though later on they dissociated themselves from the figures.

And we kept trying to make them give us a figure. In fact, we were supposed to have finished our assignment in August. That was the work plan we made for ourselves. It was 21st of August the date we put as the day to hand-over the report, but we still had to get a figure from the government, we had to get a figure from the governors. We thought it was good for us to carry them along. Some who didn't respond, our staff went to the states physically. They got responses from some, they didn't get from others. In all, we got written responses from 21 and 12 actually put figures. The government too didn't give us a figure. But the meeting we had on the 4th and 5th of October, the Minister of Budget and National Planning came and made a presentation. On the 4th, he did not give us any figure, but when we insisted on a figure, he then gave

us a figure of 20,700 the next day which Labour did not accept. Labour requested for 66,500. That was their initial demand. We put them in categories: Category 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D. And in 1D, we put the figure that the government gave us; 1C was the figure from the Nigerian Labour Congress, from the Trade Union Congress and the United Labour Congress. And when they took an average, it came to N66,000 something. The government's figure, N20,700 is still there. The 1B is the Organised Private Sector and so on. That was how we arrived at figures for our negotiations and we got four scenarios. By the time we got that figure from government because as at that October meeting, there was no figure from the government. We had to even go to the Nigerian Governors' Forum to meet the chairman - the Min-

ister of Labour, the Chairman of the National Salaries and Wages Commission who was our secretary and member and I. On the 18th of July, we went to the Governors' Forum. We went to meet the chairman and told him that we were expecting figures from the governors. And on the committee, we had six governors representing the six geopolitical zones. We had Wike, we had Dankwambo, we had Bagudu, we had Aregbesola, we had Lalong, and Governor of Imo, Okorocho. Those were governors on the committee. So, we expected that they will be briefing the governors. The Director-General of the Nigerian Governors' Forum was also attending the meetings even though he was not a member, but like an observer. So, we expected that they would have been briefing them as we went along. But by that October

which was almost one year since our inauguration, we hadn't gotten a figure. And it was on the 5th of October that the government gave us that N20,700. By then, we started some negotiations. Labour came down from that N66,500. They came down to N45,000, but by the time we drew up these scenarios, they agreed to work with scenario three which is thirty-seven thousand, seven hundred and something and then, they rounded it up to N38,000. That was where we started the negotiation. Along the line, the government, through the Minister of Labour, said okay, that they will give N24,000. But Labour and Organised Private Sector came up with the figure of N30,000, which we took as the figure of the committee.

But why has it been very difficult for the government to meet the demand of Labour on minimum wage?

They will explain. At least, when they made the presentation, we saw the expenditure profile, we saw the revenue profile. I think maybe a bit of problem with the revenue; they felt that they couldn't raise the funds to pay and all that.

Nigerians are surprised that the discussion was on for a year, and the government didn't treat it with the expected seriousness. Who is to blame?

I don't want to blame anybody. The Economic Management Team had to meet for them to take a decision, how much they felt that the revenue accruing to government can accommodate and so on. As for the governors, I don't really know why because even that last day of our negotiation, 5th of October, before we decided on the figure, the minister was telling us that he was expecting 36 letters from the state governors, saying that they cannot pay anything more than N18,000. But Labour refused to accommodate that kind of statement because the President of the Nigerian Labour Congress asked him whether the states that at the moment were paying more than N18,000 also sent letters. However, when we met on Monday, Governor Bagudu gave us a figure of N22,500; that was what the governors arrived at. But we couldn't accommodate that because we have already put all the figures in a basket and done the average, the median and came up with the figures that we used for the negotiation. So,

it means if we took that figure, we have to go back and re-do the scenarios and Labour was not ready. And on that day, we met till almost midnight because when we agreed on the figure, we had to give Labour time. We adjourned at about 8 O'clock. They said they wanted to go and consult because we were insisting that they should call off the strike.

There are those who believe that government agreed on that figure because of the forthcoming election. Do you also share this view?

I don't want to give reasons why anybody took any decision. I know about decisions we took as I chaired the committee.

In today's Nigeria, can this amount agreed upon take care of a family in terms of wage bill?

Definitely not! It is small, but it is better than the N18,000 that was the minimum wage. It is about 60-something per cent increase. You can't compare N18,000 with N30,000. I think there is still a little more. Things are hard. Everybody knows that if you have a family, you have to take care of all their needs. Those were the things we considered in deciding on a figure. You have to feed the children; you have to take them to school. If they are ill, you have to pay hospital bills for them. At least, it is better than N18,000. Much better!

What was it like, chairing the tripartite committee?

It was a very wonderful experience and I got on very well with the Labour people. We used to argue and argue and after, we will be friends. I never had any problem with them.

So, there was never a time you felt like abandoning the committee?

No, no, no, not at all. I am not that kind of a person. I can't abandon anything. When God and the government has confidence in you and give you a responsibility, why should you abandon it? You should make sure that you complete it.

What has it been like since you left office?

I have been busy ooo. Very busy!

Doing church activities?

I do church activities and I sit on the board of a bank. At least, this one took a whole part of one year from me. We were meeting twice every month from March this year.

OUTRAGE OVER 12-YR-OLD BOY TORTURED BY AUNT

Survivor reveals more details of hellish experience

By Henry Okonkwo

THERE is outrage among social workers and leaders in a Lagos community, where a woman, Sarah Eteigbe, who was alleged to have tortured her 12-year-old nephew (identity concealed) with the hot surface of an electric iron for drinking a bottle of soft drink she left at home.

The latest case added to the rapid rise in the incidence of gross abuse of minors in the hands of relations and other non-relatives. The boy, a primary five pupil, who had narrated the ordeal he passed through, in an earlier report, made more revelations to shocked social workers.

Four years ago, as Sunday Sun learnt, the boy was brought from Imo State to live with Eteigbe at Mutamu Street, Bariga, Lagos State. He said that he had continually suffered consistent physical and emotional abuse until recently when residents decided it situation could no longer be tolerated and then alerted the police about the cruelty of the alleged culprit towards the boy.

The boy said: "Ever since I have been living with my aunt, she always beats over every little thing. There was a time she cut me with a razor blade. She said that I ate her food. And at another time, she flogged me for two days for going out to play with other children. She flogged me all over my body. Then she would rest for about 30 minutes and then continue flogging me."

But the recent abuse that shocked and infuriated residents was when Eteigbe tortured him with hot electric iron for drinking her soft drink. A look at the little boy's body confirms the scourging he has been getting from his aunt. His back is all covered with different scars and injuries he sustained from the merciless caning he has been receiving over the years.

"On that day in question, I returned from school late and by the time I got home, there was no food. I had to drink the soft drink because I was hungry. I do not know why my aunt is wicked towards me," he said.

In her response to the allegations, 35-year-old Eteigbe, who is a spinster, explained why she inflicted injuries on the little boy:

"He hardly listens to me even after scolding him. I have warned him several times to stay in the house and not to go out to play with other children. He doesn't just listen to my instruction that was why I got angry and used hot pressing iron on him after he drank my bottle of soft drink without my permission."

Many of the outraged residents that spoke to Sunday Sun disclosed their bewilderment at the incident. Many suggested that Eteigbe might be frustrated and angry at her being single and thus vents her fury on not only her nephew but on the other children around the neighborhood. They said that Eteigbe in her sinister plan to ward off children coming to play around her house, she attached six long nails and other dangerous objects to her door to deter them.

"No one understands why she is so wicked and has disdain for children," said Rukayat, one of the residents. "We've appealed to her to take her nephew back to the village instead of continually torturing him. But she keeps telling us that the boy's mother dumped him on her, and that she cannot reach the parents on the phone anymore."



Victim



Suspect, Sarah Eteigbe

We all feel sorry for the poor little boy whenever we see the scars on his back and all over his body.

Another resident, Samuel, added: "I believe that Sarah could be frustrated because she's yet to have her own husband, so she now transfers her anger on children around her. But she doesn't know that the way she beats and snaps at children could even scare potential suitors away from her."

Social worker and coordinator of the Child Protection Network (CPN), Shomolu, Comrade Toyin Okanlawon, who led the team that arrested Eteigbe and campaigned for her arraignment, told Sunday Sun that he became worried

over Eteigbe's mindset towards children the moment he saw the nails she fixed on her door to harm and prevent children from trooping to her house. He further disclosed that the little boy would be treated and placed in a foster home, where he will receive proper care.

"I learnt that the boy is actually brilliant in school though he's quite playful. The CPN Shomolu, together with the Ministry of Youths and Social Development (MYSO) has intervened in boy's matter. And we agreed that he would be placed in a shelter going by the emotional and physical injuries inflicted on him by his guardian. I began to see the kind of heart that Eteigbe has when I saw the nails on her door, put there to prevent children from sitting at her door. The children in the neighborhood usually use the pavement before her door to do their homework. The long nails she fixed on her door confirmed that Eteigbe is a threat to children in the entire neighborhood. She fixed the nails to prevent children from sitting at her door whenever she was not around. Those nails are very dangerous and could harm and injure children who unknowingly run into it."



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TEXT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE ADDRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC) COMRADE AYUBA WABBA, MNI. IN REACTION TO THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE GOVERNORS' FORUM ON 30TH OCTOBER, 2018

📅 November 1, 2018 🗨️ 0

Our attention has been drawn to a communique issued by the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) after its meeting on 30th October, 2018 claiming that State Governors can only pay N22,500 as the New National Minimum Wage.

First, we wish to state that the Nigeria Governors Forum is not a negotiating body but merely a political organization for the convenience of state governors. The tripartite committee from inception sent letters to each state government to send in their memoranda as their contributions to the new national minimum wage negotiating process. 21 States sent in their memorandum quoting figures.

TOP

Second, the demand of organized Labour is not N30,000. Our demand is N66,500. N30,000 is the compromise figure arrived at the end of negotiations by the tripartite partners – Government, Employers and Organized Labour. The new minimum wage was a product of intense negotiations that lasted for almost one year.

The Governors had six representatives on the Tripartite Committee – one state governor represented each of the geo-political zones. The representatives of the state governors were part and parcel of the work of the negotiating committee from beginning to the end. It is important to note that the National Minimum Wage is not an **ALLOCATION** to workers. It is a product of **NEGOTIATION** by the tripartite partners. The unilateral pronouncement by governors of N22,500 Minimum Wage is an abuse of every known principle of industrial relations, labour laws, processes and international best practices.

Third, the NGF erroneously stated that the population of salaried workers is 5% of the general population in Nigeria. This 5% represents the nation's workforce including teachers, health workers, police personnel, military men and women, engineers, drivers and other workers laboring for the development of our country. In Finland with far less population than Nigeria, every classroom is taught by four teachers. That is a country that understands the critical place of human capital to development. Of what benefit are roads, rails and bridges without human beings to run them?

Fourth, we are also very concerned about the huge pressure being brought upon the Organized Private Sector (OPS) to compromise their stand on the N30,000 compromise New National Minimum Wage. This pressure by the enemies of the Nigerian people was what led to the recent statement by NACCIMA that sought to cast aspersion on an already negotiated New National Minimum Wage. We believe that the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA), a reputable body that represents organized labour, will present the fact as it is.

We, therefore, condemn unequivocally the communique issued by the Nigeria Governors Forum on October 30, 2018 as an attempt to undermine the authority of Mr. President. This position should be equally condemned by all.

Our demand is that the constitutional, legal and morally right step to take at this point is for the Chairman of the National Minimum Wage Tripartite Negotiating Committee to submit the report of the already concluded National Minimum Wage negotiations to Mr. President for transmission to the National Assembly for consideration and passage into law.

We wish to reiterate our position adopted at our National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of 23rd October, 2018 that any figure below N30,000 will not be accepted by us. We call on our members to continue to mobilize in preparation for the commencement of an indefinite strike on the 6th of November, 2018, if by then necessary steps have not been taken to adopt the recommendations of the Tripartite Committee.

Comrade Ayuba Wabba, mni

President



**ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2ND EMERGENCY
MEETING OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM
HELD ON TUESDAY, 30TH OCTOBER 2018 AT THE
NGF SECRETARIAT, ABUJA**

Following a meeting of the Nigeria Governors' Forum where we deliberated on the National Minimum Wage after a briefing from our representatives at the Tripartite Committee, we submit as follows:

1. The welfare of all Nigerians is our ultimate concern. In all our States, we are concerned about the deteriorating economic situation experienced by the vulnerable segment of our population.
2. In agreeing to a National Minimum Wage however, the Forum is even more concerned about development, particularly in the health, education and infrastructure spheres.
3. It is therefore our considered position that since the percentage of salaried workers is not more than 5% of the total working population, our position must not just reflect a



figure, but also a sustainable strategy based on ability and capacity to pay, as well as reflective of all our developmental needs in each State.

4. After all, Section 3 of the National Salaries Income and Wages Commission Act provides that “the Commission shall recommend a proposition of income growth which should be initiated for wage increase and also examined the salary structure in public and private sector with reasonable features of relativity and maximum levels which are in consonance with the national economy”
5. It is in this sense that we feel strongly that our acceptable minimum wage must be done in such a way that total personnel cost does not exceed 50% of the revenue available to each State.
6. Governors therefore agreed to pay a national minimum wage of N22,500.

Governor Abdul'aziz Yari Abubakar

Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum

30th October 2018