

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS (TUC) KOFI ASAMOAH AT THE INDUCTION CEREMONY OF FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITIES SENIOR STAFF ASSOCIATIONS (FUSSAG) THURSDAY 13TH JANUARY, 2011

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome all of you comrades, here assembled on behalf of the leadership of Ghana TUC to this important ceremony of the induction and presentation of certificate of affiliation by the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC), to the Federation of Universities Senior Staff Associations (FUSSAG). We commend you for your decision to transform your association to a trade union and deciding to join the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

You are today being publicly and officially welcomed into the fold of the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC) and indeed the Labour Movement in Ghana. Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC) since it was established in 1945 had sustained its commitment of advancing the socio-economic and political interests and aspirations of affiliate unions and their membership while drawing attention to our obligations as working people. The modest gains achieved over the years were largely due to workers commitment and determination to work together as a labour movement to secure and promote the aspirations of working people.

You come into the union movement at a time when we seek to further professionalize our operations, reach out and maintain constant touch with our members in order to provide service more efficiently and effectively. The challenge therefore is that your transformation into a trade union should operate within structures, regulations and the strategic development plan of the TUC.

The working people of this country had over the years continually worked to grapple with grave challenges of low pay, job and income insecurity, massive unemployment particularly among the youth, high cost of living among others through our collective efforts as workers in trade unions. Trade Unions play key roles in the development process of every country. Their democratic representation conveys unique legitimacy to interact with governments and employers organizations and to hold them accountable. By their involvement in social dialogue, trade unions work to change unfair government policies and contribute to social progress. By promoting and undertaking collective bargaining trade unions ensure that wealth is more fairly distributed within society thereby contributing to the reduction of poverty and inequalities. By organizing the poorest and the most vulnerable, including those working in informal employment relations, trade unions play a critical role in changing the dominant structures of power. Through their struggle for social justice, trade unions are and must be full partners in the development process.

The ability to serve trade union purposes, aspirations and relevance depends largely on the strength of the union, its ability to mobilize and legitimacy that comes from workers. It is therefore imperative that all workers regardless of their employment, class and status enjoy the benefit of a legal and institutional framework which guarantee their rights to freely and fairly representation and to engage in successful collective bargaining.

FUSSAG as an absolute priority therefore should intensify efforts to organize into its fold senior staff of all the private universities in the country to help strengthen the union for improved working and living conditions. To achieve these objectives FUSSAG should work hard to make the union attractive to members and potential members and to develop the appropriate structures in conformity to the constitution and internal regulations of Ghana TUC.

As you are no doubt aware the challenge of globalization and information and communication technology is daunting as they are reshaping the way work is done in terms of numbers of workers, equipment and technology. These call for a renewed and concerted effort by employers and workers in this country to work together for our mutual survival and development. As a trade union you should actively be involved and be concerned about the issue of productivity at the workplaces.

The issue of productivity and remuneration should be dispassionately and objectively discussed by workers and employers at workplaces to arrive at a common position which will enable all to participate to better our collective lot. The chicken and egg argument in respect of pay and productivity can be settled when we all understand that we have to first create the wealth and share it afterwards. Workers in demanding their rights should not forget that they have responsibilities to live up to. In the same vein employers should not be so profit oriented as to forget that creating wealth involves the commitment of workers. Workers and employers have a collective responsibility to promote workplace productivity and indeed national productivity. We hope and expect FUSSAG to be guided by this principle and work to promote internal democracy and manage the union efficiently, and effectively.

As we welcome you warmly into the family of Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC), it is our expectation that FUSSAG will justify its inclusion into the Labour Movement and be guided by its principles of solidarity, cooperation economic and social justice at all times.

The TUC salutes you and wish you the best in the coming years.

I thank you