

TEMA DISTRICT COUNCIL OF LABOUR

The Tema District Council of Labour (DCL) has noted with dismay and outright disgust statements attributed to Abraham Koomson, the Secretary General of the so-called Ghana Federation of Labour (GFL). Abraham Koomson is reported to have described the ultimatum issued by Organised Labour as “opportunistic, hypocritical and populist”.

The Tema DCL can understand why neither the TUC nor any of the unions that make up Organised Labour has restrained itself from officially responding to such obviously irresponsible statements. Sometimes the best way to reply some people is to keep quite and allow them to advertise their ignorance and disingenuity.

But for the teeming mass of Ghanaians who may not have the benefit of the full knowledge of the issues at stake the characters behind these insinuations, a response that shed light on the issues is often warranted. And the Tema DCL reacts as follows:

First, the threat, in fact the ultimatum Mr. Koomson is talking about was not issued by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) but by Organised Labour, which the TUC leads. The Tema District Council of Labour fully endorses the ultimatum. Mr. Koomson and his GFL should do well to educate themselves about the distinction between the TUC and Organised Labour.

Second, and more importantly, the Ghana Federation of Labour was fully represented at the two meetings of Organised Labour that agreed on the need to hold a Press Conference. It was at these meetings that Organised Labour Comprising all the major labour unions agreed on the content of the press statement including giving government a 10-day ultimatum to reduce the tariffs. While the GFL fully participated in the meetings it did not raise any objections to either the substantive demands of the larger group or the methodology for achieving them. Yet, Mr. Abraham Koomson could mount the moral podium and accuse others of being hypocritical.

Thirdly, Mr. Koomson seem to be making fetish of the fact that the TUC is represented on the PURC and also participated in the stakeholder consultations leading to the increases for which reason it cannot complain about the increases. This way of thinking and looking at issues clearly shows that the man neither understands nor appreciates the current industrial relations regime in the country. The TUC has one member serving on a board of Members. To think and believe that a single member can determine tariff levels of such noisy products as electricity and water in a country where politics trumps common sense and expert knowledge is to be living in a fool's paradise.

Obviously in such an environment it might seem that the TUC's membership of the PURC and many other public boards is not necessary. But it is instructive to note that while things might not be going the way we all want a lot more would have gone wrong without TUC' s membership of either the PURC or the many other public institutions. For example, through the TUC' s membership, the national interest has been

safeguarded in many areas of national life under the quite over a long period of time.

It is difficult to appreciate the logic by Abraham Koomson and his GFL that because the TUC participated in the stakeholder consultations, it is being hypocritical when it complains about the announced tariffs. Abraham Koomson should have checked what transpired and what the outcome of the consultations was. For his education, after careful scrutiny of the tariff proposals the TUC indicated that while some upward adjustment of tariffs could be envisaged what the utility companies need most is for the shareholder to invest and to ensure that the companies are managed properly. The TUC did not agree to such astronomical increases. And for the avoidance of doubt, the TUC is eternally opposed to such over the roof increases.

Finally, it is important for workers and Ghanaians to know the Ghana Federation and the characters behind it. The GFL is reputed as the second labour centre in Ghana after the TUC. It is said to have ten (10) affiliate unions and claims to have a membership of forty-eight thousand (48,000) out of which ten thousand (10,000) are dues paying members. Abraham Koomson is the Secretary General. Kenneth Koomson a son is the General Secretary of Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), the largest affiliate of GFL. Ellis Koomson another son of Abraham Koomson is the Head of Education and Research of GFL. And Kenneth Koomson's wife is the administrator of FAWU. Clearly, this is a family enterprise purporting to represent and defend workers.

Ghanaians should know them for who they are. We are aware of their deliberate ploy to muddy the waters and to frustrate the genuine cry of

workers and Ghanaians. We hope that they will learn the appropriate lessons or workers and Ghanaians will forever ignore them.

Signed

Wilson Agana

Chairman

Ebenezer Taylor

Secretary

Tema District Council of Labour