

PRESS RELEASE

YOUTH PARTY ASKS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO AVERT NLC STRIKE

The Youth Party has noted with dismay the unserious approach that the APC led Government has adopted to providing palliative to the severe economic impact of the removal of the fuel subsidy on the masses. The Government has applied a slow as well as an unserious cosmetic “rice sharing” approach to a situation that demands a robust sustainable economic way forward.

The proposed NLC industrial action to pressure the Government to act and protect the masses from economic impact of the policy is an action supported by the Youth Party. However, we caution the NLC to take a creatively pragmatic approach that would not compound the economic hardship currently being experienced by the masses.

Sadly, the President Tinubu led administration removed the petrol subsidy without any plan to protect the young, poor and vulnerable from the economic impact of its said policy on 29th May, 2023. First, the APC Government took about 80 days to announce palliative measures on 17th August since 29th May, 2023. The Government had no plan for the masses before the removal of fuel subsidy. Period. The policy was an afterthought at best as the Government merely gave an unserious 5billion Naira loan to each state, which in turn has led to a rice sharing galore across the the Country. Removal of petrol subsidy by the Government without any plan to cushion the blow on the masses has led to intolerable hardships. Petrol is part and parcel of the Nigerian way of life. Small businesses, homes, hospitals, school children and individuals are dependent on petrol for their day-to-day activities in the absence of constant power supply.

How this cynical ‘rice sharing policy’ assists the workers monthly ‘take home pay’ to actually ‘take them home’ remains to be seen. Workers now sleep in offices since their ‘take home’ salary can no longer “take them home”. Parents now struggle to afford transport fare of their wards to schools. The cost of food stuff has skyrocketed on the back of over 300% increase in petrol cost without any efforts to reduce the cost of public transports as it is done in other market driven economies

This solution portrays how disinterested the APC Government is from the reality plaguing Nigerians and its lack of empathy. It’s also obvious that the APC Government has adopted the failed ‘trickle down economic theory.’ How does rice fuel buses or generators? Once the rice is consumed, will another batch be shared? This tokenism policy does not address the major issues of hyper food inflation and public transportation which has become expensive for many of the masses.

The Government recently claimed to cut down the cost of governance by directing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to freeze the processing of visas for all Government officials seeking to travel to New York for the United Nations General Assembly, while going to the G20 summit with a large Entourage. This is tantamount to painting a donkey as a zebra when very clearly the moment it rains the reality will be revealed. It shows lack of seriousness and playing to the gallery . The failure to reduce the number of ministries shows the Government’s true intentions, which is party over country. The Senate and House of Assembly have equally showed no intention in cutting down the cost of governance. The number of ministers appointed is the largest so far in the history of Nigeria.

The Youth Party has at various points have proposed a more be pragmatic approach to dealing with the pain points of Nigerians. The focus on public transportation to reduce cost of living should be immediate. The distribution of 100-seater buses across various states of the country with the aim of keeping prices as low as possible is a first step. Secondly, Nigeria’s gas remains untapped. The transition to compressed natural gas (CNG) and converting petrol or diesel engines to CNG should be encouraged. This is a policy that should be expedited. The Federal Government should engage NURTW on how the cost of transport can

revert to pre-subsidy rates. Public transport should be subsidized as it's done all over the world.

Masses cannot be subjected to the vagaries of the market. Market has its limit. The masses need to be protected.

Also, the Youth Party would like to call on the NLC and it's allied unions to apply the pressure of their actions with a human face, as their ultimate goal should be to ameliorate the hardship being faced by Nigerians and not to worsen it.