



INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY UNATU: GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO ADHERE TO TEACHERS DEMANDS IS A SERIOUS BLOW TO THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

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For Immediate Release

Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) declared an industrial action from the 14th of September 2013 in respect of government's failure to fulfill its commitment of 20% salary increment, delayed release of capitation grant and allowances for science teachers which were negotiated between government and the Union on behalf of all the teachers in Uganda. The National Coalition on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and concerned Civil society organizations recognize government's initiative towards achieving the full realization of the right to education through making primary education and secondary school free and compulsory; however, we note that the right to education can only be fully realized by children in school if they are taught by well motivated and committed teachers.

The teachers' expectations have been met with great level of reluctance by government and parliament to honor its commitment. This is clearly seen in statements made by various government officials; "*There is no money for salary increments specifically for teachers because the government has already committed the available resources for infrastructural development.*" (The government spokes person, New Vision 17th September 2013). Although infrastructural development is critical to the improvement of the country, the education sector and teachers are factors of production who contribute to the development of the country and should be given priority. In refusing to listen to the teachers' demands and offer redress, the government is violating the right to education. It should be noted that;

- UNATU's decision of calling for the nationwide industrial action is in line with *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 and the Labour Unions Act*. Under Article 40(3) (a, b, and c) of the Constitution, it's a Constitutional right to form and join a labor Union, Collectively Bargain and withdraw Labor. *Section 8 of the Public Service (Negotiating, Consultative and Settlement Dispute Act, also provides for the same.*
- While undertaking the above actions, the employer shall not discharge an employee on the account of his or her lawful involvement or proposed lawful involvement in the activities of a Labor Union, including his or her participation in the industrial action in accordance with Section 4(d) of the **Labour Unions Act**. The employees are further protected by Section 76(1) and (2) of the **Employment Act** which provides that organization of a strike or other form of industrial action shall not constitute a fair reason for dismissal or imposition of a disciplinary penalty.

