

...NANS applauds appointment

EJIKEME OMENAZU

NATIONAL Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has applauded the recent appointment of Dr. (Mrs.) Obiageli Ezekwesili as Minister of

Education by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Speaking to newsmen yesterday at the Conference Hall of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, NANS president, Mr. Kenneth Orkuma Hembe expressed

optimism that by Dr. Ezekwesili's appointment, the deterioration of the education sector and the struggles of the key operators would be over.

Mr. Hembe expressed hope that the education sector would soon begin to enjoy the benefit of Dr. Ezekwesili's energy, expertise and finesse which she brought to the Due Process Office and the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development.

He stressed that the education sector has suffered a lot due to lack of effective, result-oriented and qualitative management as well as seeming lack of ideas on the part of the sector's past administrators.

"Our campuses have been reduced to mere certificate awarding institutions where cultism and social vices thrive unabatedly. This unfortunate situation exists from primary to tertiary levels making education in Nigeria generally unattractive and non-competitive in international labour market," Hembe lamented.

He called on Dr. Ezekwesili to urgently convene an education summit to address salient issues in the sector and gather advice and suggestions from stakeholders at home and in the diaspora on the way forward.

Hembe also condemned the recent cult related violence at the University of Ado-Ekiti that led to the death of a female student and subsequent destruction of property in the institution.

He disclosed that the NANS executive had visited the campus and held discussions with the vice-chancellor and the students' union leadership, while expressing the hope that the culprits would be brought to justice even as he called on students nationwide to shun cultism.

The NANS boss said the association received with shock the news that the National Universities Commission (NUC) has approved the payment of tuition fees by undergraduates.

"This decision is totally unacceptable to Nigerian students and NANS will soon convene a Senate meeting to determine the course of action that we must take to defeat this challenge in the same way the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS) did in the late 70s," he stressed.

He commended the student unions for embracing the Students' Welfare Insurance Scheme as is the practice in developed world, adding that "as approved by the Ministry of Education, the scheme will be administered under the co-ordination of Presidential Insurance Company and Guardian Trust Insurance Company."

Hembe condemned the continued kidnapping of foreign oil workers by Niger Delta militants, saying that "NANS views these kidnaps as negative to the interests of Nigeria" as the trend portends the danger of scaring away foreign investors.

"While we appreciate the sufferings of the people of the Niger Delta, many of whom are our members, we feel strongly that other civil means of agitation to press their demands can be adopted," he stressed.

On the 2007 general elections, the NANS boss urged politicians to be mature in their campaigns and play to the rules of the game, while warning students not to allow themselves to be used as thugs.



ia Nsukka (UNN) Alumni Association, Nze Ananyi (l) handing over a cheque to ebo for the commencement of the N500 million endowment fund launch



), Justice Mohammed Uwais (l), his wife, Mariam and Chief Gani "awehinmi On Uwais Through the Supreme Court Cases 1997-2006 by the Nigerian Law Photo: Mike Iroanya



Dr. Rotimi Durojaiye of Independent Newspapers at the Federal High Court, in Abuja Photo: Francis Ojo