

ODSG COMMITTED TO PAYMENT OF MINIMUM WAGE

Ondo state government yesterday restated, for the umpteenth time, its avowed and irrevocable commitment to the payment of new minimum wage to workers in the state. To this end, discussion on all outstanding issues between government, labour and other key stakeholders on the minimum wage will commence immediately.

The state governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko made this known while addressing workers during the 2011 May Day celebration at the Gani Fawehinmi Freedom Arcade in Akure.

Mimiko said “let me make commitment before you workers of Ondo State today that we remain irreversibly committed to paying workers of Ondo State the minimum wage. Let me make this absolutely clear, when you look at the finances of states, the affordability factor is a major factor. But because in principle we believe that N18,000 in today’s economy is no big deal, and that is the truth.

“We have put our heads together to see how, by subjecting government to instill discipline, cutting further areas of waste and embarking on increased Internally Generated Revenue drive in order to sustain the new regime of minimum wage.

“It is important to tell you, great workers of Ondo State, that in order to implement and sustain this new minimum wage, the Nigeria Labour Congress should actively join hands with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a review of the Federal Allocation formula so that more resources will be devolved to states so as to ensure the realization of the minimum wage” he explained.

Reeling out his administration’s feats in government/labour relations within two years, the governor said “the government has also adjusted workers salary structure in the state to bring it at par with their counterparts in the South West zone of the country and recruited over 6,000 workers into the public service including the Local Government Service as a social responsibility and in order to reduce unemployment”. According to him, as the first state to do so in the country, the government had since 2009 been paying 27.5 per cent basic salary to teachers, introduced new salary scale for the health sector workers, enhanced allowances payable to the Judiciary staff as well as paid 50 per cent weigh-in allowance which had been outstanding for 20 years to media houses and Ministries workers.

His words, “more than 18,000 workers in the public service have benefited from training/re-training programmes while government paid the outstanding benefits of retired Primary school teachers and Local Government staff which were liabilities of the Federal Government. By the time the state government intervened, over 20 per cent of the workers had died waiting for their claims”.

In her address, the Chairman of Nigeria Labour Congress, Ondo State Council, Comrade Bose Daramola called on governments at all levels to tackle epileptic power supply in the country, but praised Mimiko administration’s initiative of provision of Solar Energy at Isinkan Market in Akure asking for its expansion to other parts of the state.

She berated some construction firms for deducting tax from workers salaries without remitting same to government coffers.

Also addressing the gathering, the State Chairman of Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, Comrade Olufemi Bosede appealed to the state government to expand the educational facilities to enable children of workers, farmers and peasants to have equal opportunities for education.

