

A SPEECH DELIVERED BY BROTHER WILSON SOSSION,
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN KNUT, DURING THE 55TH ANNUAL
DELEGATES CONFERENCE (ADC), AT CHRIST IS THE ANSWER
MINISTRY (CITAM) CHURCH HALL, KISUMU – ON TUESDAY
11TH DECEMBER, 2012:

The Secretary General;

The Secretary, Teachers Service Commission (TSC);

The National Treasurer;

The National Steering Committee;

The National Executive Council (NEC);

Distinguished Delegates;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my singular pleasure to welcome you all to the 55th Annual Delegates Conference (ADC) of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), here at CITAM church hall, Kisumu City. What a pleasure to see our great union travel a difficult journey for 55 years! What a pleasure to see the undying spirit of the teachers of Kenya remain strong and united guided by our constitution for an unstoppable record of 55 years. We have remained faithful and loyal to the constitution of Kenya National Union of teachers, which unites and brings together teachers of all grades and

qualifications. Through our unity, we have remained a leading union in this region and the world that has set the pace for the workers rights. And in equal measure, we have attracted enemies who have never stopped burning midnight oil to bring us down. It is in the past annual delegates conferences, that fabrics and framework of unity and strength of the union and the teachers of Kenya has been reinforced. The 55th Annual Delegates Conference of Kenya National Union of Teachers remains a platform to propel the union to fulfill its mission and vision of uniting teachers of all grades and qualification and becoming one of the strongest and self reliant trade union globally.

Over the year, we lost loved ones through the cruel hand of death in the teaching family. The country lost a number of national leaders and other Kenyans in their lines of duty. We lost the former Minister for Education and the Minister for Internal Security at the time of his death and a friend of KNUT, Prof. George Saitoti, through a tragic helicopter accident. I therefore, ask this conference to take a minute of silence in remembrance of our brothers and sisters who have left us.

Colleagues, Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference therefore, must adopt sound resolutions to make the union strong, attractive and a union to behold by all teachers without an option. The challenges faced by the union over the years must be tackled now. Through the resolutions, pragmatic reforms both at the constitutional and policy front will make the union relevant to all teachers under employment at T.S.C. What we can do, let us do it today not tomorrow without an iota of doubt and fear.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The school representative system remains the heart and fabric of the union. It is imperative that all public institutions must have school representatives. The school representatives must on a continuous basis market the union in their institutions. They must as well find time to discuss with each and every teacher in their work stations the affairs of the union on termly basis. In this way, the spirit of the union shall, flow in the veins of all teachers. I am g all

branches to keep an inventory of all our schools representatives complete with their contacts and availed to the secretary general.

Further, all branches must engage in programs and activities that will attract and retain members. I must salute branches that have initiated and upgraded their SACCOs and transformed their BBFs. Several buses under BBF Schemes is a milestone in service improvement and image building for the union. All branches must be innovative towards this end and mobilize support of all members towards new programmes and projects. But we must intensify our activities in all institutions even in private schools. We cannot accept to be relegated to be a sectarian union must live true to our mission of representing all teachers in the teaching service. Furthermore, all teachers in the teaching service whether private or public shall be governed by the new T.S.C act 2012. Therefore, KNUT must restructure itself to admit teachers in private schools to its membership and represent their interests. The proliferation of many unions in the teaching service is an elaborate scheme to slow down and weaken KNUT. We can only fight

it through aggressive reforms. Never and never should we allow other unions in the teaching service to exist at the expense of unity of teachers.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The advent of the new constitutional dispensation has seen a new constitution, new bills and policies. The reforms in the education sector must be undertaken with full consultations of KNUT. Failure of which, we shall strongly oppose what is not acceptable to us. The recommendation by Prof. Douglas Odhiambo to reduce the period of instruction in primary from eight years to six years is a disastrous proposal to the children of Kenya. Mainstreaming of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) and employing sufficient teachers is a faster and cheaper route to improving access and ensuring quality in our education system. The proposed structure is therefore, very costly to Kenya and serves no new unique purposes. The ministry of Education should not play secret cards under the table on reforms. We cannot experiment on Kenyan children. We

must be fully consulted on all aspects of reforms in the sector.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Investment in education in Kenya by the Kenya Government must be enhanced and should have strong positive correlation with the growth of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In September, the entire sector was thrown into a standstill due to industrial action by teachers, lecturers and staff. This is solely because education is denied resources it deserves. A minimum of 30% allocation of this years expected GDP of 1.5 trillion should have seen the entire sector allocated 420 billion. This allocation an fully finance employment of enough teachers, paying competitive salaries to attract and retain the best teachers and financing learning programmes from ECDE to university. This is he Kenya we want and the dream that this union must stand for and fight for. The backbone of vision 2030 is education sector which must be adequately financed. May I leave this quote for this conference to ponder over" Opening one school door closes ten (10) prison doors" - Victor

Hugos a French playwright who lived in the 18th century. The Government must walk the talk and make education accessible to all school going children and supply adequate teachers through proper financing. The next budget for 2013/14 must factor in new terms for teachers under the on going negotiations, mainstream ECDE fully and raises capitation for ECDE, Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) per child. Failure of which, the union should dance a good dance to the government.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya goes for a general election under the new constitution on 4th March 2013. This will be done with painful memories of bungled elections of December 2007 which resulted in violence, displacements and deaths of innocent Kenyans. The union visited Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in 2008 and witnessed the most inhuman conditions children and other Kenyans were subjected to. Never again should this nation walk that route because of an election. We demand peaceful and democratic elections that guarantee

peace with clear election winners. We have responded to the calls by many Kenyans, Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and the international community to take a leading role in guaranteeing peaceful elections. The establishment of WEAVERS PEACE PROGRAMME will see all teachers work for peace in all polling stations countrywide. Election losers must concede defeat because elective leadership is not a right but privilege.

On National Security, we salute the Kenya Defense Force (KDF) for a splendid job in Somalia. External threat is a threat to peace yet the greatest casualties will be children and education. The KDF therefore must be congratulated for a well done Job to secure our borders. Internally, the continued deterioration of security in some parts of this nation is a great source of concern in the run up to the general elections. We condemn the Tana ethnic conflicts and other conflicts which have resulted in loss of lives, closure of schools and displacement of teachers. In the strongest terms possible, we condemn the massacre of 50 police officers in Baragoi, Samburu district. Kenya must

progress towards peace, stability and sound economic growth but not armed conflicts. The envisaged police reforms must ensure that we have the most motivated, equipped and skilled police service to meet the needs of our internal security. We cannot talk about education without internal security.

The coming general elections will see many teachers contest various seats in different political parties. We urge our membership to fully support KNUT members vying for various seats. We must take our power to the county assemblies, national assembly and the senate. A critical mass of our membership in all these constitutional institutions is inevitable. As we pursue political se I wish to restate that KNUT is not and can never affiliate itself with political parties. We cherish democracy and shall allow our members to participate in activities of political parties of their choices. KNUT as an institution operates far above political parties.

Consequently, our staff on full time employment should take 60 days leave in accordance with our circular letter, ef

KNUT/CIR/122/88 dated February 8, 1988. The head office and branches must comply with the circular. Our offices cannot and should not be used for political activities

Finally, I wish all delegates fruitful deliberations in the 55th ADC, very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful Election Year 2013.

Long Live KNUT
Long Live Kenya

THANK YOU ALL