

GOVERNMENT PLEDGES

The Government recently pledged that this October, it will release sh150b towards salary enhancement of teachers, lecturers and other non-teaching staff in public universities

By Mercy Okorom and Martin Kitubi

The leaders of the public university lecturers have agreed to call off the strike and resume work.

The move followed a meeting with President Yoweri Museveni yesterday, according to Prof. Edward Mwavu, one of the lecturers' leaders.

"We will communicate to the rest of our colleagues across the country to resume work as we wait for the President to implement his pledges," he said.

According to Mwavu, Museveni said the Government will implement his promise to pay a professor at a public university sh15m every month.

Museveni told the meeting attended by the leaders of professional trade unions and lecturers that his promise to pay the professors sh15m per month is still on.

Mwavu represented the Makerere University Academic Staff Association (MUASA) at the meeting held at the State House Entebbe, yesterday.

"Yes, we presented our issues and the President pledged that professors will get better pay," Mwavu said.

However, Mwavu said the President did not commit himself on when the increment will be made, although he (Museveni) promised that he will follow up on the issue himself.

"He was committed to paying and he asked us to resume our work. He said the economy is not doing well, but promised a brighter future," Mwavu noted.

Some of the trade unions which attended the meeting include Uganda National Teachers' Association (UNATU), National Union of Education Institutions (NUEI), Forum for Academic Staff of Public Universities (FASPU) and the Public Universities Non-Teaching Staff Executive Forum (PUNSEF).

Filbert Baguma, the general secretary at UNATU, said the President re-affirmed the Government's position that salary enhancement will be paid at the start of the next quarter in October.

"The President said the money will be paid effective this October. He asked us to be patient and that more funds will be availed for salary enhancement," he said.

Recently, following a meeting with the leadership of UNATU and other trade unions, the Government pledged that this October, it will release sh150b towards salary enhancement of teachers, lecturers



President Yoweri Museveni

University lecturers meet Museveni, call off strike

LECTURERS RE-ASSURED

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and other non-teaching staff in public schools and universities.

Wilson Muruli Mukasa, the Minister for Public Service, who addressed journalists on the development, said out of sh150b, sh15b has been earmarked for public universities for salary enhancement for both teaching and non-teaching staff. The rest of the money, sh135b, Muruli said, will cater for the enhancement of the teachers, principals, tutors, instructors from primary school level up to secondary and the Business Technical Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) institutions.

"We have secured sh150b for salary enhancement and, by October, it will be

released. Therefore, we call for calm," Muruli said.

The meeting yesterday came after a section of lecturers at public universities threatened to strike if issues of salaries are not addressed before the start of this coming semester.

The staff at Kyambogo University, particularly have been most outspoken on the matter. They started the strike even before the semester began.

Yesterday, majority of lecture rooms remained locked, with students loitering within the university compound. The only activity at the campus was the freshers' orientation sessions and bazar.

Reuben Twinomujuni, the senior public relations officer at the university, confirmed that there is a strike, but the university is open and they were continuing to receive students.

Continuing students started reporting on Monday.

Twinomujuni also said some of the lecturers are working, while others had withdrawn from their duties, but no one had been suspended.

"I strongly believe that today's meeting will bear fruits," Twinomujuni said.

The President called for a meeting with the academic staff to discuss an end to the strike so that the students are not affected.