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Date: 20TH DECEMBER, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE INCREMENT IN UNIVERSITY FEES

Good morning, we are gathered here today as the student leadership of our universities across the country. This press statement has become very crucial at this point to address the recent astronomical hikes in school fees of Public Universities in the country, which will make access to education become increasingly difficult. Ladies and gentlemen before any other thing, as an association of university students across the country we would want to thank the government and various labor unions for reaching a compromise and calling off the near two-month strike action to safeguard the academic activities of our universities. We pray that permanent solutions are arrived at quickly to prevent further strike actions which will disrupt our education system.

We are just about three weeks away from resuming school and up to date the fate of our university student is still hanging because we cannot point to a specific figure as designated and approved fees for the 2022/2023 academic year.

The procedure for approval of Public University fees is very clear and this approval does not stop at Management or at University Councils. Our universities are supposed to send their proposed fees to Parliament through Ghana Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Finance. Subject to the passing of the recent Fees and Charges Act, 2022, the final approving authority is not the university management but Parliament.

Our checks from GTEC and Parliament indicates that there has been a 15% maximum increment across board, as approved by parliament for university fees from the previous academic year. Every attempt to increase this will be strongly resisted by our students. This has begun with our students strongly expressing their displeasure over the past week on the various social media platforms.

While at this, some public universities like KNUST, UCC and the University of Ghana among others have gone ahead to release provisional school fees for the 2022/23 academic year with very high percentage increments.

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We acknowledge the economic difficulties that we are currently facing as a country, and we acknowledge Government's swift response in seeking economic restructuring with an IMF program however, we cannot collapse our education system due to the situation that we find ourselves in, as this will only continue the poverty cycle in this country and make our economic prospects worse by the years.

Our biggest concern with this release is on how short the notice on the payment has come, and how difficult it will be for most of our students to continue their education.

The 2023 budget that has been approved by parliament only seeks to worsen our plights in the areas of education, scholarships and subventions to our universities. We once again want to reiterate our position on the 2023 budget as an association and that is, it holds no future for the university student in Ghana.

ON THE STUDENTS LOAN TRUST FUND

In areas such as the Students Loan Trust Fund, the school fess increment has become very worrying because most students rely on the Students Loan Trust Fund to support their education. However, the 2023 Budget contains a 39% slash in the Students Loan Budgetary allocation as compared to 2022. The 2023 budget only makes available Ghc3.1 million in budget for the student's loan trust fund and this we find inadequate as many students would not benefit from it on the basis of the allocated funds especially with the proposed increment in our university fees.

As far as we are concerned, this does not in any way portray a government that is committed to supporting a progressively free University education agenda in this country.

ON GETFUND

On our biggest donor towards university education in Ghana i.e. GETFUND, public universities have since the introduction of the EARMARKED FUNDS AND REALLOCATION ACT 2017 (Act 947), Public Universities have continuously been underfunded by government due to the cap placed on GETFund, the biggest financier of Public Universities. The 39% allocation of the GETFund Levy representing just Ghc1.8 billion out of an estimated Ghc4.6 billion expected to accrue to through GETfund Levy to education will only worsen the financial burden on our various university. The capping of the GETFUND allocations from 81% this year to 39% in the coming year will only compel our universities to resort to school fees increment to sustain their operations.

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The decision to cap GETFund and allocate majority of the revenue accruing through GETFund Levy to other Sectors is one we do not support as it only cripples Public Universities due to insufficient funding and with this private universities will also have the nod to increase their fees due to the already high university fees in the public universities which is supposed to be progressively free. We therefore call on government to de-cap GETFund as a matter of urgency and make more funding available to Public Universities. Again, we fully support the Petition to Parliament Against the GETFUND Allocation for 2023 as submitted by Kofi Asare of Africa Education Watch.

It has also come to our attention that government intends for Public Universities to pay for Utility Bills in the coming year. This is only going to make university education progressively expensive ironically as opposed to an agenda to make university education progressively free and accessible. As done before some years ago on matters of utility bills, we will resist any attempt by government to indirectly ask students pay for utility bills. We have seen this resistance before as a country, and we do not want history to repeat itself.

ON THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The posture of the minister and the ministry towards student leadership and engaging student leaders on matters concerning education has not been welcoming and so we have decided to seek any alternative avenue to allay our concerns because the concerns of students must be addressed.

Government should be clear, if they want to wean off their responsibilities to public universities fully, then we will know and we will have the opportunity to decide as the youth of this country on which government will help us achieve our dreams of realizing our academic goals.

This academic year, we witnessed a huge number of students risking their education being truncated, notwithstanding this situation we are now seeing a further increment in these same fees and this is obviously only going to worsen the plight of the university student in this country.

The poverty cycle in this country is triggered by the increasing incidents of school dropouts. This poverty cycle must be broken. The youth of this country deserve to have an education as our rights.

IF GOVERNMENT HAS ANY INTEREST IN SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN GHANA, THE TIME IS NOW!!!

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Thank you.

Dr. Christian Ntsiful Anderson
President

Angela Aku-Sika Tagbodza
Press & Information Secretary

Cc:

GHANA TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ALL UNIVERSITY SRCS
ALL HALL JCRCS
ALL MEDIA HOUSES

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