
NSE warns against planned sack of 2000 steel workers

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All Affrica.com reported that Nigerian Society of Engineers has expressed worry over plans by the Federal Government to sack over 2,000 staff of Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited and the Nigerian Iron Ore Mining Company.

In a statement signed by Mr Kassim Abdul Ali president of NSE, the society said a plausible option should be explored, adding that the plan would worsen the perennial state of unemployment in the country.

It said the Interim Management Committee of the steel company had requested a pre operational fund of NGN 400 million to resume commercial production in the light section and bar rolling mill, the wire rod mill and the thermal plant with an assurance to generate about the same amount of revenue monthly but this was not granted.

Mr Kassim Abdul Ali said that "We are still of the view that the release of the NGN 400 million pre operational funds needed by the management committee will go a long way in kick starting activities in the Ajaokuta plant. With this, the plant will be able to generate revenue to pay staff salaries and keep the plant operational."

He added that "At a time that the country is still reeling in the throes of graduate unemployment and high poverty rate, there is no gainsaying the fact that an addition of 2,000 people into the labor market would be most suicidal."

He called on President Mr Umaru Yar'Adua to reconsider the decision and grant the request of the interim management the benefit by releasing the pre operational funds of NGN 400 million. He said that "As a matter of fact, a key index for measuring development is the rate of steel consumption. We appeal to the president to use his good offices to stop the planned sack of the workers when there is a plausible option. We also encourage Mr. President to hold further consultations with stakeholders on the way forward for the steel sector in view of its importance to the development of the nation."

(Sourced from <http://allafrica.com>)

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