

Swaziland National Association of Teachers

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UPDATE BY THE SNAT ON THE MEETING THAT WAS SANCTIONED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO INTRODUCE THE NEW TSC CHAIRPERSON

I. INTRODUCTION

The SNAT-NEC did attend a meeting on Monday (14-06-2021) at the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) Conference Room, wherein the MoET Principal Secretary (PS), Bertram Stewart, introduced the newly appointed Chairman to the TSC- Dr. Amos M. Mahlalela. This was merely a Courtesy Call meeting and there were no substantive issues that were discussed therein. However, the Chairman, as a new Officer at the helm of the TSC delivered his twelve (12) page inaugural speech since the meeting agreed that no substantive issues were to be discussed therein, the SNAT-NEC had decided not to re-act to Dr. A.M. Mahlalela's speech for now, pending convening of meetings that will discuss sectoral issues that affect our members.

However, as the SNAT NEC, we have observed that excerpts from the Chairman's speech are periodically being published in the country's dailies and that, if left unattended might end up confusing not only our members but also the general Swazi populace. The SNAT-NEC has therefore decided to put issues into the correct perspective as follows;



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II. GIST OF THE STATEMENT

That;

1. We welcome the fact that at least this time around, the Officer at the helm of the Commission is a teacher by profession. Our ardent belief is that he clearly understands all the tenets of the profession and, as such, there will be no need to orient the Chairperson on such sectoral issues. The SNAT also believes that if the education system of the country is to develop, all the TSC Commissioners should have experience as educators.
2. The maiden speech by the newly elected Chair was however ambitious and too theoretical. Most of the issues that he raised and the arguments that he put forward seriously lacked a workable scientific formula in order to achieve the goals he envisions. The TSC navigational system that the Chair adopted, brilliant as it may look, shall not be effective if all education stakeholders will not be party to such a strategic goal. The Chairman talked about “**The Morden Strategic Management Model**” that focusses on changes, amendments and corrections.
3. Any change in any organisation can be misdirected if stakeholders are not meaningfully engaged. Experience has taught us that if change is imposed on a people, it is bound to face some resistance irrespective of whether or not it is excellent. As the SNAT, we therefore challenge the TSC Chairman to itemize the issues he espoused in his speech, place them on the table for all parties to engage on same. Unless and until that is done, no progress will ever be realized and there will be unmatched frustration and confusion amongst those tasked with managing such change.
4. The Chairman also raised very contentious issues which we request our members and the Nation not to worry about. These include: categorizing schools that attain a pass rate that is below 76%, as poor performing schools and that teachers who teach in such schools might not be retained and/or paid as teachers. This analysis by the Ph.D holder highlights the fact that he chose to intentionally overlook all factors that may directly affect students’ performance in schools. We consider this a gross and grave mistake to have been committed by our academic equal.
5. The narrative that says all unemployed teachers should form regional Agricultural Schemes is not only off-tangent but also undermines the efforts that are made by the country to successfully push for Education for All by 2030. On



another note, such an argument eclipses the central duties of the TSC as a body that deals with the employment of teachers, amongst other issues. It is the duty of the government to create job opportunities. However, for citizens to be able to deliver, they must be employed in sectors where they have received adequate professional training.

III. CONCLUSION

As the SNAT, we embrace the fact that the TSC is a semi-autonomous body which is under the Ministry of Education and Training [MoET]. However, we hope there will be meaningful engagements on all issues that affect teaching and teachers in particular. As a country, we still have a duty to set aside adequate resources to fund education. Our education system must make our learners to have a sharp competitive edge when they are compared with their counterparts from around the globe. The task that lies ahead for all of us is so enormous and we want to challenge the new Chairperson to work so hard so that we together deliver the best for the Nation. We hope that the upcoming meetings shall be fruitful indeed.

ISSUED BY THE SNAT SG ON THE 16TH JUNE 2021



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