

CITATION

In Honour of Trade Union Leadership and Service

COMRADE SHINA OLASUNKANMI LUWOYE

HND, MBA, FCA, AICMC

President, PENGASSAN 1999 - 2003 | President General, Trade Union Congress of Nigeria 2000 - 2003

PROFILE SUMMARY

Comrade Shina Olasunkanmi Luwoye is a broad-minded chartered accountant, entrepreneur and trade unionist whose name is inscribed among the most transformative labour leaders of Nigeria's oil and gas industry. A talented and disciplined leader, he rose within three years of joining the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) to become its youngest-ever National President, going on to also lead the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) at a defining moment in its history. His leadership was marked by transparency, cohesion, discipline and an intentionally futuristic vision - qualities that reshaped the character and institutional strength of the unions he led, and whose legacy continues to guide the labour movement today.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT, PENGASSAN (1998 - 2003)

Comrade Luwoye took over PENGASSAN from the ruins of military-era suppression of trade unionism, and within a year had transformed it into the most influential trade union in Nigeria and across Africa's energy sector. As National President, he brought transparency to the union's finances and administration, and significantly improved cohesion, discipline and internal unity among a diverse and geographically dispersed membership. His leadership was intentionally futuristic, focused not merely on immediate industrial agitation but on building durable, forward-looking institutions for the union's long-term relevance and financial independence. Guided by a philosophy of industrial partnership, his signature achievements as National President include:

- **Institutional Infrastructure:** Construction of the PENGASSAN Secretariat at 288 Ikorodu Road, Lagos, within two years in office, giving the union a permanent institutional home.
- **Transparency, Cohesion and Discipline:** Instituted transparent governance and financial practices within the union and strengthened cohesion and discipline among members, uniting a diverse and geographically dispersed membership around a shared, disciplined and forward-looking agenda.
- **PENGASSAN Cooperative Society:** Established the Cooperative Society of the union, mandated to build a sustained investment platform for expanding the confluence of the union's influence beyond its traditional aluta (industrial struggle) mandate, positioning PENGASSAN as an institution with lasting economic relevance for its members.
- **Women in PENGASSAN Unit:** Established the Women in PENGASSAN unit, mandated to strengthen the mobilising power of the union through the greater involvement of women in the workforce and in union leadership and activities.
- **Formation of NUPENGASSAN:** Extended an intentional arm of fellowship to NUPENG (National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers), under the leadership of Comrade Brisbane Awe and Comrade Peter Akpatason, leading to the formation of NUPENGASSAN in April 2001 at Savannah Hotel, Rumuogba, near Woji Junction, Port Harcourt - a collaborative platform between PENGASSAN and NUPENG conceived to deepen unity between the senior and junior cadres of oil and gas workers, with an ultimate ambition of merging the two unions by 2020. The formation gave rise to the popular rallying cry "NUPENGASSAN Superpower!", coined to epitomise the strength and solidarity the alliance represented.
- **Rights of Contract Employees to Collective Bargaining:** Successful agitation for the right of contract employees in the Nigerian oil industry to organise and to have a collective bargaining agreement; the first contract staff to be unionised under this reform were those of Shell Petroleum Development Company (Shina Luwoye Branch). This was an agitation that employed both intellectual and combative strategies before it was achieved. Following a warning strike carried out in collaboration with NUPENG in 2001, the Shina Luwoye-led executive secured the industry's agreement to organise a tripartite two-day workshop devoted solely to the agenda of contract employment in the Nigerian oil and gas industry - a proposition brought forward by PENGASSAN. The conference,

hosted by the Federal Government at the then NICON NUGA Hotel (now Transcorp Hotel), brought together tripartite players across the Nigerian oil and gas industry, and its major highlight was the achievement of the right of contract employees to collective bargaining. In a related case, the Luwoye-led executive secured the reinstatement of 15 Shell contract workers who had been sacked for embarking on a protest to join the union, during which power was mistakenly shut down to the medical facility at the company's Port Harcourt Industrial Area. All the affected workers were recalled, and, following further negotiation and agitation by the executive that contract staff of more than 10 years' service deserved pensionable appointments, some of them were subsequently converted to permanent staff.

- **Enforcement of Constitutional Discipline and Rotation:** Prior to his leadership, it was commonplace for individuals to remain on branch executive committees for over ten years without rotation, in violation of the union's constitution. Shina enforced the constitutional provisions on tenure and rotation across all branches, ending the entrenchment of long-standing office holders and restoring constitutional discipline to the union's leadership structure.
- **Statutory Remittance of Check-Off to PENGASSAN Secretariat:** The correct statutory process required branches to remit 100% of check-off (union dues) collected to the National Secretariat, which would in turn pay back to branches and other organs of the union what was statutorily due to them. Branches had previously departed from this process, retaining the check-off at source instead of remitting the full amount to the Secretariat. Shina corrected this practice, and in a demonstration of even-handed discipline, put the weight of the law against his own branch executive committee, suspending it for retaining money statutorily due to the National Secretariat instead of remitting it as required.
- **Minimum Wage Strike and Salary Adjustment (2001):** Convinced that a review of the national minimum wage must translate into a bottom-up adjustment across the workforce, Shina led a three-day strike in 2001 demanding that the oil and gas industry adopt and implement the over 50% increase in minimum wage granted by the Obasanjo Government. The agitation secured a 5% salary adjustment for Nigerian oil and gas employees, spanning junior to management cadres, in recognition of the new minimum wage.
- **Retirement Age Reform and Reinstatement of Dismissed Warri Refinery Staff:** Rather than through negotiation, the review of the retirement age of oil workers from 55 to 60 years was achieved as an instrument of collaboration and partnership between Shina Luwoye, Engineer Gaius Obaseki and the Obasanjo Government. The same instrument of collaboration was employed to restore some Warri Refinery staff who had been summarily dismissed under the military government, with a number of the affected cases commuted from outright dismissal to early retirement instead.
- **Refinery Privatisation Fight (September 2002):** As PENGASSAN President, spoke to Vanguard on September 10, 2002 in opposition to the Federal Government's plan, through the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), to privatise Nigeria's four state-owned refineries (combined capacity of about 445,000 barrels per day), which were then plagued by technical problems amid rising fuel importation. He stated that PENGASSAN members were "fully prepared and mobilized" to resist the sale, warned that the BPE "will lose the war to privatize the refineries," and noted that the campaign would succeed because "the whole organized labor" and oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta were united against it. In furtherance of this position, he led PENGASSAN, in joint action with NUPENG, in a one-day national warning strike on September 23, 2002 protesting the planned privatisation of the downstream oil sector. The national warning strike was carried out through the mobilisation of over 1,000 oil and gas workers from Port Harcourt, Abuja, Warri and Lagos, alongside over 100 tankers mobilised from Suleja to block the National Assembly Complex and the NNPC Headquarters.

His leadership drew national attention, and he featured on several occasions on 'Tuesday Live' alongside leading captains of industry, debating and offering solutions to challenges facing Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

PRESIDENT GENERAL, TRADE UNION CONGRESS OF NIGERIA (2000 - 2003)

In May 2000, Comrade Luwoye took over the leadership of the then little-known Senior Staff Consultative Association of Nigeria (SESCAN) and, within a year, rebranded it into a formidable labour centre under the new name Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), organising state affiliates across 21 of Nigeria's 36 states within that same year. His proficiency in strategic planning and negotiation was instrumental in securing the eventual recognition of the TUC by the Obasanjo-led Federal Government, the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) and the International Labour Organisation, culminating in the 2002 amendment of Nigeria's labour laws recognising the right of senior staff unions to form or belong to a central labour organisation. True to his philosophy of honesty and integrity, he resisted pressure to remain in office

merely to receive the resulting certificate of recognition; the TUC was duly issued its official certification as Nigeria's second labour centre shortly after his promotion to a senior management position at Shell, concluding his tenure as President General in 2003.

NATIONAL SERVICE

In recognition of his contributions to national industrial policy, Comrade Luwoye received the Federal Government of Nigeria's Presidential Commendation for his service to the Petroleum Products Regulatory Committee (2001 - 2003). He served as a Member of the Petroleum Products Regulatory Commission (2001 - 2003), a Member of the Presidential Committee on Review of Petroleum Products Supply and Distribution in Nigeria (2000 - 2001), and as Member and Workers' Representative to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Tripartite Committee on Industrial Relations, Geneva (March - April 2002).

It is in recognition of this record of transparency, cohesion, discipline and futuristic institution-building - and of a legacy that reshaped the trajectory of trade unionism in Nigeria's oil and gas industry, and indeed in Nigeria at large - that we honour Comrade Shina Olasunkanmi Luwoye today.