

The Harare Declaration of the 1st WFTU Africa Mining\Energy Conference

12 Mar 2018

AFRICA, ZIMBABWE

1 .PREAMBLE

In accordance with the declaration of Abuja Conference, we, the WFTU affiliates in Southern Africa, take the next step to address the challenges, needs and aspirations of the working class of our region. We convened the 1st WFTU Minerals/Energy Conference, under the theme: “Organising against new challenges facing trade-unions in Africa”



The conference identified issues of concern and developed an action plan which will be followed to address such. The mining and energy unions in Africa, particularly from the Sub-Sahara Africa converge in Harare, Zimbabwe on the 5&6 March 2018 to map out a plan of action to address the pertinent issue of minerals and energy extraction, production and beneficiation.

The unions acknowledge the mammoth task that they are facing, relating to capacity to organise, adversarial employers and the changing nature of the world of work due to technological development or industry 4.1 as it is called.

2. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The followings challenges were specifically identified by attending Affiliates:

- Dumping of products that was stifling local industrialization and subsequent to job losses
- Climate change and global warming effects that have a bearing on employment
- Laws that are repressive to Trade Unions functioning and activities
- Limited funds for financing of Trade Union Activities attributable in part poor economic performance
- Pro-capitalist judiciary that does not fairly expedite labour matters
- Casualization of employment in workplaces that manifests itself through short term contract employment and outsourcing
- Crop up of splinter yellow Unions that sometimes use violence and threats to gain and maintain membership.
- Unions spending less on education leading to membership that is not empowered
- Job losses due to mine closures owing to financial mismanagement and depletion of mineral ores
- Uncoordinated and disjoint Unions efforts in organising against workers’ exploitation by employers, as individual Unions or in solidarity with other Unions across the African continent and the world at large
- Ageing membership of Unions
- Government frustrating Union effort to get a fair deal for workers those still in employment and those that have been retrenched.
- Collective bargaining done in bad faith by the employer including not conforming to terms of signed agreement
- Employers undercutting permanent employment opportunities by creating own private companies. They then use these private companies to contract for work that would have otherwise been done internally by the employer. Such companies are indirectly owned by management which is corruption.
- No access to workers during working time
- Mistrust of members in their Unions when the Unions don’t deliver, in time, on expected outcomes

3. ACTION PLAN/SOLUTIONS

The Affiliates in the mining and energy sector resolve to deal with the challenges as identified in the following manner.

- We need come with economic polies that balance imports and export policies. We need to oppose dumping as it implies exploitation of workers elsewhere. Trade union campaigns to limit imports. Trade Unions shall push the government to augment local production and adopt protectionist policy where it is necessary. There shall be analysis of Trade policy/agreements (e.g. AGOA) with the rest of the world and research their effect on the working class including jobs.
- Lobby governments for legislation that favours workers. Research - funded by the government. Carry out campaigns taking cognizance of the effect of clean jobs on employment - adopting interventions that create clean jobs and protecting jobs at the same time
- On the issue of senior civil servants that are corrupt and doing business with government- We should propose legislation that bars civil servants from owning in business.
- On the question of the financial sustainability of the unions. ZEWU needs to broaden its scope of organising. It should also explore the issue of creating an investment company. It should first explore the pros and cons of establishing investment companies. Sharing experiences on investments and learning from success stories. Alternative sources of income including establishment of investment companies. Engage asset management companies to give expert advice on an establishment of an investment company
- Widening trade union scope and elimination of yellow unions.
- Investigation of possibilities engaging alternative sources of income including establishment of investment companies.
- Unions should oppose casualization of employment. There should be an international campaign against labour brokering, casualization/corruption and nepotism.
- We need to publicise our victories and programmes as unions. We should also use the WFTU platform. Facebook / WhatsApp platforms should be utilized.
- NUM as a union that has benefitted from international solidarity and assistance and is prepared to assist other unions in Africa where possible. Assistance assumes many forms including education and other technical assistance.
- Unions should invest more on worker education to empower workers.
- Unity amongst the union affiliates is more important. WFTU should be active in the mediation efforts within its affiliates.
- International solidarity is an important weapon for worker struggles. There shall be solidarity campaigns (that cut across countries) against laws that are repressive and against operations and of trade unions e.g. POSA & AIPA.
- Get space at AU structures. Campaign for inclusion of trade unions in the regional groupings. Solidarity picketing on embassies about the plight of workers in Botswana
- Share info about legal issues that assist on carrying the legal case between BMWU and government.
- Undertake solidarity campaigns advocating for expeditious resolution of cases
- Advocate for establishment of more labour courts
- Companies should be encouraged to invest and explore more into mining. The mining sector should manufacture rather than export for value addition. The sector should also Identify the processes and procedure necessary to close mines, taking consideration the workers' interests.
- Beneficiation of Africa's minerals should be encouraged and legislated.
- Unions should strive for employee ownership scheme.
- WFTU shall intensify the recruitment campaign.
- WFTU should broker peace amongst affiliates.
- Advocate for merging of trade unions
- Use WFTU declaration as the year of worker education to resuscitate trade union education in our unions. There shall be mass education sensitizing workers on what the union has done and where it

is going. Leadership education and development of bilateral agreements with universities which will offer relevant courses to trade union activists.

- We decentralized education seminars.
- For ZEWU deal with the issue of retiring members in 10 years. We should give the youth members more space to contribute in building the union. Monitoring legislative developments. Organise youth structures who will recruit young workers - investment for the future.
- There should be education and training for negotiators, sharing of strategies across unions around collective bargaining strategies.
- Lobby for trade union participation in Investigation of those who are given tenders
- Lobby parliamentarians from the portfolio commission to create law which accommodate trade union reps in the procurement entities
- Provision of farming equipment and government should ensure that farming is successful.
- Engage Security clusters to arrest perpetrators of violence
In acknowledgement of the low attendance, the affiliates resolved to meet twice a year.