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AU-OATUU Partnership Forum 2014
16-18 April 2014
Accra, Ghana

REPORT

Introduction

The 6th African Union – Organization of African Trade Union Unity (AU-OATUU) Partnership Forum was held in Mensvic Hotel, Accra, Ghana, from 16-18 April 2014.

Purpose and Objectives

The objectives of the Forum included the following:

- a) To sensitize and update the Trade Union movement about events and developments in the AU system and mobilize their support for its program and agenda.
- b) To discuss Agenda 2063, harness the inputs of Trade Union Organizations and workers and develop a complementary labour agenda that will facilitate the achievement of its goals and objectives.
- c) To sensitize and mobilize support for ongoing process of ECOSOCC elections and encourage active participation of Trade Unions in the process.
- d) To review and analyze the security environment in the continent and assess how workers can contribute towards the creation of a stable and secure environment to support the development of AU Member States and the integration project of the continent.
- e) To examine ways of strengthening the framework of AU-OATUU partnership Forum so that workers can contribute more effectively to the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of AU policies and programs.

Attendance

Leaders and representatives of Trade Union Organizations and the labor movement across the five regions as well as service staff of the AU Commission from CIDO, Strategic Planning and the Finance Department attended the meeting. Trade Union participants included: Mr. Demba Diop, Union National des Travailleurs du Mali, Mr. Vincente Joao Antonio and Uniao Nacional Dos Trabalhador es Angolanos, Mr. Theophile Cole SONNY, Union Syndical des Travailleurs Centre Africains, Mr. Joseph Bervelle Kodjo, Union Generales des Travailleurs de la Cote d'Ivoire, Mr. Kassahun Follo Amenu, Conference of Ethiopian Trade Unions, Mr. Francis Atwoli, Central Organisation of Trade Unions, Mr. John Nyemah NATT, Liberia Labour Congress, Mr. Mohamed Mabruk Abuzied, National Union of Libyans Workers, Mr. Jose Bertin Randrianasolo, Confédération Générale des Syndicats des Travailleurs de Madagascar, Mr. Maiga Arouna, Syndicale des Travailleurs du Niger; Mr. Eric Manzi, Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda, Mr Ahmed Alkamil, Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation, Mr. George Paul Baya, South Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation, Mr. Jennings A. B. Wright, Sierra Leone Labour Congress, Mr. Bassou Rakis, Union des Syndicats du Tchad, r. Wilson Usher OWERE, National Organisation of Trade Unions of Uganda, Mr. Enock Mahari, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions.

AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

The meeting began with the adoption of its agenda and work program with few amendments, as indicated in Annex I.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony witnessed three focused presentations from the Secretary-General of the Ghana Trade Union Congress (TUC), the Director of Citizens and Diaspora Directorate of the AUC-CIDO as the representative of the Chairperson, and the President of OATUU, Mr. Francis Atwoli, who is also the Secretary-General of the Congress of Trade Unions (COTU) in Kenya. The Secretary-General of OATUU, Mr. Owei Lakemfa chaired this session. He called the meeting to order and introduced the three main presenters.

The Assistant Secretary-General of OATUU on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Ghana TUC presented the welcome address. He offered apologies on behalf of the Secretary of the Ghana TUC who had to go away urgently to the Office of the Minister of Finance to finalize the determination of minimum wage bill. He welcomed all participants and urged them to enjoy the hospitality of Ghana and its Government and people. The TUC Secretary-General considered it an honor for Ghana to be chosen as host and commended the inspiration behind the agenda and timing of the meeting.

In his contribution, the Director of CIDO, Dr. Jinmi Adisa, observed that the meeting was taking place at a unique historical moment in which the OAU/AU was finalizing the yearlong celebrations of its 50th Anniversary. This was an appropriate moment for stocktaking in which the lessons of experience can be harnessed to the requirements of planning for the future. The development of Agenda 2063 as a transformational roadmap was situated in this context and participants in the Forum must faithfully consider it as a first order of business and offer concrete suggestions that will make it a viable, constructive and realistic plan for shared inclusive development.

He stressed the importance of ECOSOCC, which stands as the epicenter of the people-centric character of the AU as critical for the development of this agenda. He underscored the difficulties associated with the development of the Organ and the current election process and underlined the need for OATUU as the umbrella worker's organization to galvanize the labour movement to participate in the ECOSOCC election process.

Furthermore, he noted, the agenda item on the security challenges underlines the need to create a conducive environment for progress, stability and orderly development of the continent. Thus the themes of the Forum are not only crosscutting but also well conceived and tied to the explicit demands of the integration agenda in Africa at this point in time and across the wider space of time.

He urged that some attention should also be paid to strengthening the institutional structures for AU-OATUU collaboration and paid tributes to past and present leaders who have played a critical role in constructing the platform. These include

Alhaji Sunmonu, the former Secretary-General of OATUU, Mr. Owei Lakemfa, the current Secretary-General, Prof. Ghandu, the former President and Mr. Atwoli, the current President. He observed that Mr. Atwoli's role has always been critical even before he assumed the Presidency. Thus the collaboration project is in very safe hands.

Finally, the President of OATUU, Mr. Atwoli recalled that the purpose of the Forum was to create a social compact between the labour movement and the African Union to foster the goal of integration, social and economic development of the continent. In this regard, he saw the timing of the current meeting as most appropriate considering the three key issues that are stated for discussion, namely, Agenda 2063, the ECOSOCC process and the causes and effects of insecurity in Africa. He reflected on requirements in each of these three areas.

On Agenda 2063, he observed that the Trade Union movement had already examined it and come up with its own contribution on "The African Workers Agenda" that should be integrated within it. He also saw the ECOSOCC model of the AU as unique and called for the effective engagement of OATUU with the process to strengthen ECOSOCC performance and satisfy the legitimate aspirations that it is intended to promote.

On the security situation, he noted that despite improved performance in peace and security matters on the continent, major challenges persist and the solution is to effectively broaden the dialogue on peace and security beyond narrow dimensions to cover the gamut of human security concerns. Trade Unions can play a catalyst role in this regard as shared interest of workers often transcend racial, ethnic or religious boundaries in their approach to the problem. The effective integration of this catalyst role will play key role in the ongoing process of structural transformation of the continent. On this note, the President of OAUU declared the meeting open.

Discussion and Deliberation

The meeting continued for two days in six (6) separate sessions as indicated in the work programme that is attached. At the end, it adopted the conclusions and recommendations noted below

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ON AGENDA 2063

- a) The Forum welcomed the AU Agenda 2063 as a very important landmark document which would guide the process of Africa's integration process in this millennium and set the pace for future growth and development. It recognized Agenda 2063 as a living document that is still work in progress but considers what has been produced so far as providing an appropriate roadmap for the continental organization and its Member States.
- b) The Forum agreed that the content of Agenda 2063 in its present forum provides an excellent manifesto. However, in order to translate this vision into purpose, targets, indicators and means, instruments and strategies for realizing the declared objectives must complement the goals and aspirations. A logical corollary of this process would be a framework for monitoring and evaluation of

the implementation process that would enable systemic actors to adjust and adapt means and ends as situations may require.

- c) Within this context, the Forum considers it appropriate to reflect on the wisdom of the ten-year frameworks built into the broader plan perspective. There may be a need to adjust the plan perspective to provide more details and offer sharper clarity in the short and medium term vis- a- vis the long term.
- d) The Forum stressed the imperative of aligning the interests, objectives and demands of workers and the labour movement with Agenda 2063 as the impetus for productivity. Such alignment must be carried out in a manner that assigns responsibility to various actors with clear and appreciable benefits. In this regard, the Forum emphasized that the labor movement has a very active role to play as a catalyst for growth, development and prosperity in Africa.
- e) The Forum observed that since the document was first conceived in the Executive Council Decision, the Trade Union has keenly followed the processes of its development and developed an African Workers Agenda that takes into account both Agenda 2063 and UN document on Post 2015 follow-up on the Millennium Development goals. The African Workers Agenda outlines a complementary labour agenda that will need to be integrated as an effective tool of Agenda 2063.
- f) Thus the Trade Union movement, through the Forum, committed itself to develop a complementary workers education document on Agenda 2063 as pedagogy around it. This document will explain the content of Agenda 2063 in a layman language that the ordinary worker across the continent can understand and imbibe in a manner that will inspire him or her to be driven to implement it.
- g) The Forum agreed that this process has clear and huge potential for popularization and indoctrination because Trade Unions have millions of followers. The Nigerian Union of Teachers in Nigeria alone has 2 million members who can be reached easily through this method. Its counterparts elsewhere on the continent have similar potentials across the various regions. Thus the desire to make the Agenda people-centric can be facilitated through the Trade Union Movement.
- h) Finally, the Forum urged the African Union to provide capacity support for this facilitation process. It recalled that in the period of the OAU, OATUU was given an annual subvention of 100,000 USD but that under the AU, no capacity or resource support has been provided to the labor movement. It requested that at least a modest amount should be invested to facilitate the purpose and realization of Agenda 2063.
- i) The Forum further highlighted some critical issues that must be kept in focus as the basis framework of Agenda 2063 develops as a living document as follows:
 - A prosperous Africa must be people-centric, one whose prosperity is driven by the energy, commitment and enthusiasm of the populace and which concomitantly, meets their basic needs.

- The focus of growth in this aspirational context will be human resource development that facilitates appropriate welfare requirements. However, prosperity will not just mean money, welfare and income distribution but an environment that nourishes good governance, fundamental human rights, the rule of law, respect for the sanctity of life and prosperity, all the things that would facilitate the pursuance of happiness.
- Specific attention should be given in this process to service industries, and mineral production, commerce; provisions of basic infrastructure and energy supplies in the context of the eight plan processes.
- Focus must be placed on having appropriate institutional structures that are adapted to growth and development.
- The agenda should also emphasize the requirement of order and priority with emphasis on doing those things first that will facilitate multiplier effects. The Forum emphasized that Africa has had many beautiful plans and visions that failed at the level of implementation. The process of implementation of agenda 2063 will be an essential component of its success or failure.

On ECOSOCC

- a) The Forum took note of the Presentation on the ECOSOCC Elections
- b) Acknowledged the importance of the ECOSOCC Organ as a pivotal instrument for the creation of a people-centred AU.
- c) Reflected on the experience of the previous two ECOSOCC Assemblies under Prof. Wangari Maathai and her successor, Mr. Akere Muna.
- d) The Trade Union Forum highlighted the desire to build upon this experience positively to increase the status, standing and responsibility of ECOSOCC as the civil society organ of the Union.
- e) Underscored the responsibility to participate in the election process and seek leadership responsibility to ensure that the Organ functions properly.
- f) Directed the OATTUU Secretariat to assume immediate responsibility to mobilize the gamut of Trade Unions within AU Member States, across regions and the wider public to send applications for ECOSOCC.
- g) Requested the OATTUU Secretariat to circulate information to all national affiliates, regional action at the level and monitor results to ensure that a substantial number of applications are made within now and the closing date of June 30, 2014.
- h) Requested Trade Union Forums to constantly place this theme on their agenda and use their various meetings as galvanizing influence for coordination of the process

- i) Emphasized the need for effective and close collaboration between Trade Unions at national, regional and continental level under the auspices of OATUU.

On the Security Situation in the continent

On the Security Situation on the continent, the Forum:

- j) Underlined the importance of peace and security as the backbone of any society
- k) Acknowledged that the state of security on the African continent has been a source of concern since independence as various countries and the continent at large have witnessed turmoil, social disorder, insurgencies, armed conflicts, terrorism etc. Interstate conflicts that were predominant at the beginning have given way to intra-state conflicts.
- l) Recognized that several efforts have been made to address the situation with positive consequences but security remains a major challenge on the African continent.
- m) Reviewed the experience of various countries through presentations of the Trade Union representatives in those countries including Burundi, Kenya, Guinea Bissau, Tunisia, Libya, Mali, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast and the Boko Haram in Nigeria, The Forum also reflected on the collapse of the security system in certain states and the common incidence of post-electoral violence.
- n) Decided that the threats to African Security can be attributed to a host of internal and external factors including leadership failures, the intrusive interests of powerful external actors and countries. Invariably, this has fed on governance difficulties, economic mismanagement and decline, increasing poverty and electoral malpractices. Governance difficulties and economic decline that lie at the root of the various internal conflicts must be properly addressed and the Sierra Leone Trade Unions highlighted the usefulness of the Open Government Initiative Forum through which the public can air their views on issues pertaining to governance, maladministration, corruption and other social problems affecting the common citizen.
- o) Underlined the role and importance of the Trade Union Movement as a catalyst for positive change in this area. Recognized that most African governments tend to perceive Trade Unions as a body that supports the opposition and works for regime change and that this misperception has made it difficult for Trade Unions to paly a significant mediation role in cases of internal crises and conflicts within states.
- p) Recalls that Trade Unions are representative organizations of workers with a long tradition of internal democracy, transparency and accountability. As such they are torch bearers in the construction of democratic societies as well as integral parts of the social dialogue in any society
- q) Projects therefore, the need for Trade Unions to play a more proactive role in the search for peace and security in Africa by helping to build a stronger sense of meaningful solidarity among the people. Trade Unions and the Trade Union movement should thus commit to mediation of internal differences and to forging

environments that would nurture democratically engaged citizens and instill the need for protection of workers and their interests. The unique characteristics of the Trade Unions as solidarity mass movements embracing populations that are tied to and spread across workplaces and interdependencies would give them a special status in this regard.

- r) Accordingly, it recommended the establishment of an African High Command that can reach any flashpoint within the continent within the shortest possible time. The Forum saw the African Standby Force as a positive ingredient for this purpose.
- s) Derided the situation in which some African leaders seek to cling on to power indefinitely as an albatross that undermines progressive change on the continent. The Forum therefore, recommended the institution of term limits for leadership so that African Presidents can only serve two terms in office
- t) Recommended that OATUU should play an active role in the search for peace in African by establishing a Department in charge of training experts in conflict prevention and conflict resolution issues especially as they affect the workforce. OATUU should also encourage African Governments to give special attention to young people to curb unemployment and provide appropriate skills training as well as the creation of work environments that will facilitate job satisfaction.
- u) Endorsed the roadmap of Agenda 2063 as a guiding light that would help to ameliorate this problem but recommends that it should be linked to desire to establish a United States of Africa. The Trade Union would like to see the establishment of a United States of Africa in 2063.

CLOSING CEREMONY

The meeting ended with the adoption of the report and the closing addresses by the AU and OATUU. The Director of CIDO on behalf of the Chairperson thanked OATUU and the leadership of the labour movement for their efforts and commitment to the Forum. He assured the participants that the outcomes will be reported faithfully to the Chairperson of the Commission who will take consequent actions. He underlined the need for OATUU and the Trade Union leadership to do its part. He emphasized the need to strengthen the institutional framework of collaboration. In turn, the OATUU President Mr. Atwoli, thanked the AU and his colleagues in the labour movement for their active participation. He assured the AU delegation that OATUU will ensure that its various affiliates submit their applications for ECOSOCC because the Trade Union movement recognizes the importance of the Organ. He also recalled the position of the former Secretary-General on the need to use tax on air tickets as an alternative source of the AU and emphasized the commitment of the Trade Union movement to ensure that the AU is properly funded. He assured the AUC that the Trade Union is ready and willing to assist the AU in securing necessary funding for its activities as may be required.

Finally, he emphasized the need to ensure that all the recommendations of the Forum are implemented and observed that this monitoring and evaluation process and appraisal will be a priority on the agenda of the next annual meeting of the Forum. On this note, he declared the meeting closed and wished all participants safe journey to their respective destinations.