



TRADE UNION AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON LABOUR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Johannesburg, South Africa, 28th & 29th July, 2006

Introduction

In Africa, poverty and environmental damage can be understood as sides of the same coin. Drought, deforestation, desertification, water and soil pollution, all have impacts on the lives of workers, their families and communities, with clear results on employment, food security as well as occupational and public health.

To facilitate trade union action, the interconnections between these issues must first be properly understood. Strengthening the linkage between labour and environment will have the effect of ensuring that economic, social and environmental factors are made to be mutually supportive.

Because of their relationship to production and position in workplaces Trade Unions are in a unique position to link these dimensions in very practical ways, thereby ushering a new kind of trade unionism for the XXI century.

The African Trade Union Conference on Labour and the Environment aims to establish a framework for discussion, development and adoption of common strategies for the trade union movement on sustainable development at the workplace, community, national and regional level.

The African Conference is set to follow up the legacy of the First Global Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment, organized by UNEP, ILO and Sustainlabour, on 14th-16th January, 2006.

The Global Assembly was a giant step in the unfolding of the trade union's environmental and sustainable development agenda.

The time has now come to examine its outcomes in the context of regional and local realities. Incorporating the environmental dimension into trade union work, encouraging decent and sustainable job creation and setting in motion the necessary just transition measures; all these are expected outcomes of the process that will begin with the African Trade Union Conference on Labour and the Environment.

Objectives

- To establish a framework for discussion and the adoption of common strategies for action on Sustainable Development by African trade unions to:
 - Improve the understanding of African trade union concerns and needs regarding environmental issues.
 - Promote an exchange of experiences and good practices.
 - Promote knowledge about possible actions by African workers in the context of sustainable development.
 - Raise awareness about the linkages between Environment, occupational health and safety and other areas of trade union action, e.g. asbestos and HIV/AIDS.
 - Identify the training needs of African workers, so as to enhance their role as agents for change toward sustainability, through actions at the workplace and within the local, national & regional settings.
 - Build action networks for empowering national organizations to implement the decisions taken regionally and to incorporate them within international processes.
 - Support the development of regional actions, i.e. campaigns or action plans.
- Improve regional sustainability as it relates to the world of work.



FRIDAY, 28TH JULY

8:00
9:00

Registration

9:00 1st Session: Labour and environment, A way out of poverty.
10:30 Chair: Zuelinzima Vavi, COSATU General Secretary.

- South African Government
Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Enviro Minister (tbc)/ Rejoice T. Mabudafhasi, Deputy Enviro Minister (tbc)
- Integrating TU action within the Sustainable Development paradigm: decent jobs & environment
Andrew Kailembo, ICFTU - AFRO General Secretary
- The central role of Decent Employment in poverty eradication and environmental protection
ILO Africa Regional Office (tbc)
- Environmental challenges in Africa: 11th regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
UNEP Regional Office for Africa (tbc)
- Presentation of the Resolution of the TU Assembly on Labour and Environment.
Sustainlabour Foundation

GREETINGS

- Paz y solidaridad foundation.
- AECL. Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.

10:30
11:00

Coffe Break

11:00 2nd Session: Introduction to working groups & Examples of Trade
12:30 Union action on Environment

1. *Equal and sustainable access to resources and services: water, energy and land*
 - equity and access, service quality, wastewater management in new human settlements.
 - employment, incomes, prices, taxes and government policy. Housing policies.
2. *Vulnerability to Climate Change: consequences on Labour and the Environment*
 - drought, desertification, deforestation, food insecurity
 - employment, livelihood, mitigation and adaptation measures



3. Hazardous substances in the workplace & the communities

- pesticides, asbestos and international Instruments

4. Labour and Environment: making companies accountable

- Risks of volunteer measures and impact on labour & environment
- EPZ's and environment.

12:30 14:00	Lunch
14:00 15:00	3rd Session: Identification of common challenges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gender Perspective b. Health: with HIV/AIDS, and other infectious diseases c. Rural/Urban
15:00 15:15	Break

15:15 18:00	<p>4rd Session: Working Groups</p> <p>Each Group will concentrate on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Analysis of the situation b) Identification of priorities and barriers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b.1 Gender Perspective b.2 Health: with HIV/AIDS, and other infectious diseases b.3 Rural/Urban b.4 Other c) Recommendations to governments and regional organizations. d) Proposals for trade union action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equal and sustainable access to resources and services: access to water, energy and land 2. Climate Change - Vulnerability, its Labour and Environmental Consequences 3. Hazardous substances in the workplace & the communities 4. Labour and Environment: making companies accountable
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SATURDAY 29TH JULY

09:00 10:00	5 th Session: Presentation of Working Groups recommendations
10:00 13:00	6 th Session: Building trade union environmental action plans in Africa: sub-regional perspective. Sub regions groups. The objective of these groups is to identify common problems and join actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Africa • Western Africa and Cape Verde • Central Africa and Ecuatorial Guinea • Southern Africa • Eastern Africa
13:00 15:00	Lunch
15:00 16:00	Presentations and discussion of the plans for TU action in Africa
16:00 17:00	Debate & adoption of the Johannesburg Accords and action plans
17:00 18:00	Closing Ceremony
18:00	Cocktail