

Trade Unions Actions for Equal and Sustainable Access to Resources and Services e.g. access to water - WG Recommendations

Tuesday 17th January

Bekhi Nshalintshali of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) reported on the methodology and recommendations reached by his Working Group:

With regard to the relevant text in the Workbook, he said that there was general agreement with the overall text, but that the definition of resources should be expanded beyond water. Thus a specific paragraph on other resources was needed.

Recommendations:

To Trade Union organisations:

- Awareness and education campaign: local, national, regional and global levels, to include mass education and a component focused on schools.
- Capacity building.
- Right for input on policy formulation.
- Access to funding for projects, including strengthening Trade Union's research.
- Drawing in and coordinating expertise and research.
- Examine social security net and extend to all workers.
- Assess human resource development.
- Develop alliances with other Major Groups (with NGOs, exercise caution, develop tactical alliances, recognise potential weaknesses, and avoid labour's marginalisation).
- Make human resources available to work on these issues in ICFTU/GUF bodies.
- Develop systematic engagement with UN bodies, in a structured way.

To Intergovernmental bodies:

- ILO mechanisms of social dialogue need urgent focus.
- International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should recognise the importance of labour's participation in decision-making, and not impose conditionalities or policies. They should instead be prepared to use Trade Union bodies as resources to provide inputs as essential stakeholders with valuable expertise.
- UNEP should continue to provide input into social dialogue processes and to supplement the reluctance of many employers and governments to address sustainable development.
- The UN system (especially the ILO) should seek to integrate sustainable development within social dialogue mechanisms.
- UNEP should give consideration to acting as convenor at the regional level, providing briefings to Trade Union Executive Bodies at the country and/or regional levels.
- UNEP Regional Offices should be trained to understand the potential and engage with the structure of Trade Unions.
- Overall, UN agencies should better coordinate their involvement with labour.
- TUAC's capacity to act within OECD structures should also be strengthened.

Employer Organisations:

- Call for transparency in political lobbying and advocacy, especially republic services, including through consultancies.
- ILO should remain focal point for engaging employers, through social dialogue.

Trade Union membership:

- Mass education.
- Basic services delivery, i. e. water.
- Place sustainable development on the agenda of Trade Union executives, with a view to seeking leadership and membership support.

Trade Union training and education:

- Major Groups should be better coordinated, including increased UN funding, while maintaining their identity and autonomy.
- Encourage UNEP to speak with Trade Union executive at their meetings.
- Identify and utilize better analytical tools, research, etc.
- Link with academics to develop labour-related issues.
- National centres to take on more public services issues.
- Use eminent persons as convenors and advocates within the labour movement.
- Disseminate sustainable development materials and communications tools, including audiovisuals, Trade Union publications and websites, public media, etc.
- Labour should also increase its involvement with the WTO on issues affecting resources and services.