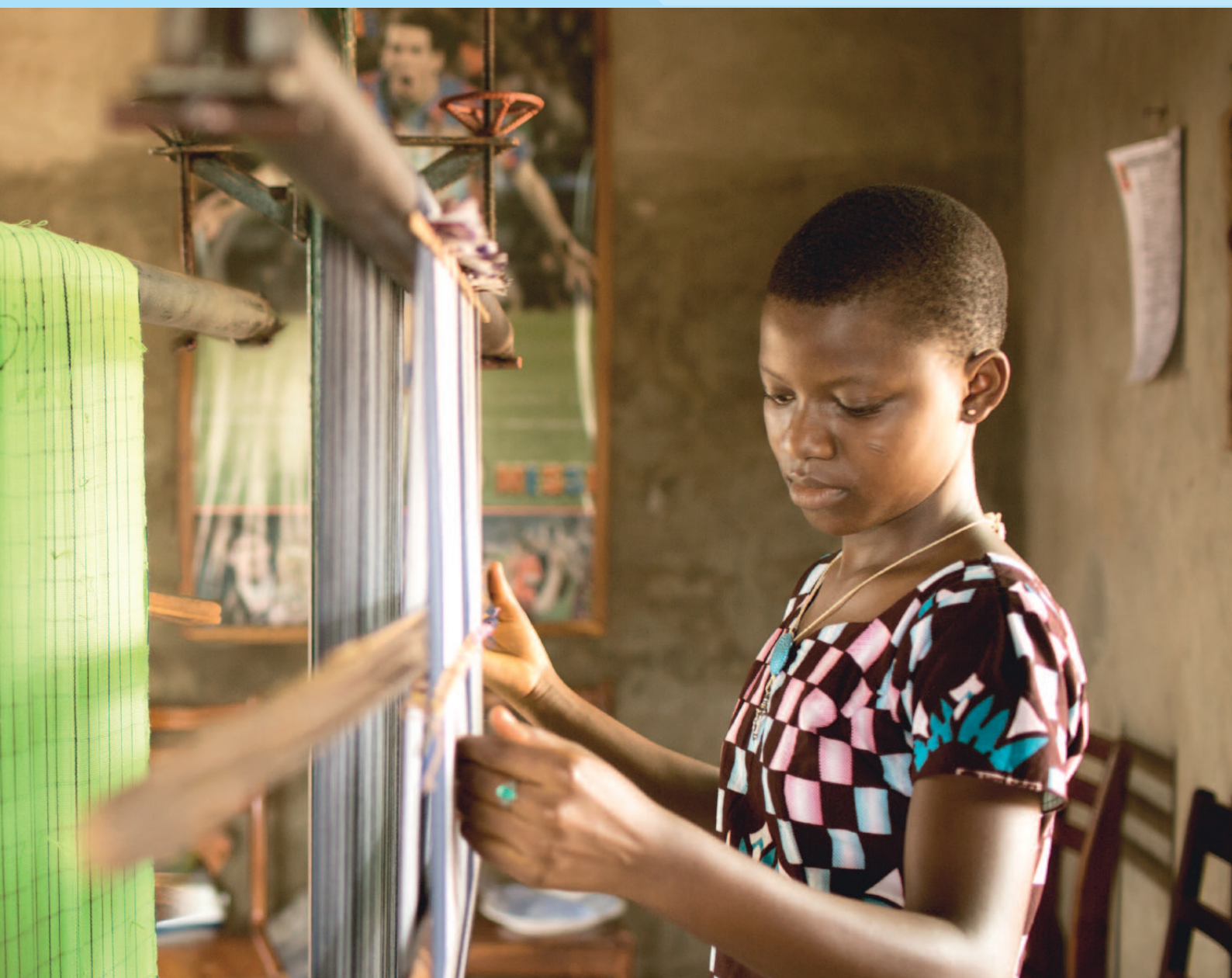


# PAVING THE WAY FOR FORMALISATION OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

*Experiences and Perspectives  
from ITUC-Africa and  
Trade Unions across Africa*



Ulandssekretariatet  
LO/FTF Council



## ABBREVIATIONS

ANAM	National Agency for Health Care, Benin
CIAWU	Malawi Commercial, Industrial & Allied Workers Union
CNTT	Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Togo (National trade union centre in Togo)
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
EATUC	East African Trade Union Confederation
FTF	Danish Confederation of Public and Private Employees
GEA	Ghana Employers' Association
IE	Informal Economy
ILO	International Labour Organisation (UN tripartite organisation)
ILC	The ILO's annual International Labour Conference held in June in Geneva, Switzerland
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
ITUC-Africa	International Trade Union Confederation in Africa
LO	Danish Confederation of Trade Unions
LO/FTF Council	The Danish trade unions' Council for International Development Cooperation
MCTU	Malawi Congress of Trade Unions
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals (by 2015)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASSIT	National Social Security and Insurance Trust, Sierra Leone
NOTU	National Organisation of Trade Unions, Uganda
RAMU	Régime d'Assurance Maladie Universelle (national health care scheme in Benin)
SATUCC	Southern African Trade Union Co-Ordination Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (by 2030)
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
TUC (Ghana)	Trades Union Congress, Ghana
UNIWA	Union of Informal Workers Associations, TUC, Ghana
UNSTB	Union Nationale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Bénin (National trade union centre, Benin)
USTN	Union des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Niger (National trade union centre, Niger)
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment - Globalizing and Organizing
ZCIEA	Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

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We are indebted to all the trade union representatives and other partners in Africa who have contributed to this publication. It is not possible to mention all the topics and experiences with the informal economy happening in Africa,

but the intention of the publication is to give an introduction to some relevant topics on the agenda, good experiences and lessons learnt and serve as inspiration for the forthcoming social dialogue to promote formalisation of the informal economy.

## PAVING THE WAY FOR FORMALISATION OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

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# FOREWORD



## ***Foreword by Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, General Secretary of ITUC-Africa***

ILO Recommendation 204 on transiting from the informal to the formal economy is a major step in recognizing the reality of the informal economy and the need for intervention in addressing the decent work deficit there as part of the effort to meet the development challenge of our times. Neoliberal globalization has been relentless in its assault on working women and men with the result that today there is more inequality, more vulnerability for workers, especially those in the informal economy, the majority of whom are women and youth and less social protection for the majority of workers. These contrast with the advances in technology, higher rates of productivity and the greater wealth that is created and monopolized by few.

R 204 represents an important global response that provides guidance to workers, governments and employers on addressing the issue of an expanded informal economy through transiting from informal to formal.

Addressing the challenges posed by a large informal economy is going to be critical for addressing some of the major social problems of our time – huge unemployment, particularly among the youth, and the extremely inadequate existing social protection, with approximately 10% coverage across Africa. The publication shows a range of initiatives taken by a number of unions, particularly in Africa, since the 1990s, in intervening in the informal economy. At

the heart of all these have been organizing informal economy workers, finding their voice, assuring their representation, accessing the requisite services for their sustainability, seeking their regulation for good governance, etc. These are important initiatives that have to be systematically developed and expanded, using R 204.

Organizing informal economy workers is one of the biggest challenges facing the trade union movement in Africa currently. It goes to the root of renewing the trade union movement through expanding membership coverage, increasing union density among all workers in order to make unions more representative; strengthening the collective voice of workers and their bargaining rights and ability to influence social and economic policies and measures in the interests of the people; and also achieving wider and better organization that allows trade unions to provide avenues for self assistance and mutual benefit societies among workers.

What has gone before which is presented in the following pages shows that we can do better if we make greater effort.

R 204 is a clear legitimization of what we have been doing right in the last three decades and should inspire African trade unions to greater achievement. Let us join hands in responding to this important global call to action.





***Foreword by Mads Bugge Madsen,  
Director of the LO/FTF Council***

They exist – but are not taken into account. They contribute significantly to the national economies. They often constitute 70 to 90% of the workforce. They do not have normal access to social security, health or education. The majority work and live at the mercy of the authorities, employers or even criminal gangs. Most often they are working long hours in underpaid, dangerous, and dirty jobs. Worldwide at least two and a half billion people are working in the informal economy.

First and foremost, they are vulnerable and any small improvement of their work, income and social situation contributes to lessen their uncertainty, open a way out of poverty, and start a virtuous circle for the benefit of both workers and society.

Providing people in the informal economy with a voice contributes to build democracy. It is a ticking time-bomb under any democratic society when millions of people are not being heard and being excluded from influencing their daily work and life.

When people from the informal economy are lifted into the formal, society is at the same time becoming richer. The tax base is consolidated and increased, thereby providing the basis for building a sustainable social protection floor.

With the ILO Recommendation 204 on the transition from informal to formal economy a major step

was taken to recognize and address the needs of people working in the informal economy. The Recommendation provides a framework – a skeleton – for the future work. It is now up to governments and the social partners to add flesh and blood to the bare bones.

The Recommendation ties in with the new SDGs and not least Goal no. 8: “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all”, and emphasizes the political recognition of Decent Work as key to reduce poverty.

The LO/FTF Council has for almost twenty years provided support to trade unions in their efforts to reach out, organise, and provide services to different groups of workers within the informal economy, and has over the last years focused even more on the process leading up to the adoption of the ILO Recommendation.

Now it is time to put the policy framework into practice: Strengthen the efforts to lobby governments to provide universal access to social protection. Strengthen the efforts to organise, represent, and protect the rights of all workers – including in the informal economy. Strengthen the efforts to promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy – allowing for an effective social dialogue and Decent Work for all.



# ILO adopts historic labour instrument to tackle the informal economy

BY JØRGEN ASSENS, HEAD OF THE AFRICA DEPARTMENT  
& EVA TABOR, CONSULTANT, THE LO/FTF COUNCIL

On Friday June 12 2015 the ILO Recommendation on transition from the informal to the formal economy was adopted by the ILC with 481 votes for and one against. It is the first ever ILO instrument to tackle the informal economy (IE) in which more than half of the world's working population, some 2.5 billion people, have to find a way to survive. It was indeed a historic moment.

The ITUC and the ITUC-Africa played a crucial role to put the IE and the need to secure decent work and social protection for all workers on the international agenda. For the last two years the ITUC has lobbied governments and employers and participated in a number of negotiations at the ILO to pave the way for the ILO discussions. The ITUC-Africa and its affiliates have lobbied governments, collected concrete experiences and been actively involved in the whole process. Furthermore, more and more national trade union centres in Africa have embarked on organising workers in the IE, thus giving them voice and representation, while at the same time securing a stronger voice in social dialogue.

## **CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR CONCRETE STEPS TO PROMOTE FORMALISATION**

Workers succeeded in getting most of their claims into the Recommendation which is based upon the ILO's

decent work agenda and on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The IE is very broadly defined so that it covers all kinds of informal workers and economic units in the IE as well as informal workers in the formal economy (private and public sectors), in sub-contracting and in supply chains. The scope has been one of the difficult issues to reach agreement on.

The Recommendation has three main purposes:

- To establish welfare among workers and secure decent working conditions
- To develop micro and small enterprises so they are more productive and can create decent jobs and thereby also reduce unfair competition
- To create more income for states through taxes so that they can secure development including social protection

It thus covers the interests of workers, employers and governments which was crucial in order to reach consensus.

The Recommendation stresses the need to design and implement laws and regulations, policies and other measures aiming to facilitate the transition to the formal economy. Member states need to ensure that an

integrated policy framework is set in place in tripartite social dialogue with trade unions and employers' organisations which i.a. addresses:

- Promotion of strategies for sustainable development, poverty eradication and inclusive growth, and the generation of decent jobs in the formal economy
- Promotion of a conducive business and investment environment
- Respect for and promotion and realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work
- Promotion of equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence at the workplace
- Promotion of entrepreneurship and access to business services
- Access to education, life-long learning and skills development
- Establishment of social protection floors and extension of social security coverage, including maternity leave and child-care facilities
- Effective occupational safety and health policies and efficient labour inspections
- Income security, including appropriately designed minimum wage policies

The Recommendation stresses that governments should promote the implementation of a comprehensive employment policy framework, based on tripartite consultations, which may include a number of elements i.a. such as pro-employment macroeconomic policies, trade, industrial, tax, sectoral and infrastructure policies that promote employment, education and skills development. A balanced approach combining incentives with compliance measures is needed.

#### **TRADE UNIONS MUST PUSH FOR A FOLLOW UP TO THE RECOMMENDATION**

The Recommendation is indeed a great step. But it is the follow up by governments in social dialogue with trade unions and employers' organisations which is crucial to secure that coherent and integrated strategies across a broad range of policy areas are developed and concrete action is taken. And it is up to trade unions to push governments and employers to establish a national forum where such policies can be developed. It could indeed mark the beginning of new well-functioning labour markets which secure decent work and sustainable development.



**GUY RYDER, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ILO, on the ILO website after the adoption of the Recommendation on transition from the informal to the formal economy on June 12 2015:**

"I think it's been a very important moment after two years of hard negotiations, the Conference has just adopted with near unanimity this Recommendation on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Look, this is something which affects a very large part of the world's working population, nearly half who is still working in informality. And over the years we've seen a growing consensus between governments, workers and employers that the right thing to do is to move these people into formal employment situations. We know it's not easy. We know that these are processes which are complicated. They have different components and I think the great value of this Recommendation and it's the first time, is that we now have an international framework of guidance for member states of how to bring this about. And it will also be a very, very important instrument for the ILO as we work to cooperate with our member states to help them to bring this about. Terrific result. A really important step forward and a lot of work ahead. It is not just the adoption of this Recommendation now.

It's actually putting it into practice that will matter. But a great morning, great day, important vote."



# Putting ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy into practice

BY KWASI ADU-AMANKWAH  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF ITUC-AFRICA

The preceding section has set out the main elements of ILO Recommendation 204 and the workers it covers in both the urban and rural sectors. For trade unions in Africa, the immense significance of this Recommendation derives from the large numbers of workers who survive or make a living in the informal economy, be it rural or urban. In accepting the scope of the term informal economy in the Recommendation to cover “all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law and practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements” ITUC-Africa acknowledges that the informal economy has witnessed massive expansion in the last four decades as a result of implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the overall predominance of neoliberal globalization in Africa. Thus, while the informal economy, particularly relating to peasant agriculture, local manufacturing, food processing for household consumption, retail trade and a whole range of provision of goods and services for average urban and rural households have always existed alongside formal capitalist production of goods and services in Africa, the expansion of the informal economy in the last four decades has resulted from labour market flexibilization that led to the informalization of previously formal employment and the introduction of new forms of employment that have placed a wider range of wage workers outside regulation and the application of labour standards and social protection.

In its Congress Resolution of 2011 on “Promoting Organization in the Informal Economy and a Solidarity-Based Economy for Better Development of Africa” ITUC-Africa underlined that over two-thirds of working women and men operate in the informal

economy under precarious conditions and without social protection. Congress reviewed Africa’s economic and social fortunes in recent times, acknowledging that significant economic growth had failed to reduce poverty among the people, with inequality rather worsening. In the assessment of ITUC-Africa, a social or solidarity-based economy which is open to a large section of society meets the needs of the underprivileged, providing them with jobs, incomes and minimum social protection.

For ITUC-Africa, the objectives of the Recommendation to provide guidance to Members to:

- Facilitate the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while respecting workers’ fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship.
- Promote the creation, preservation and sustainability of enterprises and decent jobs in the formal economy and the coherence of macroeconomic, employment, social protection and other social policies.
- Prevent informalization of formal economy jobs.

This conforms in large measure to our own strategic objective of contributing to the self-organization of informal economy workers as one of the essential means of building workers’ power in Africa and in promoting the social economy as an integral part of a development process in Africa that inures to the benefit of Africa’s working people.

Moving forward with Recommendation 204 requires renewed commitment to organising workers in the



informal economy as part of the organizing drive for Africa's trade unions with a clear view to building the collective strength of these groups of workers and enhancing their representativeness and their access to labour rights and social protection in conformity with the demands of decent work. This means encouraging all affiliates to pay attention to organizing informal workers into the ranks of the union, paying attention to their particular characteristics and needs and the special effort that is required to ensure that their organisation assures their collective ability to negotiate for rights at work and appropriate regulation as well as advocate for policies that guarantee their successful transition to the formal economy and its benefits.

While ITUC-Africa will seek the collaboration of the ILO and Solidarity Support Organizations in its work with affiliates towards intensifying organizing in the informal economy, it will at the same time pursue the necessary representation within the relevant African Union structures and work with sub-regional trade union structures in addressing Regional Economic Communities with a view to advocating for initiatives that encourage African states and employers' organizations to adopt policies and measures that contribute positively to the transition from the informal to the formal economy.



**Kwasi Adu-Amankwah** with Mogens Jensen, then Danish Minister of Trade and Development at the Conference on the Informal Economy in Copenhagen, Denmark, April 24 2015

#### **DEFINITION OF SOCIAL ECONOMY**

***adopted at the ILO regional conference "The Social Economy: Africa's responses to the global crisis", Johannesburg, October 2009:***

A concept designating enterprises and organisations, in particular cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which have the specific feature of producing goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity.





# Perspectives and priorities for social dialogue with employers and the government in Ghana

BY KOFI ASAMOAH  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF TUC,  
TRADES UNION CONGRESS, GHANA

The importance of the informal economy (IE) to the development in Ghana cannot be overemphasized. It contributes significantly to Ghana's GDP and about 88% of the country's workforce is employed in the IE. Its importance notwithstanding, IE workers face significant decent work deficits. Lack of representation and inadequacies in social dialogue processes in the IE, partly explain the decent work deficits in the IE.

## FORMALIZING THE INFORMAL ECONOMY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Ghana has fairly developed and functional social dialogue processes including the National Tripartite Committee (NTC) and bipartite engagements among the various social partners, particularly in the formal sector. But while a number of IE associations and combines exists, there is a dearth of social dialogue for IE workers in Ghana. In response to this, the TUC

(Ghana) in April 2015, formed the Union of Informal Workers Associations (UNIWA) from its existing IE associate members to among others, address the lack of representation and voice faced by informal workers for improved working and living conditions. TUC (Ghana) and UNIWA therefore offer opportunity for the voices of IE workers to be heard and their aspirations factored in the discourse on formalizing of the IE.



**Kofi Asamoah, General Secretary of TUC (Ghana)**

Kofi Asamoah was a member of the Bureau in the Workers' Group in the ILO Committee on the IE.



## POLICY AND INITIATIVES IN GHANA

At the national level, the National Informal Economy Committee was formed about two years ago with the broad objective of promoting decent work among IE workers. Positively, this committee was tripartite in composition. But it has unfortunately not made significant progress towards promoting decent work among IE workers. In April 2015, the Government of Ghana launched the National Employment Policy and organized a national jobs summit with the active participation of social partners in Ghana. Among other provisions for IE workers, the National Employment Policy mentions that “the informal sector is challenged in the areas of access to credit, high level of financial risk, income insecurity, unsafe working conditions, incidence of child labour, and lack of unionisation. These challenges need to be addressed to enable the informal sector realise its full potential”.

Apart from the national efforts, the TUC (Ghana) and the Ghana Employers’ Association (GEA) through a Business Sector Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC) Fund support are involved in a bipartite project focused on formalizing the IE. The project seeks to promote shared understanding between the social partners in Ghana on the transition from informal to formal.

In the last few years, the TUC (Ghana) has been active in organizing and educating IE workers and had contributed significantly to both the national and international dialogue on formalizing the IE. The TUC (Ghana) has completed a research on formalizing the IE which focused on exploring trade union perspectives on the transition from informal to formal economy.

Since the 1990s, the TUC (Ghana) and its affiliates developed policies on IE. One of the key policy objectives of the TUC (Ghana) for the 2012-2016 quadrennial is to increase its membership in the IE. The expectation is that by extending union coverage in the IE, the TUC would “promote a more rigorous application of minimum labour standards in the IE”.

## PRIORITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

The priority of the TUC (Ghana) on the transition from informal to formal is to engage with government to ensure that economic and development policies generate more decent formal sector jobs in order to halt the rapid informalization of employment. In addition, the TUC (Ghana) seeks to advocate for the strengthening of state capacity to ensure that the bureaucratic barriers that businesses face when operating in the formal economy are removed. Also, the TUC (Ghana) expects that government, through the Labour Department and other related agencies, seeks to enforce labour laws to protect and promote the rights of workers. But the Labour Department and other related agencies must also be adequately resourced with the requisite human and logistics support to carry out its mandate effectively.

In addition to the above, TUC (Ghana) seeks to encourage trade unions to continue to organise workers in the IE and broaden the scope of such organisation. Organising is an important step on the road to formality. The model of organising already established groups and associations has served the unions well. But trade unions need to create spaces for IE workers in union structures. It is also important that unions encourage IE workers to come together in cooperatives.

## IMPLICATION OF THE TRANSITION FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL

We underscore the importance of the transition from informal to formal economy to the development of Ghana. For most IE operators, it would be the first necessary step towards decent work. For state authorities, it would aid regulation. But all these would be mirage if social partners do not come to a shared understanding on the transition from informal to formal. It would also require that all social partners, including IE workers and their associations are actively involved in the processes towards formalizing the IE.



# Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) perspective on formalising the informal economy

BY ALEX FRIMPONG  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF GEA

Globally, majority of workers depend on the informal economy (IE) as a means of living and in some countries as many as nine (9) out of ten (10) workers are in the IE. Ghana's IE plays a critical role in the production and distribution of goods and services. It contributes significantly to the country's GDP and employs about 86% of the workforce in Ghana.

## GHANA'S INFORMAL ECONOMY

Ghana's IE is characterized by significant decent work deficits. Employment and income insecurity is not uncommon in the IE and lack of representation and voice as well as inadequate social protection are also common features of the Ghanaian IE. It has been argued that the nature and functioning of the IE compromise the decent work situation of workers and operators in that segment of the economy. Consequently, it has been identified that an important step towards addressing the significant decent work deficits in the IE is formalizing the IE.

In Ghana, the tripartite constituents have begun discussing formalizing the IE. Even though the tripartite constituents accept the need to formalize the IE, what constitutes formalizing the IE remains undefined.

## WHY FORMALIZATION?

While formalization by itself does not promote enterprise growth in the short term, bringing more enterprises into the formal economy over the long term would provide higher quality and more sustainable jobs, reinforce the social contract between citizens and their state, strengthen the reliability of agreements between firms, build investor confidence and increase investment, broaden the tax base, reduce the

cash economy and provide more resources for intermediation by the formal financial sector, and improve access to business services, formal markets and productive resources such as capital and land.

Formality contributes to:

- Better jobs
- Broader tax base which may allow lower rates
- Better information to promote deal-making
- Increased investment
- Stronger social contract/rule of law

## GEA INITIATIVES

The Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) plays a leading and pioneering role in organizing IE operators. It has, especially, assisted small and informal businesses and helped broker agreements between them and local government authorities on issues that affect the smooth running of their businesses, such as tax levels, business registration and obtaining of certificates and permits.

Currently, GEA and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) of Ghana are collaborating on a project which seeks to advocate for the formalization of the IE through the establishment of a pilot scheme and the development of a common position paper on the transition to formal economies through stakeholder consultations. The overall goal of the project is to develop a roadmap for the transitioning of the IE to formal economy in Ghana. It seeks to address the informal sector issues from two building blocks, namely, information and capacity building and targets enterprises involved in production and services and with the greatest potential for increasing revenues. The project is about helping existing IE enterprises to endeavour to formalise their





structures and operations, to employ more people, add value to their products and contribute to expanding economic growth while upholding the fundamental principles and rights at work. Drawing best practice experiences and a pathway to formality from the new Recommendation, it is the expectation of the GEA that there shall be massive improvements in the environment for doing business for young entrepreneurs and small business enterprises to thrive and grow.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATION**

The adoption of the Recommendation on Transition from the informal to the formal economy is a crucial step in assisting GEA to deepen and strengthen its advocacy role and engagement with IE units and operators to assist them transition to the formal economy. The Recommendation will further enable the social partners deepen their dialogue with the government to design and adopt the necessary legal and policy framework which will provide concrete steps towards a smooth transition from informal to formal economy in Ghana.



**Alex Frimpong, Chief Executive Officer of Ghana Employers' Association**

Alex Frimpong was the Spokesperson of the Employers' Group in the ILO Committee on the IE.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The IE is a very significant segment of the Ghanaian economy and also a key engine of growth and therefore efforts at formalization should not destroy the vitality and entrepreneurial acumen of its wide variety of actors. Formalization will require removing barriers to informality and developing relevant incentives for formalization. It must also be acknowledged that the transition is a process and not an event. It therefore behoves on the social partners to fashion out a transition architecture that takes into account Ghana's circumstances, experiences, economic history, entrepreneurial culture and above all the national developmental aspirations.





## Organising the informal economy in Africa – how far are we?

EDITED BY JØRGEN ASSENS & EVA TABOR  
THE LO/FTF COUNCIL

More and more trade unions in Africa organise within the informal economy (IE) and are increasingly present and visible in their communities in order to give these workers and economic units the voice and representation needed to promote their interests and defend their rights, but also for them to contribute meaningfully to socio-economic and political development. This has also led to greater participation as a social movement in community development to improve the standard of living for workers and their families. At the same time, it serves the purpose to develop a strong labour movement and a stronger voice in society at large by increasing union membership. Here, the only viable option seems to increase organising within the IE. The fact that women constitute a significant number further provides the impetus for the strengthening of their position in the labour movement, thus ensuring gender parity.

It is, however, not easy to organise the IE. People are scattered, they often change workplace or location, there is a high illiteracy rate and most of them

have little idea of trade unions. The informal nature of employment also makes it more difficult to recruit workers than in a formal workplace. Some of the IE workers have come together in associations, but they are most often organizationally fragile and are rarely having a democratic culture and tradition. Organising in the IE thus requires a political commitment from the unions and new strategies on how to reach these workers.

There are many different ways of organising the IE as is shown in the next Chapter. But what seems clear is that trade unions have been most successful when they have been able to offer the IE workers or economic units relevant services, lobby for their demands or solve some of the problems that they encounter.

### ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU WILL FIND EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE STEPS WHICH HAVE BEEN OR COULD BE USED TO ORGANISE THE IE:

- Identify the groups of IE workers/economic units (own-account workers) that you want to approach. Get concrete knowledge of their situation, problems and needs. Use contact persons in the local areas to approach them and gather information.
- Clarify within the union or national centre which services you will be able to provide members from the IE. Capacity to lobby? Capacity to negotiate with local and national authorities? Conflict resolution? Awareness-raising? Training and skills development? Legal services, business advisory services, organisational development, etc.?
- Be clear on how the IE workers and operators should be affiliated or associated. How is the constitution catering for these new groups of members? What about the union dues - and not the least the dues collection structure?
- Carry out awareness-raising and sensitization campaigns as part of the strategy to organise the IE workers. Inform the IE workers and operators about the unions, what you can do for them, and how to get affiliated.
- Help them get organised in an association or union and train them in the development of democratic, membership-based organisations, workers' rights, decent work and rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.
- Help building a robust dues collection system.
- Build capacity to lobby and negotiate with local authorities, market authorities, police, etc. Carry out training at local level at low costs. Consider, if necessary, to charge a small participants' fee.
- Gather good case stories to keep raising awareness, to attract new members and encourage them to develop and be innovative.
- Carry out low cost study circles on basic accounting for the own-account workers. For most IE operators it is crucial to be able to make accounts in order to improve their businesses.
- Promote the creation of social and solidarity-based economy (community owned workshops and facilities, production networks, cooperatives, etc.) where people come together, assist each other to be more productive, increase earnings, and create jobs while securing decent working conditions for all – including the apprentices.
- For the IE workers who do have a working relationship like domestic workers, assist them in getting decent working conditions, a decent salary, days off and vacation as well as a formal contract of employment.
- Carry out advocacy and enter into social dialogue with employers' organisations and local and national authorities to secure better conditions for the IE including access to social protection, coverage by the Labour Law, better working environment, training opportunities, equality, etc. Assist the IE members in solving conflicts. Lobby to avoid harassment from state authorities and for the development of state policies that create a conducive working environment for operators in the IE.
- Lobby for a national tripartite commission on the IE where concrete strategies and policies to promote a transition from the informal to the formal economy could be developed. Get into dialogue with employers to get a common platform or a MoU before tripartite social dialogue. The ILO Recommendation 204 is a good basis for discussions and concrete steps. Involve your IE unions and know their needs and priorities. Use local experts to develop the capacity of unions on issues which the unions are not used to deal with like taxation, registration, etc.

### RELEVANT MATERIALS

- SLLC training manual for trade unions: Building the capacity of the informal economy workers
- SLLC Informal Economy Training Toolbox, 2014
- SLLC Roadmap for organising the informal economy
- TUC (Ghana) Manual on organising the informal economy
- NOTU, Uganda: "NOTU Informal Sector Collaboration Strategy" and "Series of six resource books for organisers on organising in the informal economy"
- UNSTB Manual on basic accounting for informal economy workers





### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organise the IE in unions - along sectors
- Build capacity of the IE unions/associations so that they become democratic, transparent and membership-based organisations with a trade union culture and members knowing their rights and responsibilities
- Secure empowerment of women and access for women to leadership positions and leading structures
- Secure that IE pay membership fees to the union and the national centre
- Integrate the IE unions/associations into the national trade union centres and secure that they have representation in leading structures
- Build union structures to deal with the IE and revise the constitutions to incorporate IE unions/associations – maybe as an umbrella organisation covering all IE unions/associations
- Develop relevant services for IE members to meet their needs and demands. Cooperation with external experts on entrepreneurial development (or with employers). Lobbying for such public services for the IE. IE members must be willing to pay for such services.
- Lobby for social protection for IE workers and economic units
- Lobby for short-term adult vocational training courses for the IE
- Lobby for better access to micro-credits at more favorable terms
- Lobby for the establishment of a national tripartite forum to discuss the IE and promote its formalisation through a number of concrete policies and programmes - to follow up on the ILO Recommendation



## **The example of Zimbabwe**

BY ELIJAH MUTEMERI  
NATIONAL COORDINATOR, ZCTU

The idea of organising workers in the IE was muted in the 90s after research was done by ZCTU, Employers and the Government of Zimbabwe. In 2002 the real organising of the IE kicked off. All the formal economy sectors are represented by the same sector in the IE. The traditional way of organising in the union perspective is by sector. However, the organising in the IE was done geographically. It became tough to organise along the traditional way because workers in the IE were still mixed up employers and employees and also own-account workers and family businesses. The country was divided into Territories where shop stewards were present. All the IE structures are linked to ZCTU regional offices in the area.

The IE association ZCIEA, Zimbabwe Chamber of IE Associations was formed in 2002 and went into a MoU with ZCTU. It was thus not affiliated to ZCTU at the time. ZCIEA has however just in August 2015 decided to affiliate to ZCTU. In 2002, ZCIEA had some 1.2 million members. Today the declared membership when affiliating to ZCTU is a little above 30,000. ZCTU and ZCIEA have been working closely together in all activities. Since ZCIEA is geographically organised, it did not organise per sector. However, in the area zones there are sector representatives. Both IE workers who have an employer/employee relationship, own-account workers, economic units and cooperatives were organised. Members have to buy a card.

The fee is both for subscription and joining. Given the toughness of the economy now, fewer people are able to pay the fee. With the fees that are being paid, ZCIEA and ZCTU have been able to run some training including for organisers and paralegals. Focus has also been on introducing housing cooperatives and encourage members to save towards their house. ZCTU and ZCIEA then negotiated on their behalf to get the land to develop their house in different cities and a number of councils offered land to the IE members, ZCIEA and ZCTU being the guarantors. Realizing that some people have got land to build or develop their houses, it became easy for others to join. A Social Protection Floor Framework for IE workers has also been developed and has been a driving factor in organising.

It is hoped that tripartite social dialogue can be initiated to promote the transition to the formal economy as a follow up to the ILO Recommendation 204.



**Elijah Mutemeri**  
National Coordinator, ZCTU



### *The example of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, the SLLC*

BY MAX CONTEH  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SLLC

The SLLC has been organising workers in the IE to promote their welfare, to enjoy decent work environment and enhance their rights to have the “voice” needed to protect their interests. To capture the lost members in the formal sector; to add to the numerical strength of the SLLC; and to widen the scope of trade union support needed for creating the desired impact of collective action are all among the plethora of reasons for organizing workers in the IE. The IE organisations play a crucial role to raise the profile of the SLLC. The contribution of an organised IE to the socio-economic sphere cannot be overemphasized.

The SLLC has registered 10 trade unions for workers in the IE with a declared number of 279,856 members (out of over 2 million people in the IE). The IE trade unions operate in various sectors such as trading/commercial, transport, agriculture, fishing, services, entertainment, etc. The IE trade unions have established structures at township, district, regional and national levels in an attempt to service their members.

#### **STRATEGIES IN ORGANIZING WORKERS IN THE IE**

- **Recruitment campaigns:** The SLLC has reached out to workers in the IE since the mid 1990s. As a way of ensuring full recognition and formalising the operations of organisations in the IE, the SLLC assisted in the registration of organisations with full trade union rights.
- **Social protection:** The SLLC has agreed in principle with the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) for the review of the Act for the extension of social security and insurance coverage to workers in the IE.

- **Access to credit:** IE operators borrow money from many sources to start or sustain their businesses. Since commercial banks usually seek collateral before approving loans, few operators are successfully granted such loans. Interest rates charged by banks on loans offered are exorbitant. As a result of the registration of unions in the IE, Government as well as banks now give out low interest rates loans to workers in the IE through their organisations.
- **Representation, lobbying and social dialogue:** The SLLC has been representing and advocating for the improvement of the work place environment, issues bordering on the welfare of IE workers, tackling the indecencies of harassment from state authorities and the development of state policies that create a conducive working environment. This particular strategy has enhanced the faith of IE to belong to the SLLC. On several occasions the SLLC has intervened to protect the interests of the IE workers. For example, the City Council of the Freetown Municipality had to abort the increase of tax on traders. Recently, government wanted to halt the operations of bike riders but with the intervention of the SLLC and IE TUs and dialogue with government, a national bike riders Code of Conduct specifying the various streets and areas of operations was developed.
- **Education/Training & Capacity Building:** Awareness raising campaigns have formed part of the strategy to organise workers in the IE. With support from international partners, the SLLC is engaged in sensitisation programmes; skills development; human rights, democracy and leadership training programmes to increase capacity of IE workers.
- **Financial Contribution to the SLLC:** The SLLC has adopted a policy/regulation that eases the burden of meeting financial obligation to the SLLC by charging organisations in the IE minimal service fees as opposed to per member fee charged to unions operating in the formal sector. This strategy helped the SLLC to capture workers from the IE.



**PROSPECT FOR INFORMAL  
ECONOMY FORMALIZATION**

In Sierra Leone, there is high optimism for the implementation of the ILO Recommendation on the IE as state authority is fast coming into terms with the work and relevance of workers in the IE and there is increased social dialogue on the issue with government and other stakeholders. The right to organise and belong to a union is entrenched and guaranteed by Section 26 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone. The legal framework for the operations of unions in the IE has been created by government.



**Max Conteh**  
Director of Education,  
SLLC





### **Organising the informal economy in other African countries**

#### **NOTU, UGANDA**

In the year 2012, the constitution of the national trade union centre NOTU was amended to allow for direct or indirect affiliation of IE associations. This happened after a study was conducted on how to review services for the IE. From the study, NOTU discovered that the IE already organized and they came up with the recommendation to introduce the IE to the relevant authorities. NOTU has identified the different groups (associations) of workers from the IE and has developed an Informal Sector Collaboration Strategy. A template Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and copies distributed to the different associations. In 2014 and 2015, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (ATGWU) (affiliated to NOTU) has signed MoUs with 12 IE associations mainly from the transport sector (taxi bike riders, boda boda and taxi drivers, etc.). The total membership from the IE is now more than 70,000 following the recent organizing of 38,000 Kampala Metropolitan Boda Boda Drivers. By joining the union, the associations transform themselves into unions. NOTU has developed a strategic leadership training

program for the IE associations as well as training on organizing and promotion of informal workers. A series of six resource books on organizing in the IE has been developed for the organisers. In addition, NOTU is running trainings of IE workers on financial management, HIV/AIDS, women programs as well as low key skills development courses e.g. on bee-keeping, ploughing, mushrooming, etc. NOTU is facing a challenge in organising the street vendors because most of them have no specific areas for doing their activities. NOTU is now moving into the plantation sector in an attempt to (directly) organize and sign MoUs with the out-growers associations operating in the sugar, tea and coffee plantation sector. Later on, NOTU considers to move into the construction sector. Plantation and construction sectors hold a huge potential membership. NOTU is expecting the number of affiliated IE groups/associations to reach 25 before the end of 2015. NOTU is conducting research in formalization of the IE and advocating for inclusion of IE workers in social security and health insurance schemes.

#### **UNIWA, TUC (GHANA)**

TUC started organising workers in the IE in 1996. The TUC Constitution was changed in 1996 to rope in IE workers also in the national unions of TUC. New strategies to organise these workers were developed. IE desk officers were established in TUC and in the unions in 2000. The first association of IE workers was launched in 2003, the Makola Traders' Union. Since then TUC has carried out awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building programmes to develop the IE unions, vocational training and lobbying for their rights. In March 2015, UNIWA, Union of Informal Workers' Associations was launched as an umbrella organisation within TUC with 13 IE associations/unions for traders, caterers, porters, musicians, actors and physically disabled. Six more associations have asked for affiliation. UNIWA is a national entity which will have representation in all regions. For this, TUC and UNIWA have undertaken a number of activities

to recruit and mobilize operators in the IE. The main aim is to organise the members in the regions with the view to set up local branches. The representatives of UNIWA's Executive and some members have been trained in developing business and cooperative networks. UNIWA together with TUC have embarked on a tour in the regions in order to recruit members, sensitize the IE workers about the benefits of Social Security and social protection schemes for the IE available to them. The objective is to have 100,000 IE members by 2019. At present UNIWA is recognized as an affiliate of TUC, while the 18 National Unions are recognized as members per the TUC 2012 Constitution. There is hope that UNIWA will become the 19th affiliated union of TUC in a near future. Main focus areas for UNIWA are organising the IE, social protection for IE workers, occupational health and safety, securing reasonable incomes for the IE and child labour.



### **FENASEI, CNTT, TOGO**

The national centre CNTT in Togo has been organising members in the IE the last decade. Indeed, IE operators have been organized in various branch unions such as Hairdressers' Union, Dressmakers' Union, Transport Workers' Union, traders' union, etc. Many activities carried out these last years with support from the LO/FTF Council, have boosted the interest in CNTT, which now gets more requests for affiliations. Thus, the IE membership has increased from 20,000 in 2008 to almost 60,000 in 2015.

In order to benefit from their rights to membership of the social security system and in order to maximize their influence on government, the IE unions affiliated to CNTT have decided to unite in a Federation and take joint action to ensure decent working and living conditions for their 55,000 members. In November 2014, FENASEI, the National Federation of Trade Unions of the IE was launched as a National IE Platform with some 50 IE unions affiliated to the CNTT. They have established 5 committees on education & training, gender, organizing, support for funding proposals for vocational training and support to review micro credit financial requests. The CNTT in partnership with the National Vocational Training Institution (FNAFPP) has trained members of the vocational train-

ing committee on technical skills so they are able to support the IE unions' applications for funds.

One objective is to register members in the national social security system and ensure that they obtain the benefits due to them. For achieving this goal, a list of members ready to join the CNSS has been made. The CNTT and FENASEI have produced campaign materials in cooperation with technicians from the CNSS. They are lobbying for a special section for IE workers and the implementation of the Social Security Code adopted in 2011 which opened up for coverage of IE workers. Another objective is to maximize IE unions' influence on government and secure decent working and living conditions. In order to achieve this objective, the Federation has undertaken sensitization of IE workers about their working conditions and their rights including access to social security and vocational training in the regions. This sensitization tour will allow them to be visible and to recruit more members. The aim is to become a nationwide platform of choice for IE affiliates and their members.

There is hope that through social dialogue, a formal structure for the implementation of Recommendation 204 will be set up and that it will take into account the characteristics of IE workers in Togo.

### **CIAWU, MALAWI**

CIAWU, Commercial, Industrial and Allied Workers Union affiliated to MCTU in Malawi has started organising domestic workers this year and used May Day 2015 to put focus on their rights. The campaign is followed up by radio spots and meetings for members where they are informed of their rights and the advantages of being members of a union. Although it is very difficult to organise domestic workers, who work individually and in private homes where the union has no access, CIAWU has been able to organise a number of domestic workers and now has a total membership of

2,500. CIAWU has succeeded in getting employers to make an employment contract for their domestic workers. It seems that they do not want any problems with the union. Since it is not possible to use the checkoff system to collect membership fees from domestic workers, CIAWU is using membership cards to register them. The domestic worker pays the fee to the organiser who registers it on the membership card. The fees are gathered at the trade union office which secures that the money is deposited in the bank every week.

### **EXAMPLES OF NETWORKS/COOPERATIVES**

With support from the LO/FTF Council, the Danish Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Danish Union of Education, partners in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger and Benin have taken up the idea of developing social and solidarity-based economy by training their IE members and creating networks and cooperatives. The following results have been achieved:

- **Culinary Heritage (CH), TUC, Ghana**

CH was launched in November 2014 after comprehensive training of 45 IE caterers and chefs. The aim is to focus on good, healthy and nutritious traditional Ghanaian food produced in a hygienic way and to support the members of CH to improve their businesses, have higher earnings and secure decent working conditions for their staff.

- **Cooperative, UNSTB, Benin**

A cooperative with 76 tailors and 122 hairdressers was launched in April 2014. The cooperative comprises a purchase center and shop at the UNSTB headquarters, a Designers' House for tailors and a canteen/catering service. The network of tailors has 8 sub-networks in local areas.

- **Hairdressers' cooperative, USTN, Niger**

A cooperative for the production of hair products with 80 hairdressers was launched in June 2014. The hairdressers have a production workshop and shop at the headquarters of the USTN. They now cover 60% of supply to hairdressers.

- **Network of caterers, SLLC, Sierra Leone**

The SLLC managed to train 30 caterers and to establish a network among them. The SLLC now has a model kitchen and training facilities which can secure continued training.





### **COSATU, SOUTH AFRICA**

In COSATU, affiliates organise informal workers linked to their sector into their rank. Almost all affiliates have informal workers, but there are no exact figures, since they are not separated from formal workers. Thus, the various unions have organised home-based workers, caregivers, taxi-drivers, cleaners and security guards, plantation workers, farm workers and construction workers. Domestic workers are organised in a union which is not yet affiliated to COSATU, but

COSATU assists them with organising and resources. In 2013, COSATU set up a Vulnerable Workers Task Team which is attended by all affiliates organising vulnerable workers such as street traders, waste pickers and migrant workers. COSATU's National Organising Department and Provincial Offices are assisting street vendors to organise themselves into associations and help them in negotiations with municipalities for trading space.

### **FERWACOTAMO, RWANDA**

In Rwanda, taxi bike riders organised in a union founded in 1987. It was tentatively approved by the Ministry of local government in 2002. In 2010 it changed its status to become the Rwandan Federation of Motorcycles Taxi Drivers, FERWACOTAMO. The aim is to promote and professionalize the business of taxi bike riders and protect the interests of cooperative members. The organisation provides technical assistance regarding the creation of cooperatives, has set up a guarantee fund for members to access funds in various banks, and advocates and participates in the

development of policies governing the business of taxi bike riders. The federation comprises 8 unions in the 4 provinces and in Kigali, primary cooperatives and parkings. The unions are composed of 80 elementary cooperatives from 30 districts with more than 12,000 members. Every parking has 100 bike riders and a team leader. The bike riders make a daily contribution to the federation which is divided into 10% for the federation, 20% for the union, 30% for the cooperatives and 30% for the parkings.







**MOGENS LYKKETOFT,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE UN  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** *In an  
article in the Danish internet  
media A4, February 25 2015:*  
"Global inequality must be  
fought and climate problems  
controlled. If the international  
community does not achieve  
this, we will push the globe

into extreme conflicts. The  
trade union movement is a  
crucial player in the fight for  
more equality. Sustainable  
growth is indeed about  
securing decent jobs and  
working conditions. It is about  
insisting that states must  
deliver basic services so that  
children can attend school and  
that there is access to health  
care for everybody.

Today trade unions are  
forbidden in many countries,  
while they in other countries  
are persecuted and very  
weak. The fact that states

and enterprises do not  
allow workers to organise  
and try to undermine them,  
has contributed to increase  
inequality and create conflicts  
around the world. There is  
every reason to support joint,  
international trade union  
action and help local trade  
unions in the poorest countries  
to become strong. I clearly see  
organising in trade unions as  
one of the pillars to securing  
a more just distribution of  
wealth at national level and,  
thus, also better jobs, more  
safety and fewer conflicts."



# The Integration of the Informal Economy in Trade Unions

## *Various models across Africa*

BY JØRGEN ASSENS  
HEAD OF THE AFRICA DEPARTMENT,  
THE LO/FTF COUNCIL

There are many different approaches and models for organising the IE across Africa and it is difficult to assess which are the right ones. In some cases federations have organised informal workers within their branch as is the case in South Africa, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Ghana. In other cases national trade union centers have accepted the affiliation or association of informal economy unions or associations as for example in Niger, Togo, Benin, Sierra Leone, Ghana (where both models exist) and recently also in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In other places there is a large national association of IE workers which is cooperating with the trade unions.

It is crucial for the unions to secure that the new IE affiliated organisations get capacity building and knowledge of the basic principles and democratic structures of unions. Especially with a view to the potential huge numbers of members from the IE in the coming years and the political influence they will get in the unions.

Another issue is whom to organise within the IE. Employees and apprentices which would be the natural target group for trade unions, but who are vulnerable and difficult to reach? Own-account workers and small entrepreneurs who make out a large bulk of the IE, but could be categorized as employers if they have employees and apprentices? There are examples of organising all the various groups. In some countries trade unions only organise workers with an employment relationship, but in most countries all the various groups are targeted.

The question is whether trade unions have the capacity and knowledge to service own-account workers or economic units since it requires comprehensive knowledge of entrepreneurial issues and legislation

which is not the natural sphere of work of unions. Some unions are trying to develop this capacity and have found a number of local experts who are willing to assist them. In the long run, there might however be a trend towards small entrepreneurs, once they develop, moving to employers' organisations, while the unions organise their staff to secure decent working conditions. In this connection we have to acknowledge that some employers' organisations like GEA in Ghana already have IE SMEs among their members.

Organising the IE poses financial challenges, due to the comprehensive nature of the IE. Since most of the workers and operators in the IE do not have a regular income and most often a very low income, it is difficult to collect membership fees. It is thus difficult to cover the costs of organising and it will be formal sector unions bearing these charges which often poses political problems. Nonetheless, some systems should be developed to secure that the IE members also contribute to the trade unions if they want to be part of the trade union family and get their protection and services. The SLLC in Sierra Leone adopted a policy at their last Congress that eases the burden of meeting financial obligation to the SLLC by charging IE organisations minimal service fees as opposed to per member fee charged to unions operating in the formal sectors.

NGOs like StreetNet and WIEGO have assisted IE workers and lobbied for their rights. It is important to establish alliances with them. But it is just as important to maintain that it is trade unions who are the social partners who must play a crucial role in tripartite social dialogue.





# Social protection for informal economy workers in Africa

*Status and trade union actions/perspectives  
for structural change and inclusive development*

BY GHISLAINE SAIZONOU-BROOCHM  
COORDINATOR FOR GENDER, SOCIAL PROTECTION  
& THE INFORMAL ECONOMY, ITUC-AFRICA

At the ITUC-Africa Congress in 2011, African trade union leaders confirmed that it is possible to achieve decent work with guaranteed social protection for all and that the African trade union movement has a role to play by organising, training and defending workers in the informal economy (IE). They committed themselves to promote the Conclusions regarding decent work and the IE adopted by the ILO in 2002. The ITUC-Africa and its affiliates with the contribution of partners have worked on an organisational, institutional and constitutional level so that legislation could be adopted to regulate the working and living conditions of these workers. Today more than 40 affiliates in 17 countries in Africa have benefited from support from the ITUC-Africa to engage themselves in the promotion and protection of the rights of these workers. They now all have a platform, networks and leaders who will follow up on the necessary actions and steps. Along with the ILO, the ITUC-Africa has worked together with the other constituents for the elaboration and adoption of Recommendation 204 in June 2015. Endeavors for formalisation will allow a bigger number of people to benefit from social protection.



**Ghislaine Saizonou-Broochm**  
at the Conference on  
the Informal Economy in  
Copenhagen, April 2015

If the Conclusions of the ILC Sessions 101 and 104 have permitted us to have Recommendation 202 on the Social Protection Floor, Recommendation 204 on transition from the informal to the formal economy and a Resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on social protection, we can today reiterate the responsibilities of each constituent in order to be able to offer a minimum of social protection in the four areas of protection of workers, namely *Wage policies, Working hours, Occupational Security and Health, and Maternity Protection* without forgetting the dimension of gender equality.

## THE AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS MUST COMMIT THEMSELVES AT THE FORTHCOMING ITUC-AFRICA CONGRESS AND CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO:

Continue to improve the capacity of intervention of trade union leaders in the area of social protection so that they are able to get their governments to ratify the Convention on social protection, secure national follow up on Recommendations 202 and 204 and self-sustaining financing of the social protection policies. The African states must live up to their commitment of extending social coverage to all. The benefits must be non-discriminatory, adequate, inclusive and guaranteed. The financial sustainability of the social

protection schemes must be secured. Trade unions and employers' organisations must be involved in the design and management of these schemes. Trade unions must be present in the various platforms of proposals on social protection and social dialogue. Social dialogue and tripartite participation based on equality of conditions must constitute the necessary instruments for the elaboration of a model based on consensus which is efficient and fair, thus paving the way for equity and social justice.

Strengthen trade union strategies and secure trade union experts/focal points so that they are able to develop trade union policies on social protection and participate in the implementation of a social protection floor in coherence with national policies on social protection, economic policies, employment policies and other national social policies. Public and private investments will especially contribute to the creation of the needed new jobs. Today budget cuts and austerity measures have a detrimental effect on the economy and do not produce the expected results. It is necessary to have national experts who are able to contribute to a reform of the taxation systems and a more determined struggle against tax evasion in

order to increase public revenue and to secure budgetary space to maneuver on the basis of a large tax base and sufficiently progressive taxes. The financial and economic crisis must not serve as a pretext to undermine the rights acquired for social protection. On the contrary, the financial sector should also contribute to find solutions. The only way to achieve social security systems which are strong and sustainable is to offer decent jobs fairly remunerated which allow workers to pay their contribution to the social security schemes, to go on pension or to enjoy retirement at their own wish in proportion to the age of entering the labour market in order to promote an active old age and solidarity among generations.

Organise and support the structures of social and solidarity economy to the benefit of IE workers with regard to social protection. Access to health care through the promotion of cooperative health care alternatives must permit the cooperative movement to participate in the establishment of the system, to recruit new members but also to render services and urge their members to be controlling their own destiny in the area of health care. This will also force governments to take their part of the responsibility by

creating more inclusive models for the IE workers. It is furthermore recognized that the social and solidarity economy generates more stable and sustainable jobs unlike the atypical and precarious jobs which are a threat to the sustainability of social security systems. It appears today that it is in the countries where the social and solidarity economy is well established and functioning that people have been the least affected, productivity maintained and financial and economic catastrophes better controlled.

Mobilise and intervene for an improvement of the household and care economy. Women usually take care of the family. They don't benefit from the same pension opportunities as men. Most of the women who have spent their life taking care of others do not benefit from any social coverage. The ILO has recognized

that the dependence of elderly people is increasing: in 2000, there were nine active persons for every person over 65 years; in 2050, it will only be four. The increase in the need for care of elderly people is a major challenge for developing countries in the new demographic context.

Intensify debates on the migratory crisis and the vulnerable situation of migrants.



## ***The National Health Care Scheme, the RAMU in Benin – an example to follow***

BY EMMANUEL ZOUNON  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE UNSTB, BENIN

In most African countries access to health care has become a major preoccupation for governments. While other systems have not proven very successful, national health care schemes have become one of the most adequate systems of financing health care and improving the financial access to quality health care. The RAMU, the national health care scheme in Benin introduced in 2011, tries to secure that every citizen in Benin has access to a minimum package of quality health care. Many studies were undertaken and a lot of planning done before the scheme was finalized. Securing health care and nutrition was part of the development strategy for Benin for the years 2006 to 2011. Until then only a very small proportion of the population had any social coverage and very few had access to health care. The national trade union centre, the UNSTB has been lobbying for national health care for years and was actively involved in the process.

The RAMU is an insurance scheme to which people must subscribe and pay a monthly contribution. The system will be free for the poorest people. It tries to significantly reduce direct payment for health care, secure quality health care and increase solidarity, equity and efficiency in the health care system. The National Agency for Health Care (ANAM) was officially launched in May 2012 which marked the initiation of the

implementation of the scheme in 6 pilot zones which have now been extended to 34 zones. Some problems have been encountered since the legislation on the RAMU still needs to be adopted just as the Board of ANAM is still not in place due to lack of agreement between the national trade union centres on the designation of their representative. However, there is optimism that the system will function. There is political will in the government. The bill on the RAMU is presently being debated in the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs.

It is in this context, that the UNSTB chose “trade union strategies for effective social protection for all in Benin” as the theme for its summer University in 2015 in order to contribute to the improvement of the Bill. An advocacy document was adopted as well as a communication plan. The UNSTB is optimistic with regard to the RAMU. However, the law must be adopted, the Board in place, all health clinics sensitized and the identification of the poorest people to be free of charge must be finished to make the RAMU live up to its objectives. The UNSTB will continue to lobby for its full implementation.



**Emmanuel Zounon**  
General Secretary of  
the UNSTB, Benin









# 168 million children still involved in child labour

BY EVA TABOR, CONSULTANT, THE LO/FTF COUNCIL

We see them everywhere. Children working in the informal economy (IE). In the streets, in the markets, in every kind of workshop, in the fields, in households. When you ask parents why their children are working, the answer is often that it is too expensive to send them to school and they cannot afford it. Even if the school is free, parents still have to buy books and other materials which they are not able to.

The ILO estimates that 168 million children worldwide are involved in child labour, accounting for almost 11% of the child population. Children who are deprived of their childhood, deprived of education and without much hope of ever getting a decent job. Children in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development make up more than half of all child labourers, numbering 85 million in absolute terms in spite of the fact that most countries have ratified the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age. It shows the need to ensure that these Conventions are effectively domesticated

into national legislation and effectively enforced.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour with more than one in five children in child labour. However, there has been significant progress since 2000. In 2012 there were almost 78 million fewer child labourers, a reduction of almost one third. The fall in girls in child labour was particularly pronounced with a reduction of 40% as compared to 25% for boys. The total number of children in hazardous work, which comprises by far the largest share of those in the worst forms of child labour, declined by over half. (ILO Report "Marking progress against child labour", 2012).

## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHILD LABOUR AND LACK OF DECENT JOBS FOR YOUTH

In their World Report on Child Labour 2015, the ILO focuses on the twin challenges of child labour elimination and ensuring decent work for youth. Along the 168 million children trapped in child labour, there are 75 million young persons aged 15 to 24 years of age





who are unemployed and many more who must settle for jobs that fail to offer a fair income, security in the workplace, social protection or other basic decent work attributes. A central message in the new report is that in many national contexts policy interventions addressing premature school leaving and child labour are critical to broader efforts towards ensuring decent work for young persons. Poor youth employment prospects can serve as a disincentive to investment in children's education earlier in the lifecycle.

#### **THE NEED FOR COHERENT POLICIES WITH EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION AS CRUCIAL ELEMENTS**

A coherent policy approach is needed for tackling child labour and the youth decent work deficit. There is a need to promote education as an alternative to child labour, and to ensure that children enter adolescence with the basic skills and competencies needed for further learning and securing decent work. The ILO points at two policy pillars that are especially important for combating child labour - education and social protection. Ensuring free, compulsory and quality education through to the minimum age of employment, provides families with the opportunity to invest in their children's education as an alternative to child labour and makes it worthwhile for them to do so. Expanding social protection helps prevent child labour

from being used as a household survival strategy in the face of economic shocks and social vulnerability.

#### **CHILD LABOUR IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY**

Since more and more trade unions in Africa are organising the IE, the abolition of child labour in the IE should be a priority issue. There is a need to gather much more information on the reasons for using children in the IE. There is a need to sensitize members on the urgency of sending their children to school. There is a need for vast campaigns and awareness-raising on what it means for children to work and what it means for their future perspectives if they do not attend school.

In the forthcoming social dialogue on formalisation of the IE, issues such as securing quality education, skills development, social protection and abolition of child labour should be priority areas and integrated in the overall strategy to promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy.



# Youth unemployment in Africa

*One of Africa's greatest challenges with a huge potential*

BY PRINCE ASAFU-ADJAYE  
RESEARCHER, LABOUR RESEARCH  
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Africa has a youthful population. About 225.34 million or 19% of the continent's 1.186 billion population in 2015 are young persons aged 15 to 24 years (UN, 2015). And an estimated 60% of the continent's population are young men and women under the age of 35 years. The energies of the youth constitute a vital force for the continent's development. Africa's youth are potential agents for socio-cultural, economic and political development and technological innovation on the continent.

However, Africa has failed to optimally harness this demographic dividend. One of the greatest challenges facing African governments and policy makers is how to create opportunities for the youth of the continent to contribute to Africa's development. Labour underutilization is very high among Africa's youth and according to Africa Economic Outlook (2012) most young Africans are unemployed or more frequently, underemployed in informal jobs with low productivity and pay.

The labour market outcomes of the young people on the continent constitute real economic, social and political threat. Poor employment outcomes enhance the susceptibility of young people to radicalization and recruitment into armed conflicts. According to the African Economic Outlook about half of young people who join rebel movements do so due to poor labour market outcomes.

## LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGE

Arguably, the most important labour market challenge facing Africa's youth is labour underutilization; insufficiency of the volume of work or labour slack, low remuneration and incompatibility of education and occupation (skills mismatch). Africa's informal economy serves as a palliative for the employment



crisis on the continent. But the informal economy is noted for significant decent work deficits and labour underutilization. In 2013, vulnerable employment in Sub-Saharan Africa was estimated at 77.4%, the highest rate in the world (ILO 2014). Labour demand shortfalls, particularly by the formal private sector and poor educational outcomes largely account for informalization of employment and labour underutilization.

## NEED FOR POLITICAL WILL

To promote decent work among Africa's youth, active labour market policies targeted at the continent's youth must pay particular attention to the informal economy and labour underutilization. Africa needs to halt the rapid informalization of employment and at the same time formalize the informal economy on the continent. The ILO Recommendation on formalizing the informal economy provides a useful starting point. But African governments need to demonstrate commitment and political will and allocate national resources to finance the transition. Also, there is the need to establish the right synergy with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and involve informal economy unions and associations in the process. While financial resources are important in the process, resources required in formalizing the informal economy are not only financial. It would also require



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some administrative, policy and legislative changes to deal with the constraints that compel people to be in the informal economy.

#### **NEED FOR CHANGE OF ECONOMIC POLICIES**

In the last three decades, neoliberal market fundamentalism with emphasis on growth and price stability underpinned economic policies of most African states. Admittedly, Africa has achieved remarkable economic growth in recent decades. Figures from the World Bank show that from 2000 to 2014, Sub-Saharan Africa recorded GDP growth of 4.1% per annum compared with the 2.2% per annum recorded globally. But this growth failed to generate decent formal sector jobs in the required quantities to meet the growing labour supply. This explains the rapid informalization and labour underutilization and shows that decent work for Africa's youth cannot be achieved and sustained by relying solely on the devices of the market. Africa needs to change the current economic management paradigm. African states therefore need to refocus economic policy and place decent employment at the core of fiscal and monetary policies. Trade and investment policies and interest rates regimes must be aligned with the continent's employment objectives.

#### **PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK AND SKILLS TRAINING**

In addition, promoting decent work among Africa's youth also requires removing the constraints to labour demand by the continent's formal private sector. The deindustrialization of Africa must be halted and

reversed if decent jobs are going to be available to the teeming youth. While industry and manufacturing have seen a decline in contribution to GDP, the services sector has increased its share of the GDP. But the bulk of the growth in services has come from the low end, including in the informal economy, with associated decent work deficits. Structural transformation of the economies of Africa is necessary to promote increased formal private sector demand for labour by sectors that generate decent jobs. This structural transformation cannot be achieved by the current neoliberal political economy.

The supply side limitations of African labour markets also need to be addressed. In 2010, youth literacy rate in Sub-Saharan Africa was about 70%. Skills mismatch has partly been blamed for the poor labour market outcomes of Africa's youth. This requires increased investments in education with particular attention to vocational education and better synergy between industry and education on the continent.

#### **A HUGE POTENTIAL**

Africa's youthful population presents enormous opportunities for the development of the continent. But economic and social policy failures have resulted in significant labour underutilization, particularly among the youth on the continent. Poor employment outcomes have turned the otherwise demographic dividend into a social and political risk. Promoting decent work among the continent's youth requires a refocus of economic policy. It would require that decent work is made a central objective in economic policies.





# Short-term adult vocational training – a crucial instrument

## *Improving the skills of workers and economic units in the informal economy*

BY JØRGEN ASSENS  
HEAD OF THE AFRICA DEPARTMENT,  
THE LO/FTF COUNCIL

One of the major problems affecting the millions of people in the informal economy is the lack of skills and training opportunities which could improve their possibilities of getting decent jobs or improve their small businesses and make them more efficient and productive, thus also paving the way for formalisation and the creation of new decent jobs while contributing to the overall development of the countries.

### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING MUST MEET THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET**

Most of the vocational training available in Africa are 3 to 4 year courses mainly aimed at workers in the formal economy. There is no or very little practical training in enterprises, there is generally a lack of proper equipment, and teachers are often poorly qualified in the technical field. Thus, students are not properly qualified for a real job. While there certainly is a need to form skilled workers for the formal sector, this type of vocational training does not, however, meet the huge training needs of workers and economic units in the informal economy.

There is a need to develop new training policies and to reshape vocational training systems towards the informal economy. To make skills development more accessible for informal economy workers, especially women and youth, the training needs to be both affordable, short with a flexible timing, and providing immediately applicable practical skills.

### **EXPERIENCES FROM DENMARK**

Through the programmes carried out in West Africa, the LO/FTF Council has supported national trade unions in 5 countries to develop two-week training courses specifically aimed at selected groups of mem-

bers in the informal economy like hairdressers, tailors and weavers, caterers, bike riders, photographers, market vendors and vegetable growers. The courses have combined technical and entrepreneurial training with focus on how to develop your business, basic accounting and taxation. Labour legislation, workers' rights, occupational health and safety as well as social security have also been crucial topics to secure focus on decent work.

The courses are based on the long tradition for short-term adult vocational training in Denmark and developed in cooperation with the Danish Union of Education and the Danish Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. In Denmark these courses are developed in tripartite councils and updated regularly to meet the changing demands of the labour market. They are financed by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. Employers pay for the participation of their employees in some of the courses.

### **THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM COURSES**

Through the evaluations carried out, it was clear that the courses had an amazing impact for the workers and the small businesses. Participants had acquired new and relevant professional skills which have improved the quality of their performance and also encouraged them to try new ideas or use more innovative methods. They had acquired skills to run and manage their businesses in a more efficient way, do proper accounting, service their clients better and thus also attract new clients. They had more self-confidence and also more respect in society for their work. The information about core labour standards and basic workers' rights had made them improve working conditions of employees and apprentices.

## ***Mozambique:***

### **A NEW LAW ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING AFTER MASSIVE LOBBYING OF TRADE UNIONS**

In 2014 a new law on vocational training was passed in Mozambique. This was the result of comprehensive lobbying from the national trade union centres OTM and Consilmo and social dialogue between government, employers and the trade unions since 2006. It is the first time a law gathers the various kinds of vocational training aimed both at formal and informal workers. It thus covers both short-term courses and the long technical training courses.

The trade unions are most satisfied with the result which secures two main aspects. The first one is that trade unions and employers can play an active role in the elaboration and implementation of the training so that it meets the needs and demands of the labour market. The second is that a fund has been established to finance the training. Employers are contributing to this fund.

The LO/FTF Council and the Danish trade union federation 3F have been supporting the capacity building and lobbying of the trade unions to get the law adopted.

Many of the participants had enrolled in social security schemes where possible. Many had also been able to replicate what they had learned in their local areas. New forms of cooperation had been established and networks, cooperatives and purchase centers launched.

### **NEED FOR TRIPARTITE SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

Skills development for workers and economic units in the informal economy is crucial to secure increased productivity and earnings, decent work and a gradual transition from the informal to the formal economy. This is also highlighted in the ILO Recommendation

on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. It should, thus, be a priority for governments and should be an integrated part of the new policies to promote formalisation.

A systematic short-term vocational training system should be developed and tripartite structures should secure an active involvement of employers and trade unions so that the training meets the demands of the labour market. Financing must be a priority for governments as part of policies to secure decent work, formalisation of the informal economy, job creation not the least for the youth and, thus, the promotion of a more developed and well-structured labour market.







**GUY RYDER, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ILO:**

"The unanimous endorsement from UN member States gives the international community the impetus we need to work together to tackle the formidable challenges confronting humanity and our planet, particularly those we face in the world of work."

# The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## *A major breakthrough for the world of work*

BY EVA TABOR  
CONSULTANT, THE LO/FTF COUNCIL

On September 25 2015, world leaders from across the globe adopted the new development agenda, "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" at the UN in New York. It marks the end of a negotiating process that has spanned more than two years. The aim is before 2030 to eradicate extreme poverty, promote prosperity and people's well-being, while protecting the environment. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) build on the outcome of the 8 Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) which helped more than 700 million people to escape poverty over the past 15 years.

The broader SDGs go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. Highlighting poverty eradication as the overarching goal of the new SDGs, they fully integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and calls for action by all countries. The 17 sustainable goals and 169 targets aim at tackling systemic barriers to sustainable development, such as inequality, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, inadequate infrastructure, inequality between rich and poor countries and within countries, lack of employment and decent jobs. In the coming year, negotiations will decide how to achieve and measure the 17 goals.

### **DECENT WORK AS A DRIVER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The vision of decent work as a driver of sustainable development runs across the whole agenda with a specific goal to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and reproductive employment and decent work for all" (goal 8). There are also targets on youth employment, child and forced labour, skills enhancement, empowerment of women and increases in productivity and productive employment. The SDGs also reaffirm the need to respect, protect and promote fundamental freedoms for all and recognizes the relevance of social protection, as well as the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development. Amongst the targets on the promotion of inclusive growth and decent work is support for entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and the encouragement of the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.

With the strong focus on decent work, it is indeed a major breakthrough for the world of work and together with the new ILO Recommendation on transition from the informal to the formal economy, it must be expected that it can push governments, employers and trade unions to find common strategies and policies to put employment and decent work on the agenda as key issues to improve the conditions of

millions of workers across the globe and contribute to poverty alleviation, social justice and sustainable development.

### THE ONLY WAY FORWARD

The SDGs are indeed ambitious. Especially in a world marked by conflicts and wars, 60 million refugees and displaced persons, half of the working people still struggling to survive in the informal economy, increasing inequality between rich and poor, lack of decent jobs, huge youth unemployment, still widespread inequality between men and women, bad governance and corruption, and ever increasing environmental and climate problems. It will need an extreme commitment both politically and financially across the globe and in the various countries if the SDGs are to be achieved.

One of the first proofs of the commitment of world leaders will be seen at the Climate Change Conference in Paris at the end of 2015 and whether it will be possible to reach consensus on a new binding climate change treaty.

**MOGENS LYKKETOFT, CHAIRMAN OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: *In an article in Politiken on 15.8.2015.***

"The UN document is revolutionizing because it stipulates that the struggle against poverty and environmental destruction are two sides of the same coin. Since the UN adopted the MDGs 15 years ago, we have actually halved extreme poverty in the world. This is impressive. But at the same time, inequality has grown, and the damage on the environment and the climate has worsened which is completely untenable. Therefore there is a need for a different concerted action the next 15 years. We will never be capable of completely eradicating extreme poverty all over the world if we do not create much more equality in the distribution of wealth between rich and poor countries and between rich and poor people in each country. And if we don't change attitudes now, our wealth will be undermined by climate change, environmental catastrophes, uncontrolled migration and new conflicts."

## The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.





## *The LO/FTF Council's cooperation with trade unions in Africa*

Since the LO/FTF Council was launched in 1987 by the two Danish Confederations, the LO and the FTF, as their council for international development cooperation, the LO/FTF Council has supported national trade union centres in Africa in their struggle for democracy, justice, poverty alleviation, workers' rights, and social dialogue. Today the LO/FTF Council is cooperating with partners in 17 countries in Northern, West, East and Southern Africa as well as with the ITUC-Africa, EATUC and SATUCC. Through the LO/FTF Council, cooperation has also been established with a number of national federations and their Danish counterparts.

For the last 10 years the outset for the work of the LO/FTF programmes has been the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the four decent work pillars:

1. Creating decent jobs
2. Guaranteeing rights at work
3. Extending social protection
4. Promoting social dialogue

Five strategic elements constitute the basis for the cooperation with partners:

- Networking and exchange of best practices
- Organisational development and sustainability
- Human resource development
- Lobbying and advocacy
- Research and documentation.

The last decade there has been increased focus on supporting partners in organising the informal economy and lobbying for their rights. Support has i.a. been given to advocacy and campaigns for social protection, short-term vocational training and tripartite social dialogue.

The LO/FTF has been supporting the ITUC and its regional organisations during the ILO standard-setting process on the informal economy. Regional meetings have been held in 2014 and 2015 to prepare the ILC process and to exchange experiences on the informal economy. Final meetings and a conference were held in Copenhagen in April 2015 to finalise the position of the ITUC and its affiliates. The active participation in the ILO process will hopefully lead to active involvement of trade unions in the follow up to the Recommendation and promotion of social dialogue at national level on formalisation of the informal economy.

The LO/FTF Council is also cooperating with Danish Industries and the Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises on social dialogue and development of SMEs.

The LO/FTF Council also has programmes in Asia and Latin America. The work of the LO/FTF Council is financed by DANIDA, the EU and the Danish trade unions.

## **ITUC-AFRICA**

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) is a pan-African trade union organisation created in November 2007 following the merger of two former African trade

union organisations, namely ICFTU-Afro and DOAWTU. ITUC-Africa has 16 million declared members and 103 affiliated trade union centres in 51 African countries. The headquarters of ITUC-Africa is now in Lomé, Togo.

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***“ILO Recommendation 204 is a clear legitimization of what we have been doing right in the last three decades and should inspire African trade unions to greater achievement. Let us join hands in responding to this important global call to action.”***

KWASI ADU-AMANKWAH  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF ITUC-AFRICA

