

**PRE-CONGRESS WORKSHOP ON  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND TRADE UNION INDEPENDENCE  
Development Cooperation And Trade Union Independence**

Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg (South Africa) 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

**Concept note**

**JUSTIFICATION**

International trade union solidarity is still active, useful and fruitful, and the initiatives of cooperation have considerably increased. This trend is the result of the special and historical links between some organizations of the South and those of the North. These links result in transfers of resources, knowledge and know-how which yield important results and contribute to the improvement of the living and working conditions in Africa.

However, as all human endeavours, international trade union solidarity is experiencing some problems. Some projects are implemented in an isolated manner and fail to be integrated into an overall trade union development programme. Development initiatives are undertaken separately and do not fit in a comprehensive development approach. The institutional stakeholders involved in the cooperation with the African trade union movements are increasing by the day but the information does not always flow among them. The duplication of activities is therefore so frequent that the same activity can receive funding from several sources.

Partners have different concerns and priorities. They give support to priority areas fixed in advance. The partnership often leads to the juxtaposition of the resources and instruments belonging to each partner. The rationale and strategies compete sometimes instead of complementing each other and as a result, the practices of one partner exclude the other partner.

Projects are supported here and there on an ad hoc basis and often give rise to ad hoc activities that keep unions busy, but they fail to form part of a development programme. These projects do not take account of the objectives and priorities of African trade union partners that do not always base their projects on a strategic planning document approved by their internal official structures.

These discrepancies make it difficult to ensure the cohesion of trade union development activities. Cooperation initiatives are led by a variety of information and decision-making centres. In the Northern countries, there are government bodies that provide aid. These bodies are represented in the South by cultural or other advisors who monitor through their state chanceries, projects and programmes. On the ground, there is sometimes a decentralised technical adviser's office which monitors and implements the programmes. In

addition, there are ad hoc missions coming from the North to monitor the programmes on-site. This form of cooperation involves several offices which are all decision-making centres.

The planning, monitoring and assessment tools developed by the partners are increasingly elitist and technical while African organizations do not always have the required technical human resources to implement the projects.

Consultation is now necessary to overcome all the contradictions not only at the policy/strategic level but also at an operational/management level in order to take international trade union cooperation to a higher level of effectiveness and efficiency.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Analyze cooperation practices
- Formulate new principles and guidelines to make international trade union development cooperation more effective and efficient.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

-30 trade union leaders of the organizations affiliated to ITUC-Africa:

## **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

Partners' trade union cooperation policies

New principles and guidelines for development and international trade union cooperation effectiveness