

# **TRADE UNION RESEARCH IN AFRICA: ASSET FOR ACTION AND PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

Presented

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# The Changing World order...

- Globalization has taken a centre stage and now rules the world economic order
- The integration of technology, trade foreign direct investment (capital) and labour are some of the most key indicators that are driving globalization.
- The pace is evidently been fast, is fast and now entrenched and has ramifications.

# The Changing World order...

- So, people are now talking about one a mega economy, one macro economy, one single economic space; one global village and in some instances a universal set of values
- We hear of global and new opportunities for all
- We are also aware that most countries in the Africa are talking about market-lead economies based on economic growth and macro-economic stability
- In other ways most States now cling to the neo-liberal agenda as a path way to development

# Ramification or Consequences...

But there is a down-side to it:

- The results of a mega economy, one macro economy, one single economic space, privatization, monetary liberalization are:
  - ✓ **Poverty, unemployment, underemployment, retrenchment, casualisation, informalisation, outsourcing, capital flight, etc.**

# What is the Power play?

- The global world can now be expressed into three major players or forces that must shape society: the **People (and the workers)**, the **State** (which suppose to be an expression of the people) and the **Global Capital**

# What is the Power play?

- In this context questions are raised about the role of the State, Worker (and the people) and capital
- How can capital be countervailed
- To what extent should the State roll out or roll in?
- How should trade unions navigate such a terrain

# How we Engage and Navigate?

- This engagement is about:
  - the question of making the State that has the necessary instruments to be ethical, responsible and accountable to needs of the people.
  - to create a mass and concerted efforts of the making capital accountable
  - Creation of a critical trade union leadership that can engage beyond “the bread and butter issues

# What type of trade union values and traditions guide this?

- Free and independent
- Democracy and workers control
- Freedom and solidarity
- Bias with the poor and working class
- Socio-economic policy
- Unity of Purpose
- Working with progressive forces
- Social Justice



# What type of trade union values and traditions guide this?

Quote:

- “Our collective bargaining strength is based on our internal organisation and mobilisation, but it is also influenced by the more general climate around us: laws, policies, the economy and social attitudes. Furthermore our lives extend beyond collective bargaining and the workplace and we must concern ourselves with issues like housing, taxation, education, medical services, the environment and the international economy. Social trade unionism means unionism which is rooted in the workplace but understands the importance of participating in, and influencing, the general direction of society”

# **WHY LABOUR RESEARCH?**

- **Changing global perspective of labour relations.**
- **Link of labour research to education, organising, advocacy, leadership development, affiliate support in traditional TU issues such as bargaining, OSH, case management (dealing with specific workplace grievances & disputes – currently lawyers, labour brokers are replacing TUs in case work)**

# **WHY RESEARCH CON'D?**

- **Distinction from Basic & Applied Research: Action Research?**
- **Creation of organic labour research perspective with clear ideological anchor**
- **Clear role clarity with political activity and political leadership – Research as ‘back-room’ capacity behind statements, activities and positions of labour in development process.**

# **CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AT GLOBAL LEVELS**

- **ILO**
- **Global Union Research  
Network**
- **Global Labour University**

# INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS IN AFRICA & REGION

- ALRN
- ANSA (SATUCC)
- LRS (Labour Research Services)
- NALEDI (National Labour Economic Institute)
- LaRRI
- LEDRIZ
- Ghana Labour Research & Policy Institute

## Practical Exercise

- How has the importance of research been articulated in your unions?
- What have been the opportunities and threats in advancing the value of research in your unions?
- How have you tried to link research in your union to current trends global and national trends (development of themes)