



New dawn for decent work in Zimbabwe



Decent Work Zimbabwe partners at the launch of the project last month

The Zimbabwe Decent Work Project was launched by the European Union (EU) Head of Delegation to Harare, Timo Alkonnen who stressed the need for systematic reforms to unlock processes that would guarantee decent work in Zimbabwe.

The project seeks to contribute to democratization, social peace and stability in Zimbabwe through enhanced role of trade unions as a primary civil society actor representing ordinary working citizens, enabling them to meaningfully participate in policy dialogue, and mobilise alliances with civil society partners for promoting decent work.

Speaking at the launch, the EU ambassador said Zimbabwe was full of potential and only needed to pay attention to reforms in order to unlock Zimbabwe's full potential.

"Zimbabwe is full of potential for economic growth and prosperity for its citizens, however, something is holding back the country from unlocking this potential. You cannot separate the economy from the political sphere. There is need to respect the democratic principles that underpin a developmental state," Alkonnen said.

He condemned the continued harassment of trade unionists by the state adding that it was creating serious drawbacks towards the

achievement of decent work standards.

"Needless to say, I condemn with the strongest possible the physical assaults and threats against union leaders," he added.

Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) President Peter Mutasa and Secretary General Japhet Moyo have been arrested for calling for stayaways and have recently received death threats twice inside the last month alone.

Speaking at the launch, Mutasa said the decent work programme which is building the capacities of unions was positioning trade unions to make meaningful inputs and participation in the country's development processes.

"Trade unions can only participate if they are equipped with the necessary skills to do so. This why this project is very important to us in the labour movement. Capacity development of trade unions allows not just increased participation, but quality participation at all levels, from shop floor up to the national level," he said.

He bemoaned the austerity measures being implemented by the government saying they were seriously affecting the living and working conditions of workers.

"To the best of our knowledge, austerity implies cutting back, which adversely

impacts consumption, investment, aggregate demand and growth. In short, austerity is procyclical as it worsens the economic downturn. With the average minimum wage of \$300, it is clear that

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ZCTU leaders remanded to 2 October

The case in which ZCTU leaders Secretary General Japhet Moyo and President Peter Mutasa are facing treason charges for organising the January 14-16 stayaway has been moved to 2 October.

The ZCTU leaders are accused of plotting to topple a constitutionally-elected government after they allegedly recorded videos, urging the public to engage in a stay-away against fuel price hikes in January this year.

ZCTU GBV Education & Training Manual completed

The ZCTU Education department has finalised the Gender Based Violence Education and Training Manual.

The first draft of the manual was completed in May last year and the final writing and editing process was completed last month at a two-day workshop in Mutare.

The process analysed the content, relevance and flow of the 1st draft with a view to enrich and make it more user friendly. The manual will be a tool to be used by the ZCTU and its affiliates in combating GBV at the workplace and in the communities. Main objectives are to:-

The manual examines the extent of the problem of GBV in the workplace, trade unions and communities and offers remedies. It also has aspects of the new ILO instruments on violence



ZCTU GBV Education & Training Manual writing and editing team

and harassment, Convention 190/19 and Recommendation 206. The

manual also explores the role of trade unions in the elimination of GBV.

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wages are way below the living wage threshold. Most working class families are food insecure, they can't afford medical care and drugs, and they are failing to pay rentals and school fees. In short the workers and the majority poor citizens are in a dire situation, poverty has worsened. Let us remind ourselves, these issues are at the heart of the decent work concept that is, the aspirations of people in their working lives; opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. For most Zimbabweans, these desires are but a mirage!" he said.

FES's Aulline Chapisa said the launch was an opportunity for all stakeholders to reflect on the meaning of decent work which sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives.

"The concept recognises that focus must be placed not just on the quantity, but the quality of employment regardless of the occupation in which a worker is engaged. This is a concept that should be vigorously pursued, especially in light of the challenges associated with the current economic crisis and beyond."

"While it is acknowledged that profits are the driving force behind all business entities in any capitalist society, the decent work concept acknowledges the fact that some equilibrium must be found between

economic and financial matters and social justice, both at the workplace and in wider society opportunity and treatment for all women and men – including people with disability," she said.

She said the project presented unions not just as concerned about the workplace but a society as a whole, life as a whole, and the working class to have a voice in society.

Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economies Association Secretary General Wisborn Malaya said all workers deserved a better livelihood anchored on decent work.

He condemned the criminalisation of informal activities by local authorities and recognition of traders as citizens who have a right to engage in economic activities for a living.

"We are happy that the decent work project. We are a productive affiliate of the project. We focused on study cycles to inform every worker in the informal economy to understand issues to with workers, the challenges they are facing, how best they can be informed educationally to stand the ground when they face such challenges...We took that package into the decent work programme...we have come to realise that peoples' lives have been changed and we appreciate the project so much," he said.

A government representative said government was fully committed to the Decent work agenda and was prepared to work with all social partners through the Tripartite Negotiating Forum towards the realisation of the project's objectives.

LEDRIZ director Godfrey Kanyenze

said the project had come at the most appropriate time when the country needs promotion of Decent Work, against a background of high informality where 94.5% of all jobs are informal characterised by high decent work deficits.

"Since the ESAP period, Zimbabwe has gone through a process of structural regression characterized by rapid de-industrialization and informalization of the economy. From being the second most industrialized economy in Sub-Saharan Africa at independence in 1980, Zimbabwe now has the third largest shadow economy in the world with an average of 60.6% of GDP," he said.

This overall objective of the programme is to be achieved through three related Specific Objectives as follows:

Strengthen the strategic, institutional and operational capacities of trade unions to enable them to be responsible, informed and competent agents to achieve decent work and promoting social inclusion;

Strengthen advocacy capacities of trade unions from the local to the national level to increase citizen awareness of social, economic and political rights and participation and represent their needs in policy formulation processes; and

Promote greater cohesion among trade union federations, civil society organisations, academia and broader society including private economic actors to facilitate effective dialogue with policy makers for promoting decent work.

ZIBAWU targets Cabs

The Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union (ZIBAWU) is on a collision course with the Central Africa Building Society (CABS) over a host of unfair labour practices.

The union is accusing the bank of non-cooperating on issues to do with the improvement of workers welfare. It also accuses the bank of violating workers' right to join trade unions and victimisation of workers committee members.

The building society fired the Chairperson of the workers committee Piki Guvheya for unclear allegations as he tried to represent the workers.

The union has recently been targeting the bank's head offices in Borrowdale, Harare and has also pitched up at the international Cricket t20 matches which are sponsored by the bank.

The demonstrations saw two of the union's organisers Paul Mutsatsa and Samuel Mkozho being arrested for purported trespassing at the banks head offices.

"ZIBAWU is demonstrating against them because they don't respect workers' rights. They must give workers the opportunity to join the trade unions because it is their right. "Workers need the chance to express their concern over oppression and abuses but CABS is not affording them that right," said the union's national organiser Tirivanhu



Demonstrators at the T20 cricket match in Harare

Marimo.

He added that the bank was victimising its employees through cherry picking. "when the workers committee Chairperson was dismissed

there were other workers who had been charged with same offence but were not dismissed so we need to see transparency and fairness for the workers," said Marimo.

ZCTU Eastern Regional officer Tenson Muchefa dies



The ZCTU has lost its Eastern Regional Officer Tenson Muchefa who died on the 5th of September after a short illness in Mutare. He was laid to rest at his rural home in Buhera.

Muchefa joined the ZCTU as a regional officer in 2009. Prior to joining the ZCTU, Muchefa was a member of the National Engineering Workers Union where he held several positions from the shopfloor.

He went on to join NEWU as an employee where he rose to be an organiser with the union.

He was also in the ZCTU Northeastern regional committees and rose to be a regional Chairperson, a position he relinquished upon employment at ZCTU.

During his stint as an activist Muchefa was instrumental in mobilisations for ZCTU national actions in the Northeastern region. He was a victim of police brutality and was arrested several times for partaking in ZCTU mobilisation activities.

Muchefa was also part of ZCTU activists who were arrested and are out on bail for organising the October 11 2018 ZCTU demonstrations against the introduction of the 2% transactional tax in Mutare.

During the same week the labour movement also lost Emson Sibanda, the former General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Tobacco Industrial Workers Union, who had gone for retirement in December 2018 and Angeline Chitambo, former ZEWU President.

Both Sibanda and Chitambo had previously served in the ZCTU General Council and were laid to rest in Harare.

May their souls rest in Eternal Peace.

Society's expecting more from ZCTU as hardships bites



ZCTU exhibitors attending to visitors at the ZIBF



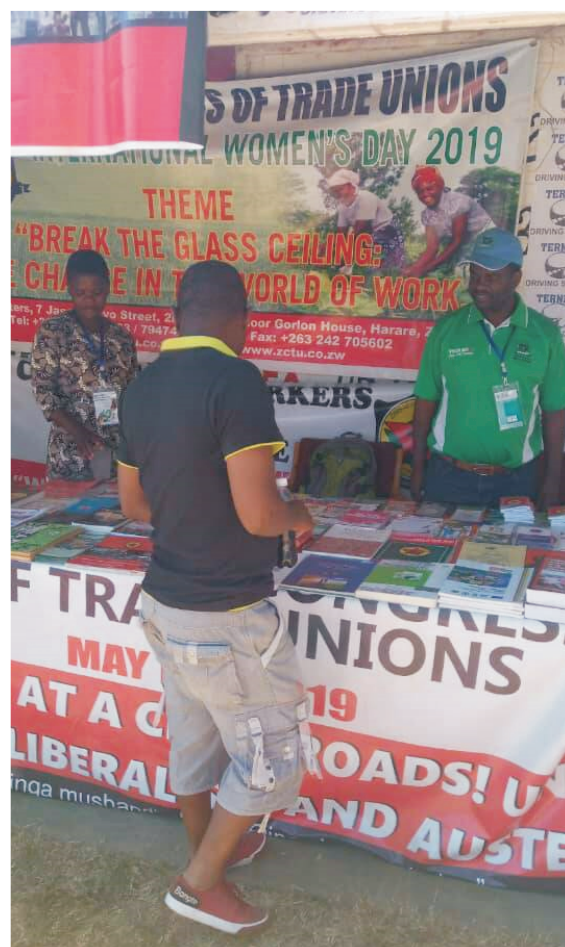
ZCTU's Tatenda Kadiki discussing sexual harassment with some of the visitors to the ZCTU stand at the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show

The ZCTU has exhibited at three main events over the past month in outreaches that have brought new insights into the public's expectations of the ZCTU.

Exhibiting at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show and the Chinhoyi Agricultural Show visitors to the stands largely inquired about what the ZCTU planned reactions to the economic meltdown and the looming crisis.

Issues and Demands from visitors:

- What is ZCTU's position over the use of local currency when prices are indexed to the US\$ exchange rate?
- High time now to confront the President himself with the issue of meaningful salary increments.
- ZCTU need to push for the restoration of salaries and wages lost through recent currency reforms.
- ZCTU need to spread its roots to rural areas on all its programs.



Chinhoyi Agricultural Show exhibition

- ZCTU must enforce compliance of Collective Bargaining Agreements.
- ZCTU must intensify educational programs and campaigns in all sectors.
- ZCTU must reintroduce regalia for its visibility.
- ZCTU should engage Government for reduction of taxes.

The exhibiting teams responded to the above and other issues that were raised, stating the ZCTU position on each issue.

The teams also handled some grievances raised by some and referred other issues to relevant unions.

In instances where visitors brought issues that required the intervention of other organisations outside the labour movement they were referred to such organisations.

All set for September 13 commemorations



Police rounding up ZCTU leaders on Sept 13 2006



Former ZCTU Secretary General Wellington Chibebe lies in bed at a local clinic with a fractured arm suffered from police beatings

THE Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) will once again this month commemorate the police brutality of September 13 2006 when the police assaulted, injured and arrested union officials for demonstrating against high taxation, poor salaries and lack of statutes to enforce collective bargaining agreements among other demands.

On the day, thousands of workers around the country took part in ZCTU organised demonstrations against poverty afflicting over 80 percent of Zimbabweans demanding Poverty Datum Line (PDL) linked wages and Government's commitment to fight inflation. Workers also demanded a meaningful benefit from the HIV and AIDS levy fund through free distribution of anti-retroviral drugs. They also demanded a stop in the implementation of the proposed compulsory National Health Insurance Scheme that was to be administered by the National Social Security Authority (NSSA).

However, 13 years down the line, the cause of 13 September remains a pipe dream. Salaries remain very poor, collective bargaining platforms are being undermined, new taxes have been introduced and the democratic space has been narrowed.

The situation has degenerated, the economy is in a tailspin with

inflation rising, prices of basic commodities sky rocketing daily and demands for interventions and redress by trade unionists have been met with brutal repression.

Workers from various sectors are claiming incapacitation to continue reporting to work owing to poor earnings.

Back then, former President Robert Mugabe shocked the world when he approved of the beatings while addressing a crowd gathered at the Zimbabwe Mission in Cairo when he said that:

"If you want an excuse for being killed, be my guest go into the streets and demonstrate. The police were right in dealing sternly with Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions leaders during their demonstration... because the trade unionists want to become a law unto themselves. We cannot have a situation where people decide to sit in places not allowed and when the police remove them, they say no. We can't have that, that is a revolt to the system. ***Vamwe vaakuchema kuti tarohwa, ehe unodashurwa.*** When the police say move, move. If you don't move, you invite the police to use force".

The heavy handedness of the police on the demonstrating workers was more than shocking, with tacit approval from the state, ZCTU leaders were tortured at the condemned Matapi Police Station holding cells and suffered multiple fractures.

The brutal force exhibited by the



Police beats up trade unionists during arrests in the streets of Harare

Mugabe regime has however, been surpassed by the Mnangagwa administration whose interventions have cost lives. This year's commemorations come at a time when ZCTU leaders, President Peter Mutasa and Secretary General Japhet Moyo are facing subversion charges for calling for the January 14-16 stay-away to force the government to address the same challenges that afflicted the nation in 2006. The protest action was met with brutal force which resulted in seven people being killed by security service. Several labour activists around the country are also on bail for organising the 11 October 2018 demonstrations organised by ZCTU.

The commemorations which will be held under the theme ***"We are at a Crossroads! Unite, Fight Neoliberalism and Austerity,"*** will be held in the ZCTU's six regional centres in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare, Masvingo and Chinhoyi.