



ilera AFRICA
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ILERA 8th AFRICA REGIONAL CONGRESS 2018

CALL FOR PAPERS

**THEME: "CHALLENGES FACING THE FUTURE OF WORK: AFRICAN
PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES"**

SUB - THEMES

1, TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN AFRICA

The increased integration of the global economy due to greater free trade, vastly improved logistic and communication technology, mobile finance capital, transnational corporations and global supply chains have had a major impact on work, employment and distribution of income all over the world. Africa has by no means been immune from these trends.

We welcome papers that address the changing nature of employment and employment relations in Africa. We would like to solicit contributions that indicate the latest trends in collective bargaining, trade union strength, working conditions, industrial conflict, human resource management and skills development in different countries and regions of the continent. Has work uniformly been intensified, employment casualised and distribution become more unequal, or are there countervailing trends? How strong (or weak) are trade union movements in Africa and are they able to protect workers as well as influence

employment relations practices in the workplace? What impact, if any, are global supply chains having on employment relations in different sectors of Africa's economies? What influence is the extensive investment of China in Africa having on employment and employment relations on the continent?

2. FUTURE OF WORK IN AFRICA

The future of work in Africa, as in the rest of the world, is already and still going to be extensively influenced by technological advances. On the optimistic side, some argue that the new technologies will change the economy and society for the better, the poor will be empowered, inequality will be reduced, and solutions will be created that will rescue the environment. On the other hand there are real dangers that, as new technology advances, paid work will become less formal and more insecure, with jobs not having prospects for advancement or benefits. This growing precariousness will cut across all sectors, occupational levels and professions.

The impact that new technologies are going to have will depend on the levels of development of countries in Africa. There are clearly differences with regard to the capacity of the State; the relationships between unions, employers and government; and, the legislative framework for labour market regulation.

We call for papers that will address these issues. In particular we welcome papers that can discern trends regarding the changing nature of work due to new technologies, as well as climate, environmental, political, economic and social changes in society. Analysis of the reasons for the trends will add value to the contributions.

3. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA

In many parts of Africa skills development is still informal and takes the form of “informal apprenticeships” whereby a young recruit watches an experienced worker perform tasks and then copies what he or she is doing. There is no theoretical training and the outcome is usually low skills with low productivity.

On the other hand, many governments in Africa have drawn up complex and advanced technical and vocational education training (TVET) and other post-school systems and have established institutions that provide practical and theoretical training leading to occupational qualifications.

There is a realisation that, if Africa is to raise the standard of living of its citizens, African countries have to encourage investment in high productivity industries for which they must provide enough highly skilled labour that is suitably qualified and in the right trades and occupations.

In addition African states place an emphasis on entrepreneurship, on people creating their own productive income-earning work. This entails encouraging people to have an entrepreneurial frame of mind as well as providing them with the necessary skills and resources, especially start-up capital.

We call for papers that cover any of the above and related themes. We welcome overviews of the continent as well as specific case studies such as country, industry, enterprise, NGO, and any other organisations or projects.

4. PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN AFRICA

A development that public sector employment relations have started to share in common around most of the world over the past 30 years is the progressive abandonment of the unilateral determination of terms and conditions of employment by the State as employer. One of the reasons for this is the rise in prominence of public sector trade unions as they have stood their ground better than private sector unions which have declined in density. In many countries the public sector trade union membership and influence have become stronger and more entrenched than in the private sector. There has also been an extension of more and more collective bargaining rights to public employees. This has brought considerable gains for public sector employees with regards to negotiating terms and conditions of work.

We call for papers that examine whether these global trends are applicable to Africa as well. While there are some countries such as South Africa where this has been the case, how general is this trend in Africa? We welcome case studies of particular countries as well as papers covering a range of countries. There may also be innovative, interesting and unique developments in public sector employment relations taking place in Africa. We encourage submission of papers that alert and inform us about them.

5. SOCIAL SECURITY AND PROTECTION IN AFRICA

Social security systems in African countries have seen comprehensive developments in recent years including, generally, the strengthening of contributory-based schemes (typically social insurance-based pension and other arrangements); a move away from individual employer liability (whether on an insured or another basis) in fields such as maternity, sickness and employee injury benefits to transferring the liability to a public scheme; the introduction of universal schemes in the areas of, among others, health and social pensions, relying in part on principles of national solidarity; some attempts to cover informal sector workers and other vulnerable categories of workers; the rapid expansion of social assistance and cash transfers (both conditional or unconditional) arrangements; the establishment of supportive registration and ICT systems; and some attempts at fiscal reprioritisation to ensure better protection not only in relation to social security, but also the wider area of social protection (e.g. health, education, nutrition).

The above developments have been accompanied by the large-scale adoption of social protection policies and strategies. Yet, the legal framework providing for the above has remained limited and fragmented. With some notable exceptions, legal provisions are largely restricted to the contributory-based environment, with social assistance still lacking a similar framework. Contributory-based social security legislation is also exclusionary by nature, as large numbers and categories of workers, especially in the informal sector, are not covered by these arrangements. Also, many cash transfer schemes are pilot-oriented and therefore limited in extent, and essentially donor-driven, raising questions regarding equality of treatment, up-scalability, and government ownership. Yet, some of these schemes have successfully been transformed into national arrangements. Finally, there is an evident need to strengthen institutional and governance arrangements, due to largely fragmented institutions and weak supervision, as well as the lack of sufficient autonomy for tripartite governing structures.

Papers that address any of the above or related social security and social protection issues, either from a continental, sub-regional or country/cross-country perspective are welcome. Papers could also reflect on underlying themes, such as what informs governments' greater involvement in these areas; and the fostering of rights-based approaches (with particular reference to continental-level and sub-regional level standards and instruments).

6. EMERGING ISSUES IN LABOUR LAW

The changing nature of work and work relationships has again brought the role, and questions relating to the nature of labour law, to the fore. Traditionally, from the perspective of the individual relationship, labour law has focused its attention on the rights and obligations of employers and employees within the context of an employment relationship. Those who work in other capacities or provide/demand work outside the framework of an employment relationship are seemingly not covered by labour law as historically understood. What is required, therefore, is to consider how to extend, if not reconceptualise, labour law to address these contexts in Africa. Also, there is need to investigate the role and impact of labour law in often complex triangular relationships, involving third parties (e.g. labour hirers), with reference also to good practice examples of how this phenomenon has been regulated in African countries.

Several challenges also confront collective labour law in Africa. Three of the affected areas relate to the strengthening of collective bargaining as a central institution, also with reference to properly regulated collective bargaining structures; legally effective bargaining outcomes; and appropriate provision to be made for industrial action.

Separate labour law adjudicative institutions are increasingly a reality in Africa. Many innovative and good practice examples exist. Of particular importance is also the greater emphasis being placed on formal and informal alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration. There is much that African countries can learn from their peers in these areas.

Authors are encouraged to submit papers on these and any other relevant labour law themes. In addition, consideration could also be given to how best to align labour law regulation in African countries with international, continental and sub-regional instruments and standards.

7. MIGRANT LABOUR IN AFRICA

Africa is witnessing increased labour migration within the continent, especially on an intra-regional basis. The migration flows in this regard are both regular and irregular. Yet, the protection extended to migrant workers leaves much to be desired. This applies in particular to the areas of recruitment practices, and the protection of migrant workers' civil and socio-economic rights, including labour and social protection rights. To a large extent, insufficient attempts to deal with the root causes of labour migration within and from Africa have exacerbated the often uncontrolled and undocumented flow of labour migrants, resulting also

in an unprecedented proliferation in human trafficking, for employment and related purposes. These causes concern among others high unemployment (especially youth unemployment) in countries of origin, and the need to support poor families back home.

Yet, on the other hand, a continental agenda, which supports (within Africa) free movement, a single passport, open borders and enhanced treatment of African migrant workers is increasingly evident, in particular from the perspective of continental-level (AU) instruments, standards and vision – as confirmed by a recently adopted free movement protocol, a revised migration policy framework, and a flagship joint labour migration programme.

Papers are requested that reflect on how to support the unfolding continental agenda(s), the strengthening of migrant workers' protection, the better management of labour migration, including addressing inefficient recruitment practices, and dealing efficiently with the root causes of labour migration within and from Africa.

8. GENDER AND WORK

Gender remains a key concept in understanding social phenomena. Its significance remains true in assisting us to understand the differential experiences women and men have in workplaces and industrial relations. The continuing different societal expectations for women and men influence role expectations in the workplace and employee relations in ways that are gendered. In many African contexts these expectations create challenges for women as they struggle with 'inclusion', and thus experience sexual harassment, work-life balance issues and many other exclusions. Even though men have been argued to benefit from patriarchy, critical masculinities studies illustrates that they do not do so equally. This therefore calls for an examination of how men experience the workplace and industrial relations in different ways.

We therefore welcome papers that address critical questions in women and men's experiences and historical attachments to work. What are the continuities and discontinuities of unequal treatment of women in work? What are the new experiences and conceptions of masculinities emerging as a result of unemployment and precarious work? How do these experiences influence industrial relations and conceptualizations of masculinities and femininities?

Deadline for submission: **15 March 2018**
Notification of acceptance/rejection: **6th April 2018**

Submission guidelines for congress papers:

1. All proposals must be submitted to Abstracts2018@pscbc.org.za
2. Authors must submit an extended abstract (1000 – 2000 words), or a full paper (up to 8000 words). Papers exceeding these limits will be desk rejected.
3. Contributors must declare the most appropriate theme of the conference paper.
4. Each manuscript should be accompanied by an abstract, not to exceed 150 words.
5. Manuscripts must be submitted in English.
6. The manuscript should not contain the author's identification information. A separate file should be submitted including the personal and employment details of each author, an abstract and a '100 words' biography of each author.
7. Submission should be on letter paper (8.5"x11" or 216x279 mm), with double-space text, and using either Arial or Times New Roman 12pts.
8. Manuscripts could be submitted either in MS Word or PDF.