

Ilera AFRICA
8th REGIONAL CONGRESS

7-8 May 2018

MAURITIUS

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

Message of Support: Mr Radhakrisna Sadien, President, National Trade Unions Confederation

Honourable Soodesh Satkam Callicurn, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment & Training

Mr Frikkie de Bruin, President LERASA

Prof. Dong-One kim, President ILERA

Me Pradeep Dursun, Chief Operating Officer, Business Mauritius

All protocol respected, my dear colleagues, dear brothers and sisters

This morning I am addressing you with a note of gratification in that ilera AFRICA has chosen to hold this regional congress in Mauritius . I am also addressing you with a note of hope and expectations having regards to the theme and sub-themes we shall be addressing. We have expectations because we are looking for scientific analyses and hope because we shall get out of here with enlightened knowledge which shall be useful in decision making.

These three days will be dedicated to addressing a host of issues ranging from poverty eradication, industrial relations and bargaining structure to sexual harassment, Rights based social protection and the identity of the employer. To name a few.

Honourable Minister, dear colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen as a partner and stakeholder in the world of work our actions are geared towards the welfare and improvement in the quality of life of workers. There is a general perception that trade union activities relate to demands specifically on salary increase and salary increment. We make it a matter of pride to make it known that trade unions bring their members to act and react on the environment, on housing, on youth training and employment, on climatic change and water which is life. I say this because in the absence of a means of transport you can walk but in the absence water one dies.

The UN has for years rung the alarm as to the ageing population across the planet, be it in high income economy, in emerging economies or developing countries. There lies the challenge for all of us. The question we ask is how do we address the problematic of housing for all, which is after all, a basic

human right. And housing to-day has to be placed in the context of climate change, Mauritius is a glaring example of this. In as much as we are witnesses to the Government's efforts in housing for the poor we are concerned for the others classes which in a neo-liberal economy like ours are cornered on all sides. While the system wants to favour flexibility in labour laws which is a menace to workers, trade unions will have to be vigilant.

We welcome the topic of sexual harassment which requires no taboo attitude in dealing with this. Women workers and men for that matter should be made attuned to the world of work decent relationship among staff. Just as psychology and socialization are part of the training program of educators in the same way induction courses should include this subject for all other workers.

Unions contribute voluntarily in the formation of young scholars and graduates in the Youth Training Programme put in by Government. We are conscious that the world of work is a challenging world for the young and the uninitiated. So there is where we too bring in our contribution.

Hon. Minister, dear colleagues, I can't ward off from this opportunity the serious threat looming ahead with regards to water management in this country. As workers representatives and in defense of society we stand firm against the privatization of water which inevitably bill up consumers and fatten private companies.

We are having a flux of migrant workers on contract and others in illegal employment. Their plight have been decried while police are arresting and the authorities are deporting these workers back.

Further, we shall be discussing on the identity of the 'employer'.

I have tried to brush up a few of the salient topics on the agenda while all other items are concerns of every day life.

My dear colleagues this workshop is situated in the African context so we shall have to think outside the frontiers of our country.

I am sure we shall have a fruitful workshop during these three days and that we shall leave better informed and equipped to confront the challenges of the day.

Thank you very much for your attention.

03.05.2018

