



Ulandssekretariatet
LO/FTF Council

5. The LO/FTF Council in Africa

Cooperating partners

In a broader context the project cooperation takes place within the global network of trade unions affiliated to the ITUC and its regional organisation in Africa, within specific sectors with the Global Union Federations, and on national level with national centres and their affiliates.

Programme and focus areas in Africa

The LO/FTF Council in Africa works within the four priority areas encompassed by the Decent Work Agenda.

- Access to gainful employment;
- Social dialogue;
- Rights at work – including occupational health and safety and HIV/AIDS.
- Social protection and social security

In Africa, these areas are currently implemented in one overall regional programme. Focus of this programme is the creation of more decent employment with emphasis given to the following issues:

- Decent employment and labour rights in Southern Africa
- Good Governance and Local Social Dialogue in East Africa
- Decent Employment and informal economy in West Africa.

In addition, the LO/FTF Council is implementing a two EU-funded programmes in Rwanda and Sierra Leone respectively. In Rwanda with a strong focus on the promotion of local social dialogue, while in Sierra Leone focus is on the extension of trade union services to operators within the informal economy.

The programme in Sierra Leone is further tying-in with a Danida Funded Alliance programme in four countries in West Africa. The programme is promoting the development of more decent employment by focusing on building both skills and capacity among micro entrepreneurs. This programme is being implemented in cooperation between the LO/FTF Council, the Danish Union of Education, and the Danish Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

Finally, the LO/FTF Council is implementing a programme in East Africa to promote social dialogue at both national and sub-regional level. The programme is implemented jointly with Danish Industry (DI).

Strategy and objectives:

A common feature of most labour organisations in Africa is the need for both the organisational capacity and the knowledge required to partake in and influence concrete improvements and development processes at work places in Africa. Many of the trade unions in Africa are relatively

well-organised organisations with a membership of 40-70% of the wage earners. However, small-scale farming and informal employment encompass up to 80-85% of the total workforce. The overriding strategy is therefore to provide assistance for trade unions to reach out to both the current and potential union members in the public and private sectors, as well as the labour force within the informal economy.

The LO/FTF Council seeks to support the internal capacity building of the trade unions and the development of regional and sub-regional networks among trade unions. At national level, the aim is to support the development of a strong national labour movement, which is able to support member organisations and local trade unions in recruiting and servicing their members and at the same time participate as a credible cooperating partner in the social dialogue with both government and employers.

The overall objective of the cooperation in Africa is to build capacity within the trade unions, strengthening their capacity to provide services to members and to promote a further democratic development, contribute to poverty alleviation, and to meet the many challenges at the labour market.

Target groups:

The broad target group is the organised wage-earners within the public and private sectors, as well as the potential members of the labour movement. Priority is given to gender equality and the ambition to encourage more women to take an active part in the work of trade unions.

The direct beneficiaries of support through the various programmes are the politically elected representatives, educators and labour activists of the partner organisations. The intended beneficiaries are the members and potential members of the trade unions, thereby including the broad population, not least the most destitute and marginalised, who are currently working within the informal economy.

Programme strategies:

Both at the national and the regional level, one or more of the following strategic intervention areas are included in the programmes:

1. Institutional and organisational capacity development
2. Education programmes and systems for shop stewards
3. Information and campaign activities
4. Administrative and financial project management systems
5. Organising strategies and development of trade union systems
6. Formation of networks and alliances
7. Social dialogue

Education activities and Advocacy are prioritised in all projects:

Education of trade union activists is an important element in the LO/FTF Council supported programmes in Africa. It enables the four focus areas mentioned above to be reflected and turned into capacity building in practice. Education activities range from establishing educational systems to shop steward education and study circle activities.

Capacity to carry out advocacy is an important element in any trade union participation in social dialogue in Africa, and advocacy has a high priority for the LO/FTF Council building capacity to participate in decision-making processes, including negotiations of collective agreements, improvements of working conditions and social security services.

Presence in Africa:

The LO/FTF Council currently has offices in Mozambique, Togo and Tanzania, which extend technical assistance and thematic advisory services to each project. Both the international and local advisors extend their services in close collaboration with the Head of the Africa Department, based in Copenhagen.

