

REPORT

OF THE

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP



ORGANISED BY THE

ORGANISATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF WEST AFRICA
(OTUWA)

HELD BETWEEN MAY 11TH-13TH, 2016 AT HOTEL DE BENTLY
UTAKO DISTRICT, ABUJA



Ulandssekretariatet
LO/FTF Council



International
Labour
Organization

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Acknowledgment

The leadership of OTUWA would like to acknowledge the contribution of a number of organisations and individuals who contributed in several ways to ensure the success of the Strategic Planning Workshop.

The leadership wishes to specifically thank the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Chris Ngige, who honoured the workshop with his presence. He addressed the Opening Session, and declared the workshop open. He also went beyond the call of duty to host all the foreign participants to a dinner in his residence, a gesture which participants greatly appreciated.

We would like to acknowledge the huge contribution of ILO ACTRAV, which apart from providing the bulk of the funding for the programme also graciously released its Head of African Trade Union Programme, Mr. Mohammed Mwamadzingo, to do a presentation on the activities of the ILO, and participated in the 3-day programme.

The ILO Country Office in Abuja similarly contributed immensely to the success of the programme. The Country Director, Mr. Dennis Zulu, not only approved funds for the accommodation of participants and for the venue; he also personally was on hand to present an address at the Opening Session.

The LO/FTF Council of Denmark sent its West African Head, Ms Lilian Napoé, to participate in the programme. The LO/FTF Council also made financial contribution to the organisation of the workshop.

Friedrich Ebert Foundation facilitated the participation of Comrade Steve Faulkner who was the Lead Facilitator at the programme. The Nigerian Resident Representative of FEF took time to address the Opening Session, while Comrade Remi Ihejirika, FEF's Programme Officer based in Lagos, actively participated in the 3-day programme.

The Solidarity Centre gave moral support to the programme. Its Country Director, Brother Christopher Johnson not only addressed the Opening Session, he personally participated along with two of the country staff.

Our host, the Nigeria Labour Congress, assisted with the preparation for the programme. Even when it became obvious that due to commitment with ITUC in Brussels he couldn't physically participate, the NLC President, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, was in constant touch with the official government representative while away to ensure that the Opening Session went without hiccup. The General Secretary, Comrade Peter Ozo-Eson, presented the Congress address at the Opening Session.

We are also deeply appreciative to OATUU, ITUC-Africa and EATUC, all of which sent top members of their leadership to share valuable experience with us.

Equally acknowledged are the African Regional offices of Public Services International (PSI) and Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) who sent representatives to participate in the workshop. We are also grateful to ActionAid Nigeria, whose representatives actively participated in the workshop and shared valuable civil society perspective with us.

The leadership would like to express appreciation to the ad hoc support staff – Mrs Olubunmi Okonoda and Ann Ella – who assisted with the other translation work outside the simultaneous translation which was contracted out.

Comrade Iduh L. Onah was largely responsible for writing a component of the report, while Comrade Steve Faulkner, the Lead Facilitator, drafted the strategic plan that emerged from the workshop.

We are indebted to all the participants, majority of whom were members of the OTUWA leadership – Executive Council and General Council members. Without their active participation, the programme would not have been as successful as it turned out to be.

To all of these and others not mentioned here by name, go our profound thanks and gratitude.

John E. Odah
Executive Secretary

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BACKGROUND

The Organization of Trade Unions of West Africa (OTUWA) was established in 1983 in Conakry, Guinea. It began on a very bright note under the leadership of Comrade Moutari from Niger Republic. OTUWA, unfortunately, ran into crisis when the leadership moved to Côte d'Ivoire. The death of the Secretary General which was followed by the political instability in the country, as well as problems of lack of institutional capacity combined to ground the organisation and making it dormant for a number of years.

West African trade union leaders after months of consultation amongst themselves with the support of the ILO, OATUU and ITUC-Africa on the need to revive OTUWA eventually held a re-launch conference in October 2015. At the conference, two major decisions were taken towards the revival and rebuilding process of OTUWA. One was the relocation of OTUWA headquarters from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to Abuja, Nigeria. The second decision was to appoint an Executive Secretary to man the Secretariat. Subsequently, the Executive Committee of OTUWA at its meeting in Dakar in November, 2015, approved the appointment of Comrade John Odah as Executive Secretary of OTUWA.

He assumed office in January 2016 at the new headquarters of OTUWA provided by the NLC on the 2nd Floor of the Paschal Bafyau Labour House, Central Business District, Abuja. The new Secretariat, along with the OTUWA leadership, in the efforts to properly reposition the organisation, decided to organise a strategic planning workshop with the primary objective of developing a strategic plan to guide OTUWA's engagements, operations and activities in the next five years. The workshop was held from May 11-13, 2016 at Hotel De Bently, Utako, Abuja.

Workshop Objectives

Given the above background, the objectives of the strategic planning workshop include the following:

- (a) To review the state of trade unions in the West African sub-region;
- (b) To articulate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of OTUWA as a sub-regional trade union centre;
- (c) To develop a strategy of engagement with ECOWAS and other multi-lateral organisations for the benefit of workers within the sub-region;
- (d) To discuss and develop a financial sustainability plan for OTUWA; and
- (e) To outline programmes and activities to be captured in a 5-year strategic plan for OTUWA.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S/N	Name	Organisation
1.	Caroline Mugalla	East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC), Kenya
2.	Idrissa Djibrilla	CDTN, Niger Republic
3.	Hien Augustin Blaise	CNTB, Republic of Boukina Faso
4.	Jennings A. B. Wright	Financial Secretary, OTUWA, SLLC, Republic of Sierra Leone
5.	Alberta Laryea-Djan	TUC (Ghana)
6.	Pius Quainoo	Building Workers International Africa (BWI), Ghana
7.	Ahounou Florentine Setondji	UNSTB, Republic of Benin
8.	Mademba Sock	President, OTUWA, Senegal
9.	Sophie Danielle Kourouma	Vice President, OTUWA, Republic of Guinea
10.	Liliane Napoé	LO/FTF, Lomé
11.	Sani Baba	Public Services International (PSI), African Region, Lomé
12.	Stephen Faulkner	Nine Plus Unions, Republic of South Africa
13.	Theresa Tawa Viskinda	Liberia Labour Congress, Liberia
14.	Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah	Ghana Agric Workers Union (GAWU), Ghana
15.	Emmanuel Nzunda	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Ghana
16.	Mohammed Mwamadzingo	International Labour Organisation (ILO), Geneva
17.	Kwasi Adu Amankwa	ITUC – Africa

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S/N	Name	Organisation
18.	Peters Adeyemi	Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)
19	Amachree Simero	Trade Union Congress of Nigeria
20.	Dr. Oko Comfort	Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)
21.	Abubakar Shanabo	Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)
22.	Abubakar A. Yakub	Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)
23.	Hauwa Hassan	Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)
24.	Tunde Aremu	ActionAid-Nigeria
25.	Kenneth Okoinene	ActionAid-Nigeria
26.	Nkechi Odinukwe	Solidarity Center
27.	Christopher Johnson	Solidarity Center
28.	Gabin Raphael	Solidarity Center
29.	Remi Ihejirika	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
30.	Chom Bagu	OTUWA Consultant
31.	Bunmi Okonoda	OTUWA Secretariat (Support)
32.	Ann Ela	OTUWA Secretariat (Support)
33.	Onah Iduh	OTUWA Secretariat (Support)
34.	John Odah	Executive Secretary, OTUWA Secretariat

Programme of Workshop

Date	Morning Session	Afternoon Session
Day One 11/05/2016	- Opening Session - Agenda Setting by Facilitation Team - ILO Budgeting System: 2016-2017 Circle Mohammed Mwamadzingo	- OATUU, Trade Union Activities and the West African sub-region – OATUU Secretariat. Comrade Emmanuel Nzunda - ECOWAS, Regional Integration Activities: The Role of Trade Unions. Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah
Day Two 12/05/2016	- ITUC – Africa & Trade Union Activities in the West African sub-region and reflections on SATUCC Comrade Kwasi Adu-Amankwah - Building an effective sub-regional Trade Union Federation: The example of EATUC. Comrade Caroline Mugalla - Group Activity 1 - Analysing the State of Health of Trade Unionism in West Africa.	- Group Activity 2 Partnership not Patronage– Working with Global Unions/CSOs/ Funders etc. - Group Activity 3 - Rhetoric or Reality: Developing/Evolving a Financial Sustainability Plan for OTUWA.
Day Three 13/05/2016	- Report back on Group work - Group Activity 4 - Towards a Strategic Plan for OTUWA	- Group Activity 4 (contd.) - Towards a strategic Plan contd. - Report back on Group Activity. - Activity 5 Workshop Evaluation - Closing Session.

Opening Session



Comrade Mademba Sock, President of OTUWA, delivering his welcome address.

The workshop, which was convened under the theme: *“Rebuilding and Repositioning OTUWA for Future Challenges”*, had in attendance the leadership of OTUWA and representatives of national centres across West Africa; representatives of International Labour Organisation (ILO), Friedrich Ebert Foundation Abuja, American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), the Danish LO/FTF and representatives of OATUU and ITUC-Africa. The workshop was addressed and declared open by Nigeria's Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Chris Ngige.

Welcome Address by President of OTUWA

In his welcome address, OTUWA President, Comrade Mademba Sock, told participants and guests that leaders of trade union centres in West Africa, while rising from the revival conference held in Abuja last year, gave his leadership the mandate “to reposition OTUWA, so that within a short period of time, we could catch up on grounds we have lost.”

According to Comrade Sock, a profound unifying feature that bound West Africans together despite inherent differences in size, language, culture and beliefs, is the

passionate desire for democracy and development among the peoples of the sub-region.

He said the pivotal roles played by trade unionists in the struggles for independence across West Africa, illustrate the fact that the trade union movement is not a mere appendage to the development of West African sub-region or the continent as a whole, but also a vital part of it. He said: “The trade union movement was present and organised at the birth of our independence and democracies. It has defended our democracies when they have been under attack by unconstitutional means, and they are still present now when our societies are faced with the impact of world recession and what appears to be another threat to our development. I want to reassure everybody here, that it is not improbable, given our history, to say that the trade unions will still be here, when most of us are but a distant memory to our great grandchildren.”

He noted that West Africa has many challenges – challenges of under- development, rampant poverty among the people, high rate of unemployment that continue to rise, insecurity, low intra-regional trade among West African states which is below 15%, with the bulk of trading still being carried out with Europe and America. He therefore urged participants at the workshop to devote substantial time to analyse these challenges and how best to address them.

“This is not an easy task. Poverty, under-development, enforced austerity, unemployment, super exploitation of our human and natural resources, and the growing gap between the 'haves' and the have-nots' are all challenges that we face across all of our borders. Made worse by the growth of corruption, the ever present threat of insurgencies, and the breakdown of law and order, and not least the plight of our young people, many of whom have not had a decent job of work since leaving school decades ago,” Comrade Sock said.

The OTUWA President pointed out that workers in West Africa are not happy with respect to the negotiations towards Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between ECOWAS and the European Union, as the sub-region is not acting as a unit, and as a result dividing its ranks with countries signing the agreement individually.

He said the leadership of OTUWA is prepared to strengthen the organisation so that it will be able to represent workers' interests and defend their rights across the sub-region. “This will not be an easy task, but we are determined, to make sure that our deliberations this week will lead to a renewed and vigorous effort to strengthen our bonds to each other, across national boundaries, and despite our diversity,” Comrade Sock said.

He ended his address by thanking the ILO, both the Workers Activities Branch in Geneva and the Country Office in Nigeria, the LO/FTF Council and FES, for their support in organising the workshop.

Address by President of NLC

In his address delivered on his behalf by the General Secretary of Congress, NLC President, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, stated that Nigerian workers are delighted in the revival of OTUWA after its conference held on 22nd October, 2015. He commended the ILO ACTRAV, ITUC-Africa, FES, Solidarity Center, OATUU, LO-Sweden and the OTUWA Conference Technical Preparatory Committee for their support in the course of the reactivation process which he said is happening against daunting odds.

Comrade Wabba charged the leadership of OTUWA by stating that as West African workers celebrate the return of the sub-regional body, it must be conscious of the burden and responsibility of actualizing the core mandate of OTUWA which is to promote, defend and protect the interest of the working people in West Africa.

He noted that in the years that OTUWA was dormant, trade unions in the sub-region have had very rough time addressing the myriad of challenges that confronted working people marked by the blind implementation of neoliberal economic policies imposed on governments by the IMF and World Bank. “This event is taking place within the context of global system crisis and the instability of West African economies, including all aspects of social life, unemployment, expanding informal jobs, lack of social protection, lack of decent work, non-respect of fundamental rights of workers, insecurity and immigration crisis,” the NLC President said.

Comrade Wabba appealed to workers across the ECOWAS sub-region to be committed to the rebuilding process in order to reposition OTUWA to meet the challenges on ground. He said a fundamental task for workers as a



Comrade Peter Ozo-Eson

collective is to support the integration process within the sub-region in order to foster economic, social and political consolidation and growth for sustainable development. “To achieve this, proliferation of trade unions, which weakens union power for collective action, must be checked as it constitutes a threat to trade union unity and development. Closely allied to this is the need to embark on an aggressive organising and recruitment of members to increase strength of unions to be prepared to confront the onslaught of global capital on the economy,” he said.

The NLC President challenged trade unions within the sub-region to be watchful and interrogate spurious bilateral and multilateral trade agreements signed by governments that literally translate to further enslavement rather than position African economies for growth to serve the interest of the people. He therefore called on trade unions to oppose the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and stop governments from buying into it while also advocating for industrialisation and trade among nations in the African continent.

Comrade Wabba identified corruption as one of the fundamental problems of the sub-region “which has permeated all facets of our national life and largely responsible for retarded development in West Africa. This has deepened inequality and poverty as the ruling class in collaboration with top government officials mismanage the economy and loot the public treasury with little or nothing left to provide social infrastructure and the enabling environment for sustainable development. Trade unions must hold policy makers accountable and campaign for good governance with robust engagement of policies in the interest of the poor and working families.”

Wabba identified the twin crises of rising insecurity and cross border migration in the sub-region as key challenges resulting from failure of leadership, neo-liberal globalization which has exacerbated poverty and inequality coupled with what he described as “geo-political military adventurism of the West led by America that has engendered social dislocation of some Gulf states, throwing up civil strife in Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Somali and Syria, including other countries in the Maghreb region.”

Solidarity Messages:

There were solidarity messages from the ILO, LO/FTF Council in Lome-Togo, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Abuja and American Solidarity Center, Abuja.

The ILO's solidarity message was delivered by its Country Director, Mr. Dennis Zulu. He said the ILO was delighted to be part of the workshop especially as it was meant to



Mr. Dennis Zulu

draw up a five-year strategic plan that will guide OTUWA in galvanizing the unity of trade unions in West African sub-region. He said the workshop is important step to making OTUWA efficient and effective organisation just as it will define the roadmap for its development. He said the “ILO looks forward to a vibrant OTUWA that would be able to engage the governments and employers in the sub-region in constructive dialogues that would benefit trade unions and its members in West Africa.”

Mr. Zulu recalled the Abuja conference where rebuilding process of OTUWA began and stated that with the strategic planning workshop, he was convinced that “OTUWA is back revived and ready to offer services to national trade unions in West Africa.” He thanked all the partners and donors that contributed to the revival process while also commending the leadership for the bold decision to relocate the headquarters to Abuja.

Mr. Zulu thanked the NLC for providing office accommodation for the organisation and noted that the decision to relocate OTUWA Secretariat to Abuja is a very strategic one in the context of its proximity to ECOWAS head office and the benefits it portends. He said while ILO's partnership with ECOWAS has impacted positively on countries of West Africa, his hope is that with OTUWA now operating in Abuja, “social dialogue at the regional level will be enhanced and this will in turn ensure quality services to national trade unions.”

According to Mr. Zulu, prevailing situation in the world of work marked by diverse changes in the last few years presuppose that more unpredictable changes are likely to characterize the world of work in the next few years. He therefore opined that the strategic planning workshop “offers us an opportunity to reflect on the past events in order to gaze into the future and anticipate appropriate actions so that workers would not be taken unawares.”

He revealed that the ILO is supporting the ECOWAS Commission to develop a Sub-Regional Decent Work Programme (SRDWP) for the ECOWAS region. The SRDWP,

he said, would be the framework for the delivery of the ILO's support to ECOWAS sub-region.

“It would be used to promote decent work as a key component of regional development strategies. Tripartism and social dialogue are central to the planning and implementation of a coherent and integrated ILO programme of assistance through the SRDWP.

“In addition, the ILO is also supporting the ECOWAS Commission through the Freedom of Movement and Migration in West Africa (FMM) Project in strengthening the functioning of the Regional Social Dialogue Forum.

“ILO supported the setting of the Bureau (office) for the Social Dialogue Forum, the Annual General Assembly held last year and the one that would be held in September 2016. The OTUWA is expected to play critical roles as the regional trade union representing the workers/trade unions in the ECOWAS Region in the development and implementation of the SRDWP and the Regional Social Dialogue Forum,” Mr. Zulu said.

He concluded his address by calling on participants “to come up with constructive ideas that would help to consolidate OTUWA and reposition it for sustainability.”

In its solidarity message, LO/FTF Council of the Danish Trade Union Federation, expresses its support and welcomes the initiative for the revival of OTUWA. Represented by Ms Lilian Napoé, International Adviser and Head of the West African sub-regional office based in Lome, Togo, LO/FTF gave assurances that it will support OTUWA to the best of its ability, just as it supported the discussions for OTUWA's revival and hosting of its congress. “Our wish is to see the emergence of a strong West African Organisation for stronger trade unions,” Ms Napoé said.

In a brief introduction, Ms Napoé said the LO/FTF is the Danish trade union council for international development co-operation and was created from the fusion of the two largest Danish



Ms Lilian Napoé

confederations in Denmark, namely; the Danish Federation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants (FTF) which were merged in 1987 to help sister trade unions in developing countries to strengthen their capacity. She said LO/FTF operates mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America and that to have better results and impact, the LO/FTF's relies on national, sub-regional, regional, and international cooperation.

She said at the international level, LO/FTF collaborates with global trade union networks affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation as well as sub-regional organisations like East Africa Trade Union Congress (EATUC) and South Africa Trade Union Congress (SATUC).

She commended OTUWA leadership for designing the workshop, for according to her, the organisation will through a forum like the workshop attain its objectives. "This will entail stock taking of OTUWA's present state, securing financial resources, involvement of ECOWAS, development of a 5-year strategic plan and especially its future implementation. It will also be necessary to develop a strategy that will involve ECOWAS for worker's welfare," Ms Napoé said.

The Resident Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Mrs Seija Sturies, in her short message, said the FES is happy at the revival of OTUWA. She stressed the commitment of FES to work with the leadership of OTUWA in building a formidable sub-regional centre for the defence of workers in the sub-region. She



Mrs. Seija Sturies

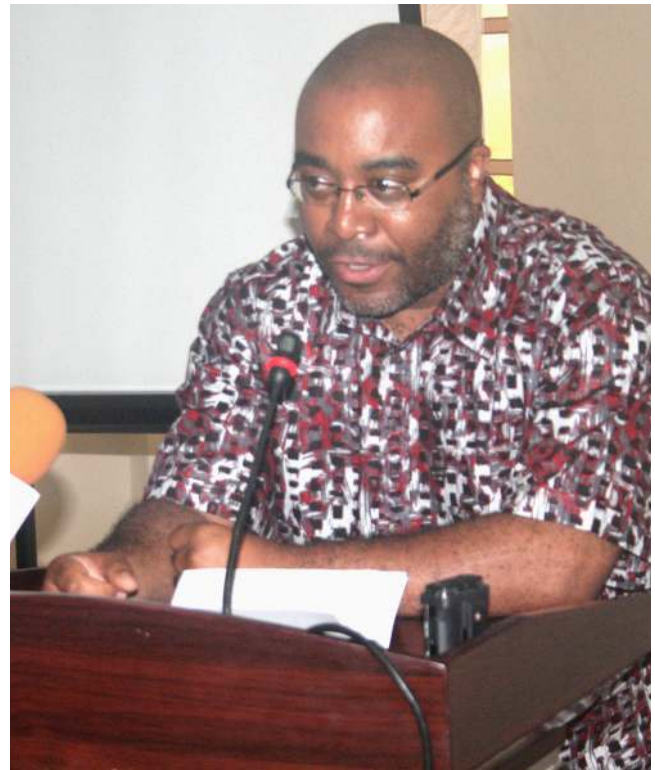
wished the workshop fruitful deliberations and looked forward to its outcome, praising the decision to develop a strategic planning for the organisation, going forward.

In its solidarity message, delivered by Mr. Christopher Keith Johnson, Country Program Director, West Africa, Solidarity Center, AFL-CIO, said it was happy and honoured to have participated in the re-launch conference of OTUWA last year.

Mr. Johnson acknowledged that there was sense of purpose at the conference with particular emphasis on identifying the challenges workers face and the

desire to develop a vision on how the trade union movement in West Africa will take a lead in overcoming those obstacles.

He said the Solidarity Center is excited on the take-off phase of OTUWA, the steps it is taking against the backdrop of numerous socio-economic challenges – the impact of falling commodity prices, globalization, etc. He said having engaged with trade unionists in the sub-region for some time, he is conversant with a range of social impediments West African trade unionists are dealing with such as instability and conflict, human trafficking, recovery from public health emergencies, privatization, the struggle



Mr. Christopher Keith Johnson

of trying to earn a living wage in the informal economy, gender inequality, and a closing of democratic space that is silencing the voices of working people. “Tackling these issues cannot be done in isolation. OTUWA's revitalization could not have come at a better time. Workers need unity now more than ever before,” Mr. Johnson said.

He said the AFL-CIO and the Solidarity Center will continue its relationship with OTUWA as it is an important vehicle in the conversation for social and economic transformation, and the quest for decent work and workers' rights in the sub-region as well as the mission to evolve campaigns that will bring true unity in trade union movement in West Africa.

Remarks from Minister of Labour and Employment

Before declaring the workshop open, Nigeria's Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Chris Ngige, called on OTUWA to be in the forefront on the campaign for the diversification of the economy of the ECOWAS sub-region. The Minister said the diversification of the economy of the ECOWAS sub-region was imperative, adding that the mono-economic bases of West African countries were largely responsible for their current economic crisis.

He noted that there is a big threat to the economy of the ECOWAS sub-region because of its largely mono-economic base, while expressing happiness that OTUWA has been able to overcome the challenges that had held it down for several years. “The revived

OTUWA must therefore help the governments and employers in the sub-region address socio-economic issues in the interest of the people of the sub-region. In Nigeria, we must look for other sources of revenue and the most easily identifiable one is agriculture and mining. We are also diversifying in trade and services. And because of the availability of fertile land in West Africa, the same thing goes to sister countries. OTUWA, which is our regional component of international trade unions, must, hence, lead this campaign for the diversification of the West African economy,” Dr. Ngige said.

Ngige called on OTUWA to help the governments in the region develop the requisite skills for the full maximisation of the utility of their cash crops. He said this would enhance local processing of the raw forms into finished products. He urged the workshop to be the starting point of this line of thought by getting the people to move from the area of white collar jobs to blue collar jobs in agriculture and mining.

He enjoined OTUWA to be “the catalysts in entrenching decent work environment in line with the ILO Convention which we all are signatories to.”



Dr. Chris Ngige

Highlights of Presentations

In the course of the three days that the workshop lasted, there were five presentations. The first presentation was made “*International Labour Organization: Bureau for Workers' Activities: Programme and Budget 2016-17*” was made by Mohammed Mwamadzingo, Regional Desk Officer for Africa, ILO/ACTRAV.

The second presentation, entitled: “*OATUU and Trade Union Activities in the West African Sub-region*,” was made by Comrade Emmanuel Nzunda, the Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity (OATUU); while the third presentation, titled, “*ECOWAS and Regional Integration Activities: The Role of Trade Unions*,” was made by Comrade Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah, General Secretary of Ghana Agricultural Workers Union, (GAWU).

The fourth presentation, titled: “*Building a Sustainable Sub-Regional Trade Union Organization and the Experience of EATUC*,” was made by Caroline Mugalla, EATUC Executive Secretary, while the fifth and final presentation was made by Comrade Kwasi Amankwa, General Secretary of ITUC–Africa, entitled: “*ITUC Africa Strategic Plan: 2016 – 2019: Theme: Strong Trade Unions for a Better Africa*”

At the end of the presentations, participants were broken into working groups with specific tasks to deliberate on and report back.

The report backs from the group were taken on the final day of workshop.



Mohammed Mwamadzingo

First Presentation

The first presentation, “*International Labour Organization: Bureau for Workers' Activities: Programme and Budget 2016-17*,” by Mohammed Mwamadzingo essentially revolved around the mission of ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities, its main areas of works and how relevant they will be to the future of OTUWA.

The mission of the Bureau/ACTRAV, according to Mwamadzingo, includes the following:

- Link between the International Labour Office and its key stakeholders: the workers' organizations
- Ensures that the concerns of workers' organizations are incorporated into all the activities of the International Labour Office
- Enables workers' organizations to make full use of the potential of the Office.
- Enables the Office to count on the support of workers' organizations in promoting and attaining its goals

The focus of the presentation, however centred on the activities planned by the Bureau/ACTRAV for Africa, generally and West Africa in particular, in the next two years – 2016-2017, which according to Mwamadzingo, may likely prevail in the next seven years.

He said the Bureau/ACTRAV works in many ways; as a special department internally as well as externally. Internally, the Bureau has direct access to the ILO Director General, whom the Bureau directly reports to while it equally works with other departments such as the Employment Sector, (which Mwamadzingo said happens to be the biggest sector within the ILO), International Labour Standards, Social Security, Labour Inspection, Employers Bureau, etc. Essentially, the Bureau of Workers' Activities, Mwamadzingo said has a lot of influence within the ILO offices outside headquarters – at the regional level, sub-regional level and country offices.

At the external level, the Bureau/ACTRAV collaborates with many organisations, for example, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and its sub-regional bodies, World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU). Apart from these organisations, the Bureau also works with a number of regional and sectoral trade union organisations such as BWI, PSI, Education International, etc. He said the major partners of the Bureau/ACTRAV are the national centres, taking almost 80 per cent of the work of the Bureau/ACTRAV, and which serve as the main entry points for the ILO in getting involved in trade unions activities in various sectors including trade union research institutions, education and organising, across the globe. He said that the national centres are aware of such collaborations.

According to Mwamadzingo, the basic work of the Bureau/ACTRAV is to, in close cooperation and through the Secretariat of the Workers' Group do the following:

- Give technical assistance to the political work of the Workers' Group,
- Help to organize meetings of the Workers' Group or its members with other ILO departments
- Provide information regarding the work of the Office
- Organize symposia or conferences on issues related to the agenda and priorities of the Workers' Group and in line with the issues and priorities of the organization.

For the next two years, Mwamadzingo said, the Bureau/ACTRAV will be concentrating on two major areas of work the eventual result of which is to achieve



Cross section of participants at the Opening Session.

social justice. He said for this, the Bureau/ACTRAV will place emphasis or prioritise working with workers groups on “rights” and “freedom of association and collective bargaining,” even though attention will still be on other issues.

Mwamadzingo explained that by “rights”, it is meant that the Bureau/ACTRAV will have greater focus on the promotion and implementation of international labour standards. He said this is because the ILO was created with the primary objective to set standards for the rest of the world to follow and as a result, the department will continue to set standards wherever possible by working with trade unions to set up new standards and ratify them. For those that have been adopted before, the Bureau/ACTRAV will work for their implementation, said Mwamadzingo. He said by setting, ratifying and implementing standards, all combine to end conflicts. He said when standards are set; the course of implementation usually brings conflicts. One of the duties of the Bureau/ACTRAV is to use its strong mechanism unit to ensure that the supervisory structure of the ILO works to resolve such conflict.

“So we put a lot of emphasis on the work of the Committee on Application of Standards (CAS), the work of the Committee of Freedom of Association (CFA) and the work of the Committee on Application of Conventions and Recommendation (the Committee of Experts). But again, that is not the end of it; it is our intention to follow-up on union and ACTRAV actions on the recommendations of these organs. So once it is been determined by the conference that Nigeria needs to implement the minimum wage

recommendation, it is our role as ACTRAV to make sure that it is not just mentioned at the conference but it is also implemented at the country level,” he said.

The second element of the priority accorded “rights” in addition to international labour standards, Mwamadzingo said, is the question of labour law enactment and reform. He said this is based on the understanding that there are many on-going labour law processes in many countries of Africa just like in other parts of the world, either at the constitutional or parliamentary levels. ACTRAV's role is to ensure that labour law reform processes will not at any level going to reduce workers' rights and this, he said, is done by way of elaboration, implementation, enforcement (inspection and labour administration), conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

The second priority is on “freedom of association and collective bargaining.” Mwamadzingo said there is no way a union can exist without enabling rights and in that regard, Convention 87 “is the mother and father of the labour movement.” He said in some countries, Convention 87 is never respected while in others (about six or seven), it has not even been ratified not to talk of implementation. He said as a result, it is the duty of ACTRAV to ensure that there is freedom of association to allow organising and equality as enabling rights. “Again, we also realised that the number one service that a labour union can provide its members is collective bargaining. So for us, we are going to put maximum emphasis on collective bargaining to ensure decent working conditions. So collective bargaining agreements must give us some understanding of income security or labour protection, occupational safety and health, working condition as well as other important issues that deal with employment as enterprises,” he said.

Mwamadzingo highlighted how ACTRAV will work together with OTUWA in the next two years; how ACTRAV will deliver what it has within the department. He identified six ways of delivering information to unions. These include the following:

- (i) Integrated planning and evaluation (HQ, Field, TURIN)
- (ii) (Global) Campaigns (identify action themes) (putting into consideration regional and sub-regional contexts)
- (iii) Research and knowledge (sharing arrangement) (for this year (2016), there will be more emphasis on stress at work and how trade unions can enable themselves to reduce stress at work)
- (iv) Training and education (which constitute much of ACTRAV's bargains. This will be done, through seminars, workshops, conferences, onsite and online education)

- (v) Publications/Materials/Meetings Global, regional, national
- (vi) Communication (internal/external/trade unions) E-platforms

In the final part of his presentation, Mwamadzingo dwelt on the major issues that ACTRAV will work with regional trade union organisations in the next two years. He said ACTRAV held a retreat that involved all the 50 senior specialists of ACTRAV that worked around the world to be able to identify the key challenges that trade unions face.

The nine officers that come from Africa, Mwamadzingo said, identified nine challenges that trade unions in the African continent face.

The number one challenge facing trade unions in Africa, he said, is division. “Proliferation of trade unions – whenever there is a small misunderstanding among ourselves, the easiest way out to resolving the misunderstanding is by creating another labour centre and this is increasing at a higher level than before. In some countries, such as Mauritius, there are nine trade union centres, a country with less than half a million labour force,) Mwamadzingo said while also mentioning Senegal while pointing out that OTUWA President, who is from the country, knows the number of centres there and the membership each has. He said such trends create disharmony in trade union organisations.

The second challenge facing trade unions in Africa, according to Mwamadzingo, is declining membership as a result of a number of factors.

He identified the complex political context especially in fragile states as the number three challenge facing trade unions in the continent. This he said is in addition to the question of labour migration.

The number four challenge is unemployment, especially of young workers and women, while number five is the challenge caused by the informal economy.

The number six challenge he identified is the violation of workers' rights which he said is on the increase in the African continent. He identified minimal coverage in collective bargaining as the seventh challenge that trade unions face in the continent, with deficits in decent work, especially in Global Supply Chains (GSC) in Export Processing Zones (EPZ) and also in extractive industries, as the number eight challenge. The number nine challenge is what he called limited communication skills and tools.

He said it is from these challenges that African trade unions will have to derive their actions on the way forward.

What then are the actions on the way forward? Mwamadzingo asked, and he went ahead to say that he will not try to handle the nine challenges one after the other, or in any particular order but rather by dealing with the ones that “we have the means of addressing and are of immediate concerns.”

He said one of the immediate challenges is the need to transform “our informal economies to formality.” He said this is a challenge of recent occurrence in terms of coming up with an international labour standard and with respect to Recommendation 204 of 2015. “So it is one of our priorities to look at mechanisms of transition to formality,” he said. Towards this direction, he said ACTRAV has placed emphasis on three sub-regions of Africa, namely, West Africa, the Indian Ocean Islands and East Africa. He said ACTRAV has been bold enough to say that it wants to work in West Africa with the following countries: Benin, Togo, Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Liberia and Senegal. This he said is based on the notion that these countries are likely to succeed in implementing Recommendation 204, although that does not mean that other countries will not work unto the implementation, but “for us, we want to have these as target countries to be able to deliver the implementation of Recommendation 204.

He said it is ACTRAV's hope that by the end of the period, national trade unions will be able to increase their strength in organising at the regional and national levels.

Another immediate challenge, according to Mwamadzingo, is labour migration. He said ACTRAV's intention is to promote decent work agenda to include migrant workers and that four sub-regions in Africa have been identified where this problem is very much pronounced. They include: West Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa what he called “the major labour migration corridors.” Some of the countries he identified include: Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, for West African sub-region; while for East Africa, the countries include: Kenya, Ethiopia and Eretria.

Mwamadzingo noted that in relation to the issue of migration is the issue of rights or the promotion of international labour standards. He said here, emphasis will be placed on standard setting, ratification, implementation and supervisory mechanisms. He said the emphasis here is to look at the decisions or supervisory mechanisms and make sure that follow-up on them are done. He said that at the moment, there are three major countries that have difficulties with supervisory mechanisms; namely, Mauritania (with focus mainly on slavery and inequality issues), Swaziland (with focus on Convention No. 87) and Zimbabwe (with focus on the follow-up on a myriad of issues with regard to the Mugabe regime).

Apart from the above, Mwamadzingo said ACTRAV also intends to look at ratification

and implementation in a number of countries. For the West African sub-region, he said ACTRAV has identified Guinea Bissau as one of the countries to place emphasis on because unions appear to be very weak there.

Another immediate challenge is collective bargaining which Mwamadzingo said is another big issue. ACTRAV's emphasis here is to see how it can bring back into the limelight the question of income security and wages. He said addressing this will be done through capacity building, sharing with unions at all levels models of collective bargaining agreements that cover a wider range of issues. He said there will be more emphasis in this regard on Burkina Faso basically because the country has a working structure of understanding among the four or five unions in the country. ACTRAV also wants to do the same with Niger Republic.

He said on the question of challenge of rights, ACTRAV has “identified the importance of dealing with the fragile states. In the period ahead, it is our intention, when talking about West Africa, to work very closely with countries that have just come out of fragile situation. Here I can identify Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.” He said ACTRAV intends to hold a regional workshop in collaboration with OTUWA on the aftermath of the Ebola virus. “We know the devastating effect it had with the countries I just mentioned – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – yes it is over now but as unions we need to have trial actions on what will be required next time it happens,” he said.

He said in this year's ILO Conference, there is going to be a discussion on global supply chains. He said it will or should not be just a discussion that will end at the conference but that ACTRAV has identified it as an area that needs to be worked on in the years ahead in terms of promotion of decent work agenda in the global supply chains.

He also identified green jobs, which he said is related to the above. Some of the countries identified in the West African sub-region in this regard include Togo and Cote d'Ivoire, which he said are highly affected as areas of export processing zones and global supply chains.

Mwamadzingo said on the challenge of freedom of association and collective bargaining, ACTRAV identified trade union unity as one of its major priorities. He said ACTRAV wants to work with trade unions to focus more on how they can work together. He said ACTRAV may not talk about merger but more about trade union unity through better understanding and addressing issues of representivity. He said this problem affects more severely French-speaking countries in Africa more than the others. He said ACTRAV will put more emphasis on Francophone Africa, more particularly in Cote d'Ivoire. He made reference to a court judgement passed a day before (May 10, 2016) dividing UGTC into two as the court had declared as illegal the



Participants during a presentation.

current set of leaders of UGTC. He said this immediately means that another centre is going to be formed in that country. This is apart from the fact that there are already in existence two other trade union centres with the same name. He said while it is ILO's priority to work in Cote d'Ivoire, it is not going to be easy but there is the need to have some understanding.

He said ACTRAV also wants to do the same in Burkina Faso by working for trade union unity in the country as well as in Mali and Senegal.

Mwamadzingo said the other challenge is Sustainable Development Goals: The Post 2015 Agenda. He said this is certainly an issue for ILO as it is also an issue of trade unions. He said Object No. 8 of the SDGs is about decent work and that this will be difficult to achieve in various countries if trade unions are not involved.

He said ACTRAV tried to think much ahead by posing the question: what is it that ACTRAV will do to realise Sustainable Development Goals? He said in this case, ACTRAV has identified five countries that it wants to be the lead countries in the next seven years and has tagged them as “pilot countries.” For West Africa, Senegal and Burkina Faso have been identified while Ghana and Nigeria may be able to follow-up subsequently.



Comrade Emmanuel Nzunda

Second Presentation

The second presentation, “*OATUU and Trade Union Activities in the West African Sub-region*,” by Comrade Emmanuel Nzunda, the Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity (OATUU), as the title suggests, centred mainly the interface between OATUU and West African trade unions.

Comrade Nzunda began his presentation by given a general overview of trade unions which he said “are primarily organisations pursuing the short-term economic interests of their members” and that the historic role of trade unionism essentially is its “mission to better the conditions of work and life of working women and men and their families, and to strive for human rights, social justice, gender equality, peace, freedom and democracy.”

He further asserted that contemporary trade unionism, more than ever before faces serious challenges from what he termed “uncontrolled capitalist globalisation” and as a result needs to strengthen its capacity through “effective international trade

unionism” in order to realize its mission. He stated further that internationalization/regionalization is necessary especially where unions are unable to achieve their economic goals at national level and in the context of the internationalization of trade, capital and labour markets which tend to render national trade union actions inadequate.

Apart from the above, Comrade Nzunda stated that internationalization is paramount in order to aggregate greater influence of global, continental, regional or sub-regional organisations on decisions that are likely to negatively affect labour market and labour movement at national levels.

He said the revitalisation of OTUWA is very significant as workers in West Africa need it as a common front to set standards and protect their rights in the sub-region through engagement with ECOWAS to, among other things, achieve results that are not normally included in the confines of a collective agreement, address globalization and regional integration issues and their impact to workers.

In this regard, Comrade Nzunda outlined five sets of indicators which he urged OTUWA to include in its strategic plan that it is putting in place. These include the following:

- (i) Whether trade unions have developed and empowered themselves as the guarantors of labour standards within the sub-regions and region as a whole.
- (ii) Whether trade unions have begun to coordinate their actions on regional/sub-regional bases.
- (iii) Whether there is a common ground for trade unions to coordinate their actions and functions.
- (iv) Whether trade unions have forged partnerships or strategic alliances with other actors in the region such as co-operatives; human rights bodies, research institutions, gender, youth, consumers and environmental groups, and
- (v) Whether these alliances and partnerships have contributed to strengthen the capacity of trade unions for collective action in the quest of common interests and shared values.

Speaking on OATUU and trade union activities in the West African sub-region, Comrade Nzunda said in line with OATUU Constitution, it is a legitimate mandate and obligation for OATUU to support and strengthen sub-regional trade union organisations to effectively represent workers in their respective regional Economic Communities in order to advance workers' and trade union interests. In that respect,

OATUU, he said, has been working closely with SATUCC, EATUC and OTUWA in Africa.

He said before OTUWA became inactive, OATUU and OTUWA jointly implemented few activities such as capacity building for trade union leaders, issues to do with youth employment, democracy and good governance as well as the strengthening of OTUWA.



Apart from these collaborative engagements, Comrade Nzunda stated that in its strategic plan for 2013/2016, OATUU set five priority areas, which include the following:

- (i) Strengthening of OATUU and its affiliates
- (ii) Decent work and Basic Needs
- (iii) Promoting Gender Equality in African Trade Unions
- (iv) Promoting Youth Employment and their Effective Integration/Participation in African Trade Unions
- (v) Pan-Africanism and Africa's Regional Integration

According to him, it is on item (v) above that the sub-regional activities of OATUU feature by way of reactivating inactive sub-regional trade union organisations, support or re-invigorating them to be effective in their respective areas. He said OATUU is therefore committed to enhance its collaboration with OTUWA and other sub-regional trade union organisations on a range of trade union issues primarily for the purposes of capacity building through joint meetings and seminars.

He revealed that OATUU is planning with the African Union to have a regional forum in which sub-regional organisations will be part of, as it is about Africa's regional integration, labour migration and other trade union issues.

Speaking on the levels and avenues of engagement at which OTUWA can engage, Comrade Nzunda said for the purpose of the strategic plan, the first point of call will be

ECOWAS through the ECOWAS Commission and its departments which he said are relevant. They include the following:

- (i) Education, Science and Culture
- (ii) Social Affairs and Gender
- (iii) Trade, Custom and Free Movement
- (iv) Political Affairs Peace and Security
- (v) Agriculture, Environment & Water Resources
- (vi) Energy and Mines
- (vii) Renewable energy and sustainable development

In addition to the above, Nzunda further recommended other institutions and specialized agencies of the ECOWAS, the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF) and its various national platforms as well as the ILO sub-regional office in Abuja, which he said is already working with OTUWA.

The second levels and avenues of engagement that Nzunda identified are at the continental level. According to him, Article 78 of the ECOWAS Treaty makes integration between ECOWAS and the African Community a major agenda, in fact, “an essential component of the integration of the African continent.” Major continental partners he identified include OATUU, ITUC-Africa and ILO Regional Office while equally networking with other sub-regional trade union organisations such as EATUC, SATUCC, OTAC and USTM. Nzunda stated that it is essential to articulate the areas in which collaboration will take place.

Also at the continental level Nzunda recommended “networking and collaboration with other like-minded organizations” to exchange and share information of interest.

For a comprehensive strategic plan for OTUWA, Comrade Nzunda outlined a range of strategies and lobbying activities. These include the following:

- (i) Constant follow up on the ECOWAS developments
- (ii) Campaigns for the implementation of protocols especially related to labour and employment issues
- (iii) Ensure that regional integration processes fully incorporate consultation with trade unions
- (iv) Demand for participation in various meetings and activities organized by the ECOWAS Commission



- (v) Seek constant consultation with the ECOWAS Commission
- (vi) Work closely with the ECOWAS Commission especially the Department of Social Affairs and Gender
- (vii) Conduct research activities and develop position papers in connection with the OTUWA agenda and issues for the informed contributions to ECOWAS meetings
- (viii) Push for the enhancement of social dialogue and institutionalization of tripartite structures at the ECOWAS level
- (ix) Organise tripartite forums/activities/consultations to market OTUWA positions
- (x) Use of information and communication technology to popularize OTUWA position
- (xi) Use of technical expertise from the ILO and OTUWA affiliates
- (xii) Build strategic alliances and networking with other actors

For a successful rebuilding process, Nzunda also canvassed for the commencement of activities and programmes by OTUWA. These activities, he said should include, among others, the following:

- (i) Strengthening of OTUWA and its affiliates

- (ii) Capacity building of OTUWA Secretariat
- (iii) Improve financial and human resources through organising
- (iv) Produce policy on migration, human and trade union rights,
- (v) Harmonization of labour legislation and standards in the region
- (vi) Strategies for realization of Sustainable Development in West Africa through Decent Work with focus on:
 - Goal 8-The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
 - Africa's priority for creating decent jobs for all, with particular emphasis on youth, women and persons with disabilities - The African Union 2063 Agenda
 - EPAs
- (ii) Monitoring and evaluation: Implementation of the ECOWAS Treaty and its instruments e.g. protocols such as:
 - The Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment (1979).
 - Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001)
 - ECOWAS Protocol on the fight against corruption (only eight countries ratified- not entered into force)

The backbone for a successful implementation of any strategic plan, Nzunda said is for a realistic “financial sustainability plan.” To achieve this, he said, there must be a realisable strategy to do the following:

- (i) Effective membership contribution by affiliates.
- (ii) Mobilization of resources from various cooperating partners/friendly organizations for the implementation of various OTUWA activities.
- (iii) Identify projects and put them into long and short term plans.
- (iv) Canvass for ECOWAS support.
- (v) Organise fundraising for OTUWA, for instance, by imposing a solidarity levy of one US dollar per member.



Comrade Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah

Third Presentation

The third presentation, titled, “*ECOWAS and Regional Integration Activities: The Role of Trade Unions*,” by Comrade Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah dwelt on the objectives and role of ECOWAS and the expected role of trade unions in the integration process.

Comrade Kingley began his presentation with a statement that everyone is happy that OTUWA has re-emerged, or that it has been “born-again” and therefore needs a strategic agenda. He said as a continuation of the conversation towards proper repositioning of the organisation, the presentation will focus on the challenges facing trade unions generally and specifically in the West African sub-region and how, on their own part, trade unions in West Africa could contribute to the ECOWAS Regional integration programme, the realisation of sustainable development goals in the sub-region and in the process defend and further the interests of labour and working people in the sub-region.

He said the basic work of OTUWA will centre on the traditional roles of trade unions with service to its members, partnering with civil society organisations to defend workers' rights and interests, promote social justice. In doing this, he said OTUWA will be guided by the principles of unity and solidarity, strive to be independent and uphold the ethics of democracy.

According to Comrade Kingsley, trade unions face a number of challenges today, which include challenges arising from various objective factors and internal dynamics that have not always been the healthiest for working people and their organisations, growing informal sector at the expense of the formal with declining rate of the employed leading to growing unemployment and underemployment, rising cases of inequality and insecurity of employment and the challenges of decent work deficits in the world of work.

He said it is important in trade union programmes like the workshop to remind workers of the various trade union instruments and mechanisms workers utilised to defend their rights. Such instruments include various legislations at national levels and by international institutions at global, regional and sub-regional levels. Some of the key legislative instruments he identified include:

- (i) ILO Conventions and Recommendations
- (ii) Other multi-lateral/global, regional and sub-regional conventions, including human rights (UN, AU, NEPAD, ECOWAS, UEMOA, etc.)
- (iii) National constitutions and institutions (i.e. National tripartite mechanisms, sectoral bipartite mechanisms, factory inspectorates, labour organisations, employers' associations, etc.)
- (iv) National legislations including laws, legislative instruments, etc.
- (v) Major rights include those relating to association and collective bargaining. Non-discrimination, freedom from child labour, freedom from forced labour
- (vi) Occupational Health and Safety in general
- (vii) Occupational Health and Safety in Agriculture in particular, and other sectors
- (viii) Social protection (challenge of migrant labour), maternity protection, informal economy, among others.

On the issue of the primary objectives of ECOWAS, Comrade Kingsley noted that regional integration remains the core and that this process involves deepening of cooperation among sovereign nation states within the West African sub-region in various aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life of the societies. He said it is for this reason that at its formation in 1975, ECOWAS was established to, among other things, “encourage, foster and accelerate the economic and social development of member states; improve living standard of West Africans; and promote social integration of West Africans through the establishment of community citizenship.”

According to him, the integration process was to be operationalized on some fundamental principles set by the founding fathers. These include: equality and interdependence of member states, inter-states cooperation, integration and collective self-reliance, harmonisation of policies and integration programmes, political and governance



concerns like non-aggression, peace, stability and security, promotion and protection of human rights, promotion and consolidation of democracy and accountability, economic and social justice.

Comrade Kingsley said as a federation of trade unions in West Africa, OTUWA is also guided by similar principles and should invariably draw on them in relevant specific advocacy programmes.

Apart from using the ECOWAS principles for advocacy, Comrade Kingsley also noted that OTUWA's strategic plan should seek to deal with, among other things, direct labour issues, formalisation of the informal economy, and engage on a broad range of development issues.

On direct labour issues, he identified for OTUWA to promote the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions, campaign for harmonisation of labour legislations, promote the development of labour institutions at the national and sub-regional levels through bipartite and tripartite mechanisms while also promoting decent work agenda through the ECOWAS Commission.

On the formalization of informal economy, Comrade Kingsley urged OTUWA to key into the general consensus to formalise the over 92% informal economy of the sub-region by building a consensus towards achieving a coherent labour approach. This, he said, may proceed with definite agreements on promoting basic standards of engagement and operation for women and men working in the informal economy, and suggested that for greater effectiveness, trade unions can pursue this concurrently in all West African countries.

According to Comrade Kingsley, since it is difficult not to link what OTUWA does with the development concerns at the various national levels; OTUWA should invariably be

interested on development challenges in the respective countries in the sub-region. He identified the development challenges facing West Africa to include the following:

- (i) The over-dependence on primary commodity export resulting to low level of trade among West African countries.
- (ii) Threatening international trade rules, as exemplified in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and WTO rules and the various iniquities heavily schemed against West African countries.
- (iii) The challenge of de-industrialisation now as against the situation some years after independence. The need to interrogate policies that brought about de-industrialisation such as SAP, etc.
- (iv) Unhealthy competition for FDI – race to the bottom
- (v) The menace of climate change, adaptation and mitigation challenges and their implications for the world of work.
- (vi) The concern for sustainability of development
- (vii) Peace, democracy and governance challenges – the corruption challenge

He said since every development issue entails labour dimensions and implications, OTUWA in its strategic plan needs to develop its strategy for intervention on these development issues by, among other things, following ECOWAS level discussions, identify labour and employment implications and share the information and perspectives as well as develop campaign and advocacy strategies and implement them.

To successfully carry out this engagement, Comrade Kingsley advocated for the strengthening of OTUWA as a trade union organisation as well as trade union organisations at the national level, carry out SWOT analysis of OTUWA and national centres, address the proliferation and fragmentation of trade unions, address the tendency towards trade union bureaucratism and opportunism, try to develop a new trade union culture, driven by the galvanised and harmonised energies of members at the national level, while also building strategic alliances and networking with other CSOs, although he placed emphasis on trade union terms in order to preserve the autonomy and independence of trade unions.

Comrade Kingsley stated that since organisation decides everything, it is very important to note in the beginning of the rebuilding process to steer OTUWA away from what he called undue bureaucratic structure. “It will not have much life, it will be there; it can even be very active in engaging at that level, big time; it is very easy. But that is not what we are looking for! We are looking for effectiveness! All of us agree on that. That effectiveness is going to be realised on when we have well developed organisation on the ground and also at the national level feeding into the organisation at the Abuja level; getting the representatives of OTUWA to account. I am not only talking about financial

accountability but also political, ideological and organisational accountability. What is it that we are doing and with what mandate and where does that mandate emanate from and what are the mechanisms for ensuring that that mandate emanates from the ground? It means taking a closer look at our organisational structures and their functioning such that we begin to breathe a new life into them; it means building solidarity from the ground,” Comrade Kingsley said.

He concluded his presentation stating that trade union role in ECOWAS integration process may be defined in terms of the following:

- (i) Coordination, harmonisation and integration of trade union efforts in line with the regional integration process
- (ii) Promoting standards and rights throughout West Africa
- (iii) Representation/observer status in ECOWAS structures and institutions – especially at the lower levels – so that trade unions can proactively engage.
- (iv) Contribute to revamping trade union organisation at national levels
- (v) Develop campaign and advocacy strategies that are consistently implemented and monitored for their effectiveness
- (vi) Sharing best practices – strengthen communication – use ICT technologies without alienating member organisations



Facilitator addressing participants



Comrade Caroline Mugala

Fourth Presentation

The fourth presentation, “*Building a Sustainable Sub-Regional Trade Union Organization and the Experience of EATUC*,” by Comrade Caroline Mugala, Executive Secretary of the East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC), as indicated in the title, centred on the objectives, organisational structure and activities of EATUC.

According to Comrade Mugala, EATUC is an umbrella organisation formed in 1988 with the aim of bringing together the national trade union centres within the East African Community Partner States, namely; Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania. EATUC is composed of the following East African trade union centres:

- (1.) Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU), Kenya,
- (2.) Trade Union Congress of Tanzania, (TUCTA),
- (3.) National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU), Uganda,

- (4.) Zanzibar Trade Union Congress (ZATUC),
- (5.) CESTRAR (Rwanda),
- (6.) COSYBU (Burundi).

EATUC has an observer status within the East African Community (EAC) structures.

EATUC has the following organs or structures:

- a. The Summit composed of Secretaries General of the six national centres that made up EATUC and the mandate of the Summit is to determine policies, principles of action and programmes of EATUC;
- b. The Committee of Experts composed of professional staff from EATUC affiliates serving as advisory body to EATUC and the Summit, and
- c. The Secretariat.

EATUC' vision and objectives, according to Mugala, are expectedly in line with the core philosophy of trade unionism. While its vision is: "To strive to achieve the long-term interests of workingmen and women i.e. decent work, decent life, social protection and socio-economic justice for all in the EAC," its objectives include the following:

- (i) To integrate workers' interests and efforts in the East African sub-region with a view to developing a common approach towards enhancing social and economic justice, through the participation of workers' organisations at all levels of regional integration
- (ii) To promote co-operation among workers in East Africa through the joint development of workers' education programmes, research activities, youth activities and integration of gender dimension in the trade union work.
- (iii) To ensure that the East African Community involves labour in all issues regarding regional integration,
- (iv) To institute tripartism and social dialogue as a method of work,
- (v) To promote the ratification of international labour standards by the Partner States

- (vi) To harmonise labour laws and policies in East Africa, and
- (vii) To promote the concept of free movement of factors of production in the region.

EATUC's major mode of operation since inception is through strategic planning which enables the organization to, among other things do the following:

1. Problem analysis and lessons learned in the process through a baseline survey.
2. Identify a limited number of priority areas (1-4) in line with national/regional development frameworks.
3. Set intended medium-term (5 years) outcomes, indicators, target and strategies.
4. Define an implementation plan with outputs, activities and resources.
5. Monitor the implementation and reporting on same.
6. Evaluate and review performance in order to adjust activities and outcomes accordingly.



Group Activity

In line with the methodology of operation, Comrade Mugala said EATUC's current Strategic Plan, with a lifespan from 2012-2017, seeks to:

1. Deepen ownership of EATUC
2. Strengthen EATUC and its affiliate organisations
3. Enhance meaningful participation and contributions of trade unions to the integration process.

The Key objectives and results of the five-year strategic, which will terminate next year (2017) are broadly in five categories with many specific targets.

The first broad category is to improve and strengthen EATUC Secretariat with the following as specific targets:

- (i) Build capacity of staff at EATUC secretariat
- (ii) Increase EATUC's financial base and sustainability through affiliation fees,
- (iii) Collaboration with partners,
- (iv) Organize joint regional activities with the EAC
- (v) Enhanced Service delivery to affiliates

The second broad category is the enhancement of EATUC social agenda and influence in the EAC regional integration process by undertaking the following specific activities:

- (i) Influence EAC Policy decisions
- (ii) Enhance understanding of EAC Common Market Protocol by EATUC affiliates
- (iii) Enhance implementation of the ILO Decent Work Agenda
- (iv) Enhance understanding of the informal economy

The third category is capacity building of national centers where EATUC shall undertake the following:

- (i) Enhance awareness of affiliates on the Common Market Protocol and workers' rights on free movement of labour



Group Activity

- (ii) Enhance effective engagement on issues of regional integration to foster decent work
- (iii) Enhance capacity in gender mainstreaming
- (iv) Increased trade union membership through organizing of special groups (youth, women, and informal economy)
- (v) Enhance trade union unity

The fourth broad category is the area of research, activities of which are anchored by the East Africa Labour Research Center.

The fifth broad category is in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

According to Mugala, while EATUC operates as an independent body of trade unions in East African sub-region, it closely monitors the activities of the structures of the

East African Community (EAC) in line with its observer status. She identified the structures and roles of the EAC as follows:

- (1.) The Summit, is responsible for the overall policy direction and control of functions of the EAC.
- (2.) The Council, among other functions, makes policy decisions for the efficient and harmonious functioning and development of the EAC.
- (3.) The Coordination Committees receive and consider reports from the sectoral committees and coordinate their activities as well as implement the decisions of the Council.
- (4.) Sectoral Committees, monitor and constantly review the implementation of the programmes of EAC with respect to other sectors such as Labour and Employment, the East African Court of Justice by ensuring the adherence to law in the interpretation and application of and compliance with the EAC Treaty; coordinate the activities of the East African Legislative Assembly as well as debate and approve the budgets of the Community. The Sectoral Committees also consider annual activities and report on the activities of EAC as well as discuss all matters pertaining to the Community.

Even though its status within EAC structure is basically on observer status, Mugala said EATUC operates within the EAC through carefully planned strategies and lobbying. Among it is activities include organising tripartite fora and consultations, harmonization of employment policies in the sub-region, harmonization of labour laws, engagements with relevant authorities on social security issues, employment and social rights and decent work.

EATUC's other activities with EAC capacity building in the areas of gender , lobbying and advocacy, EPA, global financial crisis, good governance and democracy, EAC common market, extractive industry, tax justice and informal economy while also campaigning for the implementation of protocols which accommodate labour and employment issues.

EATUC also ensures that regional consultative and integration processes fully involve trade unions in all sectors, work closely with the EAC secretariat especially the

department on immigration, labour and refugee management, encourage trade union contact, coordination and solidarity on labour and employment issues by depending on the committee of experts from EATUC affiliates, conduct research to develop thematic positions in connection with EATUC agenda and make informed contributions to the EAC by, for example, developing trade union manual on regional integration, good governance and democracy, employment and social charter, EPA, employment policies, informal economy, among others.

EATUC also utilizes information technology (Facebook, twitter handle and other social media instruments) for its campaigns and advocacies such as campaign for enhancement of social dialogue and institutionalization of tripartite structures at the EAC, awareness creation on MOU with the EAEO- Joint 4-year project at the sub-regional, national and sectoral levels and so on.

At the continental level, EATUC cooperates and collaborates with ITUC-Africa, OATUU, ITF, FETUEA, SATUUC, among many others. It also has built a strong relationship with the East Africa Civil Society Forum, East Africa Employers Organization, East Africa Law Society, East Africa Business Council, Action-Aid, Tax-Justice Network and East Africa Tax Justice Network. Others organisations EATUC has strong alliance with include Seatini, East Africa Local Government Associations, East Central Africa Social Security Association, StreetNet and JustJobs.

In the area of financial Sustainability, EATUC's main source of fund comes from affiliation fees, which Comrade Mugala said is calculated based on membership. EATUC's other sources of finance come from cooperating partners namely; FES, ILO, LO/FTF, LO-Norway, FNV, SolidarityCenter, DI, DECP and Action-Aid.



Comrade Kwasi Amankwah

Fifth Presentation

The fifth and final presentation made by Comrade Kwasi Amankwah, General Secretary of ITUC–Africa, is entitled: “*ITUC Africa Strategic Plan: 2016 – 2019: Theme: Strong Trade Unions For a Better Africa.*” The presentation illustrates the overarching objectives of trade union attention and activities in the context of the current and emerging challenges that trade unions, and by implication, workers, face in contemporary Africa.

Comrade Amankwah began his presentation by stating that ITUC-Africa has affiliates from all the sub-regions of the continent, and that it should be noted that the sub-regional trade unions bodies have been organised by themselves in the sense that the East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC) and the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC) have been organised with on-going structures that represent their respective affiliates vis-à-vis their sub-regional communities; the

East African Community Partner States and Southern Africa Development Community, respectively.

According to Amankwah, an interesting feature to note in relation to EATUC and SATUCC is the way in which they have tried to develop what they called “social tracker” as a basic standard they used to push all the governments in their sub-regions.

He said for West Africa, the situation might be different simply on the basis of the fact that, though OTUWA may be the oldest sub-regional trade union organisation, it has been “quite un-functional for a variety of reasons.” He said notwithstanding the differences in the setup with the sub-regional bodies, one of the key things that the different sub-regional trade union bodies in the continent can become part of a whole. He said this is essential because if not carefully handled, the different sub-regions will, rather than work together, begin to compete with one another. He said one of the roles the ITUC-Africa has played is to engage with the sub-regional bodies to avoid those possibilities. “So going into the future, I will say, especially for those who are still young in the movement, that we should be targeting to develop a structure which fits into one hole...It will take a lot of courage but I think it is possible, and in fact if we did that, we will find that leadership questions will become quite easy to manage. For instance in the constitution of ITUC-Africa, the sub-regional leaders are expected to be part of our structures, take part in all our meetings. So if they get a clear status there, for instance, transiting from sub-region to region becomes easy,” Comrade Amankwah said.

He said in the past few years that OTUWA has not been functioning, the ITUC-Africa in collaboration with LO/FTF had been forced to focus on some issues in West Africa which are actually the responsibilities of OTUWA, such as issues in relation with the informal economy and social security. “Fortunately for us, and for OTUWA, we are situated in West Africa and we are able to pick those things and work on them for OTUWA when LO/FTF wanted to do some work in those areas. If OTUWA were there, I know it would have been the principal driver while we would have offered them support as we are expected to do,” Comrade Amankwah said.

According to Amankwah, the focus of his presentation is to reflect on what ITUC-Africa has done as far as strategic plan is concerned. He said ITUC-Africa organised a congress in November last year on the theme, “Building Strong Trade Unions for a



Group Activity

Better Africa.” He said in the congress, there were a number of sub-plenaries, one of which was on the rights, democracy, governance, peace and security where those issues were deliberated on and how they affect workers. There was another sub-plenary on minimum wages, public services with particular attention on public health and social protection, while a third plenary was on the state of ITUC-Africa, where focus was on organising. The fourth plenary, he said, was on structural transformation in Africa and resource mobilisation with a sub-panel on migration (as it has become a big question in the continent) and how to manage it. There was also a session on climate change.

He said out of the conclusions of the congress on these six major areas, the ITUC-Africa developed for the General Council a strategic plan, which takes the theme, “Strong Trade Unions for a Better Africa,” as its reference point.

Comrade Amankwah said the core of the strategic plan is to, apart from the reaffirmation of the mission and vision of ITUC-Africa, become as representative of the interest of workers as possible in the continent. He said in the strategic plan, the first thing that was captured was to do a SWOT analysis of the organisation – by

identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of organisation as at now. The analysis includes the following:

Strengths:

- (i) Growing internal trade union democracy within affiliates
- (ii) Growing participation and representation of women unionists at the national and
- (iii) international levels
- (iv) Growing participation and representation of young unionists at the national and international levels, Continent-wide representativeness
- (v) Growing Visibility
- (vi) Participatory management system
- (vii) Open internal communication
- (viii) Transparent and accountable
- (ix) Professional staff (Competent and committed personnel), Intergenerational balance amongst staff
- (x) Team spirit
- (xi) Establishment and staffing of the ITUC-Africa Labour Research and Education Institute
- (xii) Improved official bilingual competence
- (xiii) Ownership of headquarters secretariat
- (xiv) Conference facilities
- (xv) Track record of achievements
- (xvi) Solidarity support of the ITUC
- (xvii) Appropriate monitoring and follow-up of project activities at national level

Weaknesses:

- (i) Low trade union density (less than 10%)
- (ii) Inadequate attention paid to organising and recruitment



Group Activity

- (iii) Fragmentation of unions at national level
- (iv) Poor membership records
- (v) Poor payment of affiliation fees
- (vi) Poor reporting from some national organisations
- (vii) Dependency on external funding for activities
- (viii) Limited regional & linguistic representation in staff complement
- (ix) Absence of human resource policy and plan

Opportunities:

- (i) Growing discontent with social economic and political status quo by Africans
- (ii) Growing mass activism
- (iii) Growing mass consciousness
- (iv) Strategic partnerships - ILO, regional economic communities, African Union (AU), Third World Network-Africa, Africa Labour Research Network (ALRN), Tax Justice Network–Africa (TJN-A), Federation of African Journalists (FAJ)
- (v) Other partners: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Society for International Development (SID), University of Lome, University of Cape Coast, Media

Foundation for West Africa, Africa Labour Media Project

- (vi) Growing sub-regional trade union organisations
- (vii) Strengthening Cooperation with GUFs
- (viii) Big potential for increasing trade union membership
- (ix) Increasing ITUC-Africa affiliates
- (x) Potential for affiliation of independent trade unions to national centres
- (xi) Growing acceptance of the decent work agenda globally (Social Partners, UN SDGs, AU Agenda 2063)
- (xii) Growing acceptance of the importance of social dialogue for development
- (xiii) Labour-friendly media – ALMP, Radio Labour
- (xiv) Growing accessibility to ICT, Labour Start. Media Foundation for West Africa
- (xv) New ILO labour protection instruments (Conventions 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers and Recommendations 200 on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 202 on National Floors of Social protection, 204 concerning the Transition from Informal to the Formal Economy, and Force Labour Protocol)
- (xvi) Emergence of China, India and , South Africa, Brazil (BRICS) as global player
- (xvii) Cooperation with CSOs

Threats:

- (i) Bad governance in many countries
- (ii) Civil Conflicts
- (iii) Growing terrorism in Africa
- (iv) Growing impunity
- (v) Labour market deregulation
- (vi) Growing poverty
- (vii) Widespread corruption
- (viii) Youth unemployment
- (ix) Deteriorating working and living conditions
- (x) Deepening inequalities
- (xi) Relentless pursuit of Neoliberalism
- (xii) Poor infrastructure (economic, social)
- (xiii) Constitutional & Electoral processes manipulation
- (xiv) Weak industrialization

- (xv) Low agricultural productivity
- (xvi) Weak regional integration
- (xvii) Resurgence of xenophobia
- (xviii) Poor management of Migration
- (xix) Poor public health
- (xx) Poor social services
- (xxi) Climate change and environmental disasters
- (xxii) Falling oil prices
- (xxiii) The new scramble for Africa

According to Comrade Amankwah, looking at the SWOT analysis, ITUC-Africa developed a number of programme areas with each highlighting the specific issues, objectives, expected results, indicators and the proposed activities for their realization outlined over the four year period of the plan. The programme areas include the following:

- 1) Human and trade union rights.
- 2) Peace and security (which Amankwah said was not part of the strategic plan before the current one but has to be included now arising from the rise in cases of terrorism).
- 3) Organising and workers empowerment (which he said is not limited to recruitment alone but encompass trade union unity as well as youth empowerment).
- 4) Gender equality
- 5) Extending social protection
- 6) Climate change and environment (with the issue of climate change being very real)
- 7) Structural transformation for Africa's development (unions need to drive the process for change so that working people in the continent will not continue to be hewers of wood and drawers of water or to operate the same way that our forefathers did. Unions need to act to see how attention can be paid to structural transformation in the continent).

- 8) Finance and logistics (if there is no money, you can do little or nothing).
- 9) Communication (there is need to improve our communication).

He said in relation to the programme areas, it must be noted that what they did was to identify the programme areas and pose basic questions as to their relevance to trade unionism or ITUC-Africa today. He said it is in response to questions like that that achievable objectives, expected results, indicators and the proposed activities for their realization were identified and outlined.

According to Comrade Amankwah, the last two programme areas – finance and logistics and communication are essentially internal but very crucial to driving the other programmes.

He stated that in terms of finance, the direct affiliation fees for ITUC-Africa account for less than 10 per cent of its total income and that even the payment of such affiliation fees is erratic with many members paying their affiliation fees only in the year congress is held. “So the three years before, I don't know what people expect the organization to do,” he said.

He said luckily for ITUC-Africa, as part of a global organization, the ITUC-Africa gets some allocation, which represents the core funding. He said projects make up the greater percentage of the total budgeted income with the funding coming from the global unions. Based on this, Comrade Amankwah said the conclusion of ITUC-Africa is that this is not a sustainable financial situation and that this perspective, though not reflected in the strategic plan, it was however highlighted in the financial report. He said that was important against the backdrop of the fact that project funds have been diminishing over the last four to five years, with many of the project partners closing their offices as the source of their funds dwindle. “If we want to be viable organisations, and especially if we want to be independent, we need to pay attention to finance. One of the things we want to do during this period is to set up a regional solidarity fund so that those who are stronger can contribute so that we can use that to support each other. I think it is possible for us to learn how to do some things for ourselves,” Comrade Amankwah said.

He said in the area of communication, which may not be as expensive, there is the need for trade union leaders to be in touch with one another by utilizing IT facilities for interpersonal communication as well as for campaigns and advocacy.

REPORTS-BACK FROM GROUP WORK ACTIVITIES

Group Activity One: *Analysing the State of Health of the Trade Union Movement in West Africa*

<i>Activity 1:</i>	<i>Analysing the State of Health of the Trade Union Movement in West Africa</i>
<i>Aims:</i>	<i>To help us to:</i> · <i>Contribute towards building an accurate picture of the trade union movement in each of our own countries, and across the sub-region as a whole.</i> · <i>Think about the impact of trade unions over the last period on workers, and the perception of workers, government and the employers of labour.</i> · <i>Identify the most pressing challenges that we face, and begin to think about possible responses that will strengthen trade unionism in our countries and region.</i> · <i>Begin to think about the role of a structure like OTUWA in strengthening the power of trade unions.</i>
<i>Task:</i>	<i>Working in a small group you are asked to address the points below and then report back to the plenary session.</i> · <i>There is little doubt that the trade union movement globally has been on the defensive for too long. Have there been any mitigating factors that are specific to West Africa that help us to understand the particular state of health of the West African trade union movement?</i> · <i>Reflecting on the State of Union Movements in your group, what would you say are the most pressing challenges facing them, and what has been their most important advances or strengths?</i> · <i>Given the current economic, political and social environment, what should be the purpose and benefits to workers of a regional trade union formation like OTUWA?</i>

Report-back on Activity One: There was a re-alignment of the tasks and participants were asked to identify a set of challenges facing the labour movement in the sub-region. It was decided that two key challenges should be taken out of the identified challenges and the two should be: (i) Challenges of trade union fragmentation and (ii) Women and youth inclusiveness in trade unions.

- (i) Priority challenge N° 2: Supporting affiliates towards strong and united national trade union centres (fragmentation)

Step 1: Addressing the Challenge of Trade union Fragmentation

- The situation is known concerning the fragmentation and breaking away of national trade union centres, it is a reality in some countries and constitutes a challenge for trade unions.
- What must we or do we (OTUWA) want to do now, in the medium and long terms:
- Stop the fragmentation and the breaking away;
- Promote trade union culture and democracy in organizations;
- Encourage unity of trade union activities by consolidating what is existing; (NB: strengthen unity of labour movement);
- Encourage inter labour union relations; unity of action, joint action committees (training, united celebration of May Days on 1st May, etc.)
- Support professional election processes in countries and make a rule out of it at the community level in terms of harmonization;
- Establishment of OTUWA focal points in countries where there are no more affiliate;
- Assist trade union centres in recruitment drives (organizing);
- Denounce the excesses in countries where trade union rights are repressed and take measures for the representation of trade union centres at the OTUWA level;
- Collaborate with ITUC-Africa, OATUU and global unions as well as other research institutes in terms of expertise on specific issues.

(ii) Women and Youth Inclusiveness in Trade Unions

Challenges

- Under representation of women and youth
- Inadequate representation of issues relating to youth and women
- Inadequate and lack of initiatives to address youth and women issues constitutionally and in terms of policy
- This reduces the legitimacy of the trade union created by lack of their representation considering that women and youth form the majority of the union movement

- Lack of policies or poor implementation of policies and constitutional articles on youth and women
- Presence of functional women committees/commissions and youth committee, budgets set aside (OATUU, COSATU, NLC, EATUC, ITUC-AFRICA are examples of organisations where these structures exist)'
- Best practice from other sub regions, GUFs and others

Steps Towards Remedy

- Aims - Functioning women and youth structures to increase their representation and participation in decision-making process, programmes and activities which will positively impact on growing unions
- Increase membership, influence of the trade union that cuts across gender and age.
- OTUWA needs to have a policy on youth and women as an immediate term consideration that will give direction on how to establish functioning structures and constitutional inclusion
- Baseline/data collection on women and youth -Policy-Education and awareness raising-increase representation and participation leading to enhanced building of capacity.
- Target-women and youth membership
- Policy document on women and youth should clearly define who is responsible for what
- Time frame of five years is manageable with annual progress reports and evaluation
- OTUWA in itself needs to be strengthened; a priority in this regard is that it should constitute the women and youth committees as soon as possible.
- Report back through regular progress reports presented to relevant OTUWA's constitutional structures

Human and Material Resources

- OTUWA should develop a resource mobilization strategy that takes into consideration the need for women and youth issues that are addressed within its strategic plan.

Group Activity Two: *Achieving Financial Stability (Sustainability) and Strengthening the Secretariat*

Activity 3: Financial Sustainability: Rhetoric or Reality?

Aims: *To help us to:*

- *Clarify our thinking in terms of financial self-sufficiency and what it means for independence and autonomy and on-going relationships?*
- *Consider the funding environment domestically and internationally and what the implications are for trade unions.*
- *Begin to construct a sustainability framework that can take us forward at this time.*

Task: *In small groups, look at the points below and then share with the workshop.*

- *How realistic is the notion of achieving financial self-sufficiency in the current climate, and is it even desirable? What are the implications for unions of income derived solely from membership subscriptions? Please explain.*
- *How can we guard against any possible undermining of trade union independence when utilising funds from external agencies? How can we win the commitment of workers to projects that might require support over and above subscriptions?*
- *What could be the elements of a financial sustainability framework that could be explored in more detail, particularly for the activities of OTUWA?*

Report-back on activity: The above activity was modified with the heading changed to: “*Achieving Financial Stability/Sustainability and Strengthening the OTUWA Secretariat.*” The issues the group was tasked to address were also streamlined as follows:

1. What is the Challenge?
 - a. Low level and irregular dues payment
 - b. Poor management of resources
 - c. Non-exploration of other funding opportunities
 - d. Weak staffing situation and poor remuneration
 - e. Weak affiliate support
 - f. Poorly equipped secretariat
 - g. Absolutely necessary to make members appreciate the mission of OTUWA
 - h. Let affiliates understand the losses that will arise if we do not get the OTUWA working and how they will translate into concrete losses for workers

2. What are we concretely seeking to achieve?
 - a. Well-staffed, well equipped secretariat that is sustainable and delivers on its mandate; that makes use of capacities and competencies within the affiliates and taps into the existing resources of ITUC-Africa and OATUU
 - b. Financial stability (sustainability) based on:
 - i. Regular payment of subscription
 - ii. Levies
 - iii. ECOWAS dedicated funds
 - iv. ILO dedicated funds
 - v. Other Commitments from Partners, e.g. FES, LO/FTF, etc.
 - c. Secretariat – Short term
 - i. Four personnel – Executive Secretary; Programmes Manager; Bilingual Finance and Administration Manager; Utility Officer (– driver and logistical support)
 - ii. Secretariat supported by a Technical Working Group – made up of persons from the affiliates
 - iii. Equipment and logistics – office space; meeting room; laptops; desktops; vehicle; internet; ACs; fridge; stationery; projector; website; Facebook page; twitter handle; stand-by generator; etc.
 - iv. Efficient, robust systems and procedures that ensure highest level of accountability first and foremost to affiliates and also to partners and donors
 - v. All these draw strength from the OTUWA Constitution and the Policies of Affiliates but they should be re-enforced by way of resolutions from the decision-making structures of affiliates
3. How and when are we pursuing these?
 - a. Short term – up to September 2018
 - i. Start-up processes fall on the NLC commitments covering one to two years
 - ii. Finalise Strategic Plan and mobilise affiliates around it

- iii. Use special projects to raise committed and long-term partnership relations
 - iv. Executive Secretary and NLC reps in OTUWA structures SHOULD approach ECOWAS and others for sustainable funding.
- b. Medium term - 3 - 7 years:
 - i. Other affiliates make commitments
 - ii. Structured support for work of OTUWA
 - iii. Integration of existing sub-regional groupings/networks into OTUWA work.
- c. Long term - 8 years plus:
 - i. Endowment Fund and other investments
 - ii. ECOWAS dedicated fund built into ECOWAS budget
- 4. How do we ensure that we are on course?
 - i. Quarterly report within the structures
 - ii. Mid-year report
 - iii. Annual report
 - iv. Regular intensive communication – to ensure sustained and growing political will on the part of all.

Group Activity Three: *Partnership, not patronage! Working with Global Union Federations, Civil Society Organizations, Funders and our own Trade Union Partners and Representative Organizations*

Group Activity 3: Partnership, not patronage! Working with Global Union Federations, Civil Society Organizations, Funders and our own Trade Union Partners and Representative Organizations

Aims: To help us to:

- Think through the possibilities of working with a range of organisations that share similar values in the quest to represent the interests of workers and their communities.
- Draw on our experiences of working with a range of organisations and how best to do so effectively.
- Make sure that we play a full and meaningful role with friendly organisations and establish lasting and mutually beneficial relations.

Task: Working in small groups address the points below and then report back.

- (1) What has been the experience of members of your group of working with civil society organisations nationally and regionally?
- (2) What do you think the role of GUFs could be in strengthening structures like OTUWA?
- (3) What are the lessons that you have learned from working with funding bodies like the FES and others?
- (4) What are the most important guiding principles that should govern our relations with all of our partners?

Report-back of Group Three is as follows:

Task 1: Experiences of Group Members:

All the members of our group have had varying experiences with the following stakeholders:

- CSOs at the national level: Human rights defence organizations, consumer rights organizations, political parties, especially the opposition political parties, etc.
- At the regional level: Third World Network-Africa (TWN-Africa), StreetNet, Mutual Health Sub-regional Networks, Justice and Fiscal Rights Network, etc.

The experiences are presented in a structured manner through up-to-date networks and alliances on issues relating to the unlimited interests of workers: (Labour freedom, ratification of conventions on household workers, child labour, war against high cost of living and the development of good governance and transparency in the management of public utilities, democracy, social protection, universal health insurance, equitable trade, Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), etc.

Task 2: Role of GUFs in Strengthening OTUWA:

Bring in expertise in specific sectors, assistance, capacity building, trade, alliances in organization of campaigns, lobbying and partnership relationship.

Task 3: Lessons Learnt:

Readiness, good collaboration and shared expertise. Furthermore, difficulties in aligning national plans of action with the priorities of technical and financial partners. Improvement of communication, respect of commitments especially on financial issues.

Task 4: Guiding Principles:

Respect of commitments on either sides (regularity in the production of narrative and financial reports as well as transfer of funds within time frame).

Group Activity 4: Towards a Strategic Plan for OTUWA

Activity 4: Towards a Strategic Plan for OTUWA

Aims To help us to:

- *Begin to assemble the beginnings of a Strategic Plan to take OTUWA forward over the next four years.*
- *Think through how best to ensure that OTUWA is seen to be relevant to the needs of workers and is respected by other social partners.*
- *Reflect on the challenges we have identified, and the principles that should guide our responses to them.*

Task Working initially in plenary:

- *The Facilitation Team will introduce a Strategic Planning tool that should help us to construct a framework on which to build a comprehensive and coherent strategic plan for OTUWA.*
- *After introducing the framework, we will move into commissions to work on particular areas of activity, and then report-back and pass through a process of consolidation.*
- *A draft Strategic Plan will then be pulled together, and the most pressing tasks to realise it will be identified and responsibilities allocated accordingly.*

Group Report-back:

This activity was carried out by the workshop on which a number of suggested thematic areas were additionally drawn. The Draft Strategic Plan (below) put together by the Facilitating Team is informed by the inputs from the exercise.

OUTLINE OF A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OTUWA 2016–2020

Considerations on Purpose of the OTUWA Strategic Plan

It is acknowledged that a Strategic Plan of this type, which is fundamentally developed to rebuild and reposition OTUWA must by necessity be seen as a living document. As OTUWA develops further, there will be a need to elaborate the purpose and scope of the Strategic Plan, in order to reflect the realities of Trade Unionism in the West Africa region and beyond. Its purpose however at this stage can be summarised as follows:

- To outline a range of measures to rebuild and strengthen OTUWA within a particular time frame and in respect of the human and material resources available to it.
- To present a framework to systematically address a range of collectively identified and prioritised challenges facing the trade union movement and workers in general.
- To provide a coherent implementation plan that can be monitored and evaluated in order to make necessary adjustments should the need arise.
- To record the allocation of responsibilities, duties and resources to ensure transparent accountability and cost effectiveness.
- To mobilise active participation in the work of OTUWA from Trade Unions and partner organisations including civil society, and to enlist their on-going support.

Summary of the Context

While it is possible to identify a range of challenges that face the trade union movement across the Continent associated with decades of under-development, and systemic poverty, the failure to address the needs of the people through inappropriate structural adjustment programmes, has resulted in chronic economic hardship and unemployment. More latterly, the implementation of austerity policies has tended to worsen impoverishment, and increase inequalities and decrease opportunities. In many of the countries of the West Africa Region, a range of specific challenges have compounded the more general features, and not least amongst them has been the incidence of military intervention and conflict, the undermining of the democratic dispensations established at Independence, the institutionalisation of corruption, and more latterly the health and social crisis caused by the Ebola epidemic.

The state of the Labour Market across the region tends to reflect the economic orthodoxy that has in general been pursued by Governments across the region, with a

decline in the public sector and service delivery to those most in need, deindustrialisation and the continuing absence of beneficiation in relation to extractive industries, an over-reliance on an export led recovery model at the expense of national development, self-sufficiency and environmental protection. The continuing impact of globalisation and flexible and unregulated supply chain models, have diminished the possibility of providing decent work or sustainable livelihoods. This has particularly impacted on young workers and women.

What this has meant is that there has been a dramatic increase in the informal sector, where basic regulatory protections are largely absent, and where large sections of the economy operate outside of the fiscus.

Under these circumstances, Trade Unions have been forced into a defensive mode for much of the last period. However, the fact that they have been able to survive, to innovate, to creatively address the changes in the labour market is in itself a remarkable achievement. The fact that they have been able to continue to provide representation and protection for workers, is testament to their resilience, and the robustness of democratic and participatory organisation.

The Role of OTUWA

Before outlining the Strategic Plan for OTUWA it will be important to define its role, and what it seeks to achieve. The following is derived from a review of its founding Constitution, and the deliberations of the Abuja Strategic Planning Workshop:

- To build and coordinate an inclusive, united and strong regional trade union movement to promote the interests of workers of the West Africa region.
- To engage in international and national solidarity actions between national centres and their affiliates, and to ensure that organisational rights enshrined in the instruments of the ILO, AU, ECOWAS and National Governments are respected and adhered to.
- To represent the interests of workers in ECOWAS and other appropriate structures and to work for the adoption of worker-friendly policies including those that promote decent work, equality, employment and sustainable economic development.
- To play a full and meaningful role in ITUC-Africa and OATUU activities and strengthen relations with Global Trade Unions, the ILO and civil society organisations in pursuit of common goals.

Strategic Areas of Activity

Pillar 1 To Strengthen and Capacitate the Secretariat

Given the context described above, and the need to re-establish OTUWA as identified by the Abuja Strategic Planning Workshop of May 2016, and in particular to reconstituted and capacitate the Secretariat in order for it to perform its functions which are essentially as follows :

- To coordinate the activities of OTUWA and in particular the activities associated with the emerging Strategic Plan
- To ensure that affiliates are kept informed of developments on a regular basis
- To provide support and coordinate solidarity action to affiliates when required
- To be the public face of OTUWA and the interface with ECOWAS and all fraternal organisations and partners.

Proposals Towards Ensuring an Effective OTUWA Secretariat Office

- a. It is acknowledged that re-establishing and repositioning OTUWA will require considerable attention and support of the Executive Secretary. However it is important to recognise that this work cannot be undertaken efficiently by one or two personnel. In this regard, the day to day running of the office, and maintaining its infrastructure and dealing with daily administrative matters must not fall onto the desk of the Executive Secretary, although oversight will be needed initially. The time and energy of the Executive Secretary must be spent on ensuring that the main pillars of this strategic plan are implemented, and that time is also made available to build and enhance important relations and engagements with key players, especially affiliates at this time.
- b. To ensure that the Secretariat can fulfil these vital roles, the most immediate tasks are to ensure that the following is realised as a matter of urgency :
- c. A basic staffing policy needs to be in place as a matter of urgency (that can be elaborated over time) that covers terms and conditions of all staff and what is expected of them. This should be developed before any additional appointments are made. It is suggested that those terms that apply to other sub-regional organisations (SATUCC, EATUCC) staffers could provide a base-line, and could be added to if additional expertise/capacities are required. Given the concerns for OTUWA to lead by example in terms of gender balancing, this should be a key feature of the staffing policy.

- d. That there is an efficient and committed administrative hub in the office consisting of at least a PA to the OTUWA Executive Secretary, (preferably with appropriate language skills), Additional Support Staff to ensure that transport, messaging and security are in place.
- e. Office infrastructure to enable efficient communications with affiliates and partners etc. and to allow for meetings and other activities in the office. An arrangement with the NLC could be helpful in this regard.
- f. The possibility of short/medium term secondments from affiliates and associates and internships should be actively explored, particularly if they are linked to the implementation of projects associated with the Strategic Plan, but also in terms of using exchanges across affiliates to share and build capacity.
- g. Given current resource limitations, it is suggested that a communications strategy be developed that provides for regular communications with affiliates (a monthly electronic newsletter for example) and that this could be organised on a limited contractual basis for the time being. Clearly the question of translation will need to be factored in.
- h. Time Frames : Points 1 – 3 above to be implemented by End of August 2016 and Points 4 – 5 by end October 2016.

Pillar 2 Building Affiliate Membership and Unity

It is acknowledged that unless OTUWA affiliates are representative of workers within their respective countries, then OTUWA itself will be weak. Given the pressures on Unions to move beyond simply surviving, there is now a need for them to become proactive agents for change in both improving the terms and conditions of workers, and in transforming society more generally.

A fundamental requirement arising from the Strategic Planning Workshop, is for Unions to grow, to work towards greater unity, both internally, and externally, and to ensure that the participation of workers is strengthened and sustained. There are many factors militating against this happening and some of these factors are detailed in the Summary of the Context above. However, despite what might appear as formidable obstacles, there are creative responses both within the region, especially in terms of organising in the informal sector, there are many lessons and expertise that can be drawn upon outside of the region, and there is a willingness to experiment.

Proposal 1: Recruitment and Servicing Members

With these considerations in mind the following is proposed :

- a. A major workshop on Recruitment, Servicing Members and Increasing Worker Participation should be organised as a priority. The purpose of the workshop will be to :
- b. Receive a report from each affiliate to construct an accurate assessment of the membership potential across the region, and
- c. Develop generic materials to promote trade union membership, worker unity, democratic trade unionism and will address the question of fragmentation.
- d. Devise a model programme for low cost in-country organising workshops aimed at launching a recruitment campaign in each country, and ensuring that there is a complementary servicing and participation element to each programme.
- e. Develop a specific approach to building appropriate informal sector organisation, by drawing upon the best practice of OTUWA affiliates, and organisations such as WIEGO.
- f. Ensure that women and young worker participation is fully integrated as a vital element of all roll-out programmes, and this should be reflected in in-country provision.
- g. To agree that those who are nominated to attend the initial regional workshop will then constitute an OTUWA Organising Network of educators/trainers to lead this work and that this must be reflected in the priority they must give to this work by their local affiliates.
- h. To consolidate the overall project as one coordinated and serviced by an experienced trade unionist seconded to work on behalf of the Secretariat for this purpose.
- i. Time Frame: The Workshop should take place in the third Quarter of 2016 to allow for resources to be gathered, and a suitable secondment to be arranged.

It should be stressed that this project should be seen as revitalising the recruitment and organising capacity of all affiliates and would seek to embed best practice into each participating organisation.

It will be particularly important that the lessons of the project are drawn out and shared with the OTUWA Executive Committee and all affiliates.

Proposal 2: Addressing the Question of Fragmentation

It was acknowledged by the Strategic Planning Workshop that the fragmentation of the trade union movement in the region requires very careful consideration before remedial action can be embarked upon. The reasons for such fragmentation are complex, and relate to both historical traditions and legacies, and to an array of internal and external pressures.

What is proposed here is an incremental approach that builds trust and confidence in OTUWA, and that takes into consideration that this approach does not hinge upon a single intervention or event, but is rather part of an on-going process.

Another important acknowledgement is that OTUWA is striving to be an inclusive organisation that represents the interests of all workers regardless of their political orientation, cultural and religious diversity and organisational structure. There will however be a necessity to make an assessment that potential affiliate members do ascribe to the principles that underscore democratic trade unionism, including adherence to a democratic constitution that includes provision for regular free and fair leadership elections at all levels, accountability and transparency, and a commitment to trade union unity. With these considerations in mind the following is proposed:

- a. Each affiliate will be asked to prepare a brief but succinct report on the state of the trade union movement in each country, and in particular the range of organisations that constitute the trade union movement. A template that can be updated will be developed for this purpose. In addition to basic information about all unions/federations active in each country, it will also seek to gather information on membership, sectors covered and the state of relations that exist.
- b. The Executive Secretary, in close cooperation with in-country Executive Committee and General Council members will develop a schedule of meetings in each country within the region over a twelve month period to meet with as many of these organisations as possible, and to engage them in the possibility of participating in OTUWA activities. The initial emphasis will be on developing cordial relations, and to make a determination of what needs to be done at in-country level to increase levels of cooperation, mutual respect and joint work on common concerns. It should be noted that much of this is already underway in some countries. A similar process will take place if there are divisions emerging within existing affiliates, in order to strengthen trade union unity.
- c. Visiting each of the countries in the region in this manner should also provide an opportunity to meet with Labour Ministers and others, and win their support for steps towards building unity, and also to open up the possibility of positive engagements at the level of ECOWAS

- d. If progress in terms of the above proposals is made, then opportunities for potentially new affiliates to participate in the various in-country programmes (e.g. on recruitment and servicing members) should be provided.
- e. It may prove to be important at some stage to clarify the organising scope of both existing and potential OTUWA affiliates, and not least to ensure that competition for membership is not allowed to damage relations and especially moves towards greater unity.
- f. It will be important to ensure that should existing and potential OTUWA affiliates require solidary support for a particular dispute they are engaged in, or are subject to any measures that seek to undermine their right to organise or function as an independent trade union, then OTAWU and its affiliates will engage and offer whatever solidarity support they can. This will both build the profile of OTUWA, and provide opportunities to cement mutual respect at national level.

Pillar 3: Engaging ECOWAS and Related Activities

Given that OTUWA has secured observer status within ECOWAS, and has therefore a valuable opening into its various structures, it will be important to use these to best effect. Clearly matters of Labour and Related Social Concerns such as migration will be a direct point of entry, but there may be many other avenues where the voice and views of Labour should be heard. This could include discussion on social security matters, adherence to a range of conventions and other instruments, the question of the environment, and more generally on economic and social development. The important point here is to ensure that there is a strict degree of prioritisation, and acknowledge that it is more strategic to make a comprehensive and impactful intervention in a small number of prioritised areas, rather than to spread ones intervention too thinly and dissipate any impact that could be made.

Taking lessons from other regions in this regard could be extremely helpful, and to illicit the views of the ITUC and OATUU, as well as other partners could prove to be critical, and especially in terms of learning the lessons for an effective, credible and sustainable intervention.

However it will be important to recognise that while this work is crucially important, it cannot rest on the shoulders of a small and already committed Secretariat alone. Engaging with an institution like ECOWAS, and possibly the AU and other formations requires considerable capacity, even in carefully prioritised areas. With these considerations in mind the following is proposed.

- a. That a review is initiated on the current state of policy development and approval in ECOWAS in those areas that directly affect Labour, for example on the harmonisation and standardisation of Labour Legislation, Equality, and Employment. This will also involve a document search and assessment of existing OTUWA documentation, and that of fraternal organisations such as ITUC and OATUU, and others including Civil Society Organisations that have expertise in these matters.
- b. That this review be undertaken by an individual drawn from a labour friendly institution, with the purpose of providing a comprehensive background document for Executive Committee deliberations. It will be important that the person assigned to this research project is able to present documentation that is accessible, and that can be made available to a wider audience. It would also be useful for this person to have appropriate language skills and be familiar with trade union organisation.
- c. It is envisaged that this will largely be a 'desk-top' research project, perhaps complimented by a range of key interviews using skype etc. Its costs therefore should be limited.
- d. The Executive Committee will then use this document to engage in a strategic discussion on what areas of intervention in ECOWAS should be prioritised and how this will take place. This will by necessity also involve a degree of in-country lobbying and possible campaigning, and this should be built into the Executive Committees response.
- e. Time Frames: it is envisaged that this research project should be initiated as soon as resources allow, and be completed by the beginning of October 2016.

It should be noted that the visits to affiliates as envisaged in Proposal 2b above will serve to further inform the approach, and provide very useful tactical information.

Pillar 4: Financial Stability Going Forward

As acknowledged by the Strategic Planning Workshop, the area of financial stability is a crucial element to have in place going forward. All of the proposals listed above depend to a large extent on the degree to which resources (both human and material) can be mobilised and secured. It is further recognised however, that given the pressure on individual unions and their federations to mobilise increases in membership subscriptions at this time presents a real challenge.

There are other important considerations when discussing the issue of financial resources related to the question of sustainability, independence and effectiveness that need to be factored in. Certainly, the experience of an over-dependence on external funding is known throughout the trade union movement, and the observation that increasingly arises in that those trade union organisations that have been in receipt of external funding for prolonged periods are most affected when they are no longer available.

One of the lessons to emerge is that unless explicit complementary measures are taken to increase self-sufficiency and sustainability when external funds are available, when they are no longer available it can result in a catastrophe, and reduce the organisation to a worse state than it was before external funds were first made available! This has been the case of many trade union movements on our continent and beyond.

The reality that we are faced with is that not only is subscription revenue likely to be limited and even in decline, the availability of funds from external sources are also increasingly limited. Austerity policies of Governments in the North have impacted on the development funds that they make available to their own trade union movements, and there has been a visible tightening of what these funds can be used for. The implications of this are very serious. Increased supervision and direction of developments funds in the North, compounded by the severity of the resource deficit in the South, means that those distributing funds can, if they so wish, exercise more control over the responses that trade unions in the South may wish to embark upon.

For this and many other reasons, it is essential that OTUWA defines very carefully what it requires financial support for and why. One of the key purposes of the Strategic Workshop was for OTAWU to define for itself, based on the needs of workers and their organisations in the region, what its current strategic priorities are, and which are reflected in this document.

Despite the severity of the economic and social crisis throughout the region, there are several options open towards achieving financial stability, and possible financial advancement, and some of these are covered in what follows below. However, it is worth acknowledging that amongst the affiliates of OTUWA are those who, because of their size and overall resource capacity, are able to provide support to OTUWA over and above affiliation fees, and especially in terms of donations in kind. While this must be acknowledged as a valuable contribution to regional solidarity it is also important that OTUWA develops itself in a modest manner, and seeks to make savings wherever possible to ensure that the balance between infrastructure development, and its activities remain complementary and are not distorted.

