

**FEDERATION OF FREE  
TRADE UNIONS OF ZAMBIA  
(FFTUZ)**



**PRESIDENT'S SPEECH FOR THE  
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE  
NATIONAL TRIPARTITE  
DIALOGUE ON MATERNITY  
PROTECTION HELD AT NEW  
GOVERNMENT COMPLEX FROM  
27<sup>TH</sup> TO 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013**

- The First Lady, Dr. Christine Kaseba Sata
- The Honorable Minister of Labour and Social Security
- The Honorable Minister of Gender and Child Development, Honorable Inonge Wina
- The President of Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) Mr. Alfred Masupa
- The President of Zambia Congress of Trade Unions Mr. Leonard Hikaumba
- ILO Resident Director, Lusaka Office
- The Gender Specialist, Bureau for Gender Equality, ILO, GENEVA, Ms. Adrienne Cruz
- Ladies and Gentlemen

The First Lady, Dr. Christine Kaseba Sata, you will recall that when you addressed delegates at the International Labour Organization (ILO) Africa Regional Meeting in Johannesburg in 2011, a youth who gave a moving speech said and I quote

**“IT IS EITHER YOU SORT US OUT OR WE SORT YOU OUT”.**

Madam First Lady, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Youth said these words in reference to the problem of Youth Unemployment. The warning was loud and clear. The Youth meant to say Mothers and Fathers, please create employment for the Youth, otherwise, the unemployed youth would deal with you and you would regret.

We should not forget that these youths, who are a product of Maternity Process, want jobs so that they can look after their wives, husbands, children and their families.

It is regrettable that in spite of getting excited whenever a new baby is born, we still have not

learnt to appreciate significantly, PREGNANT WOMEN. Most employers still look at a pregnant woman as a burden at work places. A pregnant woman is considered to be a cost to employers. Most times, when women fall pregnant, the employer sees her as insignificant to the Organization she works for. There are numerous instances of discrimination, harrassment, humiliation, mental torture on the part of employers, decreased hours, forced unpaid leave etc. Instead of being looked at as a life giver, most women have actually lost employment upon getting pregnant. Once a woman gives birth, the discrimination continues in many other forms too.

Madam First Lady, the Federation is not happy with this kind of bad attitude towards women.

It is significant to realize that having children is a blessing. If women stopped having children, there would be a generation gap and this gap would have far reaching consequences.

The Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia would want to see a Zambia where poverty is eradicated. Motherhood constitutes a significant risk factor for poverty. Poverty affects pregnant women because women end up having stunted children. A stunted and unhealthy child is a burden to the resources of the nation.

The effort being made by the Patriotic Front Government towards ratifying convention 183 on Maternity Protection is a step in the right direction. We are excited that the Government has constituted a high-level task team to drive the process forward.

Being a member of this task team, The Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia will participate fully so that women are fully protected as they desire to fill the world with healthy human beings and not stunted, unhealthy and mentally retarded human beings.

In conclusion, **I would ask; Is there anything that can be done?** As a Federation, we feel that immediate reform of existing laws and enhanced