



**Resolution presented at the end of the
YOUNG WORKERS' SEMINAR
held during the
12th African and Arab countries Regional Conference (AFRECON)
of Public Services International (PSI)
held in Gaborone, Botswana, 22-25 September 2015**

Introduction

The 12th African and Arab Countries Regional Conference with the theme: ***Consolidating the working class trade union solidarity, democracy, freedom, social justice and quality public service delivery***, brought together participants from PSI affiliates from countries within the region. It created an opportunity for young workers in unions to meet and share ideas on **major challenges facing them within the region and ways of strengthening their participation in trade unionism**. During deliberation, young workers observed that several decisions and resolutions have been passed by PSI and its affiliates but these have remained on papers, with little or no action at most levels of PSI structures. Specific issues affecting young workers from some countries within the region and the progress made so far were examined, and then forum resolved as follows:

CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG WORKERS IN THE AFRICAN AND ARAB REGION

- ✓ **No constitutional provisions, policy document and young workers structure in PSI and most of its affiliates.** While observing the efforts and progress made so far by PSI and some of its affiliates on young workers' mentoring, the forum noted lack of constitutional provisions or policy document to protect the interest and development of young workers in PSI and its affiliates. It calls on PSI and its affiliates to review the existing constitution and make provision for young workers and create youth structure.
- ✓ **No information on level of young workers involvement in PSI and its affiliates on the intended 30% participation/representation.** Forum noted that there is no precise for the involvement of young workers in the unions, thus enjoin PSI and all its structures to involve youths in policy formulation, implementation and decision making processes of all trade unions.

- ✓ **Lack of budgetary provision and poor funding of young workers programmes:** The forum noted the lack of budgetary provisions and inadequate funding for young workers' programmes and calls on PSI affiliates to make specific annual budgetary allocation for young workers and help them to get sponsorship for their programme and activities.
- ✓ **Corruption and youth unemployment:** The issues of corruption and youth unemployment are major reasons for youth migration from the African and Arab regions, this has resulted in loss of several lives, abuse of human rights and abuse of labour. Also due to underemployment or unemployment, a great number of youth have given up on looking for work. The youth, thus, calls on PSI and its affiliates to continually campaign against privatisation, labour casualisation, good governance and the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions as keys to promoting decent youth employment.
- ✓ **Lack of political and leadership will to assist young workers:** The forum recognised trade unions leadership role as key to enhancing effective young workers' participation, but the lack of political will is still predominant in most unions, youths therefore enjoins trade unions to view young workers' role as one that is strategic to the succession of every union, creates more opportunity for their involvement in our unions and discourage the 'wait for your time syndrome'.
- ✓ **Poor youth networking and inadequate sharing of information:** The forum recognised the poor sharing of information and low level of awareness by young workers as major hindrances to motivating and arousing their interest and participation in trade unionism. The region is currently faced with the problems of poor networking and information sharing through the use of modern information technology. The youth therefore calls on PSI to promote all platforms for information sharing and young workers networking within the Sub region in order to strengthen their participation in trade union activities. Also, website for youth in our various unions should be created to provide information on youth programmes.
- ✓ **Poor education and training programmes for young workers in unions:** The role of trade union education and training for young workers in the unions cannot be overemphasised or underestimated, however, these are keys to capacity building of the young workers towards every union's succession, the youths therefore calls on PSI and its affiliates to sponsor

young workers on educational and training programmes locally and internationally in order to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values required to understand trade union issues.

- ✓ **Societal challenges:** The youth also identified the problems of HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, violence, negative societal beliefs toward unionism, lack of support due to insufficient information and low level of awareness about unionism as some major challenges that limit their participation in unionism.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS REQUIRED BY PSI AND ITS AFFILIATES

Young workers appeal to PSI and all its affiliates to consider and implement the following proposals as ways of strengthening youth representation and involvement in union affairs:

- ✓ Enacting laws and amending existing constitutions to provide for 30% youth representation
- ✓ Creating young workers' structures and involving them in policy formulation, implementation and decision-making of unions.
- ✓ Provide access to unions' information and updates on young workers' activities in executive board meeting.
- ✓ Providing specific annual budget and adequate funding for young workers' programme including helping them to access funding from partners.
- ✓ Sponsoring young workers on union education and training, skill transfer and mentoring.
- ✓ Facilitating and supporting platforms for young workers' networking including creating website for their activities in our unions.
- ✓ Campaign against negative policies that affect or weaken young workers' participation in unionism.
- ✓ Spot talent in young workers and supporting them to grow rather than seeing them as potential threat to union leadership.
- ✓ Promoting and supporting sporting and social activities for youths in the union.

WHAT VALUES CAN YOUNG WORKERS ADD TO OUR UNIONS?

Forum urged unions to understand and appreciate the role of young workers in unions, among which may include:

- ✓ Promoting union activities through the sharing of information within and across the region.
- ✓ Championing and supporting advocacy and campaign programmes of unions
- ✓ Ensuring succession in every union and sustaining good legacies in unions.
- ✓ Providing synergy and solidarity support to trade union struggles.
- ✓ Promoting political socialisation and good governance.

CONCLUSION: Young workers appeal that decisions and resolution passed by PSI and its affiliates should not just end on paper but transform to actions that will foster growth and development for youths in our various unions.

NOTABLE QUOTE:

‘YOUTHS ARE THE FUTURE LEADERS OF OUR UNIONS, OUR FUTURE STARTS TODAY AND INDEED NOW.’

THANK YOU.