

2nd ITUC-AP Regional Conference

Resolution No. 2

ORGANISING NO SUBSTITUTE FOR GENUINE TRADE UNIONS

The basis and the most important source of power a trade union has are the unity and organisation of its members and they are the most representative and organised forces in the struggle for social justice. It is through trade union organisation, working women and men provide themselves with the means to assert their freedom and enable them to fight for their immediate needs.

There is no substitute for genuine trade unions which are formed as freely chosen associations of workers through democratic participation. They cannot be replaced by advocacy groups, by employer or government dominated labour organisations, or by management driven Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.

Trade union density is abysmally poor in most of the countries in the region and vast segments of working women and men are still out of the union fold. Added to this is the scourge of multiplicity of unions. This has led to marginalisation of trade unions.

Legislative framework is lacking or inadequate in many countries to encourage organising and providing an atmosphere conducive for forming and joining unions. Even where statutes for protecting workers rights exist they are observed more in breach than in compliance.

Informal economy is increasing in the region; workers in informal economy constitute more than half of the working population. Adequate attention has been lacking from the trade unions in terms of organising and mainstreaming the informal economy workers. Atypical/irregular employment is also increasing.

The Conference commits the ITUC-AP, working with affiliates and the GUF to:

- to accord utmost priority to organising and where necessary we prioritise to focus on more concrete action;
- to launch specially targeted initiatives to organise women into trade unions which require added commitments to incorporate gender perspectives into trade union activity on a scale sufficient to make a difference;
- to allocate union funds to organising;
- to launch specially targeted intensive organising campaigns for bringing in workers in informal economy, atypical employment, part-time workers, self-employed, migrant labour and workers in the export processing zones and MNCs into trade unions;
- disseminate case studies on organising successes;
- wherever necessary to campaign for bringing amendments to legal or institutional frameworks which define and stipulate the status of workers or through which collective bargaining relations are recognised and protected;
- to give top priority in all areas of work to supporting organising activities and capacities of trade unions including recruitment, obtaining recognition and the conclusion and strengthening of collective agreements;
- initiate and support actions to achieve an institutional and political environment conducive to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining;
- to accord priority to organising informal workers and extend all assistance to the affiliates in this task;

- to assist affiliates to launch pilot projects in identified areas / sectors for organising;
- to assist affiliates to undertake capacity building programmes to promote their ability to organise and represent members effectively;
- launch internationally coordinated and strategically targeted organising initiatives; and
- support and encourage special organising campaigns aimed at young workers.