

**Presentation by the Trades Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) to the United Nations Country Team in Namibia on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Your Excellency Chairperson,  
United Nations Resident Coordinator,  
Directors and Representatives of all UN Agencies,  
Distinguished Invited Guests,  
Staff of the UN Agencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity granted to the trade unions to share some ideas with the UNCT in Namibia.

I am Mr. Mahongora Kavihuha the Secretary General of Trade Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) an independent trade union federation that represents independent sectorial trade unions. TUCNA is affiliated regionally to SATUCC and continentally to ITUC-Africa and globally to ITUC. We have been working very closely with the ILO as a unique agency of the UN with characteristics of tripartism, TUCNA further have been playing an active role in implementation and awareness campaigns on SDGs, We have recently produce a parallel report to the VNR that will be discussed now in July at the political high level meeting.

Resident Coordinator, Directors and Representatives of UN Agencies working in Namibia, On the 16 September 2019, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution welcoming the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and calling on United Nations bodies to consider integrating the **Declaration's policy proposals into their work.**

The resolution also requests that United Nations bodies – programmes, specialized agencies, funds and financial institutions – consider integrating the Declaration's policies, in consultation **with employers' and workers' representatives, into their work.** In particular it points to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks which are the UN's main country level planning instrument. Furthermore, we will request the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to involve the trade unions in the formulation of Common Country Analysis report for the country. Our major interest is to ensure that issues of decent work, international labour standards and other concerns of trade unions is reflected in the Common Country Analysis. This makes it easy for the concerns of workers is reflected in the national priorities.

It is against this background that we TUCNA is seeking audience with the United Nations Country Team in the Country to see how best we can work together to address the numerous developmental challenges facing our beloved country Namibia. Generally, the main framework within which the International Labour Organisation supports its member countries including the social partner (Employers and Workers Organisations) is the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). Hence, as trade unions we do not want to be lumped together with Civil Society Organisations as done in many other countries. We are membership based organisation with experience in tripartism and social dialogue. We understand that in line with the new reform of the UN, our Decent Work Country Programmes will have to be aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

Thus, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) has become main instrument for providing a coherent, strategic direction for UN development activities by all UN entities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Therefore, trade unions as very important stakeholders at national level, our major concerns are:

- How we can contribute to UNSDCF outcomes and thereby ensuring Decent Work Country Programmes outcomes is reflected in the UNSDCF outcomes;
- How to promote application of International Labour Standards and social dialogue/tripartism to be included in both UNSDCF and DWCP;
- How to work with other UN agencies at national level
- Accessing joint funds and domestic financing of priorities in both DWCP and UNSDCF.

Consequently we would like to make the following general observations:

1. There is a need to embrace social dialogue as means to bringing about development in Namibia. It is a deeply held believe of the Trade Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) that the process of development must of necessity involve all the tripartite partners in order for it to be efficient and all-encompassing. If the development agenda is about us, it must include us fully. Hence, it is our hope that the office of the Resident Coordinator will promote and sustain social dialogue in Namibia.
2. There is a need for the UN system to assists the country and ensure that state actors are playing by the rules. It is thus necessary and imperative that non-state actors are equipped and trained in all the

nuances of the UN system's for effective surveillance and monitoring of the implementation of national developmental agenda.

3. We are also interested in how the UN system in Namibia can support the trade unions and employers as important social partners in their efforts to ensure popular citizens' participation in the democratic and governance processes. We need the civic and democratic spaces for the enjoyment of human and labour rights to be preserved. Currently, these spaces are shrinking, partly on account of state paranoia and weak mobilisation on the part of the people to be able to effectively engage and demand these spaces and rights.

4. We are concerned about the socio-economic gaps and hardships that our people are facing. We would like to see more UN support for government initiatives to advance citizens' welfare. We also want to encourage the UN systems to enable non-state actors to be in a position to play critical monitoring actions and role of government and its institutions.

5. We thank the WHO for the COVAX. But we want to state that the vaccine administration should be backed up with good education and awareness creation initiatives. Disinformation and misinformation about the vaccine are discouraging people from taking the jab. Public education is key. We can also be supported to target our constituents in terms to education.

6. We also encourage the UN organs particularly FAO and UNDP to collaborate and complement one another with regard to their functions especially those that overlap, so that there is sufficient provision of food to needy communities.

In conclusion, achieving the 2030 Agenda for everyone, everywhere is humanity's best chance of ensuring the progressive realization of workers' rights and a future of peace and prosperity for all. The UN reforms are an opportunity for trade unions to leverage the strength of tripartism and social dialogue to drive transformational change and expand the framework to promote decent work and international labour standards in Namibia. It is our hope that this open door would continue to remain opened to enable us continually engage with the office of the resident coordinator.

Finally, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the ILO Country Director Madam Hopolang Phororo and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Namibia for the this unique opportunity to enable us exchange ideas.

Thank you for your attention.

