



*From left: Khamati Mugalla, Muswere Gapwuzi, Leandre Ndayizeye, Alex Nkosi, Naome Chakanya, Boniface Phiri, Nyasha Muchichwa and Henry Chingaibe*

**Africa Trade Union Development Network (ATUDN)**  
**Report on**  
**Sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**  
*Monday, February 24, 2020 to Thursday, February 27, 2020*  
**Theme: “2020-2030: A Decade to Deliver a Transformed and Prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.”**

**Introduction**

For the fourth consecutive time now, the Africa Trade Union Development Network (ATUDN) has been participating at the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD). The ARFSD is an intergovernmental platform convened by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations system to review progress, share experiences and lessons learned, and build consensus on recommendations in the form of key messages to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. These messages serve as Africa’s collective regional input to the High-level Political Forum on

Sustainable Development convened annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development recognizes the imperative of major groups, which includes trade unions, and other stakeholders' involvement in the implementation, follow-up and review of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In this regard the agenda, among others, calls for major groups to be brought together with governments, the private sector, and the United Nations system in the context of a revitalized global partnership to deliver on the ambitious sustainable development goals and targets that are at the core of the Agenda. Moreover, the Agenda stipulates that the high-level political forum will support the participation of major groups and other stakeholders in the follow-up and review and enjoin them to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda. Agenda 2063 which is being implemented concurrently with the 2030 Agenda also requires that African citizenry, trade unions, civil society organizations and all other identifiable groups be engaged with respect to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this African Agenda. The 2020 forum was the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and was held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

### **Objective**

The overall objective of the sixth session of the ARFSD was to conduct a regional follow-up and review of progress made, facilitate peer learning and advance transformative solutions and actions to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 goals.

These messages formulated during the forum serve as Africa's collective regional input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development convened annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

### **Theme**

The sixth session of the ARFSD was designed to be an action-oriented Forum for member States and other stakeholders to explore, gain insight into, share and agree on sets of concrete and workable solutions actions that will enable the countries to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 within the set time frame. The Forum was therefore held under the theme “**2020-2030: A Decade to Deliver a Transformed and Prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.**” During this forum, all the 17 SDGs were under spotlight!

### **The ITUC-Africa Trade Union Delegation to the Forum**

The ITUC-Africa participated at the forum through the Africa Trade Union Development Network. Participants were drawn from countries that will be reporting – Voluntary National Reviews – to the UN in July 2020. Since 2016 when ITUC-Africa commenced participating in these forums, trade unions in countries that are reporting have equally produced reports on the progress of implementing the SDGs from a trade union perspective. The reports have proven to be important advocacy tools with which to engage the national governments. In 2020, some of the African countries that shall be reporting on SDGs implementation at the UN and where the ATUDN members have produced the reports and qualified to participate at the forum are:

**Table 1: Showing the list of ITUC-Africa participants at ARFSD**

<b>VNR Reporting country</b>		<b>ATUDN delegate</b>
<b>1</b>	Zimbabwe	<b>Naome Chakanya</b>
<b>2</b>	Congo DRC	<b>Modeste Dongala</b>
<b>3</b>	Malawi	<b>Henry Chingaibe</b>
<b>4</b>	Kenya	<b>Caroline Khamati Mugalla</b>
<b>5</b>	Burundi	<b>Leandre Ndayizeye</b>
<b>6</b>	Zambia	<b>Cosmas Mukuka</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Alex Nkosi</b> coordinated the delegation's participation at the forum	

**Nota Bene:** The trade union delegation was also joined and supported by **Boniface Phiri** from Zambia, **Jessie Ching'oma** from Malawi, **Nyasha Muchichwa** from Zimbabwe and **Muswere Gapwuzi** also from Zimbabwe who also attended the forum. Their attendance was supported by their national centres.

### **Trade Union Strategy meeting**

On Sunday, the arrival date, we held our strategy meeting. Previous experiences have shown that when we strategise in advance on how we shall influence the process and ensure that trade union priority messages are taken on board, we have always made good progress in achieving our goals.

During the meeting, the coordinator for ATUDN oriented the delegation on the processes of the forum. In terms of engagement strategy, the meeting decided that the delegation shall distribute the ITUC-Africa printed copies on SDGs messages (from the trade union viewpoint). It was also agreed that the delegation shall be split according to the goals to ensure that the trade union

messages are reflection in all the SDGs. A whatsapp group was created to facilitate ease of communication and notes sharing during the forum.

### **Leadership roles played by trade unions during the forum**

Two members of the trade union delegations were nominated by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to co-chair discussion groups (sub-plenaries) that crafted the key messages for the African region. This was a great opportunity for trade unions to directly influence the process and as explained in the preceding section, a lot of trade union priorities were factored into the outcome document. Naome Chakanya and Alex Nkosi co-chaired the sub-plenaries as follows:

- i. **Naome Chakanya** chaired the group that looked at:
  - a. Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy
  - b. Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth
  - c. Goal 9 on industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
  - d. Goal 10 on reduced inequalities and
  - e. Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.
  
- ii. **Alex Nkosi** was responsible in chairing the group on SDG 17 which looks at the coordination and partnership mechanism to implement the other 16 goals.

### **Outcome of the major group's discussions: trade union priority messages**

To come up with an African position through key messages, the forum created sub-plenaries where people deliberated on Africa's key issues relating to the Agenda 2030 and 2063. Below are the messages that trade unions suggested and were adopted by the forum and are reflected in the outcome document:

- i. **On Prosperity: Goals 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced inequalities) and 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) trade unions recommended that:**
  - o National and sub-national governments should invest in the transition towards 100% renewable energy as well as in climate resilient infrastructure and low emission development in both cities and rural areas that is gender sensitive, fosters the principles of just transition and the needs of vulnerable groups.
  - o Governments should design and implement pro-decent work macroeconomic policies and strategies supported by progressive minimum wage policies above the national poverty lines, and facilitate the transition from the informal to formal economy.

- Governments and development cooperating partners should work towards reducing inequality. There should be inclusive policies that enhance equity and opportunities for all, supported by availability of disaggregated data.
- For industry, decent work and economic growth the trade unions recommended a paradigm shift that fosters structural transformation of African economies through commodity-based industrialization, technology skills transfer, investment in active labour market policies and program, quality public education, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and systematically take measures to reduce skills mismatch.

ii. **On Peace: Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) we recommend:**

- That Africa governments and their cooperating partners should adopt a multi-stakeholders approach and actively engagement of all vulnerable and marginalized groups including women and youth in global peace building and conflict resolution processes through preparing and implementing various plans, decisions and resolutions.

iii. **On Partnership: Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) we recommend:**

- The adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach that fosters social dialogue among various interest groups and the vulnerable; who should be properly represented, in the spirit of living no one behind.
- Governments should invest in institutions that generate data and also recognise citizen generated data to resolve the data-paucity problem; this data should be used to benchmark and monitor the progress in the implementation of the SDGs and be disseminated in a user friendly and accessible manner.
- Governments should adopt clear SDGs financing mechanisms with an emphasis on domestic resource mobilization, the curbing of the illicit financial flows (IFFs) and monitoring of the involvement of the private sector to avoid the capturing of the development agenda.
- Governments should resolve the shrinking civic space and the over-regulation of CSOs and trade unions and recognise them as actors in development.

iv. **On Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

- Governments should migrate from minimum wage policies and adopt 'living wage' policies.

- Governments should optimize revenues from the exploitation and natural resources (along the lines recommended by the Africa Mining Vision) to reinvest in poverty eradication.
- v. **On Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.**
- All African states must cushion farmers' incomes by ensuring fair agricultural produce markets that encourage more investment and production by farmers.
  - African governments should review seed policies and review and reform international seed regulations to exclude GMOs in food chains and to avoid undue advantages to non-African seed companies and avoid extinction of local food varieties that preserve our African identities.
- vi. **On Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**
- Ratifying and fully realizing Universal Health Coverage for all children, women of reproductive age, and pregnant and lactating women, with priority.
  - Investing no less than 5% of GDP on their national health sector budgets. Within these budgets, Primary Health Care plans should be fully funded prior to any other allocations, and be fully implemented.
- vii. **On Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**
- Ensuring mandatory education at all levels in Africa including lifelong learning to ensure citizens remain informed, independent and productive even in their later life.
  - Invest in Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational Training (TEVET) to enable skilling and re-skilling.
  - Review of school and university curricula across the continent to ensure that the content prepares African young people to solve our political and economic and social challenges.

viii. **On Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

- Put in place and enforce robust equal pay and gender-based anti-discrimination legislation, including implementation of pay transparency measures.
- Follow up the recommendations of the High Level Panel on Women Economic Empowerment to recognise, redistribute and reduce care work and ensure decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers.
- Create awareness, adopt and ratify Convention 190 on violence in the world of work.

ix. **On Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

- Ensure a just transition to zero-carbon societies, with participation of workers and trade unions in this process.
- Renew skills and facilitate their transmission in keeping with sustainable development. Consideration of job opportunities created by the transition towards a lower-carbon economy must be accompanied by a shift in initial and ongoing training towards jobs of this kind.

**Trade union participation in the side events**

The 2020 ARFSD also proffered an opportunity for trade unions to actively participate in side-events. Henry Chingaibe, Naome Chakanya and Nyasha Muchichwa participated in panel discussion while the rest did so during the plenary.

**“Time for 8 Campaign” - A trade union clarion call for SDG 8 implementation!**

The trade union delegation saw the SDGs forum as a rare opportunity to highlight the decent work agenda as an integral part of goal 8 and to demonstrate how the achievement of this goal has a multiplier effect as it helps achieve even other goals.

Using a “Time for 8” campaign poster, the delegation took turns to talk to countless participants about why it is the time to seriously implement SDGs 8. And the message was loud and clear, *“The key to making sure that decent work becomes the rule and that millions of working families escape poverty and*

*exploitation lies in giving working people the power to influence the decisions that shape their lives. People must be able to organise themselves (freedom of association) through trade unions to negotiate a living wage and defend decent working conditions on an equal footing with their employer (collective bargaining). There are two major, legally binding international rules on this issue – International Labour Organization Conventions 87 and 98. Unfortunately, many countries and employers fail to respect these rules, which help drive inequality, while imposing unnecessary suffering on workers”. Hence, it’s time for 8!*

### **ITUC-Africa elected to the Africa Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (ARCSEM) Regional Coordination Committee**

The icing on the cake during the forum was when it was announced that the ITUC-Africa, based on its contribution to the attainment of the global 2030 agenda and the Africa Union Agenda 2063, has been chosen to sit Regional Coordination Committee. Alex Nkosi, who coordinates the ATUDN shall sit on the committee to represent the unions in Africa.

### **Conclusion**

By way of conclusion, it can be said that the trade union’s participation at the 2020 ARFSD was a success. The trade unions did not only manage to push for their priority messages into the outcome document, they also seized the opportunity to promulgate the “Time for 8 Campaign”, demonstrated leadership in chairing the sub-plenary, had meaningful participation in side events as discussants and also made a lot of contributions during the plenaries, and in crafting messages for the outcome document. The election of ITUC-Africa into the Africa Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (ARCSEM) Regional Coordination Committee shows that the UNECA, AU and AfDB are finally recognising the trade union’s contribution in implementing the 2030 and 2063 agenda in Africa.



**Selected photos:**

**Figure: Shows Mr. Wilbert Anthony, the President of students at University of Zimbabwe**

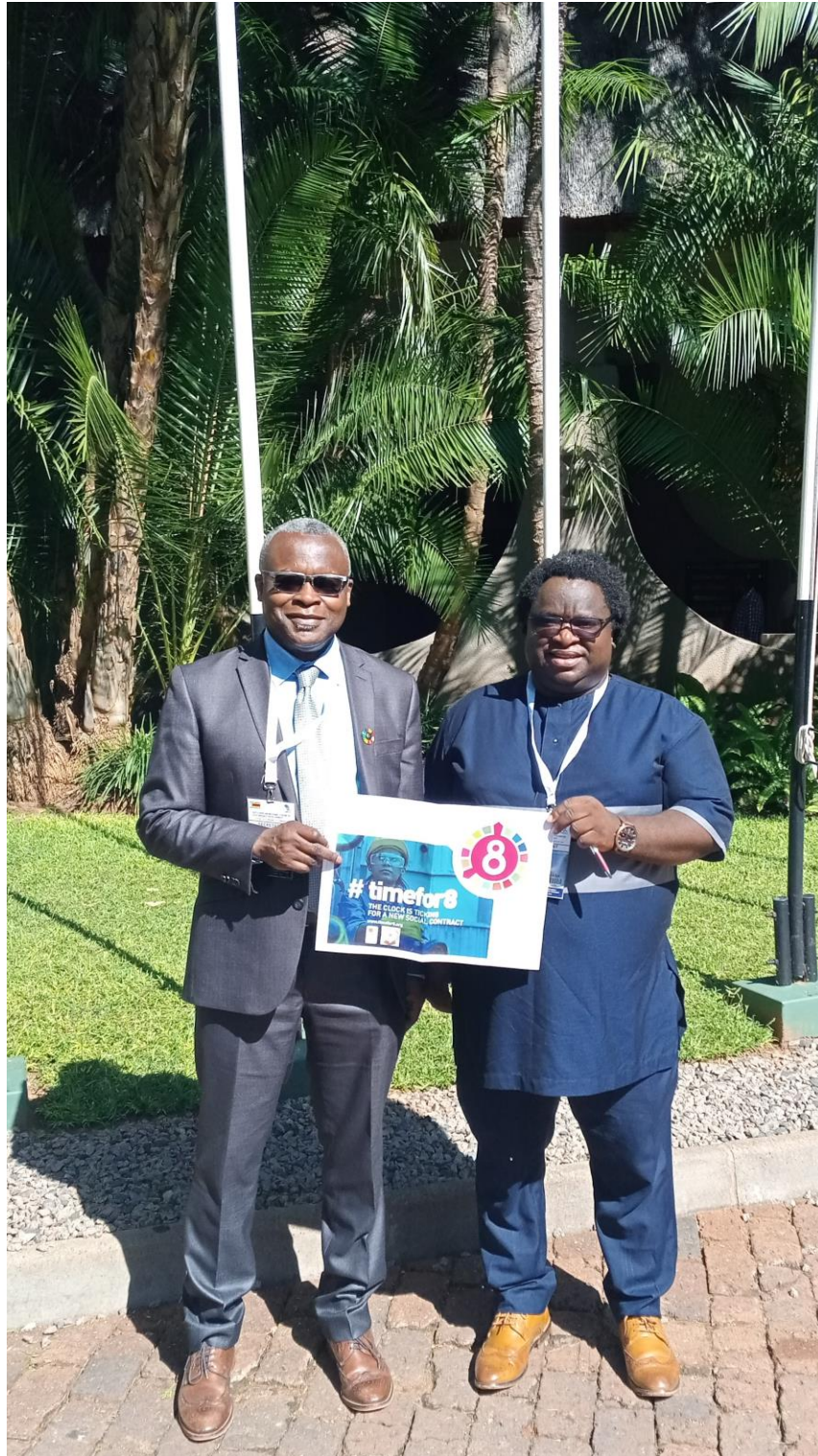


**Figure 2: Shows one conference participant, Zione Mugawa participating in the campaign.**





**Figure 3: Shows one of the ECA Directors, Dr. Bartholomew Armah with the ATUDN Coordinator, Alex Nkosi.**



**Figure 4: Shows part of the trade union delegation in the main hall during the plenary session. From the left: Khamati Mugala, Cosmas Mukuka, Naome Chakanya and Alex Nkosi.**



For feedback please write to:

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