

NEWS FROM AFRECON

I would like to use this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to all delegates and observers for making our recent Regional Conference successful. It was indeed a great moment for the region. Let me also use this opportunity to thank our Botswana affiliates for being a very excellent host. I would like to encourage all affiliates in the regions to continue in the united spirit we experienced in Botswana working together to address issues of trade union rights violations, fighting privatization and outsourcing, promoting solidarity among affiliates, organizing and recruitment, and influencing Regional, Sub-Regional and National level policies. Finally, let me thank the staff for a great job done.

Regional Secretary: DAVID KWABLA DORKENOO



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AFRECON 2015 OPENING

Rosa Pavanelli, PSI General Secretary made an opening remark during the opening of the 12th Regional Conference for the Africa and the Arab Countries in Gaborone, Botswana, reminding affiliates of the challenges that Public Services workers face nowadays in the region. She therefore called for investment in public health, tax justice, and for solidarity with countries in conflict areas.

The General Secretary indicated that African people have a proud history of fights against injustice from colonialism to apartheid. Hence, we need to continue fighting against the injustices and inequalities of today, fight for quality public services, indispensable means to democracy and prosperity” She urged that public services could help build inclusive societies and which will bring benefit to all citizens.

She also spoke about the need to work together to serve our members, to be effective for them and also make a difference for them.



Rosa Pavanelli addressing participants at the opening of AFRECON



She also stated that as PSI we are a family: the General Secretary, the Regional Secretary, the Sub-Regional Secretaries and the entire Staffs are those representing you but PSI is all of us together. “I will not be able to do what I do without the support of all of you and the contribution that you can bring to our work”.

She also took the opportunity to thank the Botswana affiliates for their enormous support and contributions toward the hosting of the conference.

The National Coordinating Committee Chairperson from Botswana Comrade Seitiso Sikalame welcomed delegates to the conference and indicated how glad Botswana affiliates were in welcoming everybody to Botswana.

The Vice President of the Region, Comrade Peters Adeyemi also took the floor to welcome all delegates on behalf of the leadership of the region. He encouraged delegates to participate actively in deliberations during the meeting. He touched on some of the positive developments in the region.

The conference was also opened with a performance from a Choir from Botswana. There was also a cultural troop from Botswana that entertained delegates with various traditional dances from the people of Botswana. It was indeed a very colorful and beautiful opening session.



A Cross Section of Participants



The Botswana Sector of Trade Union Choir singing



The Mafithakgosi Cultural Dancers

YOUNG WORKERS SHOULD BE GIVEN A VOICE IN THE TRADE UNION

During the Regional Conference for Africa and Arab Countries, 30 delegates and 30 observers met at the Young Workers seminar held on 23 September 2015. Speakers from Tunisia, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria and Algeria gave perspectives

on increasing the roles of young workers within trade unions. From the various presentations it was clear that some affiliates have created political structures through constitutional changes to allow young workers to play active role in the unions activities.

Participants emphasized the importance of understanding the value of supporting activities of young workers in the labor movement that they can be central to strengthening the movement and should not be treated separately as a “side issue”.

They also spoke about the fact that young workers should play active role in membership recruitment and ensuring that fellow young workers are recruited into the trade unions and also influence policy formulation in their respective workplaces and unions.

Other called on PSI affiliates to support young workers with educative programs that will ensure development of their class consciousness in line with young workers ideology as part of the working class. The seminar concluded by emphasizing the fact that young workers are the future generation of unions and they must be well integrated into the labor movement.

WE WON'T WAIT ANOTHER 20 YEARS!!!



This was the voice of women across the globe who met during the PSI pre-conference Women seminar held in Gaborone to precede the 12th Regional Congress for Africa and Arab Countries. In their deliberations they talked about how African women are found in precarious work and how the worst form of violence meted out to women have affected women in the region.

Presentations were made during the seminar outlined the nature of precarious work in the region and how it is affecting women in particular. Emphasis was laid on the experiences of trade unions around the region which points out the fact that national labour laws do not effectively protects against precarious work in the region.

Another important issue they factored in when discussing precarious work in the region is the fact that precarious work in Africa is commonly associated with the notion of the “working poor”. This is because the affected workers labour is rendered but wages paid to them are insufficient to move these workers above the poverty line. Thus, available data show that out of the 53% of people who are working in sub Saharan Africa and surviving on less than \$1 a day, over 80% are women. Further to this, out of the 85.4% of people existing on less than \$2 and over 70% are women.

Naomi Dedei Otoo, who chaired the PSI Africa Women’s Committee, also added her voice to the fact that the rights of women are being violated through some worst form of violence. In her submissions she mentioned that African women go through physical, economic and psychological violence. She further indicated that Africa has a long standing tradition of incredibly unequal power between men and women; this has led to an extremely high rate of violence against women.

She further indicated that violence against women in the region has been brought to the forefront by many non-profit humanitarian groups. Great strides have been made toward ending this violence, but the tradition of inequality between men and women runs deep, and it will take many years to break.

The Trades Unions are adding their voices to this call on the society, religious groups, traditional authorities and government to stand up in defending the rights of women.

Indeed women have had enough!!!

At the end of the 12th Regional Conference of PSI affiliates in Africa and Arab Countries, the conference adopted a program of action which will guide it's work in the region for the next 5 years. The program of action adopted focused on these thematic areas; fighting Privatization and outsourcing, advancing trade union rights, promoting solidarity among affiliates, organizing and recruitment, and influencing Regional, Sub-Regional and National level policies.

The 12th Regional Conference for Africa and Arab Countries climaxed with a proposed resolutions for pertinent issues affecting the region. Issues on the Universal access to health, HIV/AIDS and TB, Health care workers, the trade union response to the Ebola virus and many others were resolved and adopted. There was also a call for solidarity for Mauritanian Women.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER!!!

For more information and videos on AFRECON visit: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTth89T4iWwyQPOyii4gog7cOuKWHsNu-0R> www.world-psi.org/AFRECON2015

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Group photograph with the Regional Secretary of PSI-David Dorkenoo and Dr. L. Toni Lewis, Chair of SEIU Healthcare (USA) with delegates and participants from Ghana



From Right, Ayuba Wabba, Marrie Mbayabu, Rosa Pavanelli, Dr. L. Toni Lewis and Dr. Jasper Goss after the Ebola Panel Discussion.



The Rosa Pavanelli –PSI General Secretary and the Regional Secretary David Dorkenoo in pose with The Nigerian Delegates.



Group Photograph with the Regional Secretary after the AFRECON meeting.