

Concept Note

The Role of Trade Unions in protecting Agricultural Employment in Ghana in the Phase of Climate Change

Introduction and background

Ghana is a developing country faced with several challenges in developing its Agricultural sector including Climate Change to meet its expected contribution to GDP as well as create and sustain the required decent jobs in the sector. Climate change makes agricultural employment increasingly precarious and therefore adds a new context to the activities and risks against which trade unions must seek to protect their members. This is even more so in the context that developing countries who have contributed the least to the problem of increasing alteration of weather patterns and the environment will suffer the worst impacts. Agriculture in particular will be affected, with potentially serious implications for Food Security, poverty and employment. **This is likely to open space and relevance for Trade Unions but whether they stand up to these new challenges and opportunities remained to be seen.**

Seasonal changes will affect production systems and the resources and tools necessary to for successful harvest. Changes in climate could also change water and energy needs as well as type's of seeds and crops which will be economically viable. All of these will in turn affect the number of jobs, the seasonality of jobs, the skills required as well as wages on offer. Employment opportunities could disappear or become significantly less reliable, and climate change will present a fundamental challenge to business as usual in the labour market as more workers are pushed into the informal economy.

Trade Unions will increasingly need to engage in climate change issues by building capacity of their members in the face of increasing climate variability. Advocacy and awareness building will also need to be matched with defined strategies to ensure that individual's wellbeing not just the macro-economic remains the center of the debate and action. This will potentially place Trade Unions at the center of the debates on environmental rights, justice and equity.

This paper will attempt to make some propositions to Trade Unions in Ghana and Africa on how Trade Unions should position themselves to be relevant and to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities that Climate Change present.

The paper is a review of my Thesis : Climate Change and Its Effect on Agricultural Employment in Ghana: The Role of Trade Unions" in 2013 and published by LAP Lambert Academic Publishing in 2017.

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