



7TH REGIONAL CONGRESS FOR AFRICA – ILERA

DATES: 15 - 16 September 2014

LOCATION: The Grand Palm Hotel, Botswana

CALL FOR PAPERS

CONGRESS THEME:

“THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK: HOW DO THE INCREASE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN AFRICA, THE EXTENT OF INFORMAL WORK, THE IMPACT OF LABOUR MIGRATION AND THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IMPACT ON THE LABOUR MARKET, EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN AFRICA”

SUB THEMES:

1. INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT: IMPACT, CHALLENGES, STRUCTURES AND MODELS

There has been a substantial increase in the informal employment sector in Africa. It is suggested that up to 60% of all employment in the Continent is in the informal sector. This fact has major implications for the nature and quality of work, employment and social security of informal workers and employees. Regulation and protection afforded by the state for formal employees often does not extend to informal employees and workers. As a result, many informal workers are engaged in survivalist enterprises and remain in precarious jobs. From a broader perspective, several principled considerations arise – in particular whether informal workers should be included in mainstream or in specialised/distinct modalities of regulation, protection and coverage, and whether the solution lies in formalising/upgrading the informal economy.

Trade unions do not have a good record of reaching out and protecting informal workers and employees. This has resulted in other organisations stepping into the breach. The question is whether or not this is occurring to a significant extent, alternatively whether the majority of informal workers and employees are in fact left to fend for themselves?

The Congress invites papers that will help to shed further light on the situation of informal workers and employees in Africa, as well as forms of organisation and strategies that address their plight, addressing any of the following sub-themes:

- Defining and describing/circumscribing the informal economy/sector, informal employment and informal workers (including characterisation of informal employment relationships, value chains and links with the formal economy): definitional and statistical approaches and evidence
- Innovative forms of organisation and sources of power emerging *in the context of* informal and precarious work, including collective engagement and representation structures

- Value and contribution of informal employment to labour market and economic development
- Formalising/upgrading the informal economy: reflections on the state of play
- Unpacking the challenges of informal employment, including social protection risks and needs assessment, working conditions and occupational health and safety
- Gender and informal employment: implications for policy development

2. EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The public sector refers to the part of the economy concerned with providing various government services. The composition of the public sector varies by country, but in most countries the public sector includes such services as the military, police, public transit and care of public roads, public education, along with healthcare. At its most basic level, public economics provides a framework for thinking about whether or not the government should participate in economic markets and what the extent of its role should be. More and more pressure is placed on governments all over the world to create job opportunities in addressing unemployment in a country. The public nature of the various services rendered by government makes it particularly vulnerable to strike action. How do governments ensure equal treatment given the vast variety of occupational and other sectors accommodated within the public sector workforce? What models of performance management are appropriate when considering the special nature and varied contexts of the public sector? What institutional mechanisms, including dispute resolution structures and legal techniques, can be introduced to prevent strikes from arising and to manage industrial action in the public sector? How should a government deal with the possibility and actual occurrence of large lay-offs in the public sector in times of severe fiscal constraints and an overly large public sector? What does all of this mean for appropriate bargaining frameworks? Has the strong unionisation of the public service created a more perplexed environment? Given the background, the Congress is particularly interested in contributions covering the following themes:

- The implications of the increasing power of public service trade unions
- Disputes and strikes in the public service: Strategies for prevention
- Collective bargaining in the public service: identifying the most appropriate bargaining structures
- Incorporating performance evaluation and service delivery into public sector collective bargaining
- Remuneration in the public service: Equal treatment and the prevention of under-payment and over-payment of different sectors in the public service
- Appropriate legal techniques for the regulation of the public employment relationship

3. DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AROUND THE WORLD, AND THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION

The increased integration of the global economy due to greater free trade, vastly improved logistic and communication technology, mobile finance capital, transnational corporations and global production networks has had a major impact on work, employment and distribution of income all over the world. Africa has not escaped this trend with foreign investment from other continents on the increase. The Congress hopes to solicit contributions that indicate the latest trends in collective bargaining, the impact of foreign investment on employment, earnings, and working conditions. The African Regional Congress invites contributions from countries in every region of Africa to share what development is taking place in their countries and regions.

Sub-themes to be covered in the papers include:

- A comparison of the nature of work, wages and working conditions in the formal and informal sectors of the economy
- The role of trade unions in Africa: do they improve the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of employment relations? What role, if any, do they play politically?
- Human resource development – how well is the critical need for skilled labour in Africa being met?
- Employment strategies and working conditions of transnational corporations (TNCs) in different countries and regions in Africa
- The effect of global and regional supply chains in Africa on working conditions, profitability and the distribution of income along the supply chain
- The consequences of the World Trade Organisation's free trade policy on production, employment and working conditions; countries that gain and countries that lose
- The impact of the 2008 global financial crisis on economic growth and employment in Africa

4. **THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON: STRATEGIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS:**

The debate on harnessing migration for development and the experience of large groups of migrants setting off in search of better economic conditions and/or fleeing unrest and persecution, but often exposed to trafficking, smuggling and abuse, are but two of the phenomena which have again highlighted the plight of migrant workers and their families. Especially within the African continent this purports to be an extreme challenge.

Governments invariably grapple with growing domestic resistance and a hostile socio-political climate to the inflow and presence of migrants, often in contexts where huge demands are made on social and related services in times of austerity and economic struggle. Strict immigration law regimes and limited social protection, including social security and labour law protection predicated on a complex mix of immigration, nationality, residence, work permit and employment status therefore determine the position of most of the estimated 232 million migrants globally. The current framework of support and protection extended to migrant workers is complicated by the seemingly different legal, including international standards regimes applicable to (different categories of) migrant workers seeking employment, and higher skilled professionals and business people wanting to establish themselves and/or their businesses and services in other countries.

The Congress would like to receive submissions on:

- Who are the "migrant workers"? Problems of definition, also with reference to informal workers, self-employed migrants and the regulation of protection for skilled migrants and business entrepreneurs
- Migration and its impact on the labour market, development and poverty
- Migration in the African context and the impact of migration on sending / receiving / transition countries
- Legal status of migrants and their conditions of work and employment and quality of work life: Immigration law, labour law and social security approaches in the search for an appropriate paradigm and the response of the courts to migration
- The impact of freedom of movement regimes and regional integration on labour migration in Africa
- Unfair discrimination against people who migrate as well as the impact of xenophobic attitudes: Strategies for ensuring basic equality of treatment

- Gender / family perspectives and migration

Deadline for submission: **15 August 2014**

Notification of acceptance/rejection: **22 August 2014**

Submission guidelines for congress papers:

1. All proposals must be submitted to irasa@pscabc.org.za.
2. Authors must submit an extended abstract (1000 – 2000 words), or a full paper (up to 8000 words). Papers exceeding these limits will be desk rejected.
3. Contributors must declare the most appropriate theme of the conference paper.
4. Each manuscript should be accompanied by an abstract, not to exceed 150 words.
5. Manuscripts must be submitted in English.
6. The manuscript should not contain the author's identification information. A separate file should be submitted including the personal and employment details of each author, an abstract and a '100 words' biography of each author.
7. Submission should be on letter paper (8.5"x11" or 216x279 mm), with double-space text, and using either Arial or Times New Roman 12pts.
8. Manuscripts could be submitted either in MS Word or PDF.