

108 ILC – 2019
ZIMBABWE– Convention No 87

Chair, I will speak on behalf of the trade unions in the Nordic countries.

Once again we are here to discuss Zimbabwe and the Government's violation of Convention 87. Government has over the years made promises to improve the situation but words continue to be different from deeds.

An ILO High level mission visited Zimbabwe in 2017 followed the conclusions of this committee. Previously in 2009 a commission of inquiry visited Zimbabwe and made a report with recommendations on:

- stopping prosecution of trade unionists, allowing trade unions to operate freely
- amending the laws and creating a conducive environment for social dialogue

Although Government accepted the recommendations, like in the past, not much has been done. All Acts which the report called for reform remained intact - for example the Public Service Act and the famous POSA which I understand has now changed name to MOPA (Maintenance of Order and Peace Act). I am yet to see whether contents of this Act have also changed.

We are however pleased to note that a Tripartite Negotiation Forum Act was signed last week. We do hope that this is a serious step forward to establish a functioning social dialogue allowing the three social partners space to articulate their agenda.

In the Nordic countries we have a very active and effective social dialogue system among the three social partners. Many laws and regulations have been formulated through social dialogue. Even though we do not always agree, consultations take place. Both employers and workers follow the rules and regulations regarding the rights to organize, strike and bargain as laid down in the basic agreement between the parties. This co-operation has definitely had a very positive impact on our economies.

We hope that Zimbabwe will take advantage of the ILO experience to ensure that social dialogue contributes to economic growth of the country. Government must ensure that an agreed roadmap is in place for continued consultations and that social dialogue must be based on mutual trust.

In conclusion, we would like to urge the Government to avoid cosmetic reforms but engage in genuine dialogue with social partners for a way forward. Some of us are tired of seeing Zimbabwe on the agenda of this committee year after year and hope to see Zimbabwe on the list of progressive countries next year.