

# UNION GROWTH



DRAFT Framework for Action

# The ITUC has 176 million members with 325 affiliates in 161 countries

The ITUC family is the largest democratic force on Earth. We have a proud history at national and international levels. When we act collectively we can both drive and achieve serious change.

Nevertheless, democratic unions independent of Government represent just 7% of the global workforce. The capacity to grow, to directly represent millions more workers and to bargain collectively for a fairer share of wages, safer workplaces, better conditions and social justice measures lies in our hands.

We recognise that we must organise to grow. If we are to build the power of workers necessary to secure democracy, decent work, equality and social justice, we must break through the 7% barrier.

Can we add 20 million workers to our movement before the next Congress? Are we equipped for the challenge?

## ITUC global polling tells us that people demand what unions offer:

- More than two out of three respondents (68 percent) agree that workplaces with a union provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers.
- There is exceptionally strong support for a range of labour laws.
- 78% of people support the right to strike, rising to 99% when people are asked if they favour laws that protect the right to strike for better wages, conditions and health and safety.
- 96% of people are in favour of laws that establish and protect a decent minimum wage for workers.
- 91% of people support laws that give people the right to collectively bargain, and 89% support laws that give workers the right to join a union.
- The challenge to build workers' power through organising is to develop a strategy with identified targets and a clear plan, supported by capacity building, with action at all levels that leads to real gains for workers.

**Facts:** The global workforce is 2.9 billion.

The formal workforce is 1.7 billion.

The unionised workforce is 200 million, with as many again in unions not independent of government.

50% of workers are in vulnerable employment, most of them women facing precarity and discrimination at work.

40% of the global economy is informal.

90% of the world's 230 million migrants leave home in search of work, but less than 1% of them are in trade unions.

# Union targets

Workers around the world are facing concerted attacks on rights with the aggressive export of US-style employment practices. The attacks on freedom of association and collective bargaining are designed to ensure employers have absolute control over the workforce. This dehumanisation of work poses huge challenges for union organising, collective bargaining and social dialogue.

Many unions are developing and implementing counter-strategies in response to, or in anticipation of, the incursion of these practices into the workplace and industrial relations systems. The

global trade union movement has a vital role to play in helping unions expand their capacity and knowledge of successful practice to equip themselves to organise against this onslaught against fundamental rights.

The ITUC and the Global Union Federations (GUFs) have agreed on shared responsibility for three pathways to growth. These include corporate organising, national targets and significant obstacles or limits to freedom of association.

Building Workers' Power: ITUC Organising Framework - Pathways to growth		
<b>1. Corporate Campaigns</b>  GUF(s) Led	<b>2. Global Issues Regional/National Targets</b>  ITUC-led strategies for unorganised target groups	<b>3. Agenda Setting</b>  Strategic Global Campaigns that are in their Genesis e.g. Qatar
<b>Added Value / Partnership</b> ITUC National Centres Union Affiliates Allies	<b>Added Value / Partnership</b> GUF's National Centres Union Affiliates Allies	<b>ITUC</b> » may lead the starting of these campaigns » may help GUFs in starting these campaigns » ITUC may lead these campaigns  <b>NB:</b> » These strategic campaigns should be limited to 1 in planning and 1 in implementation » As they mature with organising possibilities they should be shifted to 1 or 2

These pathways to growth are set out to indicate the areas where the Global Union Federations will take the lead in organising, working with their affiliates, and where the ITUC might take the lead, working with our affiliates. Clearly there will be opportunities for all organisations to add value, and many strategic organising campaigns will also emerge from the bottom up.

Many ITUC and GUF affiliates and have set growth targets and have stories of successes and challenges to share. We can all learn from these stories, and the targets will provide the means to achieve the 20 million new members.

# Action points

Congress agrees that building capacity for organising is top priority for unions everywhere. 20 million new members is the target for 2018. The challenge is for all ITUC affiliates to commit to national growth and organising plans working with member unions.

## The challenge is to develop strategic organising campaigns:

- Wherever possible in partnership with GUF-led global or regional campaigns;
- With non-unionised member based organisations of workers where they exist for migrant workers or workers in the informal sector; and
- Individuals or groups of workers who are determined to act collectively for rights and social justice in unorganised sectors.

## This requires the following:

- Strategic research and mapping;
- Identifying key groups and growth targets;
- Transparent planning and evaluation;
- Capital strategies to support corporate organising;
- Training organisers, lead organisers and strategic campaign coordinators through strengthening the ITUC Global Academy;
- Deepening the partnership with the Council of Global Unions with organising campaigns in agreed corporate sectors, countries and on major global issues;
- Sharing and coordinating information and action to stop social dumping by multinational companies; and
- Building an organising fund to support organising objectives as detailed above.

## Organising campaigns must be inclusive with measurable outcomes for:

- Membership growth, union recognition and collective bargaining with workers employed by global corporations;
- Building new unions or inclusion of existing unions/member organisations to achieve membership growth, union recognition, collective bargaining, minimum wages, social protection and other gains for workers in regional or affiliate target groups and sectors;
- Membership growth and expanding leadership of women, migrants and young workers, including in the informal sector and where necessary by changing union rules;
- Identified gains for existing members and new members through organising campaigns to achieve collective bargaining, policy demands or legal rights; and
- Organising of migrant workers through action in countries of origin and destination.