

PROTECTING WORKERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

SATUCC'S SOCIAL CHARTER

In 1991 Cosatu said: 'we need to work with SATUCC for the adoption and popularisation of a Southern African Workers' Charter incorporating demands for basic social, economic and trade union rights for workers in the region'. The Southern African Trade Union Co-ordination Council (SATUCC) is a regional structure of OATUU, the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity.

The Charter was adopted in 1992. It aims to protect all workers, through laws that lay down the same conditions in each country of the region.

With the end of apartheid, bosses can now move around more easily in Southern Africa, and try to play off the workers of one country against workers of other countries. The Charter is an important weapon to protect workers against this.

It also aims to protect migrant workers. Millions of workers from the rest of the region helped build South Africa's developed economy. With unemployment rising, we must not say that migrant workers are to blame. The Charter demands the same rights for all workers.

Most governments only pay lip-service to the Charter. They are not implementing its demands. Most refuse to bring in the relevant standards from the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Workers and their trade unions need to struggle to give the Charter life.

Comrades! Take up the Charter in your organisation!



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Social Charter of Fundamental Rights of Workers in Southern Africa, 1992

We in the labour movement demand:

1. Basic human and trade union rights: to strike, to organise; to form independent unions
2. Implementation of ILO conventions and standards
3. No discrimination or exploitation in any form
4. The right to job security
5. Minimum living and working conditions
6. The right to a healthy and safe environment
7. Uniform laws for full disclosure of company information
8. Independent Labour and Industrial Courts which act speedily
9. No forced retirement without social benefits
10. Rights to negotiation and bargaining at all levels
11. Participation in decision-making about the economy
12. Protection of gender rights
13. The right to education and training
14. A regional body to monitor trade union and basic human rights and enforce improvements
15. Building of solidarity at regional and international level

'We declare that these objectives are in the best interests of all the working people in Southern Africa and of our societies as a whole. As representatives of organised labour in Southern Africa, we pledge to struggle together for their full implementation.'