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Economic Commission for Africa

Multinational Programming and
Operational Centre for Eastern
and Southern Africa (MULPOC)

Conference on Migratory Labour in South Africa

Aide-Memoire

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CONFERENCE ON MIGRATORY LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

Aide-Memoire

Sponsorship

1. This Conference is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (ECA/MULPOC) in Lusaka, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Government of Zambia and the Liberation Movements of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Venue and dates

2. The Conference will take place in Lusaka, Zambia from 4-8 April 1978.

Origin of the Conference

3. At their Second Conference of Council of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (ECA/MULPOC/Lusaka then known as UNDAT) held in Mbabane, Kingdom of Swaziland, from 26-28 April, 1976 the ministers representing the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa, after discussing at length the question of the migratory labour in Southern Africa, agreed that the whole question of the migratory labour system in South Africa, with all its ramifications, required urgent review by countries of the Sub-region. The Council accordingly directed that "UNDAT" (now MULPOC) should co-ordinate all efforts for the convening of a Conference at which the migratory labour system in South Africa and its socio-economic and political impact on the countries of Southern Africa would be discussed.

Subsequently at their Third Conference held in Lusaka, Zambia, on November 4, 1977, the Council of Ministers, after noting the progress report on preparations for the conference directed that arrangements should be expedited for the Conference to be held in Lusaka, Zambia, before the end of April 1978.

Purpose and Theme of the Conference

4. The Conference is intended to bring together those countries supplying labour to South Africa under the migratory labour system (viz. Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and other Southern African countries, as well as the international community, in order to consider the economic, political and social impact of the system in the labour supplying countries and in South Africa. The Conference is expected to work out proposals for realistic measures which the countries concerned could adopt in order to develop alternative employment opportunities internally so as to be less dependant on the South African mining and other industries for employment.
5. The Conference deliberations will be centred on the theme "Towards a Common Labour Migration Policy in Southern Africa" and will be organized around the four main topics, namely:-
 - (a) A historical perspective; the nature and extent of the problem of migratory labour in South Africa;
 - (b) Social, political and economic conditions of migrant labourers - and economic implications of social and employment conditions to labour supplying countries;
 - (c) Alternative forms of employment generated by industrialization and other employment creating socio-economic activities;
 - (d) Mobilization of internal and external resources (human and material) for realising the alternatives suggested above.
6. In addition to the above, the Conference will also consider the following:
 - (a) The role of multinational corporations in the perpetuation of the migratory labour system in South Africa;
 - (b) Forward planning in countries not yet politically liberated (South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia) with special emphasis on measures that would be required to restructure the economies of these countries away from an exploitative dependence on the migratory labour system.

Agenda

7. The following provisional agenda for the Conference is suggested:

- (a) Opening session
- (b) Election of officers
- (c) Adoption of the agenda
- (d) Organizational arrangements for the Conference
- (e) The nature and extent of the problem of migratory African labour in South Africa
- (g) Social, political and economic conditions of migrant labourers in South Africa and the effect of this migration on the home country and on the migrants themselves
- (h) Mobilization of internal and external resources
- (i) Any other business
- (j) Consideration and adoption of report and recommendations
- (k) Closing

An annotated agenda will be provided to members of the Conference at the opening.

Organization of the Conference

8. The Officers of the Conference will consist of a Director (from ECA/MULPOC, Lusaka), a Co-Director (from the ILO), a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Rapporteur and a Co-rapporteur all to be elected by the participants from among themselves. All these together with the consultants will compile the report of the Conference deliberations. The ECA/MULPOC Office will be responsible for the servicing, day-to-day organisational and welfare aspects of the Conference.

9. The Sessions of the Conference will take place in plenary and in committee discussions. In order to speed up work, facilitate discussion and formulate recommendations, two committees will be established. The working language of the Conference will be in English. There will be no simultaneous interpretation into other languages. The Conference will however endeavour to make available parallel interpretation into French for those participants who might require it.

Documentation

10. A panel of expert consultants (who will later serve as resource persons to the Conference) have been commissioned to prepare papers and working documents relating to the main discussion topics of the Agenda.

11. The migratory problem in Southern Africa has been extensively researched by several social scientists at the Universities of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. Further, the migratory labour phenomenon in the Sub-region has been the subject of special reports produced by several international organizations at the request of some of the Governments of the area. It is expected that this accumulated research will be heavily drawn upon. Every effort will therefore be made to involve in the preparation of the Conference papers as many of the social scientists who have had research experience on the subject to the extent permitted by available resources and the practical aspects of the Conference administration.

Participants and Observers

12. Participants to the Conference will consist of Senior Government Officers at the Permanent Secretaries and Labour Commissioner level from the member States served by the Lusaka-based MULPOC viz. Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Somalia, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Seychelles Islands, Comoro Islands, Uganda and Zambia are expected to send participants. Similarly all the Liberation Movements of Southern Africa viz. ANC and PAC of South Africa, Patriotic Front (Zimbabwe) and SWAPO of Namibia; also the Miners' Unions of the affected countries viz. Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland will participate.

13. Invitations will be extended to the following international organizations to attend the Conference as Observers:-

- Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)
- International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
- World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)
- World Peace Council (WPC)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Afro-Asian People Solidarity Organization - Cairo
- Pan African Youth Movement - Algiers
- World Federation of Democratic Youth - Budapest
- All African Council of Churches (AACC)
- Lesotho Christian Council (LCC)

Pan African Women's Organization - Algiers
Training and Research Centre for Women (TRCW)
Labour movements in the Sub-region
Donor Countries and Organizations
UN Agencies based in Lusaka

Observers who wish to do so may submit papers bearing on any aspect of the objectives or the Agenda of the Conference to the Secretariat of the Conference by March 6, 1978.

Costs and Financing of Conference

14. The sponsors of the Conference will meet the full costs i.e. travel and subsistence for (i) two (2) participants from each of the countries affected by the migratory labour phenomenon viz. Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, (ii) one (1) participant from each of the other member states of the Eastern and Southern African countries viz. Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Somalia, Tanzania, Seychelles, Comoros and Uganda; (iii) nine (9) non-Lusaka based representatives of Liberation movements.

15. All observers will attend the Conference at their own expense and they are advised to ensure that they have adequate funds (at least US\$55.00 per day) to cover their room and board for the period of their stay in Lusaka.

Accommodation

16. Suitable accommodation will be arranged by the organizers of the conference. Each sponsored participant will be requested to pay for his or her board and lodging out of the daily allowance which will be paid on arrival. In view of the difficulty of securing hotel accommodation in Lusaka, intending participants are advised to communicate details of their arrival to the sponsors will in advance preferably by 28 March 1978.

Arrival and Departure Arrangements

17. The secretariat of the Conference will arrange to meet each participant on arrival at the Lusaka airport. Timely notice should be given by cablegramme or telex of the exact date and time of arrival and flight number. The Secretariat will assist the Conference with bookings or re-confirmation for their return jounies.

Follow-up Conference

18. A Conference of Ministers responsible for Labour will be called later in the year (1978) to consider the Report and recommendations of the Conference. This follow-up Conference will be attended primarily by the Governments affected by the migratory labour phenomenon.

Liaison

19. All correspondence and enquiries concerning the Conference on Migratory Labour in South Africa and related or follow-up action should be addressed to:-

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