Regional Integration, Labour Migration and Decent work in the SADC: Trade Union Perspective

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Focus of Presentation

• Concept of Regional Integration
• Nexus of Regional Integration, Labour Migration and Decent work
• Notable trends of the global production system in the context of regional integration, labour migration and decent work
• What are reactions to the current policy responses?
• How have Trade Unions Responded
• Conclusion
Concept of Regional Integration

• Earlier discourse primarily related to spiralling trans-local market integration.

• Regionalism refers to a tendency and political commitment to organise the world order in terms of regions; more narrowly, the concept refers to a specific regional project.

• Söderbaum and Hettne (2010) refer to it as “complex process of forming regions ... that leads to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographical space”
Concept of Regional Integration

• A region can be more or less coherent, leading to the notion of ‘regionness’:
  ▪ a high degree of ‘regionness’ and regional identity implies the capacity to act, or ‘actorness’, while
  ▪ a lower degree of ‘regionness’ implies a greater impact on the region from the outside
Concept of Regional Integration

“Actorness” has four main ingredients:

• A shared commitment to a set of overarching values;
• The domestic legitimisation of decision-making processes and priorities relating to external policy;
• The ability to identify priorities, and formulate consistent and coherent policies; and
• The availability of and capacity to utilise policy instruments – diplomacy/negotiation, economic tools, and military means.
Concept of Regional Integration

• Nieuwker (2012) argues that the concept of integration should preferably holistic and cover:
  ▪ *economic integration* (the formation of a transnational economy).
  ▪ *social integration* (the formation of a transnational society); and
  ▪ *political integration* (the formation of a transnational political system).
Concept of Developmental Regionalism

In fact Söderbaum and Hettne (2012) see developmental regionalism means:

“concerted efforts by a group of countries in a given region to enhance the economic complementarity of constituent political units in order to strengthen the total capacity of the regional economy.”
Decent Work

• Decent work entails productive work where rights are protected, generating adequate income, with adequate social protection.
• It also implies adequate work – where all have full access to income-generating opportunities.
• This means employment, income and social protection are achieved without undermining workers’ rights and social standards.
• Decent work has key dimensions, namely:
  ▪ Opportunity to work.
  ▪ Productive work.
  ▪ Freedom at work.
  ▪ Equality at work.
  ▪ Security at work.
  ▪ Dignity at work

▪ We have learnt that migrant workers face severe decent work deficits with clear break down of Social Protection
Nexus of regional integration, labour migration and decent work

• *The best prerequisite for enhancement of decent work in context of labour migration is a development paradigm that is human-centered approach that aims to eliminate inequalities*

• Otherwise a paradigm that:
  - Shrinks employment opportunities (joblessness).
  - Increases inequality and levels of poverty (ruthless).
  - Takes place in the absence of democracy or empowerment (voiceless).
  - Ignores and undermines cultural identities (rootless)
  - That squanders the resources needed (futureless)

*Undermines decent work and intention of purposeful regional integration*
Key Questions

• What is type of region integration does SADC project?
• What is the ideological paradigm driving regional integration in the SADC?
• Does the current regional integration development paradigm promote decent work in the context labour migration?
Trends in the global production system in the context of regional integration, labour migration and decent work

• Issues of the historical imbalanced production systems driven by capital interest still remain
• Embedded in systemic and structural rigidities in the global production systems
• Fundamental relationships between labour and capital remain the same.
• Neo-liberal global financial and economic architecture that tends to reproduce economic insecurity that is a prime source of social and political conflict
• Globalisation as one driver of decent work deficits: global commodity and value chains of the formal and informal economies are now linked across the borders of many countries, influencing employment and decent work
• The increased integration of the global economy and the fact that workers are enmeshed in integrated production processes presents new challenges for trade unions
Dualistic and Enclave Structure of the SADC economies still persists (Source: ANSA, 2006)
What are Trade Union reactions to the current policy responses?

• Pursuit of policy interventions on labour migration have been highly reformist and conformist to the current order – for example the stress of micro-economic convergence by SADC

• Legislative reforms on labour migration with emphasis on fortifying exclusionist measures

• Policy responses labour migration have been not been absorptive and integrative

• Policy processes fraught with lack of comprehensive involvement of trade unions and civil society
How have Trade Unions Responded?

• Contested the current development paradigm - advocate inclusive development imperative (Questioned RISDP and influenced inclusion of Article 9 (i) of ELP)

• Promoted advocacy and social dialogue with the appropriate structures of SADC (Article 23 of SADC Treaty)

• Formation strategic alliances with other actors of civil society & faith-based organisations (Creation of Apex body for SATUCC, SADC-CNGOs, FOCCISA)

• Establish strategic and issue based political alliances (Informal sector organizations including Street NET)

• Leverage existing policy space through regional TUs such as SATUCC, EATUC (Need to extend beyond ELP, Mapping of Protocols)

• Continental and International (existing AU, ITUC structures and incorporate ideas and inputs into Global Union Federations) to deal with supply chains and outsourcing
Framework that guide our strategy

- SADC Member State cannot resist the pressure by the global actors on their own and thus they need to build an effective regional block in Southern Africa that will benefit the people of the region.
- Such a regional block will allow the movement of people and goods across borders and will be a building bloc for African integration in the long term.
- Need to looking at the development process in a holistic manner: considering three basic factors:
  - The “social factor”, meaning how people’s basic human rights are safeguarded and how vulnerable people are protected against poverty and exploitation.
  - The “democratic factor”, meaning how the political system functions, how decisions are made and implemented, how resources and opportunities are distributed and how justice and fairness is achieved.
  - The “global factor”, meaning how the system works at global level, how decisions are taken and implemented, how global resources are controlled and distributed and how this global system affects Africa.
Guiding principles for Trade Unions

It is a people-led regional integration strategy. Proposes:

• An alternative production system primarily based on domestic demand and human needs and the use of local resources and domestic savings. It also proposes the “horizontal” integration of agriculture and industry.

• A grassroots-led regional integration as opposed to the current fragmentation (e.g. fragmented EPA negotiations).

• A strategic, selective de-linking from neo-liberal globalisation and the preparation for a negotiated re-linking to a fundamentally different global production and distribution system (South-South Cooperation).

• An alternative policy on science and technology based on harnessing the collective knowledge and wisdom of the people.
Guiding Principles

• Forging of strategic alliances and networks with progressive forces at national, regional and global levels.
• A politically governed redistribution of wealth and opportunities from the formal to the non-formal sectors of the economy.
• Women’s rights as the basis for a healthy and productive society.
• An education system that addresses the needs for sustainable human development by improving technical, managerial, research and development skills.
• Promotion of an ethical developmental state – through a dynamic, participatory and democracy, peoples’ mobilisation, demonstrations, open hearings, etc.
Conclusion

Need for critical evaluate at the key elements of development paradigm in the SADC.

- Purposeful leadership and a developmentalist coalition
- Real transformative institutions in the SADC
- Focused industrial policies in the SADC
- Investment in research (R&D) in the SADC?
- Enhanced social policy in the SADC structures
- Formulating appropriate policies and implementing these in the SADC region