

SUCCESS FACTORS OF EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS COOPERATION IN GHANA IN INFLUENCING GOVERNMENTS' ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES.

BY

MR. KWAME OFORI – GYAU
GHANA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION



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INTRODUCTION

- The involvement of trade union cooperation and employers in policy making has not been a new form of social partnership in national development.
- The formation of trade unions in the early 1920's under British colonialism has been the core driving force for social dialogue in policy making.
- The freedom of association granted by the 1992 Constitution opened up both political and economic spaces for discussion of national development which greatly improved the conditions for trade unions.
- Although social dialogue was used in discussing national development, there were still conflicts between labour and government which was finally resolved in 2003 with the establishment of the tripartite national labour commission.

INTRODUCTION

- Prior to 2003 when the Labour Act was enacted, the involvement of employers and trade union organizations in policy making was not legally recognized.
- One of the most important aspects of the Labour Act, 2003 is the creation of a tripartite committee comprising – Government, Labour and Employers to determine the national minimum wage as a basis for collective bargaining.
- Social and economic policy importance:
 - Guides social and economic development for the creation of a better life for all; addresses development deficits and social insecurity
 - Contributes to creating conditions for economic development; chicken and egg relationship between economic and social policy

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

- Social dialogue refers to all types of negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between or among representatives of, employers, workers and governments on issues of common interest in the field of economic and social policy.
- Ghana's social dialogue system thrives on tripartite basis.
- A major aspect of Ghana's social dialogue is reaching consensus on collective bargaining agreements through tripartism.

POLICY CONCERTATION

- It is the process of moving towards consensus through dialogue among social partners.
- The main focus of policy concertation is on co-determination of public policy as opposed to mere consultation.
- The policy concertation takes four (4) main forms namely:
 - Decision by agreement within government committees
 - Formal tripartite or government union agreement
 - Informal agreement
 - Implementation by the state of bipartite employer union agreement

TRIPARTISM

- A process of cooperation whereby government consults and involves representatives of employers and workers.
- In the Ghanaian case, the equality in partnership is evidenced by the fact that any of the three major actors can call for a meeting of the national tripartite committee to discuss issues of concern.
- Tripartism ensures equal participation, with equal weight given to the opinions of the representatives.
- The emergence of tripartite consultation can be traced to the formation of trade unions in Ghana in the early 1920's.

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

- The policy provides the opportunity for Government to engage the youth and other stakeholders in meaningful partnership to develop appropriate interventions and services for youth empowerment.
- It involves the process of preparing young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood.
- The key principles and priority areas of the policy include: Patriotism; self reliance; leadership; Education and skills training; science, research and technology; youth in modern agriculture; youth employment that focuses on youth capacity building

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

- Identifiable groups under the policy:
 - Post-basic and secondary school drop-outs (Junior High and Senior High Schools)
 - Out-of-school, unemployed, and under-employed youth
 - Female youth
 - Youth in crime and violence-related problems
- The policy will be implemented through an ACTION PLAN, which will outline comprehensive strategies, projects and activities, time frame with respect to immediate, short, medium and long term and the budget lines that will achieve its desired objectives.
- The policy takes due cognizance of the role of private sector (Employers' Association) who provide opportunities for gainful employment.

GHANA POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

- The first poverty reduction strategy adopted as Ghana's development framework in 2003 was the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (GPRS I)
- The policy's thrust was mainly to promote macro economic stability.
- GDP grew at an average of 5.1 per cent during the four-year period (2001-2004).
- The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II) was subsequently introduced after the success of the GPRS I as a development framework covering the period 2006-2009.
- Its overall objective was to double the size of the Ghana economy in terms of real production within the next decade and increase the per capita income of the average Ghanaian.
- Growth targets were established to operationalize Ghana's international commitments under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

- Some objectives are to:
 - Promote the goal of full employment and to enable all men and women who are available and willing to work to attain secured and sustainable livelihood.
 - Safeguard the rights and basic interests of workers and promote respect for relevant international labour standards.
 - Provide equal opportunity for all.
- Some principles include:
 - Government policy and employment generation will emphasize the provision of a favourable environment for private investment and job creation.
 - The principle of collective bargaining, workers education and adjustment in wages linked to price and productivity changes will be promoted.

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

- Some strategies for achieving the policy objectives include:
 - Accelerating private sector growth through removal of critical bottlenecks, enhancing private sector competitiveness.
 - Development of micro, small and medium enterprises through removal of barriers.
 - Enhancing business development and management through entrepreneurship training by capacity building for corporate leadership.
 - Improving working conditions and occupational safety and health.
- Employers and workers' organizations are actively involved in the implementation of this policy by cooperating closely with public institutions with regards to monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

- The negotiation is constrained by the dynamics of a system in which the government can refuse to pay as agreed.
- The disunity between trade unions due to a number of unions which are independent of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) is a major threat to tripartism.
- The failure of the institutionalization process in Act 203 to strengthen the inspectorate division of the Chief Labour Officer's office.
- The labour administration, as well as employers' and workers' organizations in Ghana often do not have sufficient capacity and resources to properly strengthen their role in the social dialogue.

SUCCESS DRIVERS

- Employers and trade union cooperation have over the years successfully contributed immensely in policy making and implementation through the strength of unionization.
- Enactment of the Labour Act 2003, has given workers and employer associations the legal strength to make major contributions in policy making and implementation.
- The adoption of the tripartism through social dialogue in the Labour Act 2003 has given workers and employer associations equal participation in decision making in order to safeguard the interest of all parties.
- The worker and employers associations through the institutionalization of tripartism have gained the access to both policy making and implementation.

THANK YOU