

15th Round Table on Labour Relations

The Role of Stakeholders in Labour Disputes - How to manage Conflict and prevent Violence

Nampower Convention Centre, Thursday, 15 March 2007, Windhoek

Welcome Remarks
by **Tangeni Nuukuawo**
Project Officer, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Representatives of trade unions movement, of Namibian Police, of Namibian employers' federation and employer organisations, of government institutions, of NGOs, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our first Round Table on Labour Relations this year.

Round Tables organised by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung are bringing together different stakeholders to discuss specific topics on Labour Relations.

It is with some satisfaction that these Round Tables have become a permanent feature.

They are coming to its 15th session since 1996.

In the following years, the series of Round Table forums raised issues about labour consultation and joint consultation procedures, about mediation and resolution of labour disputes.

Furthermore, topics like productivity, privatisation and labour legislation formed part of other Round Table forums.

Today again we could gather a distinguished panel and audience to discuss the role of stakeholders in labour disputes.

It is not the first time that we are addressing this specific topic.

In 1997, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung supported a training course on conflict resolution for NAMPOL officers, followed by a training-of-trainers course.

Both courses were conducted by the Centre for Conflict Resolution of the University

of Cape Town.

Then in 1998, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung organised a Round Table with the title '*industrial dispute*' where stakeholders namely trade unions, employers, government and police participated.

We all know that conflicts cannot be eradicated because of the different interests of stakeholders.

Any conflict that is left unattended will finally lead to more aggression and eventually to violent confrontation.

We know also that conflicts that get out of hand will always be costly in terms of money or other resources and time.

I hope that today's meeting will contribute to understanding each others' difficulties and positions better.

This is a first step towards managing conflict.

At this juncture I am greatly delighted to welcome *Mr Afzul Soobedaar* from the Commission for Consolation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) of South Africa.

He will share with us the experience of South Africa on conflict management.

We thank *Mr Soobedaar* for having accepted our invitation and agreed to present a keynote address on the topic.

Equally I am pleased in welcoming and in introducing to you the panel of presenters of today's roundtable discussions.

- *Ms Mwafufya-Shikongo* (**Deputy Labour Commissioner, the Ministry of labour and Social Welfare**)
- *Mr Evilastus Kaaronda* (**Secretary General, NUNW trade unions movement**)
- *Mr Danie Brune* (**Chief Inspector, Namibian Police**)
- *Mr Hofni Shikongo* (**Board Member, Namibian Employers' Federation**)

I thank you all for having accepted our invitation and agreed to be on the panel to present your views on the topic.

Last but not least, I feel delighted that *Mr John Nakuta* has accepted our invitation at a very short notice to come and to moderate the sessions of our meeting.

After the keynoted address and the brief presentations by the panellists, the distinguished audience will have the opportunity to give their inputs and ask topic related questions to the speakers.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am looking forwards to the presentations and, I take the opportunity to thank the speakers again for having come and taken time to share their views with us on this important topic.

Thank you very much