

Innovation in the Tripartite Negotiating Forum, a Key Success Factor to Improved Labour Relations, Productivity and Economic Growth in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: Tripartism is an International Labour Organisation (ILO) framework to promote social dialogue among labour, business and the state. It culminates in sound industrial relations and the collective solving of social-economic issues in a country. In Zimbabwe, the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) has failed since its formation in 1998, to come up with any meaningful social dialogue that should enhance a holistic approach to solving the country's socio-economic challenges. Unstructured interviews were used to generate data from representatives of all the three social partners. The quota sampling technique was used which culminated in a sample size of 25 subjects based on the data saturation technique. The major findings were that; there were almost irreconcilable differences caused by different sectoral interests and priorities, a rift created by the failure to agree on the Kadoma Declaration of 2001, boycotting of meetings at times and lack of political will by some of the partners. There was need to have national interest ahead of sectoral interests and to expedite the creation of an operational framework such as the TNF Act. The Act should be able to capacitate the coalition body to be more effective for the betterment of the economy and country at large.

Definition of key terms

Innovation-creativity or new ideas which bring a paradigm shift to the way of doing things or business for success.

Key success factor-a key element which is required for an organisation to accomplish or exceed its desired goal(s).

Labour relations- issues pertaining to employment relationships that bring key parties together, that is government, employers and workers or any of the two to deal with them jointly or amicably.

Social Dialogue – negotiations of broader economic and social issues usually of a particular country by the social partners, namely government, employers and workers to amicably come up with solutions, policies etc.

Tripartite Negotiating Forum - the coalition body of the three social partners, namely government, employers and workers which is supposed to engage in sound social dialogue in order to come up with binding agreements (social contracts) on mostly economic and welfare matters in Zimbabwe.

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I. Introduction

The background to the study has been presented to enlighten the reader about what this study entailed. The real problem underlying this study has been covered under the Statement of the problem. Other key sub-topics covered include; the Review of related literature (Literature review), Methodology, Research findings, Conclusions and Recommendations. List of references used in this paper has been given at the end of this paper

II. Background Of The Study

Zimbabwe has failed to come up with a social dialogue platform that is necessary to improve labour relations, socio-economic issues among the three key stakeholders namely, Labour (workers/employees), Business (employers) and the Government (state). The three parties who form the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) have failed since the inception of the coalition body in 1998 to agree on critical aspects affecting the labour relations and economic issues. It appears there are sharp divisions and differences among the three parties and each of the three parties seem to be prioritising sectoral interests instead of compromising and putting national interests first.

Meaningful negotiations in Zimbabwe have failed to come up with a social dialogue platform that is necessary to improve labour relations among the three key stakeholders namely, Labour (workers/employees), Business (employers) and the Government (state). The Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) has been in existence since 1998 as a voluntary and unlegislated chamber in which social economic matters are supposed to be discussed and negotiated by the social partners. Issues that have been put on the table since the Economic

Structural Adjustment Programme in 1990 and especially during the hyperinflationary period of 2007-2008, included; shrinking formal employment, remuneration earnings below poverty datum line of about USD 495 as at end of July 2016 (ZIMSTATS, July 2016), lack of foreign investment, retarded progress on labour law amendments that should look at means of dealing with retrenchments, workplace security such as medical aid and insurance cover including ways to avert Zimbabwe's international image which has been tarnished in the eyes of western countries. Nothing of substance on the above issues has been accomplished to date.

The failure to have such a negotiating platform, has not only adversely affected employment and labour relations in Zimbabwe but on a broader scale, the ailing national economy which is affecting the ordinary worker and citizen. Attempts have previously been made to bring the three parties together and formulate some social protection and economic protocols or policies but to no avail. The two major labour bodies; the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) have different political alignments to the main political parties and have failed to speak with one voice for the good cause of workers. This has resulted in workers being vulnerable to exploitation as they do not have adequate social security and protection.

Most big firms in Zimbabwe are multinational corporations (MNCs), with the majority being from the former colonial master, Britain. The economic sanctions imposed by Britain and other developed countries since 2000 has even exacerbated the sour relationship between the social partners in attempts to conduct social dialogue with a view to concluding binding social contracts. Such sanctions have exacerbated Zimbabwe's economic woes. It is also important to note that in 2007 and 2008, Zimbabwe set one of the ever highest inflation records in the world of around three hundred million percent. Most formal businesses struggled. The majority were actually liquidated and others downsized their operations (*Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe report, 2010*).

During this hyper inflationary period, there was economic meltdown which culminated in the dollarization of the Zimbabwean economy in February 2009 under the Government of National Unity (GNU) as the Zimbabwean dollar had been constantly depreciating. A lot of small businesses mushroomed all over the country particularly in the capital city of Harare but majority of these were in the informal sector and they have since not been properly registered even up to today. According to the Financial Gazette, a weekly newspaper of 6 October 2013 edition, Zimbabwe had one of the highest informal sectors in the world constituting of about 85% employment in the country. The collapse of the Zimbabwe industry which is still struggling to resuscitate itself, has worsened unemployment rate in the country.

There is no doubt among most right minded people that Zimbabwe needs a national dialogue of Zimbabweans themselves for only Zimbabweans can resolve the current situation though with the support of the international community. However, this potential dialogue is also facing leadership crisis. Although everyone recognises the need for Social dialogue in Zimbabwe at the moment, seemingly it appears no one is willing to take responsibility.

It is against this background that this researcher was motivated to look into this important area of Social Dialogue on Labour relations in Zimbabwe with a view to see effective dialogue. Such effective dialogue should contribute immensely to improve the country's economic growth and the welfare of vulnerable work groups such as those working in the informal sector or in a lot of unethical organizations which violate labour issues/matters and infringe upon workers rights.

III. Statement Of The Problem

Negotiations (Social dialogue) among the three social partners (TNF) have failed to improve labour relations, national productivity (GDP) and economic growth in Zimbabwe especially over the past three years (2013-2016). There have been counter accusations among the partners and dialogue has been stalled with boycotts of meetings at times by the major labour body, Zimbabwe congress of trade unions (ZCTU). As a result of failure to dialogue, there is no holistic approach to solving Zimbabwe's economic (business) and social issues which is against ILO provisions (Conventions) on tripartism of which Zimbabwe is its affiliate. Attempts by the TNF to have Social Dialogue platform and mechanism to improve social and economic well being of business, labour and general economy in Zimbabwe have failed despite numerous efforts and attempts since its formation in 1998.

Such continued breakdown of Social dialogue has done more harm by contributing to the general economic crisis that Zimbabwe is currently facing. The economic situation deterioration is affecting especially the ordinary worker despite the nation having potential to be one of Africa's economic giants as it were in the 1980s & early 1990s when the country was dubbed the "bread basket of Africa" due to its agriculture prowess. Today it is a different ball game altogether as Zimbabwe now imports even foodstuffs and really struggling to re-establish itself as a fast developing country and Africa's icon. Workers have become vulnerable due to worrying massive retrenchments, downsizing and liquidation of most business operations.

This study intended to find out what should possibly be done for effective Social dialogue in the TNF body in order to improve the welfare and standard of living of Zimbabweans including the viability and growth of industry and commerce at large.

IV. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following sub-problems

- (i) What do pieces of legislation in Zimbabwe say with regard to operations of the TNF?
- (ii) What are the problems facing the effective operations of the TNF in Zimbabwe?
- (iii) What innovation is required to create a new culture of cooperation and unity to improve labour relations within TNF and improve the economic situation in Zimbabwe?

V. Review Of Related Literature

5.1 Theoretical and Conceptual frameworks

The **convergence theory** (Weinberg 1969; Baum 1974) improved the need for dialogue among different but interested parties (stakeholders) to come together in order to discuss broader issues of concern and come up with meaningful arrangements or agreements, e.g. the 3 Social partners and even Regional trading blocs. Concepts that pertain to the meeting of such interested parties at country level are usually social dialogue and social contract (Uzhenyu, 2015, Mudyawabikwa & Sambureni, 2003)

The National Tripartite Social Dialogue. This is an ILO guide for improved governance (ILO, 2013) among social partners.

Social dialogue and tripartism cover:

- Negotiation, consultation and information exchange among the different actors;
- Collective bargaining;
- Dispute prevention and resolution
- corporate social responsibility and international framework agreements.

Preconditions for sound social dialogue (ILO,2013):

- Strong, independent workers' and employers' organizations technical capacity and access to relevant information
- Political will and commitment
- Respect for the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining
- An enabling legal and institutional framework.

How the ILO helps (ILO, 2013)?

- strengthening legal frameworks, institutions, machinery/processes for sound Industrial Relations (IR)
- promote social dialogue among members, regional or sub-regional communities.
- supports the development of knowledge on global IR.

5.2 Tripartite arrangements or approaches in Zimbabwe

The approach to Social Dialogue in Zimbabwe has been two-pronged. The National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) under the banner of smart partnership is pursuing the broader initiatives. Secondly, resolving of national socio-economic problems through negotiations is pursued within the auspices of the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF).

(i) Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF).

Was established in terms of Paragraph 3(A) of ILO Recommendation 152. The Tripartite consultative meetings are attended by policy-makers from Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social welfare, the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (EMCOZ) and Labour which is represented by the Zimbabwe congress of trade unions (ZCTU), Zimbabwe federation of trade unions (ZFTU) and the Apex Council (a negotiating forum of the Public Sector Staff Associations).

The study revealed that the TNF should be the committee that deals with all labour policies and labour law reform that makes submission to the cabinet through the Minister responsible for labour administration who in turn, presides over these meetings. The agreed terms of reference of the TNF are to:

- Identify and deal with all macro-economic issues that affect the well being of the economy and social development.
- Deal with issues debated in the National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) that warrant further negotiations.
- Negotiate and recommend positions to Cabinet for endorsement.

Composition of the TNF

(a) On the **part of government**, the TNF usually includes the **Ministries of:**

- Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (Chairperson);
- Finance and Economic Development
- Industry and International Trade
- Mines and Energy
- Lands and Agriculture
- Environment and Tourism, and
- Information and Publicity

The study also revealed that other Ministries are invited depending on the issues under consideration.

(b) Business is represented by:

- Employers Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (EMCOZ) (Business coordinator and Co-chairperson);
- Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI);
- Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC);
- Bankers Association of Zimbabwe (BAZ);
- Chamber of Mines
- Zimbabwe Tourism Council
- Commercial Farmers Union (CFU)
- Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU)

(c) Labour organizations that represent workers at the TNF meeting are:

- The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) (Labour coordinator and co-chairperson) and five members of the Executive Office of the ZCTU attend the TNF.
- Apex council (representing staff associations such as Public Service Association (PSA), Zimbabwe Nurses Association (ZNA), Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA etc.).)
- Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU).

The following are the Statutory bodies established to deal with specific matters within the realm of the Employment and Labour Sector of TNF.

- National Retrenchment Committee
- Salaries and Wages Advisory Board
- Zimbabwe Occupational Health and Safety Council
- The National Social Security Authority's (NSSA) Board; and
- The Export Processing Zones' (EPZ's) Labour Board

In addition to these standing or Statutory Tripartite Bodies, Policy-makers of the tripartite arrangement can set up ad hoc tripartite committees or task forces to deal with specific labour matters. Except for NSSA, the others were almost non functional or were hardly executing their mandates effectively.

(ii) The National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF)

The structures are almost similar to that of the TNF. Unlike the TNF where members are first selected by their constituencies, the NECF members are appointed by the State president on recommendations made up by the Ministry of Labour.

The NECF major functions are;

- To advise the cabinet on economic issues affecting Zimbabwe
- To recommend ways in which industry could improve its production and capacity utilization
- To recommend how Labour could be empowered and developed in order to meet ever changing technology and business practices.

The NECF operates through the following task forces:

- Macro-economic Task Force
- Land Reform Task Force
- Industrial Policy Task Force
- Incomes and Pricing Task Force
- Human Resources Development Task Force
- Health and Environment Task Force
- Taxation and Expenditure Task Force, and
- Anti-corruption Task Force

Most of these are merely existing on paper without any meaningful impact at all since the tasks do not have supportive resources (no budgets in some cases). The major challenge facing NECF is that it is viewed as

partisan or polarized since literally speaking, appointments may not be based on merit but on political will and affiliation.

5.3 Issues finalised by Social Partners in the TNF

However, despite the failure to have any concrete Social Dialogue in Zimbabwe since the turn of the new millennium, the following issues were discussed and agreed upon within the auspices of the TNF in October 1999:

- The scrapping of the Development Levy;
- The scrapping of the 2½ sales tax which the Government had effected in November 1997; the deferment of taxation on Pension Funds to allow for a comprehensive study.

Since the turn of the millennium, there has hardly been any other concrete arrangement to resolve key economic issues amicably.

5.4 Some of the Cases which have brought sharp differences among the partners

(a) Kadoma Declaration of 2001

The **Kadoma Declaration** of 2001 was the outcome of the deliberation of the **Tripartite Negotiating Forum** in Zimbabwe held on 20 August 2001. Composed of Government, Business and Labour, the TNF deliberated on how the Country's Risk Factor could be reduced by then (Pindula, 2003, Insider, 2006)

Causes of Country Risk Factor

The TNF discussed the causes of Zimbabwe's Country Risk Factor by then as;

- Failure by some institutions in government to function properly
- Mismatch between policy and implementation
- Delay in policy implementation
- Wealth gap and racial imbalance in ownership of means of production
- Political Intolerance
- Irresponsible utterances by leaders
- Corruption
- External Influence in Zimbabwe running its affairs
- Lack of respect of Human Rights

These factors, the TNF discussed had caused prolonged economic depression.

Solutions Identified

The TNF identified solutions and actions to be taken by the three pillars of the TNF - Government, Business and Labour. These included, among other things:

- Depoliticising economic activity by all three partners (parties).
- Timeous implementation of policy by government and support of such implementation by business and Labour.
- Transparent redistribution of the country's resources like land.
- Application of law to prevent political intolerance.
- Fighting corruption by increasing transparency & making punishment severe to culprits.
- Have clear and consistent policies and speaking with one voice.

The team noted that there was likely to be prolonged economic depression if the country risk factor was not addressed. There was also likely to be capital flight, a reduction in foreign direct investment and donor support. Credit lines would dry up and there would be massive de-industrialisation as well as a reduction in capacity utilisation.

The team noted that corruption was not only confined to government but included such activities as transfer pricing, the black market activities, awarding of tenders, issuing of licences, allocation of public resources, immigration, police, privatisation, tourism, education and price monitoring. It also called on the government to enunciate clear consistent policies and apply them uniformly. The government had to speak with one voice and avoid contradictory statements that would clash with those of the other social partners, especially on matters of national importance.

Workers and employers had to support agreed macroeconomic stabilisation programmes but the government was to take the lead by complying with budgetary limits and implementing agreed programmes to address issues like hyperinflation, poor export performance, exchange rate distortions, increasing poverty and balance of payments.

Above all, each of the partners had to ensure good governance to improve the image of the country. It also said there was going to be a huge brain drain, high unemployment and underemployment if these issues were not addressed. This seemed to be very correct even as of now in Zimbabwe, that is September 2016.

When the document was tabled for discussion and signing in January 2003, the government balked. It refused to sign the document up to date.

(b) Shocking Supreme Court Labour judgement of 2015

One of the topical issues in Zimbabwe up to date, has been the wave of job losses triggered by a Supreme Court ruling made on 17th of July 2015 which validated termination of contracts via three months notices (*newsdzezimbabwe*, 17/07/15). This threw Zimbabwe's labour relations into turmoil. This came after the Supreme Court Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku on July 17, 2015 passed a judgement that companies could terminate workers' contracts at any time, without offering them packages by giving them three months' notice without reason to explain their actions.

That Supreme Court judgment recorded as the case of *Don Nyamande and Another v Zuva Petroleum (Private) Limited SC 43/15* caused alarm and consternation amongst trade unions and certain sections of the public. Within 24 hours of this ruling being handed down, termination notices were flying left, right and centre. What started off as restructuring by privately owned corporations quickly extended into the public sector as well. Parastatals also let some of their employees go at willy-nilly, e.g. ZBC, ZIMPOST, GMB, NRZ, Air Zimbabwe etc.

Employers seemed to have heaved a collective sigh of relief. They had been complaining quite vocally through various media that the rigidity of labour laws was robbing them of the flexibility to adjust to the prevailing economic climate thereby robbing them of a competitive edge both in regional and wider international markets. The legal precedent that followed this decision was that most companies acted on this window and downsized, with over 30 000 workers having since lost their jobs as at the end of September 2015. The provision for this 'controversial' 3 months' notice was only revised with the New Labour Amendment Act No. 5 of 2015 which became law on 26 August 2015. It was fast tracked and deliberated in Parliament for only three weeks after politicians felt that there was need to streamline the Supreme Court ruling so that it would be difficult to dismiss any employee as evidenced by the article below

(c) Employers challenge labour law amendments, October 2, 2015 (*The Independent*, 2 October 2015).

Battle lines were being drawn between government and employers after the Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ) filed an appeal in the High Court on 1 October 2015 against clauses in the Amended Labour Act 28:01 (number 5 of 2015), which had already caused far-reaching implications on labour relations in Zimbabwe. (*The Independent*, 2 October 2015).

EMCOZ, representing a significant number of employers, was complaining about a new **Section 12 C (2)** which sets a minimum mandatory/compulsory retrenchment cost for every employer who retrenches one or more employees. Employers were fighting the minimum mandatory retrenchment cost of every employee pegged at three months' notice and two weeks' salary for every year served, without considering the ability of employers to pay, among other factors. The use of a pro-rata basis was according to them unrealistic since firms were in different industries and trades and were therefore not homogenous.

Furthermore, the blanket forcing of a minimum retrenchment cost was being perceived by EMCOZ as contrary to the rule of law principle as enshrined in the constitution which prohibits arbitrary laws and arbitrary law making. For that clause, Section 12(C)(2) declared unconstitutional and invalid.

The above few cases indicate serious divergent ideas on the labour relations in Zimbabwe among the 3 social partners

VI. Methodology

6.1 Research Paradigm and design

The *Qualitative paradigm* was used as it allows freedom of expression (Rubin & Babbie, 2014) as well as the *survey design* which allowed the researcher to collect data from experienced participants on the subject matter (Kennedy, 2009).

6.2 Target population

Was made up of the Ministry of Public Service and Labour and Social Services and Ministry of Finance, Employers Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ), Civil Service Commission, ZCTU, ZFTU, Apex Council officials/representatives, Labour experts.

6.3 Sample size and sampling technique

The non-random quota sampling technique and number based on data saturation technique (Kennedy, 2009; Leedy & Omrod, 2015). This resulted in 25 interviewees participating.

6.4 Instrumentation

Unstructured interview guide was used and that allowed respondents to freely express their views for data generation (Kennedy, 2009; Khothari, 2014).

6.5 Research Ethics

These were observed and included informed consent, confidentiality, honesty and integrity, verification of statements and trustworthiness during data collection preparation, data generation, presentation and analysis (Porter, 2014).

6.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Results were analysed using the content analysis method which involved the categorization of data, classification, summarization and coding (Cresswell, 2014).

VII. Research Findings

The following findings/results have been collated and synthesized based on the research questions.

7.1 No meaningful dialogue due to different interests among the three parties

No meaningful dialogue was taking place due to different sectoral interests among the 3 parties.

Workers' interests were, the need to secure:

- Decent wages\salaries.
- Fringe benefits.
- Observance of labour rights.
- Safe working environment.
- Social protection.
- Empowerment through improved welfare, involvement and participation.
- Power to influence outcomes (decisions).
- Freedom of association e.g. joining freely a workers' committee or trade union.

Regardless of a harsh economic environment, workers still were adamant that they should be paid wages in tandem with the Poverty Datum Line of around \$540 when the Reserve Bank Governor, Dr Mangudya and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) Chief executive officer, Mr Gershom Pasi had been for long lobbying for reduction of wages and salaries given the country's economic plight/hardships. These are senior government officials. Their sentiments contradict the workers' expectations or interests.

Employers' Interests

Included;

- Profit making and to ensure mechanisms to maintain a manageable wage/salary bill.
- Productivity and business expansion.
- Tranquility at workplace.
- Prerogative to have final say or determination (Power).
- Increasing shareholders' wealth.
- Business survival and continuity.

The fact that they want to maximize profits, they would obviously be interested in reducing expenditure e.g. by paying low wages and calling for government to reduce taxes or by even evading taxation.

Government Interests

Government was interested in:

- Economic growth.
- Increased aggregate production.
- Luring foreign investors preferably through smart partnerships.
- Economic Empowerment of indigenous people to own their national heritage.
- Industrial harmony.
- Revenue generation e.g. from taxes (company, sales and income/individual etc).

The fact that government would want more tax revenue, contradicted with the expectations of the other two parties namely, employers and workers who actually want taxes to be reduced.

7.2 There was mistrust among the parties e.g. The majority of TNF felt uncomfortable with the creation of the NECF which they viewed as pro-government and counter attractive.

7.3 Negotiating in bad faith.

7.4 Boycotting meetings especially by the major labour representative body, that is ZCTU.

7.5 Imposition by the government on certain issues without concurrence or even participation of the other two parties e.g. the current economic blueprint programme Zimbabwe agenda for sustainable social and economic transformation (ZIMASSET, 2013-2018) launched in 2013 by the government. Labour Amendment Act No 5, 2015. Other areas which lacked consultation of other parties were the crafting of the Indigenisation policy, introduction of Multicurrency system and Bond notes.

7.6 Lack of political will.

- 7.7 Reneging by government on previously agreed positions e.g. Kadoma declaration of 2001 for which government did not sign the document
- 7.8 Poor economic performance in an environment under political siege especially from Western countries (European Union, USA, Australia etc) who imposed economic sanctions which have affected economic performance and growth of the country on sharp differences over land redistribution as well as allegations of lack of democracy, lawlessness, corruption, poor corporate governance and deterrent laws to freedom of expression e.g. Public Order Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection to Privacy Act (AIPPA) both of 2002.
- 7.9 Liquidity crunch due to cash shortages and few exports as a result of underperforming industry.
- 7.10 Job losses as a result of company closures and retrenchments. The retrenchments increased after the Supreme court ruling e.g. 15 July 2015 which gave companies prerogative to dismiss employees by giving 3 months' notice. The willy-nilly retrenchment culminated in over 25 000 being retrenched as at end of August 2015
- 7.11 The Supreme court ruling was seen by workers as government not protecting them which further strained their relationship.
- 7.12 The Labour Amendment Act No. 5 of 2015, which was fast tracked in parliament to be a deterrent to employers who were retrenching workers by asking employers to pay terminal benefits in retrospect was immediately challenged by employers who said they had no capacity to pay the retrenchment benefits (2 weeks' salary for each year served and yet workers considered that as peanuts)
- 7.13 Closure of companies and numerous retrenchment cases have led to a weakened tax base for government which probably explains the continued shift in pay dates for civil servants, a development that has seen government struggling to pay salaries and other benefits to its employees.
- 7.14 Economic sabotage according to government coming from unjustified work stay-aways and protests.
- 7.15 International isolation (economic sanctions resulting in no foreign aid and credit lines to the Zimbabwe government and a number of industries particularly state enterprises)
- 7.16 liquidity crunch exacerbated by cash shortage and low revenue inflows due to collapsing industry, externalisation of forex and massive corruption especially by senior government officials.

VIII. Conclusions

Conclusions were based on the research questions and suggestions made to various stakeholders as well as the TNF body.

5.1 What do pieces of legislation in Zimbabwe say with regard to operations of the TNF?

There was no legal operational framework of the TNF in Zimbabwe. The TNF body was more of a voluntary organisation with no contractual obligations to reinforce its deliberations.

5.2 What are the problems facing the effective operations of the TNF in Zimbabwe?

There were almost irreconcilable differences caused by different sectoral interests and priorities, a rift created by the failure to agree on the Kadoma Declaration of 2001, boycotting of meetings at times and lack of political will by some of the partners. There were sectoral interests first instead of putting national interests ahead. The absence of the long overdue operational framework the TNF Act only compounded the situation. Prevailing economic hardships also affected the TNF operations as the Social partners had different views on the solutions to avert or ameliorate the crisis.

IX. Recommendations

Based on the research question, **what innovation is required to create a new culture of cooperation and unity to improve labour relations within TNF and improve the economic situation in Zimbabwe?** the study suggests the following recommendations;

6.1 There was need to have attitude and behaviour change (paradigm shift) so that all parties prioritized national interests ahead of sectoral interests. There was urgent need for political will in order to create a spirit of togetherness and team work. This could be possible if there was the establishment of a Social Dialogue culture and cultivation of a Social Dialogue mindset;

6.2 Need by the government to spearhead implementation of ILO Conventions such as ILO Numbers 87, 98, 151 and 154 that promote right to organise, freedom of association and empowering government workers to be also involved in collective bargaining

6.3 Expediting the TNF Act which should streamline the roles of each partner as follows;

Labour should:

- Be driven by a clear understanding that only through productivity enhancing measures and commitment to excellence in the provision of goods and services, can they guarantee workers good salaries, wages, employment and job security;
- Adopt less conflicting labour relations;

- Assist in building the capacity of workers.

Private sector should:

- Encourage managers to employ progressive business practices;
- Assist in the building the capacity of workers in line with the new concept of social capital;
- Place productivity and quality through Smart Partnership at the apex of organizational endeavor;
- Maintain core standards at the work place in line with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Government should:

- Create an enabling environment.
- Pursue policies essential to success even in the global economy.
- Have political will.
- Overcome its differences with others in order to work towards a common goal.
- Have a common understanding of the problems among all senior government officials like Ministers in order to have a holistic approach to addressing the problems.
- Have access to information and have the technical capacity to interpret and analyze the information to make it more relevant to the social and economic demands of Zimbabwe.
- Have full commitment to dialogue by making broader consultations.

6.4 Political tolerance and social cohesion for the sake of national development. Acceptance of different views and opinions should be accepted.

6.5 Labour laws amendments are needed, especially those that deal with retrenchments and subsequent benefits. Focus should not only be on the retrenchment process itself, but the period before and after the exercise. This should help to cushion the lives of all those retrenched.

All the above to happen require complete overhaul of the manner in which the TNF has been operating, that is total INNOVATION to the manner in which business should be conducted by the TNF to improve the economic and social well-being of Zimbabwe and its people.

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