Capacity Building for Decent Work In Zambia

Collective Bargaining in the public sector in Zambia

Report of Baseline Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall objective of the baseline survey was to identify key collective bargaining issues for public sector unions in Zambia in order to provide a concrete basis for developing strategic options and responses as part of the planning process. Specifically, the survey’s objectives were:

(i) To analyse the context of collective bargaining including an overview of institutional arrangements and the legislative environment with a specific focus on trade union rights in relation to organising and bargaining in the public service in Zambia;

(ii) To assess the trade union density in the public service in Zambia, including a breakdown of existing membership and leadership by gender;

(iii) To benchmark public service wages levels against inflation and living level measures;

(iv) To establish conditions of employment in relation to hours of work, health, security, family responsibility and HIV/AIDS; and

(v) To assess the extent of member participation in collective bargaining processes.

To achieve these objectives, the survey adopted an approach based on inductive research methodology. Accordingly, the survey methodology combined qualitative and quantitative approaches and relied on both primary and secondary data collection methods. On this basis, three data collection methods were used: document review, interviews and Focussed Group Discussions (FGD). The problem investigated was formulated as follows: analyse the context and outcomes of collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia in order to understand the extent to which trade unions are safeguarding the rights and benefits of their members and thus enable the compilation of baseline data for effective collective bargaining planning and strategy formulation.
Key Findings

The key findings of the survey were as follows:

(i) Context of collective bargaining

The context of collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia provides both opportunities and challenges. While on one hand collective bargaining has existed from as far back as 1961 covering about 120,000 employees and is supported by elaborate institutional arrangements and an industrial legal regime premised on international labour standards, recent changes in the legal environment have entailed a subtle replacement of a more pluralist industrial law with one that is highly ‘unitarist’. The hallmark of this has been the redrawing of allowable and illegitimate industrial relations practices and a redefinition of relations with trade unions. It has not, however, manifested in any significant push to exclude trade unions were they have previously been recognized. Much more frequent have been moves to: reverse the trend towards unionization of more senior employees; recognizing and registering a multiplicity of unions within the public sector, delaying processes of secondment letters for union officials elected into full-time union office and reducing the range and scope of subjects and decisions covered by joint employer-employee determination.

In addition, the functionality of the collective bargaining process itself is not without critical shortcomings. Notably, public service negotiations are governed by parameters laid down by the Ministry of Finance within which the parties bargain. This has tended to often undermine the true spirit of negotiations because fiscal parameters for negotiations have amounted to imposing a wage ceiling cap in line with International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) expenditure cut measures. Grant aided institutions have also been capped by being compelled to negotiate within a five (5) percent annual wage increase margin. Altogether, these moves and measures have tended to undermine trade union rights in relation to organising and bargaining and calls for strategic responses by the unions. The current response of the union has been to seek the intervention of the head of state to relax the negotiation parameters set by the ministry of finance but this option may not be sustainable in the long-run.
(ii) Trade union membership and density

In terms of union membership, the study finds that there has been a gradual decline across all unions in the public sector. Notably, membership declined by over 45% between 1995 and 2003 for the Civil Servants and Allied Workers Union of Zambia (CSAWUZ); by about 65% over the same period for the National Union of Public Service Workers (NUPSW), and; by about 32% for the Zambia United Local Authority Workers Union (ZULAWU). Between 2003 and 2010, membership for CSAWUZ declined further by another 50% to a current membership of 17,000 in July 2010. The membership of ZULAWU also further declined though marginally between 2003 and 2010. As at July 2010, ZULAWU reported a membership of 14,500. The membership of NUPSW declined substantially between 1995 and 2003 but has since picked up from 12,000 in 2003 to 13,000 in July 2010.

The decline in membership is also reflected in declining union density. Aggregate union density in the public service showed a remarkable stability before 1993 (estimated at around 80 percent of membership), but there has since been a sharper fall from the mid-nineties. Union density ranges between 35-97% across unions affiliated to the PSI in Zambia. On average, however, the trade union density for all PSI affiliates is estimated at 65.2%. In terms of gender, it seems the case that trade union membership is still predominantly male across most unions affiliated to PSI in Zambia - with the exception of ZHUHAW which has more female members due to the higher number of female workers (nurses) in their catchment area. The picture of male domination is also reflected in the gender profile of the respective leadership committees of the unions.

(iii) Wage levels, cost of living and inflation

In terms of wage levels, it was established that across the public sector in Zambia, pay is generally on the low side, averaging K1.9 million (US$380) per month for CSAWUZ; K2.8 million (US$560) for UNZAWU; K0.9 m (US$180) for NUPSW and K1.3 million (US$260) for ZULAWU members. The public sector average for all PSI affiliates, therefore, was
K1.7m (US$340) per month. The cost of a basic needs basket was recorded at K2.6m per month (i.e. US$520) in June 2010. Evidently, public service workers earn wages that are below the basic needs basket in Zambia. This disparity constitutes an action point for future trade union actions and collective bargaining strategies. In the past, efforts to call for a poverty datum line have been met with compelling cost-constraint arguments on the side of the public sector employers. However, a case can be made to ensure that public sector wages are reflective of the cost of living.

In terms of benchmarking public sector wage levels against inflation, it was found that the wage award from the collective bargaining process for the year 2010 was 15% for CSAWUZ and NUPSW and 5% for UNZAWU. Data from ZULAWU and NESAWU was not available. The composite Consumer Price Index (1994=100) as computed by the Central Statistics Office rose from 1773.0 in January 2009 to 1942.4 in January 2010, representing an erosion of the consumer purchasing power by about 9.5 percent. Evidently, only the wage awards secured by the CSAWUZ and NUPSW beat inflation while the 5% wage increase secured by UNZAWU was far short of a compensatory wage rise to at least cover for the effect of the erosion in the purchasing. Overall year on year inflation, however, has trended downward from a high of about 189% in 1991 to about 12 at the end of December 2009. As at June 2010, however, annual Inflation rate stood at 7.8%.

In the context of Zambia, therefore, the basic needs basket would appear more useful for collective bargaining purposes than has been the rate of inflation. This is essentially because the excessive inflation-targeting at the official government level has managed to reduce inflation to single digit levels while there has not been a commensurate rise in the standards of living for the majority of citizens.

(iv) Conditions of service

The framework for working conditions in the public service in Zambia are contained in the handbook on “Terms and Conditions of Service for Public Service” issued in June 2003 (Cabinet
These conditions also accord with those contained in the employment act. The framework for working conditions in the public sector stipulates a 40-hour week, leave provision and leave earning rates that range from 30 days to 42 days per year depending on the employees salary scale; pensions contribution, and paid maternity leave of up to 90 days, inter alia. Other conditions of service common across collective agreements analysed for the public sector include: housing allowance, ranging between K160,000 – K435,000 (i.e. US$32 – US$87) per month; rural hardship allowance, between 20-25 % of basic salary, retention and recruitment allowance of 20 % of basic salary and a contributory medical aid scheme at the rate of 60% for the employer and 40 percent for the employee. The challenge noticed in terms of conditions of employment was that these tended to be static for longer periods. Essentially these was attributable to the Government’s approach of wanting to fuse all non-flexible allowances into the basic salary – a move apposed by the unions who argued that these are better left as stand-alone in order to ensure that their revision takes into account dynamic changes in the cost of living.

(v) Member participation in collective bargaining

In terms of member participation in collective bargaining, all affiliates reported that they involve members mainly in pre-negotiations and post-negotiation stages. This mainly involves asking grassroots structures to hold consultative meetings with the general membership. Once this is done, members’ inputs are then compiled at the branch level and then submitted to the national committee which then synthesises these into consolidated inputs. After signing the collective agreement, unions then embark on nationwide tours to explain the content of the signed agreements. What seems to be missing, however, is a more dynamic and effective approach that would ensure that members were made to feel a part of the whole process from start to the end. There seemed to be a feeling among some sections of the members that they were not adequately consulted on issues for bargaining, especially women and the youth who felt that their issues were hardly put on the central agenda of collective bargaining.
Recommendations:

Against this background, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The need for a **more coordinated approach** to collective bargaining in the public sector. This could take the following elements:

   a. Unions coming together to form an alliance to facilitate negotiations.

   b. Prior to commencement of public service collective bargaining negotiations, unions holding consultations among themselves to harmonise their claims and demands, and then allowing the most representative union to lead the negotiations or having a rotation team leader arrangement;

   c. After group negotiations, a single collective agreement would apply to all unionised public service workers;

2. **Building the research and analytical capacity** of unions through economic literacy programmes such as capacity building in basic economics and policy analysis.

3. **Broadening the membership service base**: the unions in the public sector in Zambia must broaden the membership service base to ensure that membership means the union takes care of important things in the life of a member, such as health insurance, mortgage facilitation and negotiated discounts on travel, hotel and holidays costs etc. Additionally, the unions must bargain over issues such as job designs, career planning, and training. Thus, they need to engage not only in issues of wages and conditions of services but also support members in getting stimulating and challenging jobs in a safe and healthy environment. To do this effectively, they would need to make consultation with members a more regular feature to understand the changing needs and priorities of members.
4. The unions must **re-organise to give more internal political clout**. On one hand this entails making grass roots organising and recruitment an integral feature of union activity, activating existing members while reaching out mainly to the unorganised within the public sector. A related activity must entail aggressively working to reclaim unionisation of workers in devolved and decentralised structures that have been created as a result of public sector restructuring that has caused membership decline. On the other hand, such re-organisation must entail efforts at merging and amalgamating. For instance, the Civil Servants and Allied Workers Union of Zambia (CSAWUZ) and the National Union of Public Service Worker (NUPSW) can arguably become stronger and more influential if they merged. Altogether, this re-organisation strategy will ensure that the trade union can address the problem of declining collective influence.

5. An integral component of sustainable trade union strategy must **prioritise the integration of the young, well-educated and female workers in the leadership and decision-making structures** and ensure that their issues have a firm place on the union’s agenda. This strategy will serve to capture the hearts and minds of the new look workforce that currently report low ratings of the benefit offered by belonging to the union. The strategy would ensure that the union is gender mainstreamed and that there is a judicious mix of a young and educated leadership and an experienced leadership with a more activist ideological underpinning. This strategy holds promise to assert the union with a natural presence in the future as it seeks to harness the dynamism of the young, the intellect of the educated and the passion of women workers that altogether constitute an overarching character of the changing public sector employee.

6. Lastly, the union will need to **embark on a labour rights advocacy strategy**. This will not only enable alliance building with new workers and the NGO community but link the local labour struggle with similar efforts at the global level.
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background information

This research report, a baseline study of collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia, is intended to serve as a resource for a planning and strategy development workshop involving affiliates of the Public Service International (PSI) in Zambia. The report is aimed at assisting PSI affiliates in Zambia to identify strategic collective bargaining objectives and, thus, develop performance indicators as part of the visioning and planning process. The effort is part of a sub-region collaborative project between the Federation of Netherlands Trade Unions (FNV) and PSI entitled, “Capacity Building for Decent Work in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe”. Key partners in this project are: Labour Research Services (South Africa), Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (Malawi), Civil Servants and Allied Workers Union of Zambia (Zambia) and Labour and Economic Development Research Institute (Zimbabwe).

Effective collective bargaining planning in the public services of the sub-region needs to rest on a good set of baseline data. In the past, PSI has not been able to systematically collect and establish a baseline for planning and for ascertaining future impacts and outcomes. This survey report is a response to that felt need. The survey sought to understand the context of collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia, including an overview of institutional arrangements and the legislative environment with a specific focus on trade union rights in relation to organising and bargaining. It also undertakes an assessment of trade union density in the public service including a breakdown of existing membership and leadership by gender. It also analyses selected wage levels with a focus on minimum wages and occupations where trade union membership is clustered and also benchmarks public service wage levels against inflation and living level measures. A summary of selected conditions of employment in the categories of hours of work, health, security, family responsibility, HIV & AIDS is also provided as is a brief assessment of member participation in collective bargaining processes.

Accordingly, the problem investigated can be formulated as follows: analyse the context and outcomes of collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia in order to understand the extent to which trade unions are safeguarding the rights and benefits of their members and thus
enable the compilation of baseline data for effective collective bargaining planning and strategy formulation.

1.2 Survey Objectives

Following along this line, the main objective of the survey was to create baseline data readily accessible to all PSI affiliates to aid strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. More specifically, the survey’s objectives were:

(i) To analyse the context of collective bargaining including an overview of institutional arrangements and the legislative environment with a specific focus on trade union rights in relation to organising and bargaining in the public service in Zambia;

(ii) To assess the trade union density in the public service in Zambia, including a breakdown of existing membership and leadership by gender;

(iii) To benchmark public service wages levels against inflation and living level measures;

(iv) To establish conditions of employment in relation to hours of work, health, security, family responsibility and HIV/AIDS;

(v) To assess the extent of member participation in collective bargaining processes.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

To achieve these objectives, the survey adopted an approach based on inductive research methodology. Accordingly, the survey methodology combined qualitative and quantitative approaches and relied on both primary and secondary data collection methods. On this basis, three data collection methods were used: document review, interviews and Focussed Group Discussions (FGD).

1.3.1 Secondary data collection
The first step involved a literature review of important documents that shed light on collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia as well as trade union rights in relation to organising and bargaining. This review was both general and specific to the situation of the public service in Zambia. The sources for this data collection method included: related books, articles, journals, pieces of legislation, policy documents, published and unpublished papers, collective agreements, union constitutions and documents from the libraries in and outside Zambia and from the Internet.

1.3.2 Secondary data analysis

Content analysis of documents obtained from secondary sources was carried out based on key survey themes. At the back of the mind during document analysis was the limitation of secondary data in that parties and institutions with their own biases might have collected it for other purposes.

1.3.3 Primary data collection

The second step in data collection involved interviews with selected key informants from the employer, trade unions and workers. A purposeful sampling method was used to determine the respondents to participate in the interview. Given the purpose and scope of the baseline survey, however, no attempt was made to obtain a representative sample. Rather, the sample was designed on the grounds of practicality within the time, budget and manpower constraints that were envisioned.

The third step in data collection involved one Focussed Group Discussions (FGD) with member of the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) of PSI affiliates in Zambia.

1.3.4 Primary data analysis

The data that was collected from interviews and FGD was then analysed.
1.4 Ethical consideration and Limitations

1.4.1 Ethical Issues

The confidentiality of respondents participating in interviews and focused group discussions will be provided through carefully maintained anonymity. Most individual respondents were very particular about their names not being kept confidential. However, the names of all people that participated in the FGD are attached as appendix 1.

1.4.2 Limitations

Given time limits and budget constraints in conducting the baseline, it was not possible to obtain a larger sample population than the realistic size of respondents targeted for primary data collection. Besides, one affiliate failed to attend the FGD and was not keen to avail its collective agreement to the research team. However, even with these limitations, it is hoped that the baseline survey will provide a useful knowledge base for future planning and strategy conceptualisation.

1.5 Survey period and area

The survey was conducted in seven (7) working days from 21 June 2010 to 2 July 2010. All PSI affiliates (who are mainly based in the Lusaka and Ndola regions of Zambia) were covered. Thus, the survey was undertaken in Lusaka and Ndola where PSI affiliates are found.

1.6 Structure of survey report

The survey report is divided into four main sections: the first section has dealt with the introduction and rationale of the survey. The second section will present key survey findings and proffer an analysis of the same. The third looks and future coordination of public sector collective bargaining and the final part summarises the report and makes some concluding remarks.
2.0 Socio-economic context of Zambia

Zambia has an estimated total population of 12.8 million people, of which females constitute 50 percent (CSO, 2007:10). Of the total population, 65 percent reside in rural areas, while the remaining 35 percent in urban areas. The population is relatively young with about 75 percent of the population estimated to be below the age of 25 years (NELMP, 2004:37). The national poverty incidence stands at 64 percent of the total population, while the same for rural areas is 78 percent (LCMS, 2006:110).

The Zambian economy is a mixture of state run and private enterprise. Zambia is classified as a low-income country with Gross Domestic Product (GDP at current US$) of 14.7 billion (2008) and a Gross National Income Per Capita of US$ 1,174 in 2008 (CSO, 2010). The economy has been and still remains heavily dependent on receipts from the export of copper and cobalt, which account for about 75 percent of export receipts. In the 1960s, copper prices were on the increase thus contributing to high profits in the mining industry that increased government revenue. These high mining industry profits propelled rapid economic growth. Employment levels also grew. As Chiwele (1995:6) writes, “the 1970s and much of the early 1980s saw Zambia experience high levels of employment, with deficits in some professions and specialities”. During this period, however, agriculture (which is predominantly rural based) was not the priority of the government’s development strategy and only half-hearted attempts were made to integrate the agriculture sector with that of the manufacturing. This made the economy vulnerable to external shocks.

Over the period 1975 to 1980, the economy suffered massive contraction largely as a result of the world energy crisis and the vulnerability of the economy due to its heavy reliance on mineral receipts, as demand for industrial inputs such as copper had reduced. Falling exports receipts and the rising import crisis resulted in a high balance of payment deficit. In an effort to maintain import levels, the Zambian government borrowed from external sources resulting in huge foreign debt. Rising production and import costs led to high inflation rates and a drastic fall in formal employment levels (Chiwele, 1995; Seshamani, 1999; Masiye and Wake, 2005). This led to disequilibria in the economy that necessitated the adoption of the structural adjustment
programme under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). However, adjustment efforts in the 1980s were characterised by several policy shifts that saw the programme suspended very often. The change of government in 1991 saw the introduction of a more vigorously pursued structural adjustment programme. To date, Zambia has continued to implement IMF-World Bank inspired economic policies and programmes. As at June 2010, Zambia had implemented PRSP I (2000-2004) and PRSP II (2006 – 2010) and was in the process of preparing PRSP III crystallized as the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP).

Most fundamentally, Zambia has started to witness some relatively sustained positive economic growth. The economy has grown positively between 2000 and 2009, in contrast to the fluctuating growth pattern that characterized the 1990’s. However, this growth is partially negated by a population growth rate of about 2.9 percent per annum, resulting in only a marginal growth in per capita terms between 2006 and 2009 (CSO, 2010). Prospects for growth are still modest as the economy is projected to grow at an annual average of 5 percent over the period 2007 to 2023, still quite short of the 8 percent needed to reverse poverty trends\(^1\) (MTEF, 2010). Table 2 below summarizes Zambia economic performance in the period 2004 and 2009.

### Table 1: Zambia’s Key Macroeconomic Indicators, 2004-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tr>
<td>GDP (current US$ Bn)</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<td>Real GDP growth rate(%)</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation rate, annual (%)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capital (US$)</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** CSO, National Accounts Statistics (2010).

\(^1\) Demery, Sen *et al* (1995) found poverty-growth elasticity for 1991 to be -0.21, -0.61 and -0.88 for incidence, depth and severity of poverty respectively. Again, Demery and Walton (1998) calculated that 4.9 percent per capita growth would be required for Zambia to halve the US$ per day poverty headcount by 2015. And if population growth is assumed to be at the official figure of 2.9, this implies that growth rates of at least 8 percent per annum would be required.
From Table 1, it is clear that the economy has assumed an upward trend in economic growth and a declining trend in overall inflation since 2004. However, despite this recovery in the rates of economic growth, the economy has failed to generate employment. As the labour force survey 2005 reveals, while the rate of economic growth increased steadily from about 3.6 percent in 2000 to 5.8 percent in 2006, the rate of unemployment unfortunately also rose over the same period, from 12.9 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2005 (LFS 2007:21). It would, therefore, appear that the favourable economic performance in Zambia did not lead to any reduction in unemployment levels. Generally, unemployment rates have increased during the period of relatively impressive economic growth in Zambia, thereby raising troubling questions about the pattern of Zambia’s economic growth.

3.0 Survey findings and analysis

3.1 Context of collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia

3.1.1 Evolution and scope of collective bargaining

The survey finds that collective bargaining in the public sector in Zambia has existed from as far back as 1961. Apart from commissioned officers in the defence forces, (police, military and prison officers) who are not unionised, collective bargaining in the public service covers about 120,000 unionised and non-union employees. In the defence establishments, the tradition has been for the appropriate part of the collective agreements reached with the civil service bargaining unit to be applied to those categories of defence personnel who hold equivalent posts but have no union representation. The rationale for this has been not simply to recognize the right of this group to collective bargaining but also to avoid unnecessary distortions in the salary structure for public service officers.
3.1.2 Institutional arrangements for collective bargaining

As at July 2010, three complementary bargaining units existed in the public sector. The first bargaining unit comprises the following: (i) unionized civil servants who are on permanent contracts. This category of workers is represented by the Civil Servants and Allied Workers’ Union of Zambia (CSAWUZ); (ii) unionized public service employees on non-pensionable basis in the civil service. These workers are represented by the National Union of Public Services Workers (NUPSW); (iii) Unionised civil servants on permanent contracts in the teaching service under the ministry of education. This category of workers is represented by three different teachers’ unions, namely, the Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ), the Secondary School Teachers Union of Zambia (SESTUZ) and the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT).²

The second bargaining unit³ comprises the following sector specific work categories: (i) unionised civil servants on permanent contract who have opted to be represented by the sector specific union in the ministry of health called the Health Workers Union of Zambia (HWUZ); (ii) Unionised civil servants on permanent contracts who have opted to be represented by the sector specific union in the ministry of agriculture called the Agriculture Technical and Professional Staff Union of Zambia (ATPSUZ).

In both these bargaining units, the employer (i.e. the Government), is normally represented by the following government department and ministries, usually at the level of Permanent Secretary:

Ministries of:

- Public Service Management Division (leader)
- Agriculture
- Defence
- Home Affairs

² The three teachers’ unions are affiliated to Education International and so are largely excluded in this surveys’ analysis.

³ The second bargaining unit has emerged in the recent past and accommodates union formations that have opted to break away from the Civil Servants and Allied Workers’ Union of Zambia. None of these unions have yet affiliated to PSI. As such, the analysis in this report will not include in-depth details of these unions.
• Justice
• Education
• Health
• Finance and National Planning, and
• Director of Budget

The third bargaining unit exists at local government level were there is a parallel but complementary bargaining machinery in local authorities and district councils spread nationwide. According to the General Secretary of the Zambia United local Authorities Workers Union(ZULAWU), “before 2001, local government authorities in the country used to group themselves under the Local Government Association of Zambia and negotiated as one employer in an arrangement similar to a joint industrial council. After 2001, however, the Local Government Association of Zambia discontinued collective bargaining with the local authorities’ union. Since 2001, therefore, the Zambia United Local Authorities Workers’ Union (ZULAWU) has to negotiate separate collective agreements with 73 local council authorities in the country. This has posed serious challenges for the union.”

Other collective bargaining units associated with PSI affiliates are those taking place at the level of grant-aided public institutions, namely the University of Zambia and the Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation where unionised workers are represented by the University of Zambia Workers Union (UNZAWU) and the National Energy Sector Workers Union (NESAWU). Before 2006, an additional bargaining unit used to exist that facilitated collective bargaining between statutory health boards in the country and the Zambia National Union of Health and Allied workers (ZNUHAW). After 2006, however, all health boards were abolished and fused into the mainline government structures. The union concerned has, therefore, not been negotiating since 2006 since it is still in the process of securing a new recognition agreement with the government of the republic of Zambia. According to Mr Nawa, the General Secretary of ZNUHAW, “the union has had a technical problem with recognition agreement with the employer and has not been able to negotiate since 2006.”

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4 With the recent (2009) formation of the Local Government Commission, it is hoped that the arrangement of a joint industrial council can be revived.
On a related note, the survey finds that collective bargaining negotiation in grant aided institutions has recently come under attack. Information gathered from the focussed group discussion suggests that for the last 2-3 years, the government of the republic of Zambia has been issuing circulars to all grant-aided institutions to restrict wage increases to not more than 5% per annum and requesting that all draft collective agreements be first scrutinised and ratified by cabinet office before they are implemented. The unions perceive this as a move aimed at undermining the institution of collective bargaining and thus a violation of the provisions of the Industrial and Labour Relations act. Besides, it seems the case that funding for wage increases across the public sector has tended to be inadequate. As the General Secretary of UNZAWU bemoaned, “funding to the universities has woefully been inadequate in the last two years.”

### 3.1.3 Legal framework and changes undermining organising and bargaining

In terms of the Legal framework for collective bargaining and organising, the principle industrial and labour relations law in Zambia is the Industrial and Labour Relations Act, Chapter 269 of the laws of Zambia which, provides for the formation of trade unions and employers’ organizations, the collective bargaining process and dispute settlement. Part VII of the Industrial and Labour Relations Act clearly spells out the due process of collective bargaining. The general rule and practice is that within a period of three months of registration of a recognition agreement, the parties (in a bargaining unit) are under an obligation to commence or carry out negotiations for a subsequent collective agreement. Under section 64 of the said piece of legislation, it is also obligatory for an employer employing twenty-five (25) or more eligible (unionisable) employees to enter into a Recognition Agreement.

However, the industrial legal regime has seen some changes in the recent past. Up until the 1990s, changes to the legal underpinning of Zambia’s industrial relations were limited in importance. The shift in the 1990s, however, was the replacement of a legislative regime that mirrored the “pluralist” position by one that is highly “unitarist.” The hallmark of this has been the redrawing of allowable and illegitimate industrial relations practices and a redefinition of relations with trade unions. It has not, however, manifested in any significant push to exclude trade unions were they have previously been recognized. This has been rarely in the public sector. Much more frequent limitations for trade union organizing can be seen in moves to:
• Reverse the trend towards unionization of more senior employees who are now defined as management even if they do not make management decisions. This has substantially narrowed the scope of union membership.

• Ensure that trade unions do not enjoy monopoly over communication with the workers. The employer is increasingly making it difficult for unions to hold meetings with members at the workplace.

• Concentrate attention on relations with individual employees and in-house employee representatives at the local level other than ‘external union officials’ at the national level. This has also manifested in changes made to the law on formation or establishment of trade unions.

• Recognize and register a multiplicity of unions within the public sector, thereby creating rivalry and destructive competition for a limited number of members.

• Delaying processing of secondment letters for union official elected into full-time union office

• Increasing the legal rights of members against their unions

• Reducing the range of subjects and decisions covered by joint employer-employee determination. Cases in point include the employer’s unilateral introduction and implementation of condition of service. This has in a subtle way created a perception in the minds of potential union members that the union may no longer be necessary.

These moves represent a subtle re-writing of the industrial relations rule book. Besides, they are a re-writing that appear to be aimed at undermining the role and relevance of the public sector union. Admittedly, these developments limit the space for trade union organizing in the public sector.

While it is the case that collective bargaining has been a long standing feature of social dialogue in the public service in Zambia, dialogue on other important policy issues (e.g. fiscal policy, employment policy, training policy, gender policy, HIV/AIDS policy etc) has been very limited. At best, dialogue on these issues has been restricted to the Tripartite Labour Consultative Council (a national labour consultative forum). But, the Tripartite Labour Consultative Council does not meet regularly and when it meets the agenda issues become broad and not restricted to public
sector issues. Besides, the sincerity of the employer’s consultation of unions through the Tripartite Labour Consultative Council has been brought into question due to instances in the past when the employer has gone ahead to unilaterally implement labour related policy even when labour had objected to the said policy content in the consultative forum.

In addition, the functionality of the collective bargaining process itself is not without critical shortcomings. Notably, public service negotiations are governed by parameters laid down by the Ministry of Finance within which the parties bargain. This has tended to often undermine the true spirit of negotiations because fiscal parameters for negotiations have amounted to imposing a wage ceiling cap in line with International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) expenditure cut measures. Hence, there has been some difficulty in public sector bargaining, partly because of the subtle attempt by government to impose a civil service wage bill cap actualized through an IMF-inspired budgeting instrument called the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Under this approach, the public sector wage bill is restricted to no more than 8 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This imperative has tended to undermine trade union rights in relation to organising and bargaining and calls for strategic responses by the unions. The current response of the union has been to seek the intervention of the head of state to relax the negotiation parameters set by the ministry of finance but this option may not be sustainable in the long-run.

However, the biggest challenge has come from the unions themselves. With splinter groups transforming into autonomous independent unions, there has not been a united voice on the workers’ side. For instance, the two new unions in the ministries of agriculture and health have refused to remain within the existing bargaining unit, opting instead to negotiate separately with employers. Also, except for the 2008 and 2010 round of negotiations, the three unions in the education sector had opted not to negotiate jointly. The source of this problem, it seems, is internal to the unions, but it has created serious instability and confusion in labour relations in the public sector.
3.2 Trade union membership and density

Moving to an assessment of trade union density, the study finds that the public sector in Zambia has been associated with a decline in union membership mainly due to retrenchment and downsizing combined with a process of ‘agencification’\(^5\). A study conducted by Muneku (2001) makes a strong case for a correlation between retrenchment in the public sector and the declining trend of unionisation\(^6\). The study infers that the front line victims of job cuts in the public sector were unionised workers, the majority of whom were not in possession of post-secondary qualification that was the standard requirement for most new posts in the core civil service (Muneku, 2001: 11).

### Table 2: Trends in Public Sector Trade Union Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servants Union of Zambia</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union of Public Service Workers</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia United Local Authority Workers Union</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>14,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* ZCTU Surveys, 2002; Union record, 2010 Data Centre (MoFNP) September, 2009 payroll data MoFNP

Thus, as can be seen from Table 2, union membership declined by over 45 percent between 1995 and 2003 for the Civil Servants and Allied Workers Union of Zambia (CSAWUZ); by about 65 percent over the same period for the National Union of Public Service Workers (NUPSW), and; by about 32 percent for the Zambia United Local Authority Workers Union (ZULAWU). Between 2003 and 2010, membership for CSAWUZ declined further by another 50% to a current membership of 17,000 in July 2010. The membership of ZULAWU also

\(^5\) ‘Agencification’ is defined as creation of executive agencies in the public sector (Olowu and Adamolekun, 1999: 89). ‘Agencification’ has been associated with the introduction of HRM in the public sector (Pilkington, 1999).

\(^6\) See also Mihyo and Schiphort (2002) for a fuller discussion on the impact of public sector retrenchment on the trade unions in Africa.
further declined though marginally between 2003 and 2010. As at July 2010, ZULAWU reported a membership of 14,500. The membership of NUPSW declined substantially between 1995 and 2003 but has since picked up from 12000 in 2003 to 13,000 in July 2010.

The decline in membership is also reflected in declining union density. Aggregate union density in the public service showed a remarkable stability before 1993 (estimated at around 80 percent of membership)\(^7\), but there has been then a sharper fall from the mid-nineties. Table 3 below summaries the profile of current membership and leadership (as at July 2010) and union density for PSI affiliates in Zambia.

### Table 3: Membership profile and union density of PSI affiliates in Zambia, July 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Actual members</th>
<th>Potential membership</th>
<th>Estimated Union density (%)</th>
<th>Estimated gender profile of membership(^8)</th>
<th>Gender profile of national executive committees/council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CSAWUZ</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UNZAWU</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NUPSW</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>9100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ZNUHAW</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ZULAWU</td>
<td>14,580</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>10,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NESAWU</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total membership</strong></td>
<td><strong>49,580</strong></td>
<td><strong>120,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7\) The high union density is attributed to the facility of the old industrial legal regime that made it compulsory for non-management staff to become automatic members of the union upon joining the public service.

\(^8\) Actual data was not available. Estimates made based on the percentage indications provided during focussed group discussions.

\(^9\) This figure represents the size of the public service, without the inclusion of grant-aided institutions. Note, however, that there are unions organising in the public service that are not affiliated to PSI. These also claim a proportion of the 120,000 workers in the public service.
As seen from the table above, union density ranges between 35-97% across unions affiliated to the PSI in Zambia. On average, however, the trade union density for all PSI affiliates is estimated at 65.2%.

In terms of gender, it seems the case that trade union membership is still predominantly male across most union affiliated to PSI in Zambia - with the exception of ZHUHAW which has more female members due to the higher number of female workers (nurses) in their catchment area. The picture of male domination is also reflected in the gender profile of the respective leadership committees of the unions – as reflected in table 2 above.

### 3.3 Wage levels, cost of living and Inflation

The existing wage levels for highest and lowest paid categories for each of the union affiliated to PSI in Zambia are summarised in table 4 below;

#### Table 4: Selected Wage Levels for PSI Affiliates in Zambia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Highest wage / month</th>
<th>Lowest wage/ per month</th>
<th>Average wage(K)/ per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSAWUZ</td>
<td>Gas/8 K2,814,610 US$562</td>
<td>Gas/15 K1,096,493 US$219</td>
<td>1,955,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The lowest wage here does not refer to the minimum wage. The public sector in Zambia has not yet come up with a sector-specific minimum wage. The lowest wage, therefore, refers to the wage earned by workers in the lowest salary scale. Otherwise, the national minimum wage for all the sectors is K268, 000 per month (i.e. US$54). For the public sector in Zambia, collective agreements do not set minimum wages.

11 The May 1, 2010 exchange rate is used i.e. one USD (1 USD) is equivalent to five thousand Zambian kwacha(K5000)

12 GAS scales represents workers in general administrative scales such as clerical staff, administrators, accounts officers, human resource officers etc. ADS also refer to administrative scales and covers officers in various administrative functions. SG III refers to Security guard grade three, which is the lowest scale for security guards in the public service in Zambia.
### Table: Wage Levels Across Public Sector Unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Average Monthly Pay (K)</th>
<th>Pay in US$</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNZAWU</td>
<td>ADS07</td>
<td>3,534,503</td>
<td>US$706</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADS13</td>
<td>2,242,453</td>
<td>US$448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUPSW</td>
<td>CE(SG)</td>
<td>956,191</td>
<td>US$191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sec GD III</td>
<td>870,881</td>
<td>US$174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNUHAW</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZULAWU</td>
<td>Clerical officer</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>US$360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen worker</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>US$160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESAWU</td>
<td>average across unions (US$)</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>US$340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 2010 Collective agreements from CSAWUZ, NUPSW, UNZAWU, ZULAWU

In terms of wage levels, therefore, it is the case that across the public sector in Zambia, pay is generally on the low side, averaging K1.9mil lion (US$380) per month for CSAWUZ; K2.8million (US$560) for UNZAWU; K0.9m (US$180) for NUPSW and K1.3million (US$260) for ZULAWU members. The public sector average for all PSI affiliates, therefore, was K1.7m (US$340) per month. The cost of a basic needs basket was recorded at K2.6m\(^{13}\) per month (i.e.US$520) in June 2010. Evidently, public service workers earn wages that are below the basic needs basket in Zambia. This disparity constitutes an action point for future trade union actions and collective bargaining strategies. In the past, efforts to call for a poverty datum line have been met with compelling cost-constraint arguments on the side of the public sector employers. However, a case can be made to ensure that public sector wages are reflective of the cost of living.

In terms of benchmarking public sector wage levels against inflation, it can be noted that the wage award from the collective bargaining process for the year 2010 was 15% for CSAWUZ and NUPSW and 5% for UNZAWU. Data from ZULAWU and NESAWU was not available. The composite Consumer Price Index (1994=100) as computed by the Central Statistics Office rose from 1773.0 in January 2009 to 1942.4 in January 2010, representing

\(^{13}\) See annex for details of the basic needs basket as computed by the Jesuit centre for theological reflections in Zambia
an erosion of the consumer purchasing power by about 9.5 percent (CSO, Consumer Price Index, June, 2010:3). Evidently, only the wage awards secured by the CSAWUZ and NUPSW beat inflation while the 5% wage increase secured by UNZAWU was far short of a compensatory wage rise to at least cover for the effect of the erosion in the purchasing power. Overall year on year inflation, however, has trended downward from about 17.5% in 2004 to 9.9% in 2009. Currently, annual Inflation rate stands at 7.8% in Zambia (June 2010).

### 3.5 Conditions of service

The framework for working conditions in the public service in Zambia are contained in the handbook on “Terms and Conditions of Service for Public Service” issued in June 2003 (Cabinet Office, 2003). These terms and conditions of service, together with Service Commission Regulations, Service Commission Policies and Procedures for Employment in the Public Service, Disciplinary Code and Procedures for Handling Offences in the Public service, constitute Human Resource Management Policies and Procedures in the public service. In addition, cabinet office issues administrative circulars and instructions from time to time to complement these policies and procedures. Note that these terms and condition of service are premised on the basic conditions of employment as stipulated in the Employment Act. As such, the public sector framework provides further elaboration as an administrative guide. Table 5 summarises common conditions applicable in the public service in Zambia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition of service</th>
<th>Rates/existing provision as at July 2010¹⁴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Housing Allowance</td>
<td>K160,000 – K435,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Funeral Grant</td>
<td>Officer: K600,000 + Standard coffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officers’ Spouse: K500,000 + standard coffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officers’ child K500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Meal Allowance</td>
<td>K50,000 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Subsistence Allowance</td>
<td>K280,000 per night for married officers, K275,000 for single officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tool allowance</td>
<td>K20,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Commuted night duty allowance</td>
<td>K40,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Commuted overtime for drivers</td>
<td>average, K33,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Uniform upkeep allowance for uniformed officers</td>
<td>K50,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. House loan</td>
<td>Ten times the officers’ annual basic salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Car loan</td>
<td>Ten times the officers annual basic salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Leave travel benefits</td>
<td>K1,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Collective bargaining agreements, CSAWUZ, NUPSW

¹⁴ To convert to US dollar equivalent as at May 1, 2010, please divide each of the figures provided by 5000.
An elaboration is now made on the following conditions of service that are cross-cutting: hours of work, annual leave, pension scheme, job security, family responsibility and other benefits.

**Hours of Work**

Members of the public service and those in grant-aided institutions work a 40-hour week, at 8 hours per day. Provision for overtime does exist for workers required to work unusual hours because of the exigencies of duty or the nature of their work.

**Leave Provisions**

Workers in different grades of the public service have different leave entitlements. These range from 30 working days per year to 42 working days. The handbook also makes provision for commutation of leave days for cash, convalescence leave, special leave, occasional leave, maternity leave, paternity leave and study leave. Ordinary leave earning rates for each month is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Off.</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>3 1/2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2 1/2</td>
<td>2 1/2 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pension schemes**

There are two pension schemes that cater for public service employees: the public service pension fund and the local authorities’ superannuation fund – as explained under section 4.3. An established officer makes monthly contributions to the pension’s scheme and on retirement upon attaining the pensionable age of 55 years qualifies for a pension.

**Job security**
The public service offers the most secure jobs in Zambia. Most public service appointments are on permanent and pensionable basis. Except for a category of workers called classified employees who have a fixed term contract, public service workers are employed for an indefinite period that provide a range of employment benefits. This form of employment contract is sometimes described as permanent and pensionable and, other things being equal, public service employees are expected to continue working for the public service until they reach the legal age of retirement at 55 years or opt for voluntary retirement. For grant-aided institutions such as those represented by UNZAWU and NESAWU, most employees are on short-term (2-4 years) renewable contracts.

**Family Responsibility**

In terms of family responsibility, maternity and paternity leave provision exist as follows:

- Maternity leave is provided at three (3) calendar months and is administered according with the terms and conditions of service for the public service –as earlier highlighted. Maternity leave is accompanied by full pay. However, provisions for related maternity rights like leave for ante and post natal check-ups and time for nursing infants are not explicit in the conditions of service.

- Paternity leave is provided at the rate of five (5) days for the public service.

**Other benefits**

The Terms and Conditions of Service makes provision for a variety of benefits to be paid to different work categories. The common ones\(^{15}\) are provided in the text box below:

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\(^{15}\) These conditions and applicable rates were drawn from the collective agreements of CSAWUZ and NUPSW.
3.6 Member participation in collective bargaining

In terms of member participation in collective bargaining, all affiliates reported that they involve members mainly in pre-negotiations and post-negotiation stages. This mainly involves asking grassroots structures to hold consultative meetings with the general membership. Once this is done, members’ inputs are then compiled at the branch level and then submitted to the national committee which then synthesises these into consolidated inputs. For instance, CSAWUZ reported that they involve members through the following means:

- At every biennial or quadrennial conference, members mandate the leadership to negotiate on their behalf;
- This is later followed by circulars every year to collect members’ submissions for collective bargaining. Inputs are then analysed by the research and information department;
- During actual collective bargaining, only measured consultations happen except that before the union signs the collective agreement, they consult members on the outcomes of the bargaining process.
- Once the collective agreement has been signed, the negotiating committee then undertakes nation-wide tours to report back to the members on the process and outcome of collective bargaining.

Some common benefits paid to unionized public service employees, June 2010

- Housing Allowance range between K160,000 – K435,000 per month
- Rural Hardship Allowance, between 20-25 percent of basic salary
- Recruitment and Retention Allowance, paid to eligible degree holders at the rate of twenty (20) per centum of basic salary
- Contributory medical scheme at the rate of 60 percent for the employer and 40 percent for the employee.
4.0 Future coordination of collective bargaining among public service unions

A response to the multiplicity of unions in the public service has recently come in form of coordinated approach motivated by central administration and the recent amendments to the industrial and labour relations act. Thus, recent amendment to the Industrial and Labour Relations Act has lead to new directions for ensuring a more coordinated approach to collective bargaining in the public service in Zambia. The new Act has included a clause that provides that the employer in a given sector or industry shall negotiate only with the most representative union. This entails that not all unions in a given sector or industry will have to negotiate separately with the employer. As such, this development has not received wide acceptable among all unions in Zambia. There is some level of apprehension, especially among smaller unions, that this clause is meant to favour big unions that will by default be advantaged to negotiate on behalf of everyone in the sector or industry. The consequence of this new clause for the public sector is yet to be seen. However, by its logic of public sector unions are beginning to strategise together and to consider options for a single public sector bargaining alliance to possibly come into effect during the negotiations for 2012 improved terms and conditions of employment.

On its part, the Ministry of Labour has initiated dialogue with the public sector unions to facilitate the enactment of a statutory instrument that would provide for an administrative arrangement to facilitate a single public service bargaining alliance. The key elements of the proposed framework are:

a. Unions shall come together and form an alliance to facilitate negotiations.
b. Prior to commencement of public service collective bargaining negotiations, unions will hold consultations among themselves to harmonise their claims and demands, then the most representative union shall lead the negotiations;

c. It shall be the responsibility of the majority union to ensure that minority unions participate;

d. Any union not willing to take part in group negotiations shall inform the ministry of labour at least three (3) months before the commencement of the negotiations of its circumstance and reason for not wanting to participate in group negotiations;

e. After group negotiations, a single collective agreement would apply to all unionised public service workers;

f. Any union that wilfully objects to participation in group negotiations shall be bound by the content of the group collective agreement.

All in all, this new dimension will serve to strengthen coordination among public service unions and possibly lead to a desired renewal of the collective bargaining machinery in the public service in Zambia.
5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

The study has shown that Zambia’s legal framework guarantees the right of civil servants to the formation of trade unions as well as their recognition for collective bargaining. On the other hand, it was also seen that the functionality of the collective bargaining machinery in the public service is not without shortcomings. Notably, public service negotiations are being increasingly governed by parameters and cabinet circulars laid down by the Ministry of Finance and cabinet office, respectively, within which the parties must bargain. This has tended to undermine the true spirit of collective bargaining.

The biggest challenge, however, has come from the unions themselves. With splinter groups transforming into autonomous independent unions, there has not been a united voice on the workers’ side. The source of this problem, it seems, is internal to the unions, but it has created serious instability and confusion in labour relations in the public sector. The future outlook in terms of unity of purpose during collective bargaining negotiations holds some promise, however. The recent amendments to the Industrial and Labour Relations Act creates a unifying logic that will ensure that unions can act together when it comes to collective bargaining. This will likely strengthen the effectiveness of the collective bargaining machinery in the public service in Zambia and stand it in continued stead as a best practice example in the southern African sub-region.

An assessment of the trade union density, however, gives a mixed picture. Some union reported a high density while others are on the low side. On average, however, the estimated density was at about 65%. Wage levels, however, are generally on the low side and fall short of living level measures.

The conclusion the study reaches is that public sector unions in Zambia are in need of capacity building for improved collective bargaining, recruitment and organising/ re-organising.
Against this background, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The need for a more coordinated approach to collective bargaining in the public sector. This could take the following elements:

   a. Unions coming together to form an alliance to facilitate negotiations.

   b. Prior to commencement of public service collective bargaining negotiations, unions holding consultations among themselves to harmonise their claims and demands, and then allowing the most representative union to lead the negotiations or having a rotation team leader arrangement;

   c. After group negotiations, a single collective agreement would apply to all unionised public service workers;

2. Building the research and analytical capacity of union through economic literacy programmes such as training for capacity building in basic economics and policy analysis.

3. Broadening the membership service base: the unions in the public sector in Zambia must broaden the membership service base to ensure that membership means the union takes care of important things in the life of a member, such as health insurance, mortgage facilitation and negotiated discounts on travel, hotel and holidays costs etc. Secondly, the unions must bargain over issues such as job designs, career planning, and training. Thus, they need to engage not only in issues of wages and conditions of services but also support members in getting stimulating and challenging jobs in a safe and healthy environment. To do this effectively they need to make consultation with members a more
regular feature to understand the changing needs and priorities of members.

4. The unions must **re-organise to give more internal political clout**. On one hand this entails making grass roots organising and recruitment an integral feature of union activity, activating existing members while reaching out mainly to the unorganised within the public sector. A related activity must entail aggressively working to reclaim unionisation of workers in devolved and decentralised structures that have been created as a result of public sector restructuring that has caused membership decline. On the other hand, such re-organisation must entail efforts at merging and amalgamating. For instance, the Civil Servants and Allied Workers Union of Zambia (CSAWUZ) and the National Union of Public Service Worker (NUPSW) can arguably become stronger and more influential if they merged. Altogether, this re-organisation strategy will ensure that the trade union can address the problem of declining collective influence. In order to do this successfully, however, the unions will need capacity building for sharpened skills in areas of recruitment and organising strategies,

5. An integral component of sustainable trade union strategy must prioritise the integration of the young, well-educated and female workers in the leadership and decision-making structures and ensure that their issues have a firm place on the union’s agenda. This strategy will serve to capture the hearts and minds of the new look workforce that currently report low ratings of the benefit offered by belonging to the union. The strategy would ensure that the union is gender mainstreamed and that there is a judicious mix of a young and educated leadership and an experienced leadership with a more activist ideological underpinning. This strategy holds promise to assert the union with a natural presence in the future as it seeks to harness the dynamism of the young, the intellect of the educated and the passion of women
workers that altogether constitute an overarching character of the changing public sector employee.

6. Lastly, the union will need to embark on a labour rights advocacy strategy. This will not only enable alliance building with new workers and the NGO community but link the local labour struggle with similar efforts at the global level. In order to do this successfully, however, the union will needs training in advocacy and lobbying skills.
Bibliography


