

Southern Africa Trade Union Co-ordination Council

STATEMENT ON THE ZIMBABWE AND SWAZILAND CRISIS

We, the leaders of National Trade Union Centres/Federations from the 11 affiliates of SATUCC, namely, from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe having met from 6th to 7th November, 2003 at the 9th Labour Symposium at the Sheraton Hotel in Harare in Zimbabwe with the view to deliberating on the question of promoting social dialogue, policy development and democracy.

Apart from discussing the architecture of the current global socio-economic and political order and its ramifications especially with prescriptions from the World Bank and the IMF and the multilateral trading system under the WTO, we also discussed the deteriorating political situation in Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

On that score we noted that:

1. Despite being signatory and having ratified the ILO conventions, SADC Social Charter and other relevant international and regional instruments on fundamental human rights, the Zimbabwe and Swaziland governments continue to advance political repression and blatant abuse and non-adherence to human rights.
2. The Zimbabwe and Swaziland governments continue their brutal attacks, arbitrary arrests and general use of force to clamp down and silence the trade union movement in general and their leaders in particular.
3. The Zimbabwe and Swaziland governments continue to perpetuate a methodical assault on the workers rights, such as the right to collectively organise and wage protests, including the rights of disadvantaged such as poor women, children and people with disabilities as evidenced by the systematic cases of rape and torture.

Therefore, working with other progressive pro-democracy activists in the sub-region and beyond, SATUCC endorses the following:

1. We are committed to actively mobilise and organise workers in the Southern Africa to oppose these human right violations in Zimbabwe and Swaziland
2. We support all the demands of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) and will ensure on-going solidarity in our respective countries.
3. We shall continue to draw attention of the international trade body to the political situation in these countries. In this regard, SATUCC will endeavour to undertake activities in these countries as part of increasing awareness and solidarity
4. We shall continue to draw attention of these two governments to the importance and the role played by the Trade Unions in the democratic governance and overall socio-economic development
5. We shall continue to use international activities/events such as the forthcoming ICFTU Congress in 2004 and the SATUCC Congress in December, 2003 to highlight the plight of the people of Zimbabwe and Swaziland.
6. We implore other SADC countries to respect workers rights and adhere to all international instruments as well as conduct themselves in a manner that promotes social dialogue and democracy.