

THE EAST AFRICAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION



Report

EALA Advocacy Meeting on the Draft EATUC Social Security Portability Bill 2015

18th – 19th May 2015, Safari Hotel, Arusha Tanzania

1.0 Introduction

EATUC with the support of Solidarity Center organized the two day Advocacy meeting with EALA members in Arusha Tanzania. The main purpose of the meeting was to finalize and submit the Social Security Portability Bill 2015 to the members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)

This meeting brought together members of EATUC Committee of Experts from the five affiliates, a representative from the East African Employers Organization (EAEO) Bro. Opio Douglas, Mrs. Margaret Osure formerly with the East and Central African Social Security Association (ECASSA) and now with the African Pension Funds Network, Mrs. Doreen Muthaura the Consultant, Solidarity Center and EATUC Secretariat.

2.0 Opening Remarks- EATUC

The EATUC Executive Secretary Sis. Caroline Khamati Mugala expressed her gratitude to Solidarity Center for their continued support to EATUC in various activities and programs.

She said this draft bill is long overdue since Portability of Social Security is one of the key elements in the EAC Common Market Protocol which was signed in 2010. She

noted that EATUC had carried out a series of stakeholder activities on extension and portability of social security in the EAC region that have resulted in developed of the SSP bill. She added that the submission of the SSP bill to EALA for discussion was a big step to the right direction, and that EATUC and the social partners should use this window of opportunity to advocate for the portability of Social Security within the EAC region.

The Executive Secretary showed appreciation to the EAEO representative for coming to attend and contribute to the important process, saying it indicated the unique collaboration between workers and employers organisations within the EAC region especially when working on issues of common interest.

She concluded by urging the experts present to contribute their inputs and recommendations to enhance the draft SSP bill.

During his opening remarks, the Bro. Hanad from the Solidarity Center urged EATUC to use this historic opportunity to push this agenda and create a working relationship with EALA. He said by having this chance of interacting with EALA members it is the beginning for EATUC to push for the other issues affecting the workers within the EAC region.

He concluded by stating that the Solidarity Center will continue to support EATUC in its advocacy work with EALA and the EAC.

Day One

3.0 Discussion of the Draft SSP Bill 2015

On the first day the EATUC experts discuss the draft SSP bill which was led by the Consultant Ms. Doreen Muthaura. The experts went through the draft bill section by section, providing their inputs and recommendations along the way. These inputs and recommendations were the captured and incorporated by the consultant strengthening the draft bill.

Day Two

4.0 EATUC Present the Draft SSP Bill 2015 to EALA

On 19th May 2015 the EATUC/EAEO delegates headed to the East African Community (EAC) Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania to submit the Draft Bill on Social Security Portability 2015 to the members of East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) through the Committee on General Purposes.

The EATUC/EAEO delegation was led by the EATUC Executive Secretary Sis. Caroline Khamati Mugala who was accompanied by representative from East African Employers Organization (EAEO) Bro. Opio Douglas, Bro. Hanad Margreret Osure from the African Pension Funds Network plus other EATUC experts. The EALA committee on general purpose was led by Chairperson Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo who was accompanied by six members of her committee and Peter Mathuki also a member of EALA and Chairperson of the committee on Legal, Rules,, Constitutional affairs.

The meeting kicked off by self-introduction from all participants followed by the summarized presentation of the Draft SSP Bill 2015 made by EATUC Executive Secretary.

4.1 Plenary Discussion

Chairperson Hon. Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo congratulated EATUC for its effort and being proactive by taking big strides in advocating for very important issues within the EAC region. She noted the importance of Social Security Portability within the region if we are to fully realise the true spirit of integration. Hon. Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo said that her committee is in full support of this work undertaken by EATUC and she promised a close collaboration with EATUC to ensure that the draft SSP Bill is presented to EALA for further procedures.

During the plenary discussion, Aboubakar Zein MP and member of the general purpose committee said that this bill should act as a catalyst to engaging the EAC Secretary General, the Council of Ministers especially the Sectoral Council in charge of Labour and Employment. He noted that this should become a long term vision for EALA when pushing for broader laws and policies on social security portability in the EAC region. He also added that the committee on general purposes in their remaining tenure of two years will support EATUC in pushing this bill and agenda.

During her presentation, Hon. Valerie Nyirahabineza, a member of Committee on General Purposes from Rwanda said this bill on Portability of Social Security was long overdue because many East Africans, especially citizens from her country have been working abroad and within other EAC Partner States for many years due to the political instability in Rwanda. After the end of civil war many citizens have since returned in their country but have faced difficulties in transferring their Social Security Benefits due to the absence of a mechanism to support portability of the social security benefits. She said as a result majority were unable to transfer their benefits from their host countries where they had been working for many years before returning home. She added that as a member of the General Purpose committee of EALA, she will support any initiative done by EATUC to ensure portability of Social Security within the region.

Hon Peter Mathuki MP of EALA and member of legal, rules and privileges Committee congratulated EATUC for pushing the workers agenda at the EAC region. He also thanked Solidarity Center for their support to EATUC in drafting this important bill, adding that, EALA's doors will always be open to support issues which they see as beneficial to all citizens of the EAC Partner States. He urged the Solidarity Center to continue its support EATUC, while promising unending EALA cooperation with EATUC in pushing important issues at the EAC.

4.2 Conclusion

In conclusion of the meeting Chairperson Hon Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo suggested EATUC to organize the technical workshop between June and August 2015 for the fifteen members of the Committee of General Purposes and two participants from clerk's office to pass through the draft bill and provide their views and make amendment of the draft bill before it is officially presented to the EALA. She also stated the importance of the members to get to understand the background situation of the social security provision and schemes within the EAC Partner states.

5.0 EATUC/EAEO delegates attend the EALA 6th Meeting of the 3rd Session

After presenting the Draft SSP Bill to the Committee of the General Purpose, Chairperson Hon Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo invited EATUC/EAEO delegates to participate in the Afternoon Plenary Session at the EAC Headquarters. During the Plenary Session EALA Speaker Hon. Daniel Kidega welcomed the EATUC/EAEO delegates to the Assembly informing members of their presence. The Afternoon Plenary Session had the presentations of the budget of the Committee on General Purpose for the financial year 2015/2016, which was presented by Chairperson Hon Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo. The EATUC/EAEO delegates were able to learn how EALA constitutes its activities.