



# Encouraging West African integration via union action

## 1. Summary

Burkina Faso and Niger are organising study visits between the managers of the regional representations as part of an exchange of perspectives and best practices in order to improve and standardise the labour codes. The cooperation is being facilitated by OHADA (Organisation for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa). This year the cooperation will be extended to Mali.

## 2. Why is this a good practice?

South-South union cooperation has always been an important concern of the African union movement. Unfortunately, except for the meetings of the regional and sub-regional organisations (CSI-Africa OUSA, etc.) during congresses or joint training courses, the African unions have brought relatively little originality to their cooperation. Given the socio-political and economic situations of some of the States, the African unions through developing bilateral or multilateral cooperations could contribute to a rapprochement or even an accelerated integration of their States by contributing to the implementation of certain sub-regional agreements, notably with regard to work. This could be beneficial for employees if the union organisations were to combine their efforts to influence the community texts in their favour.

It is on the basis of this conviction that the UAS (Unité d'Action Syndicale, Unity of Union Action) in Burkina and the ITN (Intersyndicale des Travailleurs du Niger, Interunion Association of Employees of Niger) decided to establish a South-South union cooperation in order to pressure our governments to speed up the integration processes that were signed on to within the framework of the sub-regional institutions (JEMOA, CEDEAO, etc.).

To achieve this objective, the two structures established the following sub-objectives:

- Strengthen the action of the interunion associations in the two respective countries;
- Achieve a standardisation of the labour legislation, favourable to employees, in the two countries;
- Contribute to establishing an umbrella organisation of the interunion associations of West Africa;
- Work toward the adoption of a labour legislation favourable to workers in the UEMOA and CDEAO area;
- Work on the effective application of the free movement of goods and persons in the West African community.

The reasons that explain this good practice are:

- The proliferation of inspired union organisations often orchestrated by politicians. This would involve the introduction of a legal framework on the forms of union organisations and the criteria of representativeness.
- The problem of the labour laws in force, in the countries of the sub-region, inspired by the Breton Woods institutions and which are seeking to progressively deregulate the labour market, to the benefit of the employers. This would involve blocking the anticipated adoption in our countries of labour codes inspired by the OHADA (Organisation for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa) and to obtain labour codes that are more favourable to workers.
- The various forms of harassment that migrant workers are subjected to in the Community area (UEMOA) even though the free movement of goods and persons was ratified by all of the States
- The non-representativeness of the union movement vis-à-vis Community institutions. This would involve giving greater dynamism to the sub-regional union organisations, via actions of the base, in order to be recognised as a credible partner for the institutions of the West African community.

### 3. What resources are available for implementing this good practice?

In order to implement the pilot programme, the ITN and the UAS during working visits in 2013 and 2014 to Niamey and Ouagadougou held exchanges on their respective labour and social security codes. Each party came to better understand the advantages and drawbacks of the other's system. The provisions favourable to workers were identified and will be used in the process of revising these codes in the two countries. During the assessment meeting on the periphery of the CIT, each party determined that the commitments made during the working visits were currently being implemented. The Burkinabè party requested and obtained from the Nigerian delegation the regulatory provisions on union officials in Niger. These provisions will make it possible to introduce texts governing union officials in Burkina.

## 4. What are the dynamics of the good practice?

Initiated by the UAS of Burkina and ITN of Niger, the plan to integrate our states via the initiative of the workers will be implemented according to the following strategy:

- A pilot project on cooperation between the ITN of Niger and the UAS of Burkina will be tried out, in order to obtain results on the labour laws and strengthen the unity of union action, via exchanges of experiences during reciprocal working visits and the establishment of a coordination making it possible to operationalise the decisions adopted during those working visits. The results attained will be evaluated during the course of work meetings in the periphery of the CIT (Conférence Internationale du Travail - International Labour Conference).
- Sharing of the results of the pilot experiment of the two countries with the other countries of the sub-region.
- Progressive expansion of the experience to other countries of the sub-region.
- Establishment of an umbrella coordination structure that should be the interlocutor of the sub-regional institutions.
- Coordination structure should work to achieve the various sub-regional objectives set above.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Reinforcing the action of the interunion associations in the two countries encourages the achievement of a standardisation of the labour legislation favourable to workers in both countries.	The proliferation of inspired union organisations often orchestrated by the politicians risks endangering the validity of the project vis-à-vis civil society and the citizens.
Opportunities	Threats
Sharp acceleration of the regional integration process with regard to the standardisation of the labour laws.	This cooperation runs the risk of encountering difficulties that are financial in nature. The two governments presently support the approach of the two union movements by contributing funds for the working visits by fully assuming the expenses of the delegations. But what will happen when they realise that our works run counter to their own interests? The two movements will adapt, but they will be slowed down in the realisation of their ambitions.



## 5. Contact person

Put the name, address and contact details of a person who could give additional information on the strategy for recognition of the federations.

Mr OUEDRAOGO Guy Olivier, current Monthly Chairman of  
the Unity of Union Action of Burkina  
ouedguyoli@yahoo.fr  
csbcgslb@yahoo.fr





# The process of recognition for three new national federations of the informal economy

## 1. Summary

In 2006, the transportation sector succeeded in obtaining recognition of its professional union of cycle taxis as the first recognised union deriving from the informal economy. Since then, the agenda of the informal economy has grown steadily more urgent in a precarious socio-economic structure in Burundi. The COSYBU (Confédération Syndicale du Burundi) together with the FNTT-SI (Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Transport, du Social, et de l'Informel) have offered a framework for large numbers of workers from the informal economy. Once regrouped around common trades and structured in sectors, the emerging national federations of domestic servants, manufacturers and food and drink and workers should become unions officially recognised so as to be able to participate in the social dialogue.

## 2. Why is this a good practice?

Burundi has a predominantly informalised economy (>80% of the national economic activity). The workers of the informal economy are not structurally represented in the organisation of the social dialogue. More specifically, there is no regulation or standard in effect, and the general socio-economic consequences of this are serious. The trades of the informal economy operate on a small scale with an intensive use of untrained family manpower, with capital, turnover and incomes all remaining low. Access to bank credit also remains very limited. Without recognition, it is impossible for workers to find solutions with the Authorities. It is impossible for them to formulate professional training needs. For its part, the State loses out on revenues and thus cannot redistribute them or regulate these sectors. For the workers, they remain locked into a precarious situation.

However, the union framework of the FNTT-SI and the COSYBU of workers from the informal economy has now become a reality. The transportation sector already has already gone through the recognition process, which opened up for it numerous doors for improving working conditions. Recourse to the recognition of professional and national unions of the informal economy distributed over three new sectors then appeared as a strategy for recognition and possible improvement of working conditions. The recognition of the informal economy in the National Social Dialogue Charter initiated by the National Labour Board and the recognition of the informal economy in the promotion of the National Policy of Employment and Social Protection offered an opportune context.

A strategy of union recognition for the informal economy permits:

- Reinforcement of the inclusion and social cohabitation for more strata of the Burundian population occupied in the informal economy;
- Strengthening of the social dialogue and social democracy. The COSYBU found itself more representative of the general interest of workers and in its position vis-à-vis the social partners: the Employers and the Government;
- The re-valorisation of organisations of the workers of the formal economy in all provinces, which strengthens the unity and the representativeness of all workers (increase of members and of the strength of mobilisation);
- An autonomous access to public services and an influence on public decisions in order to improve their living and working conditions;
- A possible extension of social protection;
- An integration of the informal economy union leaders into the provincial and municipal committees of the national social protection policy as well as in the National Social Dialogue Committee already organised by presidential decree.

Naturally, other strategies can be envisaged in order to improve the working conditions of workers of the informal economy, ensure social safety nets or get their rights recognised. The still young trade unionism in Burundi then explains why a purely union recognition strategy is an effective path. There is no problem of union pluralism and the social dialogue must impose itself as an engine of development.

### 3. What is necessary for this good practice?

- A shared conviction within the Confederation that the informal economy does not compete with the formal economy, but supplements the representation of the general interests of all workers;
- Dispose of a participatory and democratic basis of organisation of the workers of the informal economy identified and organised in different representative sectors present over all the provinces and in Bujumbura;
- Dispose of autonomous and inclusive services for members of the informal economy in order to demonstrate the improvement of working conditions and prove the autonomy of the union process;
- Dispose of lists of precise and simple claims, illustrated by job descriptions in order to convince the Authorities;
- Dispose of managers for the informal economy trained as trade union officials
- Strive for a comprehensive administrative authority as a first approach (Mayor, Governors, Members of Parliament, Social Ministry, etc.)
- Return to inform the base by visits to the provinces and by having oneself accompanied by the Authorities

### 4. What are the dynamics of the good practice?

After having organised the sector of workers in transportation and related services during the period from 2006 to 2011, the FNTT – SI initiated a programme of unionisation of workers of the domestic, food and drink and manufacturing sectors.

Over three years, this programme went through the following stages:

- Regroup the workers of each sector by professional association;
- Set up sectoral managers;
- Integrate the different associations in the provinces;
- Draft articles of association for each of the unions of the three sectors;
- Set up constituent assemblies of the sectoral unions where the articles of association are adopted and the managing bodies established;
- Initiate the procedures for registration of the constituted unions with the Ministry of the Civil Service, Employment and Social Security;

Then, 27 unions deriving from three professional sectors were registered during the 4th quarter of 2013 (Stage of creation of the three sectoral federations: domestic, manufacturing and food and drink). Once the unions were registered, steps for the creation of the 3 federations were taken as follows:

- Draft articles of association for the federations;
- Set up constituent assemblies by the registered unions of each sector (adoption of the articles of association and establishment of the national managing bodies of the federations);
- Initiate the procedures for recognition of the three federations with the Ministry of the Civil Service, Employment and Social Security;

Thus, the three national federations of workers issuing from the 27 professional unions of the domestic, food and drink and manufacturing sectors saw the light of day during the first quarter of 2014.

Let us note that the recognition of these federations by the Ministry responsible for employment did not take long, because the latter had determined in the field that the workers of the informal economy must play a major role in the national policy of social protection in vogue.

## 5. Specific roles and instructions

- Make available for the recognition strategy, managers of the professional groups of the informal economy trained as trade union officials of the informal economy, representative and prepared to submit and justify the recognition files;
- Ensure that the base supports the lists of demands;
- Continually raise the awareness of ministerial representatives and public opinion during meetings at the initiative of the workers of the informal economy and their representatives;
- Demonstrate at every opportunity the responsibility of the union structures being created (avoidance of excesses, ability to accompany and engage in dialogue);
- Designate a union supervisory body that can promote or facilitate the steps (an already-registered union);
- Have a complete dossier to be submitted to the Authorities



What were the lessons learned, what have you gained as experiences (positive or negative) for your organisation?

- Don't hurry the files and maintain the dialogue with the Authorities;
- First register the professional unions of the informal economy, then the national federations once the professional unions have been grouped around targeted sectors.
- Set up sectoral committees for accompanying the members;
- Organise the collection of membership fees on the level of the sectoral associations for the improvement of their services.

## 6. Application to other positions or departments

Strengths (pros): Why was this strategy for recognition of the federations adopted	Weaknesses (cons): why not adopt this strategy for recognition of the federations
<p>This strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strengthens the union movement in its entirety and extends to new precarious workers</li> <li>- develops and deepens an adapted social dialogue for everyone's benefit;</li> <li>- assures a protection of workers in the informal economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-recognitions of the category of workers in the informal economy in the labour legislation;</li> <li>- Presence of a risk of politicisation of the actions of the workers in the informal economy</li> </ul>
Can this strategy for recognition of the federations be extended to problematics other than those that the good practice deals with ?	The stumbling blocks, traps and errors to avoid or the difficulties to take into account when one adopts such a strategy for recognition of the federations
<p>Yes, it notably involves the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism (hotel management)</li> <li>- Industrial</li> <li>- Mining</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire of the authorities for the workers in the informal economy, who remain an easily malleable category</li> <li>- Difficulties to understand the complex reality of working in the informal economy</li> <li>- The persistence of many social injustices is scandalous</li> <li>- Possible competition with a corporatist or cooperative approach developed by certain social movements</li> </ul>

## 7. Contact person

NSAVYIMANA Celestin  
nsavyclest@yahoo.fr







# Establishment of an interunion association to strengthen the abilities of workers in the sector of the informal economy.

## 1. Summary

The Interunion Association of the informal economy composed of the CNTS (Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs Sénégalais), the CSA, the UDTS and the UTS was set up and is operational on the national, regional and sectoral levels. It is increasingly becoming the point of reference in the organisation of the informal economy in Senegal vis-à-vis the government, international institutions, political actors and even society as a whole. The determination and commitment of the general secretariats of the affiliated union groups but also those of the members of the UG constitute an important lever for the success of this form of South-South cooperation.

## 2. Explanation of the reason for this good practice?

The Interunion association of the informal economy in Senegal constitutes an innovation in the union approach because it reflects a greater consideration of classical trade unionism in the informal sector (SEI). The dispersion of the union movement having given a negative image of the union, the fact that these four organisations have joined forces and are creating a network that covers the entire country lends greater credibility to the union action but also to the consideration given to the sector and attests to the manifest interest of wishing to organise these workers who have long been marginalised by the public authorities but also by union officials. The fact of joining forces in this interunion association for the informal economy definitely multiplies the abilities of organisations, reveals the best approach strategies and above all suggests possibilities for perpetuating the actions.

In the dynamic of the process of unification of the affiliated union groups of Senegal, the interunion association of the economy plays a leading role because, despite the differences in union membership, the workers of the SEI learn to work together, to get to know one another, to esteem one another, to understand one another in their diversity. The interunion association of the informal economy permitted to certain affiliated union groups to be present in certain regions where they had no active members. The work of training, supervision, holding general meetings by the Management Unit galvanises the workers of the SEI for greater motivation in the union action, better knowledge of the rights of workers and greater abilities to demand improved living and working conditions.

### 3. What resources are available for implementing this good practice?

The structuring of the interunion association of the informal economy is highly functional.

The subdivision into a national platform and regional coordinations with a proper definition of the tasks of each facilitates the fluidity of the information in both two directions. The platform of the interunion association of the informal economy was based primarily on the experience and resources of the CNTS, but also others.

The various equipped regional representations are at the service of the workers of the SEI for meetings and general assemblies. Reporting tools (sheets), lists of demands, are placed at the disposal of the members of the regional coordinations. The members of the Management Unit and those of the regional coordinations are trained in the techniques of accompaniment of the SEI (approach, awareness-raising, information, unionisation). They were also trained in bargaining techniques, union rights, the gender dimension and the management of the union support services. The members of the Management Unit pass on or increase these training courses within their union structures.

### 4. What are the dynamics of the good practice?

Following the first phase of the project, there was a question of enlarging it to other affiliated union groups of Senegal. The CNTS did not find anything better than to turn to the other affiliated union groups with which it was in a dynamic of unity of action in order to form the interunion association of the informal economy.

This dynamic of the introduction of the interunion association can be summarised in:

- Necessity of setting up affiliated union groups from an experience of unity of action
- Drafting of a 3-year work action plan (logical framework)
- Establishment of the national platform (composition and division of roles)
- Establishment of the regional coordinations
- Drafting of a code of conduct in the form of directives
- Performance of activities chosen within the logical framework

### 5. Specific roles and instructions

After approval, acceptance of the idea of joining forces, it was up to the coordinator and the plenipotentiaries of the other affiliated union groups to get active in the process of establishing the interunion association of the informal economy. Several meetings and activities were necessary before the machine was properly oiled. Two things can be retained from this practice:

- The possibility of establishing the interunion association is facilitated by earlier experience of being together in a unity of action
- The interunion association of the informal economy can be exported to other countries and in Senegal it can serve as a springboard to accelerate the process of unification of the affiliated union groups.

## 6. Application to other positions or departments

It is certainly true that a good practice depends on the context it had to deal with in order to emerge and constitute a solution, but generally the dynamic, its structure, the people and resources involved, etc. give the indication applicable to other thematic. Therefore a modelised approach like a slightly modified SWOT can give a rapid and concrete overview. It would look like this:

Strengths	Weaknesses
The adoption of this good practice is a necessity, an asset to be preserved and experimented with in other areas. This good practice constitutes a very important element in the search for the unity of the unions for, amongst other actions, organising the workers of the SEI.	There are those who think that a genuine union unity attains its limits due to the competition in search for members.
Opportunities	Threats
The State, the public authorities find what they want for better policies in direction of the SEI above all with respect to the reduced social protection system.	The sole source of failure is located in the reckless pursuit of a personal identity or excessive egoism



## 7. Contact person

Mrs Marième Sakho Dansokho  
pfesypros@yahoo.fr  
ou sypros@orange.sn





# How to develop an International Policy for a trade union

## 1. Summary

Most trade union organisation does not have a stand-alone International Policy document for their organisations and therefor they work mainly on an ad-hoc basis on a variety of international theme's. This poses danger of contradictions in the public sphere. By developing a specific international trade union policy and adopting it as part of the organisational strategy a trade union can better cohere its work on an international level or any level for that matter.

## 2. Why is this a Best Practice?

Before 2011 the COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) positions on international issues and international work were codified in ad-hoc, topical resolutions, resulting in a rather fragmented, sometimes contradicting and dispersed body of policy documents. Already in 2006 did COSATU's National Congress and Central Executive Committee (CEC) raise the need for a comprehensive, formalized policy framework for international work. COSATU's International Department was tasked with its development but, at the time, lacked the capacity and resources to do so. In 2009 the importance of international work was reconfirmed, and COSATU leadership called for increased efforts to strengthen it. The 2011 Central Committee instructed the International Department to implement this long standing resolution.

Parameters:

- Better coherent working (less ad-hoc, stand-alone activities, avoid duplication)
- More members involved in International work
- Not much contradictions when speaking on behalf of COSATU and its affiliates
- More education and understanding of international work
- Used as a tool of organizing as well (ex. migrant workers)
- Inspired affiliates and international friends to look at their own structures and start process of developing their own policies

### 3. What do you need for this Best Practice?

You will need to:

- Have an ideological and structured thinking of what your trade union seek to do internationally as a base for a framework.
- Everyone in the organisation must be involved.
- Identify internal (Past and current leaders, members) and external( Friends, affiliated organisations, past or current funders, researchers and writers, etc.) stakeholders – people who can contribute meaningfully to the development of the International Policy.
- Identify a steering committee that will oversee the development of the International Policy ensuring it is developed in line with the ideological outlook and culture of the organisation.
- Develop a work plan that includes a funding model for the project.
- Knowledge of and written history of past international activities of the organisation
- Research work that includes interviews, workshops, seminars, questionnaires, analysis of press statements, speeches and resolutions.
- Writers who will draft the document.
- Experts in a form of academics, international community, past and current leaders.
- Past and current standing Resolutions ( literature for reference).
- Need to develop training material for capacity building o the policy.
- Need technology in a form of computers, internet, telephone, printers.

### 4. How does the Best Practice work?

The first project activity with regard to policy development was the organization of an internal workshop (with affiliates and labour service organisations), to strategize on the upcoming International Policy Conference (May 2012) in order to identify key components for the international policy. After this first exchange, the development process of the international policy was officially launched. The research unit NALEDI undertook an extensive round of interviews, reported to have covered more than 70 interviews, with a wide range of staff within COSATU and amongst the affiliates, complemented with external stakeholders. Through this process a wide section of COSATU and its affiliates were consulted and initial buy-in was established in the early phases of the policy development process. This interview material was combined with earlier policy positions expressed in existing COSATU resolutions, theme documents, and other secondary material. Throughout the evaluation, interviewees emphasized that through this development process NALEDI did not develop a new policy as such, but rather assembled and codified the existing (partially implicit) policy components, and updated it with a number of emerging issues in the international landscape which so far did not receive much attention in resolutions but that did come up in the interviews.

This process then led to the presentation and discussion of a draft policy to the federation at the International Policy Conference and at the National Congress (Sept. 2012). After processing the feedback received at these instances, it was finally adopted at the subsequent CEC (Feb. 2013). All participants to the International Policy Conference and the Congress received a hard copy of the international policy in draft version. After the official adoption, an International Policy booklet was printed and it had been distributed to the COSATU leadership, the affiliate leadership, and some additional copies to IRO staff. The policy contains sections on the history of COSATU's international work, the underlying principles, the vision and mission, the overall and specific objectives, and a number of more operational issues.

## 5. Specific instructions

Clarify the various instructions for each function involved. Bear in mind the objective of a Best Practice: it should enable other people or departments to copy it with the least possible effort.

1. Consultations with stakeholder through a specific questionnaire, meetings, workshops and develop the framework needed
2. Do the draft framework and consult on it both internal and external stakeholders
3. Involve the highest level leadership for buy and ownership at all times
4. Put a timeframe in place when to start the process and finish it
5. Find funding for the process as it is expensive and time consuming
6. Test the draft through structures of the organisation and allow interaction on it
7. Always take into consideration inputs on the document
8. Present it for adoption once happy you have satisfied all research and inputs given
9. Use at every opportunity

Lessons learned...

- Summarizing the policy in pocket-version would be helpful.
- A translation to certain African languages could also contribute to a broader use.



## 6. Applicability for other functions or departments

- Pro's: why would a trade union adopt an international policy framework
- Contra's: any reasons why it might be better for some trade union not to adopt an International policy framework.
- Threats: help the ones who adopt the practice not to commit errors that were already made.
- Opportunities: can this Best Practice be extended to other domains, activities than the ones it was originally meant for?

Pro's	Contra's
The International Policy now provided COSATU with a comprehensive, formalized policy document that facilitates the communication of COSATU's international policy both within COSATU structures, as well as towards outside actors.	Some considered it as too elaborate and complex (need pocket size version) It caused serious tensions within the federation sparking debates on many issues e.g. COSATU affiliation to WFTU and ITUC
Opportunities	Threats
Several users recount their relief of having a policy to take with them on travels and to consult whenever a topic is raised that they might not be very familiar with. Also being able to present interlocutors with COSATU's international policy helps the dialogue with external stakeholders.	Key challenges: 1) the distribution of the policy to different target audiences and its actual implementation, and 2) the development of a stronger vision on the priorities and concrete strategies of an international policy 3) how to keep the output up to date, the ever changing international environment

## 7. Contact info

Create a record of the person to be contacted for additional information or advice.

Bongani Masuku (bongani@cosatu.org.za)  
Zanele Matebula (zanele@cosatu.org.za)  
Naledi Liesl Orr (liesl@naledi.org.za)







# Use of Trade Union Alliances (TUAs)

## 1. Summary

South-African based companies (or other multi-nationals) within the whole and retail sector, operating in the African continent, does not always provide the same labour conditions for the workers in each country. By organising the shopstewards from each country into one Trade Union Alliances (TUAs), SACCAWU could share best practices among the various shopstewards to improve labour conditions within their company collective agreements.

## 2. Why is this a Best Practice?

SACCAWU (South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union) has played a pioneering role, together with UNI global Union, in what are called Trade Union Alliances (TUAs) in Africa and beyond. These structures are effectively international shop-steward councils. For example, SACCAWU is leading the Shoprite Shosteward's Alliance, which brings Shoprite workers together from across Africa to discuss common problems, share information and build common campaigns and strategies. TUAs help trade unionists from different countries to come together to share information and to develop common strategies and responses to the problems created by MNCs (Multi-Nationals). They have been very successful in fighting the anti-worker practices of MNCs, and have begun to create the conditions for the harmonisation of the conditions of workers across countries. A key strategy for TUAs revolves around negotiating Global Framework Agreements, which effectively commit companies to adhering to certain basic labour standards and codes of practice.

### Parameters:

- Better and equal working conditions
- Better/stronger collective agreements
- Compel employers not to do anti union practice in the continent of Africa
- Getting to know the trade unions on the African continent and sharing of information

### 3. What do you need for this Best Practice?

- Cooperation with UNI (Global, Africa, and the UNI office in the region) <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/>
- Engage respective shopsteward councils of the companies
- Work with other trade unions that also organized workers within that company
- Consolidated position – one voice
- Engage the company
- Set a program (with all stakeholders) for info sharing to the membership
- Role of government – be informed, set level of compliance

### 4. How does the Best Practice work?

The core of SACCAWU's international work dovetails with its commitments and participation in the UNI. SACCAWU is often celebrated for its work in the international sphere – particularly relating to its pioneering role in the various international, or continental, or regional “Trade Union Alliances (TUAs)” in Africa and beyond. These effectively constitute international shop-steward structures, although they bring together both shop stewards and officials within multinational corporations operating in different countries. In fact, these TUAs are UNI Global initiatives – despite the acknowledgment by the UNI regarding the important contribution SACCAWU has made to them; its role being one of spearheading and leadership in the region. The Trade Union Alliances are primarily a response to globalisation and neoliberalism – which have facilitated the massive expansion in the range and activities of multinational corporations. A key strategy for TUAs revolves around negotiating Global Framework Agreements with the various multinationals.

The main activity of the TUA is to bring together unions within companies to do research, communicate effectively, and share information and experiences, and then to synergise a number of elements within the agreements. They also enable these unions to come together at yearly meeting at which these unions are able to negotiate with Shoprite management at continental level, from a shared platform and common programme. Moreover, these Alliances undertake research on companies, in which shop stewards are involved, thereby “expos[ing] ... workers to the international sphere”. Other activities of the TUAs include exchange programmes, educational work – including seasonal schools. In addition, TUAs take up campaigns around certain pressing issues where necessary – for example in opposing the takeover of Massmart by Wal-Mart (in which the SACCAWU, alongside with UNI Global Union and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) of the United States played a major role).

SACCAWU is currently a member of three Trade Union Alliances, in Shoprite Checkers, Pick n Pay and Massmart/Walmart Union Alliances respectively.

- Shoprite/Checkers Global Trade Union alliance (Shoprite Shop Steward Alliance) - continental
- Pick n Pay Union Alliance<sup>1</sup> - SADC regional
- Massmart/Walmart Union Alliance<sup>2</sup> - global

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lrs.org.za/docs/pick%20n%20payFESUNI%20final%20report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf/pages/homepageEn?OpenDocument&exURL=http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpByld/F5E2B9FC2E6C7C61C1257A240038780F>

SACCAWU has for several years been involved in the Shoprite Shop Steward Alliance, which is a continental structure – organising in Shoprite Checkers in 12 countries in Africa, including Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia. The Shoprite Alliance has a campaign that attempts to build national shop stewards councils in every country where Shoprite exists; shop stewards from the TUAs have therefore played a central role in building trade union strength on the continent, by assisting in the establishment of shop stewards' councils (to date councils have been built in Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Namibia). In this regard, SACCAWU's Mike Tau, as part of his role as Chairperson of the Alliance, has travelled extensively in Africa to set up national shop stewards councils and to support the work of these unions in those countries. And where these have been established, shop stewards have been capacitated to call general meetings, to report back and to be accountable – something that is often severely limited prior to such interventions.

Nevertheless, working with the GUFs through the Alliances, SACCAWU also believes it has made some “serious interventions” outside of setting up of shop steward councils. This type of work has included assisting a Zambian union over a wage dispute; assistance in negotiating a recognition agreement (in the face of declining membership) in Namibia, and establishing a recognition agreement and stop order facilities in Mozambique. Mozambique was an important example. Through its bilateral relations with SINECOSSE, SACCAWU was asked to travel to Mozambique to assist because company information reflected union membership was below majority. In Mozambique, SACCAWU (funded by UNI) ran a two-day workshop covering the following issues: principles of a trade union, duties of a shop steward, recruitment and organising, time management and collective bargaining and negotiations. The workshops capacitated shop stewards to be able to go out and organise a 51% majority the Matola store of Shoprite in Maputo. This was achieved in the absence of organisers, which was unprecedented in that country.

SACCAWU has also involved itself in the various campaigns of the GUFs. For example, UNI Global funds and drives an “Africa Grow” campaign that centres on recruitment and organising. SACCAWU leadership has been involved in conducting workshops on organising in various countries, including Zambia, Malawi and Namibia, Mozambique through this project.

## 5. Specific instructions

- Take contact with UNI (Global, Africa, and the UNI office in the region) – good practice on GFA will be explained by UNI.
- UNI needed to look at accountability of the companies entering into a GFA
- Mobilise respective shopsteward councils from the companies
- Work with other trade unions that also organises within that company
- Agree on a consolidated position – one voice
- Engage the company – need good working relation
- Set a program (with all stakeholders) for information sharing to the membership
- Take contact with government representatives – be informed, set level of compilation



## 6. Applicability for other functions or departments

Here you can provide a modified SWOT-analysis with the following sub-topics:

- Pro's: why would other trade unions adopt TUA.
- Contra's: any reasons why it might be better for some trade unions not to adopt TUA.
- Threats: help the ones who adopt TUA not to commit errors that were already made.
- Opportunities: can this Best Practice be extended to other domains, activities than the ones it was originally meant for?

Pro's	Contra's
Trade Union Alliances (TUA) enable trade unions across countries to come together to share information and to develop common strategies and responses, to halt the anti-worker practices commonly associated with them, and to begin to create the conditions for the harmonisation of the conditions of workers across countries	For ex. Walmart – not recognise basic rights of workers, drag process Buy-in needed, from union, workers & company Involve of the local country federations – all on same page
Opportunities	Threats
A key strategy for TUAs revolves around negotiating Global Framework Agreements with the various multinationals, which effectively commit companies to adhering to certain basic labour standards and codes of practice.	This process is not always smooth, however: SACCAWU is reported to have experiences tensions with unions in Zambia because Shoprite is a South African company, and because of the victories that SACCAWU has been able to win within Shoprite nationally.

## 8. Contact info

Create a record of the person to be contacted for additional information or advice

Mike Sikani, [education@saccawu.org.za](mailto:education@saccawu.org.za)  
Keith Jacobs, <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/contact/uni-africa>

