



## Policies of Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions on employment programs and Protection of workers' rights

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### Program introduction:

Several job-creating projects were executed since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority. It was noted that most of these projects were not responding to the needs of the local community, but they were either temporary intended for relief or random. They were not planned to support the Palestinian economy, and neither the projects nor the financial sources paid any attention to the workers' rights. It was obvious that they did not solve or reduce the severity of unemployment. Due to its many needs, the Palestinian community used to accept what was offered, particularly in the absence of a comprehensive vision and development planning, which could have created a much better economic situation.

The suffering of the Palestinian people as a result of harsh conditions, which are worsening day by day and obstructing development and prosperity, is well known indeed. But, the day will come that Palestine will attract local and international investment and will be the focus of various projects.

To prepare for the future, the General Federation has to define its position and establish its general policies in advance, in case job opportunities are created. The federation believes that employment and job creation should be linked to the protection of the workers' rights.

This policy document was prepared by the General Federation through a study on the labor market and the type and feasibility of the projects already executed in Palestine. This study was presented and discussed in a workshop with the various trade unions represented in the federation to reach recommendations. An authorized committee of unionist revised the recommendations in consultation with professional specialists in the policy relevant areas, and presented them to the executive committee, which endorsed them on Aug. 28, 2007.

The federation adopted a program to publicize these policies by distributing copies to members or visiting governorates to explain these policies and speak with one voice to the public, other production parties and concerned ministries and organizations.

## Policy Introduction

in Palestine General Federation of Trade Union we believe in the right of work, which is maintained by all national and international legislations as one of the fundamental human and workers rights, including Palestinian labor law No. 7 of the year 2000, where Article 2 prescribes the right of work for all who are able to do it.

Based on this and on our responsibility in the struggle to defend the issues of workers, who are facing all kinds of difficult situations and violations because of the political, economic and social conditions suffered by our Palestinian people in general and workers in particular, we stress our position and the following policy, which represents our approach to achieve more gains for the workers, and to protect their rights in the existing and future projects and enterprises:

### 1. Federation's Policies for emergency employment programs.

1. The federation emphasizes the need to attach a developmental dimension to the emergency employment programs.
2. The necessity to set just, clear and open standards for selecting the beneficiaries of the employment programs.
3. Wages should meet the basic standards of living, which insure a decent life for workers and their families.
4. The federation underscores the right to organize and foster relations with the workers in the emergency employment programs.
5. Based on the tried social partnership, the federation will seek to influence the public policies concerning employment to protect the workers interest under the applicable laws.
6. The federation sees the need to use the tried dialogue as a mean to strengthen and reinforce its roll in shaping policies and decisions concerning employment.
7. The federation seeks to enter into collective work agreement to develop workers' rights in those projects.
8. Building contacts with supporting international organizations and coordinating with International trade union federations to influence the goals and conditions of the programs in order to guarantee the workers' rights.

### 2- Federation's policies toward employing entities

1. Encouraging employing entities to set sustainable, comprehensive and developmental employment plans, which respond to the real needs of the

society, and presenting such plans to the financing institutions without waiting for whatever is offered to the Authority and the civil society.

2. Calling for the establishment of a controlling committee to oversee the employment projects.

### 3- Federation's policies toward International organizations financing emergency employment projects

1. The federation emphasizes its rejection of employment projects, which are not established on studies, and underscores the importance of establishing controls to protect national and social rights.
2. Cooperating directly with the financing institutions
3. Cooperating with ITUC, the European Union and other international federations to benefit from their experience and relations with the World Bank for the purpose of improving the employment program conditions.
4. Coordinating and cooperating with ILO to exercise pressure on financing organizations, such as the World Trade organization and other entities, to ensure the provision of decent work conditions.
5. The federation ascertains the importance of establishing a control mechanism to ensure transparency and integrity in maintaining and guaranteeing the workers' rights.
6. The necessity to organize workers and peoples organizations to demand the improvement of employment conditions.

### 4- Federation's policies toward employment in Israeli projects:

1. Struggling to defend the workers' right of free movement to reach their work place in Israel and the Israeli labor courts.
2. Stressing the workers' right to work in the Israeli projects as long as occupation continues.
3. The need to monitor and document the Israeli violations of the workers' rights, disclose them through the various media, and brief the world community on the daily conditions faced by the Palestinian workers.
4. The federation is committed to organize the workers of the Israeli projects and pursue their acquisition of their rights.
5. Asking the ILO and Juristic organizations to monitor the violations faced by the Palestinian workers at the hands of Israeli employers.
6. Calling for the application of International Conventions pertaining to the protection of communities under occupation through international popular groups, to exercise pressure and call for penalties on the Israeli occupation authorities for their frequent arbitrary violations against the Palestinian people in general and the workers in particular.
7. Making efforts to eliminate the difficulties and obstructions preventing the workers' access to labor courts and work places.

### 5- Federation's policies toward the private sector

1. The federation is demanding that the private sector's employment projects should be through the Employment Fund.
2. Reinforcing the principal of dialogue between the production three parties and seeking its application on the ground.
3. The federation emphasizes the importance of its participation in setting the standard for workers recruitment and in directing the employment programs toward the appropriate occupational sectors as well as encouraging cooperation with employers who respect the workers rights.
4. The federation will work to exercise its right in entering the work sites, defending trade unions rights and freedoms, and entering into collective agreements.
5. The federation supports the pommotion of investment within certain frame work and control, and if facilities are introduced to investors without affecting the workers' rights, and directing investment toward most inflicted areas.
6. The federation is fully convinced that the authorities should regulate importation to ensure the promotion, support and quality improvement of local products.
7. Underlining the importance of limiting temporary job positions and converting them to permanent sustainable and secure ones.
8. Calling for the application of environmental and public health, international and national laws, and providing required preventive arrangements in existing and future projects as well as coordinating with the relevant ministries and civil society organizations.
9. Working toward the application of international and national occupational health and safety standards and decent work conditions.
10. Calling upon the Wage Committee to play an effective role to set wagesm\, which guarantee the basic standards of living.

#### 6- Federation's policies toward the legal framework of the workers' rights

1. Individual contracts:
  - \* Initiating and publicizing a culture, which enables workers and trade union members to be aware of their rights when signing their individual employment contracts.
2. Labor courts:
  - \* The federation believes in the need to begin establishing specialized summary labor court to litigate labor dispute.
  - \* There is a need to change the labor law in order to litigate labor dispute expeditiously to maintain the workers rights.
  - \* The federation stresses the need to establish special court to protect wages.

3. The federation is exercising pressure on authorities to review the internal regulations concerning personnel management in enterprises to ensure their compliance with the law.
4. Studying and evaluating the economic and political agreements in terms of their impact on labor relations and workers' rights, and stressing the need to include guarantees to protect the workers' rights according to applicable laws in such agreements.
5. Setting a vision concerning joint international projects through alternative judicial avenues, most importantly arbitration based on collective labor agreements, to take labor disputes in the joint job creating projects.