

# QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES FOR DIGNITY

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## Resolution 1

# African and Arab Countries Regional Programme of Action 2026-2030

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. Summary

Adopted by the Regional Conference of the PSI Africa and Arab Countries Region (AFRECON), the 2026–2030 Regional Programme of Action (POA) is a bold roadmap to confront systemic exploitation, corporate power, austerity, and privatisation, while promoting and demanding quality public services as the basis for dignity, equity, and democracy. The Programme responds to a context characterised by illicit financial flows of almost \$90 billion from Africa and between \$50 and \$80 billion from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region each year, which exacerbate inequalities, unemployment, gender injustice, conflict, forced migration, and climate emergencies. The Programme sets out a vision for a region where democratic governance thrives, workers have collective power, wealth is shared equitably, and climate justice is non-negotiable.

To achieve this, the programme prioritises organising for growth and worker power, influencing policy change, defending trade union rights, advancing gender justice, empowering young people and migrant workers, promoting disability inclusion, and strengthening sectoral networks. It further seeks a just economy through opposition to privatisation of public services, demanding tax justice, debt and trade justice, just transition led by the public and universal social protection.

Ultimately, this Programme of Action establishes the PSI in Africa and the Arab countries as a driving force in global labour solidarity. It opposes neoliberal policies and offers concrete alternatives for people-centred, democratic and sustainable development. The Programme asserts that reclaiming power from corporate and authoritarian elites and amplifying the voices of workers is vital for building the region and the world that we want: a place of dignity, justice, and universal access to quality public services.

## B. About the Africa and Arab Region of Public Services International

Public Services International (PSI) is a global union federation that unites over 700 trade unions and represents more than 30 million workers in 154 countries. PSI defends trade union and workers' rights, advocates for universal access to quality public services, and gives workers a voice at the UN, ILO, WHO and other global and regional institutions. Within this global movement, the Africa and Arab Countries region accounts for over one million members organised into four sub-regions across more than 50 countries: English-speaking West and East Africa; French-speaking Africa; Southern Africa; and Arab-speaking countries.

Africa and MENA region are the world's second largest and second-most populous continent and is home to the globe's youngest population and a vibrant tapestry of ethnicities, cultures, and languages. The MENA region, endowed with 50% global oil and 45% natural gas reserves, remains pivotal to economic stability. Yet, both areas are shackled by systemic exploitation. Multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational companies (TNCs), often facilitated by international financial institutions (IFIs), siphon wealth through a host of mechanisms, including, but not limited to, endless debt servicing, tax evasion, profit shifting, and lopsided trade agreements. Unfair terms imposed by Global North powers and institutions like the IMF and World Bank enforced austerity, privatise public assets, and trapped nations in debt cycles—diverting \$88.6 billion annually from Africa and \$50–80 billion from MENA in illicit financial flows.

This plunder entrenches inequality: 70% of Africa's women work in informal, precarious jobs without social protections, while privatised healthcare and education exclude marginalised communities. Youth unemployment in MENA (30%) and Africa (60% under 35) fuels mass migration, stripping the

region of skilled workers like nurses and teachers. Concurrently, conflict and climate disasters—exacerbated by corporate-driven fossil fuel extraction displace millions, with women and girls bearing 80% of climate-induced care burdens. Insecurity, from terrorism to authoritarian crackdowns, silences dissent and undermines public services. Workers and their unions brave retaliation to defend rights, organise, and demand accountability.

Devastating conflicts, terrorism, and oppressive regimes plague the political landscape in Africa and the Arab world. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan face catastrophic humanitarian crises, while Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen are engulfed in turmoil requiring urgent relief.

In Palestine, Israel's brutal occupation and relentless bombardment of Gaza represent grave violations of international law. The unending strikes have decimated daily life, destroying homes, hospitals, and vital infrastructure. As global outrage against Netanyahu's government intensifies, Israel's disproportionate military response leads to indiscriminate civilian casualties, particularly affecting women and children. This situation transcends warfare, it's a campaign of annihilation. Yet, healthcare and public service workers bravely strive to maintain the last straws of dignity for those who survive.

## **C. The Region We Want: Demanding Quality Public Services for Dignity**

The region envisions a future where there is democratic governance, and workers' collective power that delivers:

1. Quality public services that nurture a life of dignity for all are essential, including universal healthcare, education, energy, water and sanitation, delivered by well-funded, gender-responsive institutions that are free from privatisation and corporate influence. Quality local government services such as waste management, social care, public housing, public works and green space management are also critical for a life of dignity.
2. Economic sovereignty, ensuring that wealth is equitably shared and that MNCs and IFIs pay fair taxes, cancel odious debts and abide by labour and environmental standards. International financial support must not create more country debt.
3. Inclusive democracies under transparent governments that embrace women's leadership, youth participation and collaborative decision-making.
4. Climate justice, where public infrastructure is resilient and renewable energy transitions protect workers and retain energy as a public good, with women involved in leading disaster response.
5. The rights to organise, with unions empowered to secure safe workplaces, living wages and rights for all.
6. The power to create spaces in which to lead conversations that lay the foundation for an alternative economic vision which restores economic sovereignty, prioritises social justice, and puts the needs of workers and communities at the heart of policymaking. This vision challenges the dominance of neoliberal capitalism and its institutions, such as the WTO, IMF and World Bank, and their allies.
7. strengthen national, sub-regional and regional level structures of PSI in the region through education, training and international solidarity. This will enable us to lead the necessary pushbacks and advance the right policy alternatives.

## II. BUILDING POWER TO CREATE THE REGION WE WANT

### A. Introduction

A trade union's strength lies in its membership, the bedrock of collective bargaining, policy influence, and workplace dignity. Yet across Africa and Arab Countries, privatisation, anti-union legislation, and austerity have eroded protections, leaving millions of public service workers in precarious employment. Non-payment of wages, delayed salaries, and the casualisation of labour undermine livelihoods, while governments collude with corporations to suppress dissent.

The corporate-state axis thrives on division. We will reclaim power by organising relentlessly, mobilising creatively, and centring the most marginalised-women, youth, migrants, and informal workers. Our vision is unwavering: a region where quality public services guarantee dignity for all and unions are the vanguard of democracy in the service of the people.

Trade unions' rights have come up against some challenges in the region. Legalised repression: In Egypt, Algeria, and Jordan, anti-union laws criminalise organising, while "security" narratives justify arbitrary arrests and union busting. Public sector workers are either not recognized as unions by national laws or stringent measures instituted to frustrate the process of meeting the criteria for recognition. Violations of ILO standards: 28 countries in Africa and MENA restrict collective bargaining for civil servants, violating ILO Conventions 87 and 98. Corporate-state collusion: Outsourcing and digitalisation models deny workers union representation, entrenching exploitation, offering poor public services, and undermining public data ownership.

### B. Organising for growth and reclaiming worker power

The region conducted a survey to identify affiliates' priorities, including their organising needs. Out of 164 affiliates, 96 shared information regarding their priorities and organising requirements. Based on these responses, a regional organising and growth strategy is developed.

The strategy outlines an organizing model designed to equip union (affiliate) organisers with the tools, strategies, and tactics needed for effective recruitment and organising. One that shifts the focus from service-model organizing to one that focuses on building worker power for change. Additionally, it aims to expand organising efforts, particularly in privatised public services. There are ongoing efforts in various countries in the region to implement the strategy.

To advance these efforts, affiliates, resolve to among other things:

1. Work with the regional secretariat to implement the organizing and growth strategy for 2026 to 2030, which aims to build power and influence in the workplace and policy arenas.
2. Ensure that national, sub-regional, and regional project activities reinforce organizing and growth strategies and strengthen the structures.
3. Incorporate the recruitment of private and informal workers who operate within public sector domains, such as health and waste management, into our growth strategies.
4. Contribute to global efforts to mobilize all nursing unions as a network of healthcare workers within PSI, strengthening the influence of international and regional healthcare policies and delivery for all individuals.
5. Strengthen networks of all healthcare workers within PSI.
6. Collaborate at national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels to confront authoritarian regimes and corporate interests that undermine workers' rights to bargain collectively, recognize public sector unions, and protect trade union rights and activists from corporate capture of public services.

7. Demand the ratification of ILO Conventions C87 (Freedom of Association) and C98 (Collective Bargaining) and seek reform of national laws and constitutions to align with the spirit and intent of these fundamental conventions.
8. Publicize abuse of trade union rights and call for real-time international solidarity.
9. Strengthen social dialogue and establish bargaining frameworks, such as standing negotiation committees, to negotiate wage protections, workplace safety, and gender equity with governments.

## **C. Trade Union and labour rights**

Trade unions remain a formidable force agitating for social justice, sustainable development, democracy, and good governance. Countries in the region cannot realise the Decent Work Agenda without strong trade union movements, whose sustenance is dependent on membership strength. Increasingly, growth in casualisation and outsourcing threaten and undermine the decent work agenda. In many African and Arab countries, trade union violations persist. This troubling situation continues in nations such as Algeria, Egypt, Eswatini, Liberia, Mozambique, Botswana, Chad, Sierra Leone, Niger, Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso.

In the Arab sub-region, independent unions in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, and Jordan face various forms of pressure from authorities, which may escalate to suppression, particularly in Algeria and Egypt. This union repression includes the arrest of trade unionists, dismissal from work, accusations of terrorism, and restrictions on their activities and elections. Additionally, independent unions are prohibited from collecting membership fees in these countries. The government has also implemented laws and decrees targeting independent trade unions.

Many countries still have laws that limit the right to organise and engage in collective bargaining, particularly for civil servants in Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, and Mozambique. These restrictions violate International Labour Organization (ILO) standards. PSI's primary focus is on protecting workers and trade union rights.

It is important to note that autocratic regimes are incompatible with enjoying trade union rights; this is evident in military regimes in Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea, and Mali, as well as under the monarchy in Eswatini.

Given the ongoing violations of trade union rights in our region, we will take concrete steps to defend these rights.

To this end, we, the affiliates, resolve to:

1. Support the democratisation process to ensure the enjoyment of trade union rights, such as the freedom of association and collective bargaining.
2. Defend the right to strike and collaborate with affiliates and the global labour movement and combat any attacks on this right.
3. Promote social dialogue in all its forms at all levels, including the establishment of bipartite and tripartite mechanisms at the national level to engage with local, regional, and national administrations on issues relevant to public service workers.
4. Continue to mobilise members, launch solidarity campaigns, and lobby governments and institutions at the national, regional and global levels;
5. Strengthen national, regional and global solidarity actions to resist trade union violations everywhere;
6. strengthen effective reporting systems to foster compliance
7. Advocate for the progressive improvement of the legislative landscape, beginning with the ratification and implementation of key ILO Conventions.

## **D. Strengthening networks to enhance sectoral power**

Sectoral work provides affiliates with opportunities to address workplace challenges through shared professional experiences and cross-border collaboration. By leveraging sector-specific expertise, unions can tailor strategies to the specific contexts of different countries and industries. Sectoral networks are important for strengthening the different sectors as a cohesive community of workers who share similar experiences and challenges.

Sectoral networks subgroups within the public sector, enable peer learning, policy debate, and cohesive negotiations with employers. These networks are most effective when organised around clear programmes of action that all members buy into.

Despite global PSI frameworks for sectoral work, implementation in Africa and Arab regions remains inconsistent.

Key issues include:

1. **Fragmented Sectoral Focus:** Project activities often lack a sectoral approach, missing opportunities to harness synergies and professional expertise.
2. **Governance Gaps:** No common framework exists for funding, decision-making, or accountability, leading to ad-hoc network structures.
3. **Uneven Participation:** While the region has five active sectoral networks (health, education, energy, and municipalities/local government), some affiliates engage more actively than others.

To address these challenges, affiliates, with support from regional and global secretariats, commit to:

1. Develop and adopt a unified Governance Framework to be approved by AFREC;
2. Enhance Cross-network Collaboration;
3. Integrate cross-cutting themes by embedding critical issues such as tax justice, climate action, alternatives to privatisation, and migration/migrant rights into sectoral work plans;
4. Establish a sectoral network on utilities.

## **E. Mobilising Influence – for Quality Public Services for Dignity**

Projecting power requires workers to coordinate action around clear demands alongside as many allies as possible. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our affiliates, this region has driven policy changes in several countries.

However, due to power and information asymmetries, the multilateral system continues to undermine the region through its policies. These policies constrain the mobilisation of resources and policy space, with negative consequences now evident in the quality of public services.

The complexities of multilateral systems, shrinking policy space and limited engagement time pose significant challenges. To address these challenges, we must commit to engaging with critical issues and spaces through worker-led strategies that influence policies to deliver quality public services that promote dignity.

We, the affiliates, therefore, resolve to among other things to:

1. work closely with the regional secretariat, PSI HQ and sectoral officers to build the capacity of leaders across the region, equipping them with the skills and tools needed to engage in these spaces and project the power required to bring about change.
2. strategically engage with sub-regional and regional bodies, such as the AU and RECs, as well as other policy forums, to advocate for policies and frameworks that uphold labour rights and guarantee quality public services. This will ensure that workers' voices are heard and actively shape the regional integration agenda and economic policies affecting the continent.
3. adopt innovative approaches to ensure that our messages and demands are heard through multiple media platforms, reaching all affiliates, labour movements, our allies, national governments, intergovernmental organisations and policymakers worldwide.
4. We communicate our campaign messages in a way that highlights the connection between providing quality public services and living a dignified life. Ultimately, ensure our message goes beyond organised labour and speaks to all who rely on public services and seek democratic governance that prioritises the interests of the people.
5. work with non-labour allies who share our vision, including those who use public services, the public and governments willing to challenge corporate power.



### III. A JUST REGIONAL ECONOMY

#### A. Introduction

A just economy is essential for dignity, equity, and sustainable development. In Africa and the Arab region, corporate greed, burdensome debt, and exploitative trade agreements continue to perpetuate poverty and inequality. We are dedicated to dismantling these systems by prioritising workers' rights, promoting gender justice, ensuring sovereignty over resources, and building quality public services to uphold dignity.

In the long term, our goal is to establish spaces where workers can initiate discussions that are pivotal in developing an alternative economic vision. This vision would prioritise social justice and economic sovereignty, placing the needs of workers and communities at the core of policymaking.

These spaces will provide opportunities for trade unions and their allies to analyse the failures of the current system collectively, articulate alternatives based on the experiences of working people and develop strategies to strengthen public services, create decent jobs and democratise economic governance. This vision challenges the dominance of neoliberal capitalism and the institutions that perpetuate its policies, which have entrenched austerity, deepened inequalities and undermined public services.

#### B. Tax Justice: Reclaiming Stolen Wealth

Africa loses \$88.6 billion each year due to illicit financial flows (IFFs). In comparison, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region loses between \$50 billion and \$80 billion, with 60% of this loss attributed to multinational corporations (MNCs) engaging in tax evasion, profit shifting, and using secrecy havens, including damaging tax incentives. Additionally, regressive taxes, such as value-added tax (VAT), disproportionately impact women, who spend 70% of their income on essential goods and services.

Domestic revenue is the only sustainable financing source for the region's needs, which include education, healthcare, energy, wages, inequality and poverty reduction, regional governance, infrastructure, and welfare. Meanwhile, the reforms led by the OECD benefit wealthy nations primarily, allowing MNCs to transfer tax burdens onto workers.

Over the past decade, affiliates, unions, and civil society organizations (CSOs) have mobilized for tax justice, advocating for fair revenue generation to support education, healthcare, and development. Progress has been made; for example, affiliates in Tanzania have proposed a tax incentive framework to reduce revenue losses. Meanwhile, affiliates in Nigeria is advancing legislation for an alternative minimum tax that aligns with the OECD's global corporate tax rate, with the goal to increase domestic revenue. Affiliates will continue to support the Global South's demands for a UN Tax Convention, which is seen as a democratic solution for global tax governance.

To this end, we, the affiliates, resolve to:

1. Incorporate the tax justice campaign into union education and training programs; this will involve adopting resolutions at national conferences that advocate for an alternative to the current economic paradigm, focusing on the fight for tax justice.

2. Collaborate with PSI regional and global tax justice policy officers to provide technical support and develop policy materials; inform affiliates and assist them with communication, lobbying, and campaigning to influence government tax policies.
3. Advocate for transparency in government interactions with multinational companies.
4. Fight for trade union and civil society involvement in formulating and developing national tax policies.
5. Develop a regional tax justice demand framework to guide the national tax justice campaigns.
6. Collaborate with PSI's Centre for International Corporate Tax Accountability and Research (CICTAR) and the Network of Unions for Tax Justice (NUTJ) to harness support for tax justice research and campaigns.

## **C. Government Debt: End Austerity, Prioritise a Life of Dignity**

Debt servicing consumes 40% of national budgets. This situation diverts critical funds from essential services like healthcare, education, wages, and climate resilience. 82% of debt-strapped nations face food crises, worsening the unpaid care work burden.

The root of this crisis can be traced back to colonial-era economic models. Extractive industries in the Global South provide raw materials to manufacturers in the Global North, hindering industrialisation, local job creation, technological advancement, and revenue from value-added sectors. This is exacerbated by falling commodity prices and defaults, with interest payments consuming 20% of tax revenues. Corruption and opaque borrowing practices continue to perpetuate cycles of austerity. IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs prioritise resource extraction and regressive tax increases, deepening reliance on Public-Private Partnerships.

The debt crisis illustrates structural inequities, with Global South nations trapped in a cycle of exporting raw materials while importing processed goods. This dynamic, limits opportunity for industrialisation and skills development, perpetuating dependency.

To effectively tackle the debt crisis, it is crucial to dismantle colonial legacies, challenge exploitative loan terms, and focus on providing quality public services for the benefit of all citizens. By mobilising domestic resources through fair taxation, auditing the beneficiaries of debt, and investing in sustainable industries, countries can break free from the constraints of austerity and build equitable, resilient economies.

There is a need to urgently address the issue of public debt in the region.

We, the affiliates, resolve to:

1. Educate members on debt's long-term societal and worker impacts while partnering with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to demand transparency in using external debt.
2. Promote just debt mechanisms, including relief options prioritising vulnerable citizens over irresponsible debtors.
3. Support reviews to identify beneficiaries of public debt as a foundation for restructuring accountability.
4. Campaign against corruption in sovereign debt by strengthening anti-corruption institutions and cancelling illegitimate debts, such as odious loans from opaque deals.
5. Intensify tax justice efforts, including implementing offshore wealth levies and windfall taxes to enhance domestic resources.
6. Explore alternative economic models that reduce dependency on raw material exports, prioritising industrialisation, food security, and sufficiency driven by a developmental state.

## **D. Trade Justice: Resisting Exploitative Deals**

Despite the optimistic rhetoric surrounding free trade agreements (FTAs) between Africa and Arab countries, many experts, including trade unions, remain sceptical about their ability to deliver widespread prosperity. At the heart of this scepticism lies the fact that FTAs rely on free-market capitalism and an export-oriented development model that prioritises deregulation, market access for multinational corporations and the liberalisation of key sectors, often at the expense of domestic industry, public services and workers' rights. They have entrenched asymmetric power dynamics. Such deals often erode governments' ability to support strategic sectors, protect food sovereignty, or enforce labour and environmental standards, thereby exacerbating dependency and underdevelopment rather than reversing them.

FTAs and Bilateral Investment Treaties often include the Investor-State Dispute Resolution System (ISDS) in their investment protocol. This mechanism provides investors with the right to recourse, ensuring that they are protected and that these protections are enforced internationally when national regulations, instituted in the interest of the state, undermine profit-making options for multinational companies.

Over the years, proposals for ISDS reform, such as those put forward by UNCITRAL Working Group Three and the European Union for Multilateral Investment Courts (MIC), have failed to address the fundamental problem with ISDS: the unchecked power it gives corporations to sue sovereign states. Across the world, these tribunals have granted big businesses and rich individuals billions of dollars from taxpayers' pockets – often in compensation for laws passed in the public interest. Today, there are 150 ISDS cases against African states. And these are only the ISDS cases which are public and compiled in a United Nations public database. The region will continue with its campaign efforts against ISDS in FTAs and BITs, including in the recent Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Accordingly, we, the affiliates, resolve to:

1. Evaluate the substance of proposed and existing agreements in light of African and Arab regional development aspirations, priorities and strategies;
2. Conduct research and disseminate information on the impact of various trade agreements and investments in different regions and individual countries within the context of ISDS and other related trade concerns raised by experts and trade unions;
3. Campaign against detrimental trade and investment agreements in the context of globalization and digitalization including Bilateral investment treaties;
4. Oppose agreements that undermine public services, facilitate privatisation, undermine municipalisation and contain ISDS (especially the energy charter treaty);
5. Denounce corruption and fight for strengthening institutions responsible for investigating and prosecuting corrupt officials;
6. Mobilise grassroots resistance: Build alliances with civil society and NGOs currently involved in trade advocacy and build partnerships with movements.

## **E. Quality Public Services And The Fight Against Privatisation**

The PSI Global Plan of Action (PoA) Section 6.1.1 states that “quality public services are the foundation of a fair society and strong economy.” They make communities and economies more equitable and resilient to downturns and disasters and protect the most vulnerable, children, the sick, the unemployed, people with disabilities, the elderly, and marginalised groups. Public services are the state's primary tools for fulfilling its obligations on human rights, gender equality, and social justice.

Section 6.1.4 further emphasises that the fight against privatisation is not just about stopping the sale of public services, it is a struggle for the kind of society we want, one rooted in social justice, equity and democracy that serves the interests of the people.

**The Privatisation Threat in Africa and the Arab Region:** Over the past decade, the Region has faced a wave of privatisation in healthcare, water, electricity, and education—particularly in Rwanda, Nigeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, and Ghana. Proponents claim the private sector is more efficient and better at infrastructure investment. However, research by PSIRU and others has debunked these myths as corporate-driven falsehoods.

PSI actively collaborates with affiliates and civil society organizations (CSOs) to resist privatisation efforts, including water privatisation in Nigeria and electricity privatisation in Tunisia. While PSI and its partners have achieved some progress, challenges persist, particularly in the energy sector. More significantly, affiliates have successfully developed the skills needed to negotiate and protect workers' rights in privatised industries.

The struggle against privatisation is a fight for public ownership, workers' rights, and social justice. By mobilizing affiliates, building alliances, and advocating for policy changes, we can ensure that quality public services remain accessible to everyone.

In the coming period, we, the affiliates, resolve to:

1. Strengthen our resistance against corporate-driven privatisation by equipping ourselves with effective tools and strategies to counter private sector influence.
2. Build alliances with CSOs and progressive partners at national, regional, and global levels to amplify anti-privatisation campaigns.
3. Share best practices through sectoral networks, enabling affiliates to learn from successful anti-privatisation efforts worldwide.
4. Advocate for the re-municipalisation of privatized services and support early contract termination without penalties for governments while ensuring protections in privatized sectors.
5. Challenge Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) by highlighting their economic harms and promote Public-Public Partnerships (PuPs) as a fairer alternative for funding public services.
6. Connect issues of privatisation to trade union rights, fostering solidarity across countries and sectors to strengthen our collective bargaining power.

## F. Climate Justice Now

**Workers demand equity in the face of ecological collapse:** Africa and the MENA region face existential climate threats despite contributing just 2–4% of global emissions, while the Global North responsible for 92% of excess CO<sub>2</sub> evades accountability. Climate breakdown intersects with colonial exploitation, corporate privatisation, and systemic inequality, erasing decades of development progress.

The regional realities are marked by water and heat crises and collapsing public services. By 2030, 250 million Africans will endure severe water stress, and droughts will threaten the livelihoods of 60% of Africa's workforce reliant on agriculture.

Elsewhere, cyclones, floods, and typhoons devastate homes and public infrastructure. The MENA region is warming twice as fast as the global average, endangering 50 million outdoor workers in construction, farming, local government, and informal sectors. This puts undue strain on the workers

delivering public services like health, water, energy, waste management, and others in local and community management services.

In 2023 alone, climate disasters displaced 7.5 million Africans while coastal cities like Lagos and Alexandria battle existential sea-level rise. Hospitals buckle under heatwaves and rising disease burdens, and ageing energy grids and underfunded utilities fail to meet climate-driven demand.

A "just Transition" to a low-carbon economy requires resilient, quality public services to ensure the most vulnerable do not bear the most significant burden. Meanwhile, public service delivery is under siege as health, water and sanitation, and energy services already strained are further undermined by climate change.

Workers on the frontlines face escalating occupational hazards, with women and young female adults disproportionately affected. While safety and health are fundamental rights, health and local government workers (e.g., sewage and waste management staff) lack protective gear in lethal heat and infested work environments. These public service workers and others who engage in climate-sensitive activities like farming and waste picking toil in scorching heat without sick pay, insurance, or safeguards.

False Transitions abound. For example, some renewable projects are already replicating fossil fuel abuses like casualisation, poverty wages, and union prohibitions. South Africa's wind farms pay \$1.50/hour, while Algeria's solar plants risk 20,000 oil worker layoffs without retraining. Women shoulder 80% of unpaid labour (e.g., water fetching in drought-stricken Somalia) as disasters deepen care burdens.

Climate-resilient Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) policies are necessary for public service workers, who must deliver on public needs amid a mounting climate crisis that is biting the more marginalised in society.

We, the public sector workers, reaffirm our commitment to fighting the climate crisis. We insist on the Paris Agreement's mandate for a Just Transition and, in that connection, note that climate solutions are meaningful only if they eradicate poverty, redistribute power, and honour labour dignity.

Accordingly, we, the affiliates, resolve to:

1. Advocate for governments to design and implement climate policies to build resilient services; create decent work opportunities with protections for young women and men, gig and platform workers, and those in the informal and rural economy.
2. Embed labour rights, social protection, and social dialogue into all climate policies; Guarantee freedom from child and forced labour, uphold non-discrimination, and protect collective bargaining rights.
3. Demand the cancellation of illegitimate debts, as 80% of climate loans worsen Africa's crises; Replace harmful loans with grants funded by taxing fossil fuel profits, such as the projected \$30 billion/year from EU oil giants.
4. Democratise Energy Under Public Ownership: Strengthen public energy utilities to lead renewable transitions and ensure universal access to modern energy, prioritising community needs over corporate interests.
5. Collaborate with civil society to halt exploitative projects such as TotalEnergies' East African pipelines and demand reparations from the Global North for climate crimes (for instance, the environmental destruction caused by Shell's Niger Delta oil spills).
6. Oppose trade agreements that undermine countries' ability to make a just transition and facilitate public ownership of climate and energy infrastructure

## G. Universal Social Protection

**A foundation for dignity and equality:** Universal social protection (USP) is a fundamental human right enshrined in international law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). In Africa and the MENA region where inequality, informality and colonial legacies persist, USP represents both a moral imperative and a practical solution to redress systemic exclusion and guarantee dignity for all. Only 17.4% of Africans and 33.7% of Arab states have access to social protections (ILO, 2023). The 86% of Africa's labour force works informally, predominantly women, without pension coverage, perpetuating intergenerational poverty. Regarding climate vulnerability, while 58% of Africans face severe climate hazards, fewer than 10% have climate-responsive safety nets. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of existing safety nets, pushing millions into multidimensional poverty. Today, overlapping crisis, economic instability, climate disasters and political upheaval demand immediate action.

**Universal social protection is not a privilege; it is a fundamental right, and through consistent, coordinated struggle that delivers on quality public services for dignity, it will become a reality for all workers in Africa and the Arab Region.** governments should tax the region's wealthiest 1% and End austerity.

Accordingly, we, the affiliates resolve to:

1. Campaign for expanded healthcare access and worker participation in health system governance;
2. Campaign for efficient, publicly administered pension systems with worker representation;
3. Demand the Integration of social protection in climate adaptation plans.

## IV. RESPECT AND DIGNITY FOR ALL

### A. Introduction

Public employment across Africa and Arab states remains marred by systemic discrimination against women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), ethnic minorities, people with divergent religious views, including those with different sexual orientation. Our movement recognises that dignity requires equity: inclusive workplaces, accessible public services, and fair representation for all. To dismantle structural barriers, we commit to embedding intersectionality into every initiative, ensuring no worker is left behind. Public service workers and their unions are essential in ensuring that public service workplaces are inclusive and free from discrimination, violence and stigmatisation. The priorities of the region are herein listed below.

### B. Gender Justice

Women and girls are ensnared in a web of intersecting crises marked by rampant gender-based violence (GBV), persistent wage disparities, underrepresentation in leadership, and the devastating impacts of climate change, especially in conflict zones like Palestine, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The scourge of sexual violence and displacement exacerbates these injustices, highlighting the urgent need for systemic change. Despite the provisions of UN Resolution 1325 advocating for women's active participation in peace processes, they remain marginalized as privatisation and austerity measures further increase their caregiving burdens.

In the past five years, we have witnessed a horrifying surge in violent conflicts and human rights abuses across Africa and the Arab world, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, the DRC, and Palestine, where women and children disproportionately suffer. The situation in Palestine has deteriorated significantly following the Israeli invasion of Gaza in October 2023, worsening existing inequalities and drastically limiting access to livelihoods.

Amidst the escalating crisis in the DRC, the humanitarian situation has spiraled into a catastrophic landscape, characterized by widespread displacement and an alarming rise in sexual violence against women and girls.

In response, our affiliates are unwaveringly committed to addressing these pressing challenges, advocating for women's rights, and ensuring robust protection against gender-based violence. We stand resolute in our mission to create a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality.

Specifically, we, the affiliates in the region, resolve to, among other things:

1. Continue to participate in and contribute to global, regional and national efforts to end gender-based violence;
2. Advocate for Gender Responsive Quality Public Services within the context of the dignity of women and society and ensure access to public services for all regardless of status;
3. oppose privatisation in any form through alliances with women and gender rights organisations;
4. Advocate for elimination of gender pay gaps by campaigning for equal pay for equal work done between men and women;

5. Increase efforts to eliminate barriers to full participation of women at all levels – from the workplace to leadership structures in their unions, as well as, in the civic spaces;
6. advocate for the protection of women's rights and their access to remedial assistance and care;
7. conduct campaigns against all forms of discrimination against women and ratification of gendered labour standards, especially ILO Conventions no 100, 111, 156, 190 and 183, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

## C. Empowering Young Workers

Unemployment among young people in the MENA region and sub-Saharan Africa contribute to mass migration and informal labour. Climate disasters displace 1.2 million young farmers in East Africa each year, forcing them into exploitative gig work. Unions risk becoming irrelevant without intergenerational solidarity. Although there has been significant growth in capital, the number of jobs created and the level of development in the region are not keeping pace. As a result, hundreds of thousands of young people leave the region in search of job opportunities in the global North, depriving their home countries of the skilled workforce necessary for development.

Young people are often excluded from unions due to high unemployment rates, and this situation is aggravated by the rise of precarious employment, such as casualization, where workers face job insecurity, low wages, and often lack union representation.

Young workers are essential for the future of the trade union movement and society as a whole. Involving them in the labour movement is crucial for fostering a commitment to the fight for quality public services, which uphold the dignity of workers and society. These young workers will shape the next generation of trade union leadership in the region.

The region needs young workers who are ready to confront capital in its various forms and manifestations and must be empowered to organize within their communities. With the support of regional leaders, some affiliates and FORSA, an education and mentorship program called the Young Workers Education and Mentorship Program (YEMP) has been developed. This program aims to build the capacities of young workers, enhance their understanding of the class society in which trade unions operate through a class based lens, deepen their knowledge of the political economy affecting trade unions, and equip them with the tools necessary for organization and mobilization.

To this end, affiliates in the region commit to the following actions, among others:

1. Promote the PSI Africa and Arab Countries Young Workers Education and Mentorship Program (YEMP) within their networks of young workers and committees. The establishment and implementation of the YEMP will provide young workers in the union movement access to information, training, and mentorship to prepare them as the next generation of trade union leaders dedicated to defending public services.
2. Ensure that young workers are integrated into all levels of union leadership and activities to ensure the survival and growth of the labour movement.
3. Share tools that support youth mobilization and recruitment through innovative ideas, including social media platforms and capacity-building initiatives.
4. Continue to demand job creation within the public sector.
5. Ensure constitutional provisions for youth leadership and empowerment in their constitutions



## D. Rights of Migrants, Refugees, and IDPs

Africa is home to 9 of the world's 24 nations most affected by displacement. More than 7.4 million Syrians and 22 million Yemenis are experiencing severe humanitarian crises, while climate disasters and ongoing conflicts displace millions more people. Additionally, migrant workers, particularly healthcare professionals, often face exploitation and lack access to social protections.

Nigeria, with a population of 234.6 million people, has the highest number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Africa, followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. In Syria, over 7.4 million people have been internally displaced from 2011 to 2024. Meanwhile, the war in Yemen is now considered the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with more than 22 million people in urgent need of aid and protection. As the conflict enters its fourth year, millions are lacking access to clean drinking water, putting the country at high risk of cholera and other epidemics.

In the past decade, intra-Africa and Arab migration has significantly increased compared to out-migration. While labour migration within Africa is predominantly intra-regional (80%) and primarily consists of low-skilled workers, the emigration of skilled professionals, particularly in the health sector, remains a pressing concern.

Africa has some of the highest disease burdens in the world and the lowest ratio of health workers per capita. Some studies suggest the continent will face a 6 million health worker shortage by 2030. Of the 57 countries identified by the WHO, 36 are currently facing a healthcare workforce crisis.

Migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have the right to decent work and social protection. They should have access to public and social services, which are crucial for their empowerment and integration.

To this end, affiliates resolve to:

1. Advocate for good governance, peace, and stability in the region.
2. Continue to fight all forms of persecution, violence and discrimination against millions of migrants, refugees and IDPs in our region.
3. Raise awareness, build capacity, organise migrant workers, and influence policies on migration, refugee and IDP issues;
4. Lobby and advocate for the rights-based approach in the global, regional and national governance of migration, displacement and refugee issues and demand that states abide by their human rights obligations, as embodied in UN and ILO conventions;
5. Advocate for the protection of the human rights of migrants, refugees and IDPs and their full access to gender-responsive quality public services, decent work and social security and, for that matter, oppose the privatisation of migration, refugees and IDP services;
6. Integrate migrants, refugees and IDP rights into PSI's campaign on the Right to Health and advocate for access to all public services, including those in IDP camps
7. Work with relevant actors to promote decent work and fair and ethical recruitment and continue campaigning to eliminate the policy and practice of charging recruitment fees to migrant workers.
8. Defend decent work and safety for frontline workers who are providing public services to IDPs, including public service workers who are themselves displaced, and organise them into unions;
9. Work with relevant actors, including the ILO and WHO, to promote fair and ethical recruitment of health workers, defend decent work and advocate for equity and sustainability of health sector workers.

## **E. Inclusion of Workers with Disabilities**

Eighty million Africans with disabilities experience significant exclusion from employment and social protections. Women with disabilities earn 20% less than their male counterparts and carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. Alarming, only 28% of African countries implement disability-inclusive policies.

According to the Africa Studies Centre, people with disabilities constitute 15% of the global population, which translates to around 80 million individuals living in Africa. This group encompasses those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, often preventing them from fully and effectively participating in the workplace and society.

We acknowledge that, with some exceptions, workers with disabilities can make meaningful contributions to society, including in the workplace, economy, and trade unions.

To address these challenges, we, affiliates, resolve to:

1. promote the development of disability-responsive national and workplace policies that are closely linked to occupational health and safety and labour inspections.
2. Include specific protective clauses for persons with disabilities (PWD) in collective agreements and union leadership structures.
3. Implement measures to combat stigma and discrimination.
4. Advocate for mandatory workplace accommodations such as assistive technology and flexible working hours.
5. Campaign to ratify and enforce ILO Convention C111 (Discrimination in Employment and Occupation) and ILO Convention C190 (Violence and Harassment at Work).
6. Work with grassroots movements, NGOs, and progressive governments to challenge corporate-driven exclusion.

## V. SOLIDARITY AND SOLIDARITY FUND

### A. Introduction

Solidarity is a loaded word, pregnant with the finest expressions of trade unions' collective strength and power in action. It constantly reminds us that an injury to one is an injury to all.

It is the active commitment to stand together - shoulder-to-shoulder – in negotiations, strike action, picketing, or defending a colleague under attack. It is the lifeblood of the Union movement.

True solidarity means sacrificing personal convenience for collective gain and contributing to transforming individual weaknesses into collective strength. The union movement's most potent weapon against exploitation and all forms of social injustice is solidarity: "United, we bargain; divided, we beg."

### B. Regional Solidarity Fund

The PSI Africa Regional Solidarity Fund is a key element of mutual support and collective strength within our regional movement. Established in 1994 through a collective mandate at a PSI Africa Regional Conference, the Fund expresses the core trade union principle of solidarity in action. It is a critical, member-driven mechanism that provides tangible support to needy affiliate unions.

As a fund, it enables affiliates with greater capacity to extend vital support to sister unions in difficult times. By pooling voluntary contributions from across the region, the Fund ensures that no member union suffocates under critical needs. This collective self-help approach helps PSI Africa stand together as a family, reinforcing our interconnectedness and shared commitment to workers' rights.

To guarantee the equitable, transparent, and accountable distribution of these vital resources, a specific constitution approved by the PSI African Regional Executive Committee (AFREC) will guide the management of the Solidarity Fund, spelling out:

- eligibility criteria;
- the types of support available;
- the application and decision-making processes, and
- accountability mechanisms.