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Introduction and Context

This report covers the work of Public Services International in Africa and the Arab countries from 2020 until September 2025. It combines the sub-regional activities (project funded and non-project funded) from the four sub-regions: English-speaking, Francophone, Southern Africa and the Arab countries. This period has been incredibly difficult for workers and trade unions. The COVID-19 pandemic placed a huge strain on the public health systems and economies in the region. Economic instability, with high inflation and growing debt, has made life harder for ordinary citizens. Climate shocks like droughts, floods and other human-induced displacement disrupted communities and public services. In many places, civic and political spaces shrank, and different forms of conflict continued. It was also a difficult moment for the staff. However, they adapted swiftly, engaging with affiliates virtually to ensure that the voices of workers remained strong and united. They demonstrated creativity and courage in defending public services.

Through all these challenges, the PSI affiliates did not give up. They kept mobilising. They fought to defend quality public services. They challenged privatisation. They negotiated for better wages and conditions of work for workers. Unions also campaigned for the rights of women, young workers, and the poor across our different countries. This report shows the resilience and hard work of trade unions in the region. It also provides details on the projects implemented, the campaigns fought, the successes achieved, and the opportunities and challenges that remain.

Administration and Staffing

The staff strength for the region currently stands at 19, representing Sub-regional Secretaries, Project Coordinators, Administrative and Finance staff, and Consultants. Upon the retirement of the former Regional Secretary in May 2024, the position was advertised and filled by the then Project Coordinator for Tax, Trade and Digitalisation, Daniel Oberko, from June 2024. Semir Said was employed as the Regional Organising Coordinator and Faith Lumonya, Project Coordinator for Tax, Trade Digitalisation. George Poe William was also hired as Project Coordinator to implement some health sector projects in the region.

To support the communication needs of AFRECON and future communication plans for the region, Jesse Saidu has been engaged from April 2025 until 30th November 2025. An adhoc Arabic Communication Specialist was also hired in the Arab sub-region to oversee the translation of all communication materials from June 2025 until AFRECON.

Since the resignation of the Sub-regional Secretary (SRS) for French Speaking Africa (FSA) in November 2023, the position is yet to be filled. The position will be advertised before the end of 2025. Fatou Diouf, Project Coordinator for FSA, has been acting in the position of the SRS.

Our region lost a colleague, Joumana Azar, who was Administrative and Communication Assistant in the Arab sub-region.

Project Activities: English-Speaking Africa

In English-Speaking Africa, many activities are described as thematic achievements supported by project work from partners such as U2U and FNV. Across Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Sierra

Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, PSI affiliates have mobilised to safeguard workers' rights, challenge privatisation and influence policy at national and regional levels.

1. Organising for Unity and Quality Public Services

Unions worked together to solve problems. In Kenya and Tanzania, they signed cooperative agreements to end demarcation disputes. They organised visits to Uganda to learn about the Joint Negotiating Committees. They also worked to get more women and young people into leadership positions.

2. Promoting Transparency and Decent Work in Supply Chains in Electricity, Water and Waste Services in Sub-Saharan Africa

Unions conducted research across the region on privatisation in electricity, water and waste services. They used this research to develop advocacy strategies. They also worked more with the media to disseminate their message and to influence policy. Secured absorption of thousands of casual workers into permanent and pensionable terms, improving livelihoods and stability. Influenced national reforms, including Uganda's re-nationalisation of electricity and waste management policy reviews. Resisted privatisation in critical utilities in Nigeria and Kenya, safeguarding public access to essential services. The project expanded partnerships with civil society through *Our Future is Public* and the 2024 UN CSOs Summit, amplifying regional impact.

3. Climate Justice and Just Transition

Unions produced practical toolkits for climate action. They ensured to include gender perspectives in their climate strategies. They also gave support to national adaptation plans in several countries.

4. Rights of Displaced People

In Nigeria, unions have worked hard on the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Their efforts led to the government adopting a National IDP Policy. Because of their work, PSI also got a seat on the national technical committee that deals with the implementation framework of the policy.

5. Strengthening Health Unions

In Liberia, the National Health Workers Union (NAHWUL) did amazing work. Its membership grew from just 587 people to over 5,800. This gave the union much more power. Its ability to advocate, get recognition, and negotiate improved greatly.

6. Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment

Unions celebrated big wins here. They successfully pushed for the ratification of important conventions in Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda. Many unions and countries have adopted more progressive laws and policies to address gender inequality. Some unions even included provisions from ILO C190 and other health and safety conventions in their collective bargaining agreements.

7. Organising Waste Workers

In Tanzania, unions started a pilot project to organise informal waste workers. This is a very difficult sector. As part of this work, they also advocated for legal reforms in 2022 to protect these workers.

8. Tax, Trade, and Digitalisation

Unions in the region have campaigned vigorously against harmful tax incentives and all forms of illicit financial flows. In Tanzania, for example, affiliates are collaborating with a consultant to develop a policy paper that proposes the establishment of a coherent tax incentive framework. This framework would guide the administration of incentives in line with the country's economic development goals. In Nigeria and Ghana, unions are advocating that governments adopt alternatives to the OECD's global corporate tax recommendations to ensure fairer outcomes for workers and communities in terms of spending on quality public services.

At the regional level, affiliates strongly support the call from Global South countries for a UN tax convention, which would create a more inclusive and democratic framework for shaping global tax policies and decisions. The region is continuing to campaign against harmful trade policies, particularly those that rely on the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism, as this undermines both national sovereignty and workers' rights. Affiliates are also engaging with the PSI Digital Bargaining Hub, drawing on clauses and experiences from unions in various countries. This has provided a valuable learning opportunity as well as a platform to leverage available information, enabling affiliates to contribute more effectively to digitalisation initiatives in the workplace and wider society.

Project Activities: Francophone Africa

Many important projects were carried out in Francophone Africa from 2020 to 2025. These projects were funded by our solidarity partners from trade unions around the world.

1. Cameroon Water Project (2019-2023)

This project was funded by the Canadian union CUPE. It focused on the national water company, Camwater. The main goal was to keep the company in public hands. The project worked and stopped the privatisation of water in the country. It prepared workers and the Cameroonians to resist re-privatisation. This was done through awareness-raising, training, and mobilisation activities.

2. Building Resilient Public Service Unions in Burkina Faso (2019-2023)

Funded by U2U, this project worked with PSI's affiliates in Burkina Faso. It focused on making the unions stronger on the ground. Activities were organised to mobilise more workers. There was a big effort to recruit health workers into the unions. The project also worked on developing union leaders. Training and mentoring were provided to strengthen their ability to take action and to negotiate for their members.

3. Strengthening Unions for Quality Public Services, Decent Work and Social Dialogue in Chad(2019-2023)

Also funded by U2U, this project brought together seven PSI affiliates in Chad. They worked within a national federation. The project had three main aims. The first was to strengthen unity among the different unions through coordinated actions. The second was to develop the capacity of the organisations themselves. The third was to support the unions so that they could participate better in social dialogue. This helped them have a stronger voice in national discussions about public services and workers' rights.

4. Health Workers in Conflict Zones (2020-2024)

This FNV-funded project covered Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In Cameroon, it worked with the Federation of Health Unions. In the DRC, it worked with the nurses' union, SOLSICO. The project had clear objectives. It aimed to make these unions stronger in places full of tension and conflict. It promoted and defended health workers' rights through advocacy. It supported social dialogue to improve relations among unions, the government, and employers. It also helped organise campaigns to make workers' demands more visible and to build collective power.

5. Strengthening Unions for Better Health System in DRC (2019-2022)

This project was funded by FORSA and worked with the SOLSICO union and civil society organisations in the DRC. The objectives were wide-ranging. They included ensuring the union could survive financially by finding new sources of funds. The union worked to represent all workers, including women and young people. It focused on developing leaders who were competent and who workers could trust. Another goal was to get members more involved and engaged in the union. Finally, the project promoted working with other unions and civil society groups to have a bigger impact.

6. Strengthening Unions for Quality Public Health in West Africa (2019-2025)

This U2U-funded project is still running in Niger and Liberia. In Niger, the work is with the health union SUSAS. The project is creating a strong, independent health union that is defending workers' rights properly. It is strengthening the union's participation and leadership. The ultimate goal is to improve public health services by ensuring the voice of health workers is heard in national policies.

7. Fighting Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in Africa (2021-Ongoing)

Funded by SASK, this project is being implemented in Senegal. All PSI affiliates in the country are involved. The project advocates for the ratification of the ILO Convention 190 by the government of Senegal. It wants better protection for women workers through laws and collective agreements. It is also helping to adapt their own policies to prevent and combat gender-based violence. A key target is to get provisions against violence included in collective agreements in at least one public service sector.

8. Organising Community Health Workers (2024-2025)

In Senegal, this FNV-funded project is being implemented in collaboration with two PSI affiliates: SYNTRAS and FSAS. It is strengthening their union organisation and empowering them to demand decent work. It supports the provision of quality primary healthcare by getting these workers proper recognition. It is promoting social dialogue with the government to make these jobs a stable part of the public health system. It is also building the leadership and capacity of these workers so they can be better represented.

Project Activities: Southern Africa

The work in the Southern Africa sub-region is adapting to a changing political and social environment.

1. Promoting Trade Union Rights in Eswatini and Mozambique

Both countries have high levels of political intolerance and anti-union sentiment. The project supports the Mozambican affiliate's efforts for public sector trade unions to be recognised. It fights

for the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining. In Eswatini, the project empowered the unions to resist the repressive political environment and demand union rights.

2. Organising Community Health Workers in Malawi, South Africa and Zambia

These workers are predominantly women and are often informalised. In 2020, 6,000 community health workers were integrated into the South Africa health workforce through the resilient work of our affiliates on this project. In July 2025, another 27,000 CHWs were earmarked to join South Africa's health workforce through the advocacy of our affiliate-NUPSAW. PSI is supporting unions around the world to win rights for Community Health Workers.

3. Fighting Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in South Africa

This ILO C190 was ratified in South Africa in 2021. More women are being represented in leadership positions in unions. Some unions even included provisions from ILO C190 and other health and safety conventions in their collective bargaining agreements.

Project Activities: The Arab Countries

The Arab sub-region has seen critical projects being implemented by our project coordinators in collaboration with unions, who had to deal with very difficult political and social conditions.

1. Strengthening Unions Organising and Campaigning in Egypt

The Union to Union (U2U) project aimed to help independent unions in Egypt resist repression. It focused on building the skills of union leaders. It provided expertise on non-violent actions to fight back against harassment. The project helped the unions plan and run campaigns. These campaigns demanded that the government respect the national constitution and international agreements on trade union rights. Over three years, the project made the affiliates stronger. They got better at building alliances. They campaigned on issues like conditions in the informal sector and health and safety in the health sector. Because of this work, they managed to get a seat at the table during government negotiations-members of three different affiliates as members of the Higher Council for Social Dialogue. They built a strong alliance with the ILO office in Cairo. One union, the Adult Education Trade Union, increased its membership by about 100% with many new young men and women joining.

2. On Unions Defending Human Rights, Climate Justice and Access to Quality Public Services for Refugees and Migrant Workers

This U2U project is being implemented in Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, and Algeria. Its goal is to help public service unions defend the rights of refugees and migrant workers. The project developed the capacity of the unions to see these issues from a rights-based perspective. Union leaders and members learned more about the rights of migrants and refugees. They worked to promote inclusion and fight racism and xenophobia within their own unions. In the past months, unions in Algeria have carried out a series of actions calling out the Algerian authorities against the indiscriminate racial attacks on migrant workers from Sub-Saharan Africa. They advocated for the rights of migrants and refugees at the national, regional levels and engaged with the ILO and other UN instruments on migration and labour rights. The unions also work with other global unions and civil society to influence regional and global policy. This project faced challenges because many host countries were already dealing with multiple crises bordering on democratic freedoms, political repression and economic instability.

3. Strengthening Women Trade Unionists (2023–2025)

In the regional U2U project, the leadership, campaigning, and organising skills of women in unions was improved. The goal of the project was to run campaigns against gender discrimination and injustice. Through the project, women workers have gained high-level campaigning skills. In some countries, the number of women members has grown over the last two years. More women now hold decision-making positions in PSI affiliates. In the project countries, women are campaigning to change specific discriminatory laws. Most countries are also running advocacy and building alliances for the ratification of ILO C190. More than 20 of 34 unions have adopted a quota for women representation. Some unions in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Palestine, and Iraq have even written gender equality into their official bylaws. Some governments are also changing laws; for example, Iraq's government has proposed that parliament ratify C190.

4. Building Trade Union Capacities for a Just Energy Transition

This regional project for Africa and Arab countries involved affiliates in Tunisia and Egypt. In Tunisia, the unions have done very well. They created a sector-based response to climate adaptation. They continue to raise awareness among their members about how climate change affects public services, job security, and safety at work. They advocated and built alliances with civil society organisations. Together, they called on the government to implement its national climate programme. In Egypt, affiliates joined the project in 2023. They implemented awareness-raising workshops. The aim was to get all members engaged and to adopt a union position paper on just transition.

5. Strengthening Unions' Capacity on the Use of Social Dialogue as a Tool to Defend Workers' Rights (2023-2025)

This FNV funded project was implemented in Jordan and Lebanon. It assisted unions to find strategic opportunities to make social dialogue instruments work again. The affiliates in both countries built their knowledge and capacity and engaged institutions. Now, they understand more about taxation systems, financial systems, and government economic policies. They are now in the process of writing trade union position papers. These papers will be used to negotiate with the government for fairer economic policies that put workers in the front burner of economic policies.

6. Campaigning for ILO C190 (2023-2025)

Also funded by FNV, this project focused on Egypt and Tunisia. It has several parts. It provided workers with a good understanding of what ILO Convention 190 contains. It raised awareness about the negative impact of gender-based violence on society and in the world of work. It demonstrated to unions why ratifying C190 is very important, as it created a strong legal framework. Finally, the project built alliances with other global unions and civil society organisations at every level and advocated for its ratification.

Positive impacts and project outcomes

The projects have made a real difference across the region. The positive impacts are clear.

Union capacity is much stronger. Training, mentorship, and strategic planning have given unions better skills and more resilience. In Egypt, one union grew its membership by 20%, showing that strong organising works.

Privatisation has been stopped in many cases. Coordinated campaigns in Cameroon, Uganda, and Nigeria kept essential services such as water and electricity in public hands. This protects access for everyone.

The fight for gender justice has made progress. Projects on ILO C190 and women's leadership have had a direct impact. More women are joining unions. More women are taking up leadership roles. National campaigns have started to change discriminatory laws. In addition, unions are mounting pressures on Governments to ratify crucial conventions.

Unions are better at social dialogue. In Jordan and Lebanon, the unions now understand economic policy, taxation, and finance much better. They are using this knowledge to write policy papers and negotiate with their governments.

Vulnerable workers are better protected. The projects have reached community health workers, informal waste workers, refugees, migrants, and people displaced within their own countries. Their needs are now part of national policies and union agendas.

Alliances are stronger. A key outcome has been the building of strong links between unions, other global unions, and civil society organisations. When these groups work together, their voices are greater.

Network Activities

Networks function as sector-based platforms for collective action, capacity building, and policy change. Networks help unions share ideas and work together on common or cross-cutting issues. They operate within the PSI framework and under the authority of AFREC and EB.

In Francophone Africa, there is no network just for the sub-region. However, affiliates actively participate in PSI's regional networks. They are involved in WAHSUN, which is for health sector unions in West Africa. They also participate in AMALGUN, the network for unions in the local government.

In the Arab sub-region, unions have formed sub-regional alliances to promote the rights of migrants and refugees.

In English-Speaking Africa, the Education Network is very active. It brings together unions representing non-teaching staff, researchers, and academics in higher education. This network held important meetings in Kampala in July 2022 and in Accra in January 2023. These meetings led to a new strategic plan and updated guidelines for how the network should operate.

The work of networks is without challenges. It ranges from administrative and technical support, mobilisation and funding network campaigns. The region therefore is working on developing sets of principles to provide guidance on running effective sectoral networks. One that would contribute immensely to various campaigns in the region but also ensure sustainability of networks.

Campaigns Undertaken

Our unions have used campaigns as vital tools to fight for change. Within countries, affiliates ran powerful campaigns as part of their projects. In Cameroon, they campaigned against water privatisation. In Senegal, they are campaigning for the government to ratify the ILO C190.

In the Arab countries, unions campaign against government repression in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia. They campaign for the ratification of ILO C190 in Egypt and Tunisia. They campaign to change laws that discriminate against women. They also build alliances and campaign for the rights of migrants and refugees.

English-Speaking Africa has also seen many campaigns. In Ghana, mass mobilisations led to a big win: a 23-25% pay increase and the reversal of a VAT tax on electricity. In Nigeria and Kenya, people protested in the streets against the removal of fuel subsidies and new taxes.

The unions ran strong campaigns against privatisation. In Nigeria, they fought against water privatisation. In Ghana, they are fighting plans to privatise the energy sector. In Uganda, a long campaign finally succeeded. The government brought electricity generation and distribution back into public ownership after 20 years of privatisation.

Unions also campaign to influence policy. PSI was very active at the Africities 9 summit in Kenya. It promoted social dialogue, the ratification of ILO C190, and better funding for local governments. Campaigns also led to the ratification of conventions on gender-based violence in Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda. In Nigeria, campaigning improved the rights of the internally displaced people.

In Southern Africa, the Health Justice campaign was launched in Zambia. It is meant to lay the foundations for national campaigns where affiliates in each country address their own governments on the need to implement the Abuja Declaration. The campaign calls for increased budgetary allocations to achieve universal health coverage for all citizens.

Affiliates and Membership

There is a decline across all sub-regions. Some unions have reduced declared membership to enable them to deal with affiliation fee payment. Others are facing a general decline due to lack of employment in public services and privatisation.

English-Speaking and Southern Africa have all experienced decline due to lapse of affiliates for non-payment of affiliation fee. Some of these unions had over 150,000 declared membership.

In the coming year and beyond, the regional organising and growth strategy will provide an opportunity to build membership among affiliates, increasing the number of affiliates, and receiving an increase in declared membership. With the employment of a regional organiser and training of existing staff to support organising efforts of affiliates, there is huge potential in membership growth.

Activities for Women and Young Workers

Aside from specific project activities targeting women and young workers in various countries in respective sub-regions, the Regional Women's Conference and Regional Youth Conference serves as a rallying point for capacity building and political education for women and young workers, respectively. Affiliates are also encouraged to mainstream the participation of women and young workers in project activities and various campaigns. While some sub-regions have specific projects on gender that address women-specific issues in the labour movement and national economic and social policy landscape, others do not have. In the future, there would be concerted efforts to ensure each sub-region is empowered to use projects specifically on gender to address the concerns of women in those sub-regions.

In the Arab countries, there has been a lot of focus on women. The project on strengthening women trade unionists has delivered results. More women are members. More women are in decision-making roles. Women are campaigning to change discriminatory laws. Over 20 unions have adopted quotas for women. Some unions have written gender equality into their rules. Governments in Egypt and Iraq are also proposing legal changes. Measures are adopted to address GBV in workplaces: focal points, gender desks, Code of conducts and campaigning for enforcing OSH measures

In English-Speaking Africa, gender equality remains a big challenge. The pay gap is still there, with women earning much less than men. Women are still not well represented in leadership. But there has been progress. Some unions have included gender provisions in their collective agreements. For young workers, the biggest issue is unemployment. The rates are very high, especially in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Liberia.

The region ran a Young Workers Education and Mentorship Programme (YEMP) in 2025 as a pilot project for ongoing educational work with young workers. Young workers across the continent often lack access to political education, mentorship, and developmental support, which limits their ability to effectively participate in the labour movement. This education programme is one contribution that PSI can make to meet this need.

The pilot programme was run online over two weeks—the first in July and the second in September. During each week, young workers participated in a three-hour online session each day, with each session covering a different topic and each session presented by a different internal or external speaker. The first week focused on deepening the understanding of trade unions, the basic principles that inform how trade unions operate, and deepening an understanding of gender dynamics and issues in the world of work and trade unions. The second week focused on some of the broader socio-economic challenges facing workers, trade unions and the public sector, such as precarious work, digitalisation and climate change. It also focused on developing specific skills around using social media to build and strengthen trade unions.

It was an exciting, thought-provoking, engaging and learning process, which involved up to 170 young workers from about 15 countries, including Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Botswana, Mauritius, Liberia, Togo, Senegal, Niger, Rwanda, Cameroon, Uganda, Kenya, Egypt and Jordan. Young workers are encouraged to take initiative in continuing the education process by organising WhatsApp discussions, webinars, and by attending other available external online education activities. The plan is to have a new cohort of young workers go through the programme each year. This will help to build strong second and third layers of leadership across the region.

Challenges Facing the Region

In Francophone Africa:

- **Insecurity:** Many countries are not safe. This is especially true in the Sahel region (Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali) and in Central Africa (DRC, Cameroon, Chad). The violence heavily impacts workers, especially in the health sector. It makes it difficult to get to work and to provide public services. It makes workers more vulnerable. It also makes it dangerous and difficult for unions to operate and organise.
- **Political Interference:** In countries run by the military, the government tries to control the unions or silence them. They use different tactics. They might stop collecting union dues from salaries. They might dissolve independent unions. They take away basic rights, like the right to go on strike, etc.
- **Precarious Work:** Jobs are becoming less secure everywhere. Both the public and private sector are hiring fewer people on permanent contracts. Instead, they use short-term contracts, service contracts, and other insecure forms of work. This is very bad for young workers especially. It makes it much harder for unions to organise because people are afraid of losing their jobs. These workers often have no social protection and no pension.

In the Arab Countries:

- **Laws Against Unions:** Governments have created very restrictive laws. In Tunisia, Decree No. 20 states that unions cannot negotiate without permission from the government. Decree No. 54 is used to imprison people or fine them for what they post on social media. Jordan has a new law on electronic crimes that also gag freedom of expression. Morocco still refuses to ratify the ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association. Egypt creates complicated laws to stop independent unions from forming.
- **Economic Crisis:** Unemployment is high, estimated at 11.5% in 2025. Poverty is also high. Approximately, 35% of the population is expected to be living below the poverty threshold. This makes it hard for unions to organise and fight for rights when people are struggling to survive.
- **War and Conflict:** The war on Gaza has been devastating. The Palestinian Health Ministry reports that over 61,800 Palestinians have been killed since October 2023. The health system has been destroyed. The damage to the infrastructure is estimated at \$40 billion. This human suffering is immense and creates a desperate humanitarian crisis. Most public service workers in Palestine have been experiencing delayed or partial salary payments since early 2024, with the situation worsening significantly by June 2025.

In English-speaking Africa:

- **Economic Instability:** Economies are struggling and inflation is very high. In Ghana, it reached 56.3% in 2023. In Nigeria, food inflation hit 35.4% in early 2024. Local currencies have lost their value, making imports more expensive and wages worth less. Many countries have a huge debt burden. Ghana even had to get an IMF program in 2023 after it could not pay its external debts.
- **Governance Problems:** Corruption is a persistent problem. Public service jobs are often given for political reasons, not based on qualifications or merit. There is political interference in the work of the judiciary. Unions face restrictive labour laws. In some countries, such as Burundi and Liberia,

governments have stopped collecting union dues or have stopped public sector unions from bargaining collectively.

- **Underfunded Public Services:** The COVID-19 pandemic showed how weak our public services are. Many countries lack essential medicines. Governments are not meeting their commitments to fund health, as promised in the Abuja Declaration. The education sector was hit hard by long lockdowns, like in Uganda. The move to online learning made the gap between the rich and poor, urban and rural, even worse. Water and sanitation services suffer from underinvestment and the constant threat of privatisation.
- **Climate Change:** The effects of climate change are being felt now. Floods, droughts are common. They destroy infrastructure, disrupt services, and ruin livelihoods. Unions are demanding that climate resilience be built into public service planning.
- **Declining Membership:** The fact that some large unions have stopped paying their fees and are no longer affiliated is a major setback. This means that the PSI has fewer members in the region.

In Southern Africa:

- **Trade Union Rights Violations:** In Mozambique, the only PSI affiliate, SINAFP, remains unregistered 23 years after its founding. The union is struggling as its leaders retire. In Eswatini, union bashing is common. The basic freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly are severely restricted. The Public Order Act is used to ban union gatherings.
- **Project Relevance:** There is a challenge in ensuring projects address the most pressing needs of affiliates. For example, in Botswana, a project on transparency in utility supply chains had to be terminated. In South Africa, a project on digitalisation in collective bargaining did not gain much traction. This shows the need for better needs assessment for subsequent programming.
- **Key Issues for Intervention:** Affiliates in the sub-region have identified several pressing issues that need attention. These include austerity measures, gender-based violence (GBV), a great need for training, the fight against corruption, support with organising, the climate crisis and the fight against privatisation.

Opportunities for Strengthening PSI's Work in the Coming Years

The challenges and successes of the past five years reveal clear opportunities for PSI to strengthen its work across the region. These opportunities can guide our planning and action in the coming years.

- A major opportunity lies in rebuilding and increasing our membership. The Regional Organising and Growth Strategy (ROGS) provides a roadmap and a new sense of drive towards rebuilding power through organising and recruitment. There is also a regional database management web app that has been developed and made available to affiliates to use without any fee and monthly or annual subscription. This will support affiliates database needs and provide credible information for decision making at the level of the union.
- The successful campaigns against privatisation in Cameroon, Uganda and Nigeria demonstrate that we can win. These victories provide an opportunity to build a stronger, more coordinated regional campaign against the privatisation of all essential services. We must learn from these successes and apply those lessons across different areas, including pushing for innovative modules such as Public-Public Partnerships (PPPs).

- The process to fill the vacancy of the sub-regional secretary for French-speaking Africa sub-region will begin post-AFRECON and be completed by the end of January 2026.
- There is a great opportunity to deepen our work on gender justice. The progress made in the Arab region and other countries that ratified the C190 shows that more momentum gets results. We have the opportunity to launch a concerted regional push for the ratification and implementation of C190 in every country. We can support more unions to include strong provisions against gender-based violence in their collective agreements. The growing number of women in leadership roles is a positive step. We must build on this by ensuring that more women and young workers lead our campaigns and sit at the negotiation table.
- In the Arab countries, the opportunities are linked to the difficult political environment. The projects on women trade unionists and migrant rights have made good progress. We have an opportunity to deepen this work. We can push harder for the ratification of ILO Convention 87 in Morocco and for legal reforms in Egypt and Tunisia. The alliances built with other global unions and civil society organisations are strong. We can use these alliances to launch larger campaigns against the restrictive laws that hurt trade union freedom.
- The new strategy in Southern Africa, based on surveys and country reports, offers a better way of working. This approach provides an opportunity to ensure that our projects truly address what affiliates need. We can use this method in all sub-regions. By listening closely to affiliates, we can design projects that tackle their most pressing problems such as austerity, corruption, and the need for organising support. This will make our work more effective and relevant.
- Trade is a crucial opportunity. We must encourage more young workers from all sub-regions to join this programme. Investing in young workers is investing in the future of our movement. We have an opportunity to make sure they have the skills and knowledge to lead the struggles and sustain the power.
- The Health Justice Campaign is another key opportunity. The launch in Zambia should be the beginning. We have the opportunity to support every affiliate in every country to launch their own national campaign. We must push all governments to honour the Abuja Declaration and allocate at least 15% of their budget to health. This campaign can help achieve universal health coverage and protect health workers.
- Finally, the political changes across the region, like in Botswana and South Africa, create an opportunity for renewed engagement. We must use these political shifts to open new dialogues with governments. We can push for the ratification of core ILO conventions, better funding for public services, and an end to anti-union laws. We have an opportunity to ensure the voice of public service workers is heard in these new political dispensations.
- By seizing these opportunities, we can build on the hard work of the past five years. We can face the coming challenges with better mitigation plans /strategies, more members, and a clearer focus. Our shared goal remains the same: to deliver quality public services for the dignity of all.

Conclusion

The last five years have been some of the most challenging we have ever faced. PSI affiliates in the Africa and Arab Countries region have operated in a storm of crises: a pandemic, economic collapse, climate disasters, political repression, and attack on trade union rights and leaders of Unions. Additionally, the region continues to face major challenges, as project funding has been severely cut largely due to the rise of right-wing governments in Europe. The U.S. has significantly reduced its

voluntary contributions to the International Labour Organization (ILO), resulting in widespread job losses.

This directly affects the scope and scale of our project activities, limiting the support we can provide to our affiliates and networks. This also indicates a lack of support for the social dialogue processes initiated by the ILO, including those relating to the ratification of conventions. This will directly threaten the advancement of workers' rights and the decent work agenda.

Some projects will also fold by the end of 2025 due to their design. Reduced funding and the closure of certain projects jeopardize our ability to sustain relationships that are solely project-based and to fully implement the objectives we have set for the region.

However, this challenge also presents an opportunity to reconsider our project design and implementation in the context of our regional political strategy. We will be innovative in project designs and implementation to ensure they contribute to our advocacy and campaign efforts while strengthening our NCCs, SUBRACs, AFREC and sectoral networks (AFREC approves guiding principles for network activities). These advisory bodies should become one of our strongest and most vibrant policy advocacy and campaign platforms.

The proposed Solidarity Fund Constitution by AFREC, pending approval by the Executive Board, offers an important solution. This fund can mobilise additional resources to support national-level actions and advocacy initiatives, particularly in times of crisis, while also reinforcing solidarity. We have also seen a positive trend where affiliates support regional activities through generous contributions. In this regard, permit me to acknowledge the exemplary leadership of Comrade Peters Adeyemi our vice president and the entire leadership of the Non-Academic Staff Union of Nigeria (NASU) and Brother Isaac Bampoe, the Ghana NCC chair and the entire leadership of the Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOGSAG). We encourage this across all our sub-regions.

The Regional Programme of Action (POA) is our political strategy document, guiding our actions and activities. While implementing the POA, we will give much attention to the effective roll-out of the Regional Organising and Growth Strategy (ROGS), which has received support and approval from AFREC. Additionally, we have also received the approval for the continuous implementation of the Young Workers' Education and Mentorship Programme (YEMP), and the Annual Women's Conference (AWC). At the same time, we remain committed to providing affiliates with immediate support and response in times of crisis, ensuring that solidarity remains at the heart of our actions. Our work requires a strong sectoral focus. We will strengthen and advance some of our prominent sectors: health, trade union rights, education and culture, local and regional governance, and utilities by identifying focal persons among the staff and supporting them to spearhead the activities of these sectors.

The region's economic development and growth have been characterised by impractical economic order that often benefits corporations and advanced economies. This is the logical consequence of our historical trajectory, which has been marked by colonisation, plunder and the dispossession of natural and human resources on the one hand, and economic policies chosen or dictated by external forces on the other. Illicit financial flows, debt, austerity, the privatisation of public services, climate crises, insecurity, gender-based violence, youth unemployment, migration and IDPs are all relics of a failed system. There is a strong call for an alternative. For us, this alternative must be led by working people.

To advance this quest, we intend to establish a hub for a new economy, led by a commission of our regional leaders and experts from various fields, including economics, law, history, politics, trade unionism and academia. This hub will serve as a space for critical research, dialogue, and knowledge production.

To complement our political and organising strategies, it is crucial that we develop a robust communication strategy. This will amplify our work and help us shape narratives that reflect workers' realities, challenge dominant ideologies and push for meaningful policy change. By sharing stories of affiliates, celebrating successes and exposing injustices, we can strengthen our advocacy efforts, mobilise and broaden support.