

# **AMALGAMATED RURAL TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE**

*Fighting for pro-poor Education*

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## **ARTUZ National 2020 Congress Resolutions**

### **11-01-2020**

The Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ convened its inaugural National Congress from 8 to 10 January 2020 in Mkoba, Gweru. The Congress was initially dubbed second congress but delegates resolved that the 2014 meeting was a formation gathering which did not have enough delegates to meet the congress threshold prescribed by the constitution.

### **On labor justice and the state of education sector, Congress Noted and resolved as follows**

1. The slave wages being earned by civil servants in a hyperinflationary environment

Teachers will not be reporting for duty until they receive US dollars interbank rate indexed salaries. The year 2020 is a year of resistance against oppression and exploitation.

2. Heightened victimization of teachers and learners by the Zimbabwean State, ZANU PF party and school administrators.

ARTUZ advocates for the alignment of laws governing freedoms of association and assembly to the 2013 constitution. Union will engage the Joint Operation Command, JOC to lobby them to stop the victimization of teachers. ARTUZ will sustain the Safe Schools Campaign with special focus on litigation and advocacy. Teachers to actively work as human rights defenders, defending their labour rights and the right to education for the learners. Union will create a solidarity fund to support all victims of repression. A rapid response team will be established to timely respond to all cases of teacher victimization. Research department was mandated to document all violations.

3. Adulteration of Teacher Trade Unionism culture in Zimbabwe

A massive political education program to be launched, educating teachers on the political economy and labour rights. ARTUZ to join the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, ZCTU to cross pollinate ideas with other well-established Trade Unions.

4. The dysfunctional negotiating platform established by SI 141 of 1997

ARTUZ to push for the disbandment of the illegal APEX council and the establishment of collective bargaining chambers in line with section 65 of Zimbabwe's constitution. Union will not participate in the current APEX council which is an illegal entity with no moral authority to represent workers. The council was also fraudulently constituted.

5. Infrastructure deficit and glaring shortage of teaching and learning materials in rural schools

The Union will push for the establishment of an education equalization fund which will be channeled towards upgrading infrastructure in rural schools and procurement of teaching and learning materials.

6. Shortage of schools resulting in the sprouting of private school

Congress resolved to advocate for significant budgetary allocation towards capital investments in the education sector.

7. Unacceptable teacher learner ratios at a time we have over 30 000 unemployed teachers.

Union set up a desk for Student teachers and Unemployed teachers. The newly elected Secretary for students, unemployed and retired teachers will spearhead lobbying and advocacy initiatives for the recruitment of more teachers.

8. Hardships endured by rural teachers

Union will fight for the introduction of a rural retention and attraction allowance which is at least 75% of the basic salary of teachers.

## 9. Restrictive conditions on leave days

Union will push for the restoration of the legally provided 90 days uninterrupted vacation leave after every 7 years. We further push for fully paid study leave to promote continuous learning among teachers. We further encourage in service training for teachers by line Ministry. Congress called for unconditional maternity leave. Union will lobby for the scrapping of the current provision of a maximum of 3 incidences of paid maternity leave. We will further push for the scrapping of the probation period with regard to maternity leave.

## 10. Opaque pension scheme

Pension contributions should be ring fenced in United States dollar terms backdating to February 2009. The scheme should be transparently run so that teachers can check the amount they have contributed in real time. Retired teachers should timely receive their pension upon retirement. Pensioners should be given preference of accessing cash from banks.

## 11. The Inefficiency of the Public Service Medical Aid Society and the deterioration of health care.

Union resolved to lobby Sister Unions to join us in creating an Education Medical Aid Society which will be directly controlled by teachers. The Health and Special needs portfolio secretary was created to spearhead a campaign for the introduction of mobile clinics and dispensaries in all schools.

## 12. Deterioration of the quality of education and dropping of Grade 7 pass rates in the 2019 examinations

Government should incentivize teachers, avail quality learning materials and upgrade infrastructure in schools. Rural schools are the worst affected hence the need for an education equalization fund.

## 13. Failure to progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals

ARTUZ secretary for Education to mobilise resources for the establishment of community schools providing free education for marginalized communities. The Education secretary will

also track Zimbabwe's progress towards the attainment of SDG 4 on access to inclusive access to quality education.

#### 14. Underfunding of the cumbersome and hurriedly produced curriculum

We demand an urgent review of the revised curriculum to evaluate the implementation of the new curriculum. The nation cannot wait for 7 years for an evaluation since indicators of failure are becoming apparent.

#### 15. Discrimination against teachers and learners with special needs

ARTUZ to lead a training program for teachers on the needs of learners and teachers with special needs. Union will further mobilise resources for securing aids and resources which enhance inclusivity in our schools. ARTUZ will lobby and advocate for government's intervention in the availing of resources for enhancing inclusivity in all schools.

#### 16. The attempt to recruit teachers along partisan lines.

ARTUZ will drag the Education Ministry and the ZANU PF party to court for politicizing the recruitment of teachers. The Hebert Chitepo school of ZANU PF ideology is not a national project and should not be used as requisite for one to be recruited as a teacher.

#### 17. The incapacity and partisan nature of some School Development Associations leading to misappropriation of resources and underdevelopment of schools.

ARTUZ has created the Parents Teacher Association which will advise the SDAs on best management practices. The PTA will also be a vehicle for pushing for better education policies. The Union will also conduct capacity building initiatives for SDAs.

#### 18. Centralization of education planning

The Union will lobby key stakeholder for devolution of education planning so that communities can incorporate their unique learning areas into the curriculum. This will enhance relevance of education and catalyze community development.

#### 19. Increase of cases of learner pregnancy and indiscipline in schools

The Union will provide Sexual Reproductive Health Rights education to learners, teachers and the broader community. Union will build capacities for teachers on alternative methods of disciplining learners other than corporal punishment.

#### 20. Prevalence of natural disasters leading to destruction of schools' infrastructure and loss of lives.

ARTUZ will conduct risk and disaster management for rural communities. The Union will advocate for the establishment of community-based disaster management funds.

#### **On broad national issues congress dialogued on the following**

##### 1. Debilitating effects of climate change

Union will run an education program run by geography teachers focusing on ways of preserving our earth and mitigating against the adverse effects of climate change. ARTUZ should devolve the management of funds meant for Civil protection.

##### 2. Shrinkage of civic space and erosion of democratic culture in Zimbabwe

ARTUZ to conduct political education to enhance political literacy of citizens as a way of strengthening people power. Civic education with particular focus on constitutional rights will be a priority. Union will also employ litigation as a means restoring democracy and constitutionalism.

##### 3. Escalating violence by terror groups, e.g machete wielding Mashurugwi

We advocate for the equitable distribution of our mineral wealth resources. Proceeds from mineral wealth should be channeled to national purse not to private hands of the politically powerful. The Union will engage Security Ministries pushing for the prosecution of the sponsored notorious gangs. We will further encourage communities to set up neighborhood watch committees.

4. Rampant looting of state resources, wanton corruption and selective prosecution of corrupt officials.

Union will conduct budget tracking focusing on resources allocated to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in light of the missing US\$ 6 million which disappeared. ARTUZ will publish expenditure patterns of the resources allocated. We will also push for the independence of the Anti-Corruption Commission, which is being used to settle personal scores in light of the Mary Chiwenga case among others.

5. Attempts to amend the constitution of Zimbabwe, allocating more executive powers to the President

Lobby the parliament to resist the bill of giving more powers to the executive. The union shall also be carrying out public awareness programmes on the effects of giving more executive powers to the President and push for a referendum before the enactment of the proposed amendments.

6. The economic meltdown and the ongoing dialogue among political players

Lobby government to craft consistent pro poor macro -economic policies unlike the current diabolic austerity measures. Congress called for an inclusive Economic dialogue incorporating the working voice. Union further recommended transparency in conducting elections to avoid electoral disputes which have stagnated development.

7. Threats of imperialist powers from both Eastern and Western block

Teachers will conduct leadership training initiatives for learners and citizens enhancing their capacities to resist the machinations of the imperialists. We will further seek to inculcate Pan Africanism values to drive towards unification of African States.

### **Congress further deliberated on international issues, with particular focus on**

- Iran and United States conflict and the escalating global tensions

ARTUZ recommends the de-escalation of tensions and immediate intervention of a mediator. Union will petition the embassy of Switzerland to act as mediator in the conflict.

- The occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel

ARTUZ calls upon Norway to pursue the renewal of the Oslo accord and the recognition of the two-party state solution.

- The oppression of the Saharawi people

The Union calls upon the African Union and the United Nations to impose sanctions on Morocco, demanding an end to the colonization of Western Sahara.

- The Rohingya Crisis

We are bitter with the Zimbabwean government for failing to support the protection of the Rohingya people. We call upon the United Nations to quickly intervene and protect the Rohingya people to stop the genocide.

- Climate change and the degradation of the earth

ARTUZ calls upon the developed countries to avail resources to developing countries to help mitigate against the effects of climate change.

- The rise of terrorism

We call for the equitable distribution of wealth as a means of combatting extremism.

**On internal organizational issues Congress adopted** a 5-year strategic plan prepared by past National Executive Council and further resolved on some constitutional amendments. The Union created three new National Executive Council (NEC) portfolios to add to the 7 old ones. Congress resolved on the need of a quota system for female participation in leadership.

New portfolios are, Secretary for Urban teachers, Secretary for Health and Special needs and a Secretary for students, unemployed and retired teachers.

The elected executive is as follows.

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President	Obert Masaraure	+263 776129 336
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ARTUZ salutes all partners who supported the convening of our 1<sup>st</sup> National Congress.

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