

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

The Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ) is happy to announce the successful completion of the first ever Southern African Regional Conference on Farm Workers Human Rights and Security. The workshop was held in Harare, Zimbabwe from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2001. The workshop drew 124 Participants from the region, namely Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The main aim of the workshop was to discuss issues relating to farm workers rights and human security.

### **1.1 WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:**

- To develop a common understanding within farm workers' unions and support organizations working with farm worker communities.
- Facilitate an analysis of development challenges, human rights issues and socio-economic, cultural and gender related problems facing farm workers
- To develop linkages for an advocacy and public awareness framework so as to influence policy
- Invite the international community to engage pro-actively with Southern African governments on issues related to farm workers
- To position the place of farm workers in the current socio political environment, ( HIV, gender, role of international community, land redistribution, citizenship).

### **1.2 EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Regional consensus on farm worker issues
- Collective regional lobbying and networking
- Capacity building of farm worker representative organisations and support organisations
- Sharing or research and collaboration on issues that affect farm workers and information dissemination
- Exchange visits to learn from each other
- Fund raising
- Regional communiqué which will be shared with members of the press

The above workshop is aimed at empowering farm worker communities in the region to more effectively articulate their concerns.

For further information on the conference proceedings please contact that under sign:

**Godfrey Magaramombe**  
**The Director**  
**Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe**  
**Box HG 690 Highlands, Harare, Zimbabwe.**  
**Tele Fax: 263 04 498326/ 498332**  
**E-mail:[fctz@ecoweb.co.zw](mailto:fctz@ecoweb.co.zw)**

### **1.3 ABOUT THE HOST ORGANIZATION- FARM COMMUNITY TRUST OF ZIMBABWE (FCTZ)**

The Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ) is a local NGO that focuses on the empowerment of farm workers to achieve a better life through collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. FCTZ was established as an independent Trust in 1996 by Save the Children (UK), the Commercial Farmers Union, the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) with the active support of Government sector ministries. The FCTZ was registered by the Ministry of Labour Public Service and Social Welfare as a private voluntary organisation in February 1999, registration number PVO 3/99.

The FCTZ has its roots in SCF(UK) Farm Workers Programme initiated in 1981 to introduce primary health care into the commercial farms in two districts in Mashonaland Central province. The programme expanded in the eighties to cover most of the Mashonaland Central province. In the nineties it developed into an integrated development programme encompassing early childhood development, women's clubs and adult literacy while searching for a way to empower farm communities to take control of this development. The introduction of participatory democratic structures the Farm Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), into the programme was a turning point, as these provided the communities with the necessary instruments for taking ownership of social developments that affect their lives. The VIDCOs allow for the participation of farm workers and farmers to prioritise together social developments on their own farm and through ward development committees (WADCOs) to take control of the development in their group of farms. Thus the main thrust of the FCTZ programs is community development through the establishment of participatory democratic structures.

FCTZ has developed from a relatively small organisation with staff complement of eight people in 1996 to forty people today. From implementing one program the ECEC to implementing five programs in the areas of Health, primary Education, Gender and Community Development, Advocacy and Lobby, FCTZ has established five offices one national office and four provincial offices two in Mashonaland West province and one each in Mashonaland East and Central.

#### **Aims and objectives**

The overall aim of the FCTZ is to empower farm worker communities to participate in main stream development in Zimbabwe.

#### **Objectives**

1. To assist farm communities to identify practical initiatives to improve the quality of farm workers lives particularly in the areas of education, health and housing.
2. To liase with local and national levels of government, commercial farmers organisations, farm workers organisation and NGOs to facilitate implementation of the local initiatives.
3. To promote the development of farm communities
4. To initiate relevant research into the situation of farm workers and the development of strategies to address this situation.
5. To raise policy issues with the relevant authorities.

#### **1.4 OPENING ADDRESS:**

Read By: Mr Museka, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service labour and Social Welfare, on behalf of the Minister- Mr July Moyo.

The Minister started by welcoming delegates from other countries to Zimbabwe and went on to congratulate FCTZ for organising the above conference. He stated that his ministry is very concerned with the plight of farm workers in the country, and has made efforts to address some of the issues amid the challenges that the ministries faces in regards to limited funds.

The Minister went on to state that the issues affecting farm workers in the current environment are directly related to human rights. He called upon the delegates to take whatever challenges bedevilling farm workers as an opportunity of addressing human rights and make the whole process of land reform rewarding.

The Minister said that land redistribution is a historical moment, that should be addressed professional to promote economic opportunities for all citizens, especially those that have traditionally been left out due to the colonial legacy. Farm workers among this lot.

The Minister acknowledged that the process of addressing both land and farm worker rights require both financial and technical capacity, which he said was relatively limited and called on the NGOs and international community to support the worthy process. He said, that by supporting the above process, donors are ensuring the most effective way of addressing poverty in the region.

The government, said the Minister is a signatory to ILO conventions and was ready to revisit any convention if need be to ensure that the rights of the worker are protected and internationally acceptable. This is in recognition of globalisation and the need to meet internationally accepted standards.

In conclusion the Minister called on delegates to deliberate on concrete issues and recommend policy that will ensure equity, security and dignity of all citizens. This calls for the researching and documenting of relevant data on farm workers. He urged NGOs and all stakeholders to consider raising awareness among farm worker and other relevant persons so as to influence change. With this remarks he declared the conference open.