

The Power of Negotiations and Bargaining

The world is currently faced with growing conflicts in the Middle East, Europe and on the African continent. The engagement of the act of war, comes with the intent of causing destruction or to destroy one nation or group. By engaging the option of negotiations, the distinct possibility exists of arriving at a settlement with the parties to the dispute. The process of negotiations can only take place, if there is a willingness on the part of the parties to engage in discussions. This is the solution that is required, if an end to the ongoing war between Israel and the Hamas, Russia and Ukraine, and even the verbal conflict between Venezuela and the Republic of Guiana here in the Caribbean region, is to be achieved.

For there to be an effective negotiation process, it requires that the parties trust the process and commit to engaging in open communication. The parties to a dispute should be made aware that there are benefits to the negotiations exercise. These are, it can prevent a conflict from escalating by using preventive diplomacy, it improves communication, thus maximizing the odds of a positive outcome, it can open wide new areas of interests to both parties by expanding the “pie,” and it saves trouble and money by resolving in a short period of time, ongoing disputes.

To negotiate is known to be the preferred option used by trade unions to settle workplace disputes. Politicians have also engage this process, and used diplomatic means towards arriving at some form of agreement. This approach leads to some positive outcome, where there is the identification of a lead or chief negotiator who attempts to broker peace talks and a settlement to a dispute. This may appear to differ from the engagement of collective bargaining in the traditional way is done in the workplace.

Collective bargaining is basically defined as a way to solve workplace problems. If it is that the power of collective bargaining is the process of discussions with someone else to reach an agreement that is to their advantage, then it means that the process can be used beyond the workplace in the settlement of a dispute. This is where a government and its allies, such as the United States of America, or an international organization, namely the United Nations, can undertake to bring the collective will to influence a settlement in a dispute.

What happens if negotiations or collective bargaining were to fail? Within the labour movement, it is customary that where two parties are unable to reach a settlement, they can opt to engage the process of mediation or arbitration.

The process of negotiation is considered to be the most effective means of settling disputes, whether they are between individuals, organizations, or sovereign states. International disputes arise when the interests of two or more states conflict. The success or failure of any negotiation exercise remains dependent on the good will and commitment of the parties to enter into discussions, with a view to reaching an agreement.

In applying the bargaining theory to resolving the many ongoing global conflicts, world leaders should have an appreciation that it provides a useful framework for thinking about the management of violent conflicts. It goes without saying that there is a place for bargaining in international relations, as it can be used in bargaining on matters that include international law, economic policy, human rights and even the now topical issue of climate change.