

## Planning for the Future

Planning for the future is an experience which every human being engages throughout the course of their life. The fact that no one knows what tomorrow may bring, reinforces the point that planning is essential. To plan basically means to prepare oneself for what may or may not materialize. Planning is about making provision to meet the expectations or current challenges and/or those envisaged within the corridors of the immediate or distant future. Whether it is at the individual or organizational level, the experience of planning could either be overwhelming and/or frustrating for some. There are others who may find it as just routine experience.

At the end of each calendar year, many persons resort to making New Year's wishes. This is part of the course in planning for the coming year. Those who limit themselves to making resolutions without developing a plan of how to achieve their goals, aims, objectives, desires and expectations, may find themselves in the realm of wishful thinking; that is embedded in a ray of hope.

At the organization level planning is imperative, as it is necessary to ensure that desired goals and results are achieved. The process starts with the conceptualization of ideas, to be followed by the development of a plan of action. Since implementation is critical, the defining of a set of strategies become an important aspect of the process. This is where leadership becomes essential, for it is folly to have a leader who walks around with a strategy which is a guarded secret, while the organization is left to flounder in the corridors of uncertainty.

Leaders of organizations should be aware that there are four major types of planning. These are operational, tactical, strategic and contingency planning. The latter is an alternative course of action, which can be implemented if and when an original plan fails to produce the anticipated result. The engagement of these four types of planning are particularly important at the level of the trade unions. Tactical, strategic and contingency planning are needed in a climate where the labour movement is required to respond to the perceived threats to the existence of labour; commencing with the marginalization of trade unions.

Trade unions must be proactive in their planning and be ready to execute plans as circumstances warrant. As a counter to the plans of other social partners, it requires that labour becomes consolidated in its approaches and strategies, if desired results of the labour movement are to be achieved. The lack of planning and poor planning is often worse than not planning at all. This will invariably contribute to the pressures placed on trade unions and the push back they encounter in making impactful responses.

It is for leaders to understand that planning is an important aspect of leadership. It is necessary for the setting of direction and priorities, to get everyone to buy into the mission, aims and objectives, to simplify decision-making, to better align all our resources to maximize strategic success and to have the buy-in where everyone communicates the message.

The point is to be underscored that planning is a continuous process. As a matter of fact, it is a primary function of both the leadership and management. It would be beneficial to know and reinforce that the basic steps involved in the planning process includes, developing objectives, identifying tasks to meet those objectives, determining the resources needed to implement tasks, the creation of timelines, determining monitoring and assessment method, finalizing of the plan, and communicating it to all involved in the process.