

The Most Representative National Organization

In making a determination of the most representative national trade union organization in a country, most would want to consider what is the distinction to be made between a local and a national organization. In making this distinction, the determination can easily be arrived at by examining the definition of the two terms.

Research findings reveal that a local organization is defined as a community organization which is made up of a group of people who work together for a common cause. When it comes to the definition of a local trade union organization, it is said to be a local branch or chapter, usually of a national trade union centre. The national trade union centre or national centre is defined as a federation or confederation of trade unions in a country. It is known that almost every country in the world has a national trade union centre, and in some instances, many have more than one. The fact remains that a national organization centre is a licensed or registered body to which local trade unions are affiliated. It is clearly established that the national trade union centres are country-based membership networks whose raison d'être is to represent the collective interests of members and the not-for-profit community. The understanding is that the national centre plays a critical part in bringing the sector together.

Based on the research findings, it is evident that there is a clear difference between a local and a national organization. The difficulty which may arise in making the distinction between the two terms stems from the interpretation made by those who choose for whatever reasons to move away from, or choose to ignore the approved definitions. The difficulty which presents itself when it comes to interpretations, may reside in the language used and the intent there is to vary away from the accepted definitions. The best example of comes to the fore in the interpretation of the provision of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, which addresses how the workers' and employers' delegates and advisers to attend the Annual Labour Conference, are to be selected.

According to the ILO's Constitution, each member state is to be represented by a delegation which is composed of two government delegates, an employer delegate, a worker delegate; all of whom have individual voting rights and all votes are equal, regardless of the population of the delegate's member State. The employer and worker delegates are normally chosen in agreement with the most representative national organizations of employers and workers. It is important to pay attention to the emphasis placed on the 'most representative national organizations of employers and workers.' This in every sense could only be taken to mean the individual national organization or national centre to which local member organizations are affiliated. If it is that this is translated differently, then it could only leave right thinking persons to ponder whether such actions are convenient, deliberate, or that the specific

The Most Representative National Organization, Dennis de Peiza, Labour & Employee Relations Consultant, Regional Management Services Inc., 24 May 2024

www.regionalmanagementservices.com

provision of the ILO Constitution, leaves itself opened to be manipulated and /or misrepresentation.

For those who may have doubts or reservations of what constitutes the difference between a local union and a national trade union centre, the clarity lies in the fact that the national trade union centre plays an important role in legislative changes, while local unions focus on collective bargaining agreements and other labour concerns of a specific nature. Every local union has a union steward at the workplace who is charged with the responsibility of representing the interests of union members.

The Most Representative National Organization, Dennis de Peiza, Labour & Employee Relations Consultant, Regional Management Services Inc., 24 May 2024

www.regionalmanagementservices.com