

**CTUSAB's Solidarity Message to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Delegates Conference  
of the National Union of Public Workers, Thursday, March 17, 2016**

**Theme: 'Defending Social Democracy - Yesterday – Today and Tomorrow'**

Today this 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the National Union of Public Workers has chosen to address the all-important topic of, *Defending Social Democracy – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. This is both instructive and insightful, given that the climate of this globalized world is accounting for the economic and political pressures which are being exerted by the powerful multinational corporations. These are tending to impact on the labour market, labour market institutions and political decision making.

We in the labour movement identify with the fact social democracy is a political ideology that supports economic and social interventions to promote social justice within the framework of a capitalist economy. These combined with state regulation and with business and industry working together to propel economic growth and equitable income. Added to these would be the promotion of a policy regime involving collective bargaining arrangements, a commitment to representative democracy and measures for income redistribution. This underscores the point that democracy is considered essential for the promotion of socialist ideals.

The labour movement has an ongoing responsibility to serve and protect the interests of working class people, to ensure that gains and benefits are not eroded, and that there is continued empowerment and social protection for working class people. It is with this in mind that reference can be made to 19<sup>th</sup> century social doctrine as espoused by German political theorist Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein argued that success for socialism depended not on the continued and intensifying misery of the working class, but rather on eliminating that misery.

In a 21<sup>st</sup> century world transformed by the phenomenon of globalization neo-colonialism and liberalization, the out turn has been rapid change the promotion of self-interest and rampant individualism, the erosion of traditional values and communities, and the rise of social dislocation, atomization and fragmentation.

In a world of growing inequalities, where there remains an existing threat to social democracy, trade unions must therefore position themselves both now and in the future, to respond to the rapid process of globalization that lead to market forces which are dominated and driven by the influence of multinational corporations.

We in the labour must remain conscious of the fact that social democracy aims to minimize the cost of capitalism for individuals through growth and employment enhancement policies, and through the welfare state provisions for the contingencies of unemployment, ill health and old age. Our attention must also be drawn to the need to address and reduce major unjustifiable inequalities in power and wealth, and most importantly, to achieve the objectives set within the limits of parliamentary democracy.

The fundamental question that this Delegates' Conference should address is that of 'What should form the agenda to be pursued by labour in promoting the notion of Social Democracy? In offering food for thought, the suggestion is placed before you that consideration is given to promoting and maintaining welfare and public services, promoting growth and employment, promoting democratic accountability and placing a focus on monitoring and tackling the international financial markets and monetary systems.

The Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados advances the view that trade union movement must maintain its vigilance towards ensuring the non erosion of human rights, workers rights and civil liberties. Additionally, movement should strive to ensure equity in the distribution of wealth, and guard against the rolling back of social democratic policies such as welfare entitlements, public funded services and employment protection legislation.

Best wishes are extended for a successful 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Delegates Conference.



**DENNIS DE PEIZA**  
General Secretary