FOBTOB Bulletin

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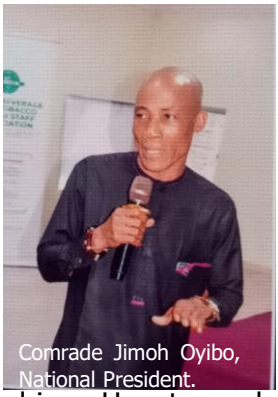
FOBTOB DRIVES AGGRESSIVE MEMBERSHIP THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NEC MEMBERS, WOMEN, AND YOUNG WORKERS.

FOBTOB, in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, successfully hosted a two-day Capacity Building Workshop themed "Building a Strong Union Through Aggressive Organising: Winning Collective Struggles for Members." This engaging event occurred from 3rd to 4th of October 2024, at the Conference Hotel Ogun State. Before the training session, the Central Working Committee convened for a retreat to facilitate a comprehensive discussion about the Association's current state and future direction. During this retreat, members engaged in thoughtful conversations, sharing insights and perspectives on key issues facing the Association and brainstorming strategies for growth and improvement. The discussions were designed to foster collaboration, strengthen relationships among committee members, and set a clear vision for the Association's prosperity.

The workshop's primary objective was to assemble members of the National Executive Council alongside young workers from various Branches. The event was designed to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of innovative strategies and effective mechanisms for organising within the union framework. The sessions included expert-led discussions, practical exercises, and case studies that highlighted successful organising efforts.

Furthermore, the workshop emphasised the importance of being versed in the Industry's Procedural Agreements, the Trade Unions Act, the Labour Act, and International Labour Standards and Conventions. Participants were encouraged to actively engage with these regulations to empower themselves and their peers, ensuring they were equipped to navigate the complexities of labour relations and advocate for the rights of all union members effectively. Overall, the workshop aimed to foster a sense of solidarity and collective action among attendees, strengthening their ability to achieve meaningful victories for their members.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS


Comrade Jimoh Oyibo, National President.

Comrade Jimoh Oyibo, the National President of FOBTOB, welcomed the representatives of FES, Resource Persons, and all participants to the workshop. In his address, the National President said the theme of the workshop aligned with the current realities as it focused on a pressing issue affecting the union which was membership drive. He stressed that a union that fails to organise will go into extinction in the distant future. He added that the workshop represented a significant step forward for FOBTOB in its ongoing efforts to build a stronger union and advocate for the interests of its members. He added that the power of the association is derived from the membership size which will make the union more effective in advocating for members' rights.

He explained that the diversity in the selection of the participants was done in order to ensure capacity building for the rank-and-file members ranging from National Executive Council (NEC) members, women, and young workers within the Association. He also emphasised the pivotal role of young workers in shaping the future of the union.

He added that FOBTOB prioritises the capacity building of the female members and supports gender equality and empowerment to create more opportunities for them to be included in decision-making processes and break the barriers to opportunities.

Comrade Oyibo informed that distinguished professionals with extensive industry knowledge were invited to present on various topics related to membership education, and the workshop offered a unique opportunity for participants to enhance their capabilities, share insights, and draw inspiration from one another.

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The National President expressed gratitude to the co-partner, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and the Project Manager, for their unwavering commitment to trade union education and for making the workshop a reality. He concluded that the workshop's focus on aggressive organising and collective struggle with a view to underscore FOBTOB's dedication to advancing the rights and well-being of its members and thus encourage participants to deploy their efforts towards increasing membership at the respective Branches.



Mrs Remi Ihejirika during her address.

In her welcome address, Mrs Remi Ihejirika, the Programme Officer, FES, who represented the Foundation, conveyed the felicitation of the Resident Representative to the participants. The Programme Officer used the opportunity of the workshop to introduce Friedrich Ebert Stiftung to the participants as a non-profit organisation, and the oldest political foundation in Germany established in the year 1925 and built on the legacy of Friedrich Ebert who was the first Democratic President of Germany. She declared that the FES has promoted trade union ideals for more than ten (10) decades with over ninety (90) offices worldwide and two (2) offices in Nigeria. The FES started in Nigeria in 2019, focusing on support for democratic institutions/groups on freedom, justice and solidarity.

Comrade Remi Ihejirika noted that the theme for the workshop, **"Building A Strong Union Through Aggressive Organising: Winning Collective Struggle for Members"**, was apt and in line with the current realities because the only survival option for the trade union as a movement is membership drive. She encouraged FOBTOB leaders to market the union through aggressive organising or risk extinction. She charged them to, "Organise or die." She observed that employers nowadays would only be willing to pay a paltry sum if the trade unionists fail to build a coalition through organising to challenge the antics of the employers. She concluded that the law was clear on who should be members of the union and the respective branch leaders are supposed to keep themselves abreast of the laws guiding unionisation while going all out to reach out to all potential members after the workshop.



Comrade Solomon Adebosin

The discussion **"Organising Without Borders: Strategies and Plan"** was presented by **Comrade Solomon Adebosin**, Executive Secretary, FOBTOB. During his presentation, Comrade Adebosin placed a significant emphasis on the objective of achieving a hundred per cent membership drive at the enterprise level. He highlighted the importance of identifying potential members who have enjoyed significant advantages from the existing agreement signed by FOBTOB but have not yet joined the union.

In addition, the Executive Secretary outlined various compelling reasons for joining the Union, such as the promotion of quality standards, enhancement of working conditions, protection of workers' rights, and the assurance of job security.

Furthermore, he raised thought-provoking questions about the existence of job security in general, citing examples of interventions by the FOBTOB National Body to preserve jobs. The essence of this question was to highlight the vital role that unions can play in safeguarding the employment of its teeming members.

In addition to recruiting new members, Comrade Solomon stressed the significance of maintaining consistent communication from leadership to the members to prevent any instances of bypassing. He underscored the importance of regular meetings, continuous training for members, and fostering a culture of teamwork to strengthen the union's impact. In concluding the presentation, the speaker reiterated the concept of "solidarity" and its inherent

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connection to collective efforts. He urged leaders to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to addressing members' concerns, emphasising the slogan that *"injury to one is an injury to all."* He thereafter motivated the participants with the rallying cry of the slogan "*organise, don't agonise*," encapsulating the proactive approach needed to drive the union's mission forward.

"Understanding the Food, Beverage, and Tobacco Industry's Collective and Procedural Agreements," was presented by **Mr. Sheyi Adegbola**, Head of Human Resources, Tulip Cocoa Processing Limited.



Mr Sheyi Adegbola during his presentation

In his presentation, Mr Adegbola underscored the importance of the Food, Beverage, and Tobacco Industry in Nigeria's economy and the crucial governance provided by collective and procedural agreements.

Mr Adegbola elucidated that collective agreements in Nigeria's food, beverage, and tobacco sectors are the product of negotiations between employers (AFBTE) and labour unions (NUFBTE & FOBTOB). These agreements comprehensively cover essential matters such as wages, working hours, benefits, and workplace conditions, establishing a framework for defined rights and responsibilities for both employers and employees, ultimately leading to enhanced labour relations and productivity.

He emphasised the procedural agreement as the guiding principle, akin to a constitution, that steers the industry. Moreover, he highlighted the significance of Article 3 of the Procedural Agreement on Scope and Recognition, which outlines the eligibility criteria for union membership. He stressed the critical role of organising in building a robust union, provided it aligned with the guidelines outlined in the aforementioned article.

In addition, Mr. Adegbola pointed out the imperative for a clear understanding of the content of agreements for Companies within Nigeria's food, beverage, and tobacco sector, as well as for the members of FOBTOB, to negotiate better agreements for the benefit of all stakeholders. Adherence to these agreements signifies a commitment to ethical business practices and compliance with industry regulations.

He further clarified that the collective agreements are bifurcated into two key aspects: Appendix "A" deals with matters such as salaries overseen by the National body, and Appendix "B" addresses issues like transport allowances managed at the branch level. In conclusion, Mr. Adegbola reiterated that interpreting agreements positively is essential for all parties to avert ambiguities and foster a win-win situation.



Mrs Adesola Okorie

The presentation on "**Changing Contract of Employment: Challenges and Prospect for Organising** was made by **Mrs. Adesola Okorie**, *Head, Human Resources, Tower Alloys Industries Limited, Lagos*. During her presentation, Mrs Adesola Okorie delved into the complexities of employment contracts within the Food, Beverage, and Tobacco Industry in Nigeria. She discussed various kinds of employment arrangements, including full-time, part-time, and temporary positions, and emphasised the need for tailored agreements to accommodate each category.

Mrs Okorie highlighted the necessity of adapting employment contracts to reflect changes in business structure, such as mergers and acquisitions, and external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic. She specifically addressed the impact of remote work on employment contracts and its potential implications for trade unions, noting that remote work could pose challenges for worker participation in trade union activities.
Furthermore, Mrs Okorie underscored the

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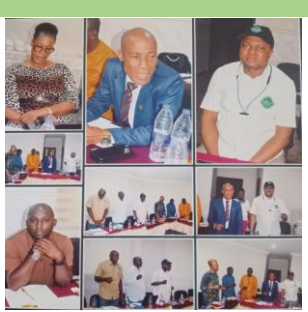
importance of a strong and knowledgeable labour union, using FOBTOB as an example. She recommended that FOBTOB stay abreast of industrial relations trends, educate its members on anticipated changes, ensure fair representation for all members in decision-making processes, and elect qualified leaders who are well-versed in labour and industrial laws. She also stressed the need for comprehensive training programs for FOBTOB members and leaders to uphold industrial harmony and development through effective collective bargaining.

In summary, Mrs. Okorie's presentation stressed the need for a critical understanding and management of employment contracts within the unique context of the Nigerian food, beverage, and tobacco industry. She highlighted the impact of evolving work arrangements, such as remote work, on trade unions and worker participation. She spotlighted the pivotal role of a proactive and well-informed labour union in driving industry progress.

The workshop witnessed a group presentation to formulate a campaign policy for organising. As a result, the following slogan was adopted from the group presentation as tools for canvassing for an aggressive membership drive in respective Branches:

- ✧ *Join FOBTOB, empower your voice!*
- ✧ *FOBTOB, winning collective struggle for members!*
- ✧ *Connect with FOBTOB, and secure your rights!*
- ✧ *FOBTOB, no victimisation!*
- ✧ *FOBTOB, no marginalisation!*
- ✧ *12,000 members, our collective responsibility!*
- ✧ *Join FOBTOB, save your job!*

WORKSHOP PICTURE GALLERY







BRANCH ELECTIONS

The election of FrieslandCampina (WAMCO) Nigeria Plc Branch took place successfully on October 16th, 2024. This event was marked by a high level of participation from members, who engaged in the electoral process to select representatives for key positions within the Branch. Following this, the election for the Promasidor Nigeria Limited Branch was held on October 25th, 2024. Both elections strictly adhered to the Association's established regulations and constitutional rights, ensuring a fair and transparent process. Comprehensive measures were in place to maintain integrity throughout the voting and counting procedures, reflecting the commitment of the Association to uphold democratic principles.



FrieslandCampina WAMCO Branch Elected Executives.



The Elected Branch Officials of Promasidor Nigeria Ltd.

Branches are encouraged to submit news and articles for publication.

(The next bulletin will showcase presentations by Mrs. Remi Ihijerika and Mr. Idowu Ekundayo).