

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS BUILDING IN NIGERIA'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Tajudeen A. Akanji and Samuel, Oluranti Sunday

Abstract

The workplace is increasingly becoming conflict-ridden as the major actors have in recent times found it difficult to work together in cooperative ways. The implication of this is that productivity is being adversely affected and consequently the wealth of the nation has been taking a deep plunge in the negative direction. Conflict in every organization is in some ways considered to be inevitable, since it often arises from inherent opposing interests of employers and employees in work relations. Social dialogue as a cooperative approach to employment relations is about harnessing actors' potentials for mutual gains through a process of integrative bargaining leading always to 'win-win' outcomes. The purpose of this paper therefore is to assess the concepts of social dialogue and consensus building in the work place, and their processes and relevance to the peaceful resolution of industrial conflicts. With role prescription for the principal actors in the industrial relations system exemplified in this paper, the relevance of social dialogue and consensus building in Nigeria's industrial relations system cannot be overemphasized. The paper also attempts to expand the scope of and improve on the procedures of social dialogue and consensus building.

Introduction

The relevance of social dialogue has continued to grow in response to the challenges of a globalized world, in particular in seeking to

Dr. Tajudeen A. Akanji

Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Samuel, Oluranti Sunday

Department of Sociology, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria

reconcile the imperatives of social justice with those of enterprise competitiveness and economic development.

The workplace is dispute and conflict induced. Various dispute preventions and resolution processes are put in place by the state to assist parties in the employment relationship. They are means of settling grievances or disputes peacefully and orderly through agreed machinery with minimum disruption of work. It is assumed that disagreement will from time to time occur, where there are different perceptions of what is fair or equitable. At the same time, disputes can be managed, indeed prevented. As such, the effective prevention and settlement of labour disputes remains at the core of sound labour relations for creating a on environment conducive to efficiency, economic growth and development (ILO, 1980). This paper therefore aims at x-raying the significance of social dialogue and consensus building in industrial relations with a view to highlighting the concepts, forms, practices and their benefits towards the minimization of open and destructive, yet avoidable, conflicts. It also aims at identifying roles for all actors in Nigerian industrial relations.

Workplace Conflict

Workplace conflict often occurs from the contradictions between the rights of individuals, their interests and the realities of the workplace itself. The rights of the actors in the workplace may be provided to them by statutes, by established practice or, most important of all, by collective agreement reached through the process of collective bargaining between representatives parties to the collective agreement. A trade dispute is defined 'as any dispute between employers and workers or between workers and workers, which is connected with the employment or non-employment, or terms of employment and physical conditions of work of any person' (Trade Dispute Act, 1990, Aturu, 2005). Fashoyin (1992:191) defined labour dispute as 'the dissatisfaction of any employee or group of employees over a denial of a perceived right or interest to which the individual or a group feels entitled.'

Theories of Employment Relation

In relation to employment relationships, various schools of thought have described different modes of interactions that exist. The schools of thought are essentially categorized based on the social, political, economic, legal and cultural settings of the environment. The basic categories are, in the main, the unitary perspective, the conflict perspective, and the system model. The two most referenced theories of unitary and conflict perspectives will be discussed in this paper.

The Unitary Perspective

This theory conceives of members of a work organization as an integral and harmonious entity with common goals and aspiration. It views collective bargaining in the organization as anti-social and conflict is viewed as a result of external intrusion or communication breakdown among the players. The implications are that the owners of capital and labour are complementary partners in the enterprise. This approach likens the organization to a football team where all eleven players play to score in the same side. Trade unions are viewed as intruders and unnecessary parts of the work organization. Akintayo (1996) concludes that the unitary perspective is predominantly managerial in orientation, conception, and emphasis. The support for the theory is essentially driven by managers because, by implication, it further assures their roles as organization decision makers and legitimizes their authorities over subordinate workers in the enterprise.

The Conflict Perspective

The conflict view of employment relations sees the enterprise as comprising of certain actors with conflicting but legitimate views in the organization. The organization is seen as a pie with each part trying to contest for its own share. As such, conflict between managers and workers are recognized as essential features of work relations and regulated accordingly through the process of collective bargaining. Although the parties have the organizational goals in common, their separate aspirations drive the different approaches towards the achievement of the goals. While the owners of capital want more interest and profit on their investments, the owners of

labour want more rewards in terms of better wages for their efforts. Essentially, the gain of one group culminates in the loss of the other. Therefore a successful enterprise is not one without conflict, but one with a responsive system in place to address the differences as they necessarily occur. Workers unions, employers' associations, and collective bargaining are essential component of employment relations.

In expressing their various discontents, individuals and groups exhibit different responses to the condition or treatments causing discomfort. In expressing discomfort, some individual would be passive while others would be active. Some do not even express them at all; they remain latent but quite volatile waiting to be ignited at the slightest provocation. Grievances are expressed variously by individuals or collectives (unions). Individuals express grievances through absenteeism, labour turnover, high accident rates, fraud, spending long hours in the toilet, pretending to be sick, sabotage to employer's equipment and property, and restriction of output. Whereas groups express grievances through, mass meeting, declaration of industrial disputes as well as various forms of strike actions.

Dispute Settlement Procedures

There are two major ways of resolving industrial disputes, the internal machinery and the external one. When collective bargaining cannot settle a dispute, the Trade Dispute Act requires the parties to follow the statutory procedures in solving the problems. These include:

Internal Machinery: An aggrieved worker is expected to seek redress through a step-by-step procedure within the workplace without resorting to industrial action. The procedure recognizes the role of the supervisor, who is expected to initially handle the matter. If the dispute is unresolved, the matter will be referred to the Grievance Committee that in most cases consists of the branch union leader and the middle manager, personnel manager or factory manager. The failure of this committee will lead to the intervention of the National Joint Industrial Council (NJIC), where the national union and the top management will be meet resolve the issue.

External Machinery: The 2003 amendment act provides that in cases where the internal machinery fails, parties are to explore certain provisions listed below.

- **Mediation:** Section 3 of the Act makes it obligatory for the disputing parties to meet within seven(7) days of the existence of the dispute, either together by themselves or through their representatives, under the chairmanship of a Mediator, mutually agreed upon and appointed by both parties with a view to having an amicable settlement of the dispute. Where this fails, any of the parties intending to pursue the matter further is required to declare a trade dispute and notify the Minister formally. In reporting to the Minister, they are required to state the point of the disagreement and dispute (section 5). The Minister could refer the dispute to a conciliator.
- **Conciliation:** When mediation fails, the Minister may appoint a Conciliator from among the professional officers in the ministry for the purpose of effecting settlement of dispute. The conciliator is expected to inquire into the causes and circumstances of the dispute and negotiate with the parties to effect a settlement. If settlement of the dispute is reached within 14 days of his appointment, the Conciliator is expected to forward a memorandum of the terms of settlement duly signed by agents of disputing parties to the Minister and the terms recorded there shall be binding on the parties involved.
- **Arbitration:** However, if the conciliator fails to achieve a settlement within 14 days of his appointment, he reports the situation to the Minister. Unlike the previous machinery, arbitration marks the beginning of a judicial process for settling disputes. Disputes are referred to the Industrial Arbitration Panel by the Minister within 14 days of the dispute. Unlike other courts where litigants can go directly, proceedings are expected to be relatively informal both in term of pre-tribunal procedure and hearing.

The award of the tribunal must be in writing, certain in meaning, reasonable and must settle all the points referred to it. Such awards

are not communicated to the partners directly but first to the Minister, who may ask for further consideration on grounds of public policy. The minister has no legal authority to set aside the IAP award in his capacity. The panel is expected to complete its work within 42 days and the award is then released to the parties. If no notice of objection is raised by the parties within 21 days of the release, the award is then confirmed and would be published in the Public Gazettes, and shall be binding on the parties as from the date of the award.

- **Board of Enquiry:** The Board of Enquiry looks into the causes and circumstances to the disputes. It is a means of informing the government and members of the public regarding the fact of the dispute. Where this is not easily discernable and the appropriate machinery for the settlement becomes difficult, it is usually appointed as the last resort when dispute is likely to have a serious effect on a public interest and it is necessary to clear the air. The board's duty is to report thereafter to the minister.
- **Industrial Court:** If the disputing parties do give notice of rejection to the Minister within 21 days of the release of IAP award, the Minister will then refer the dispute to the National Industrial Court (NIC). The NIC will hear the dispute, call evidence as may be deemed necessary and gives a ruling that is final and binding on the parties to whom it is made.

The dispute settlement procedures enumerated above have not been able to deliver the expected peace in the workplace. This is due and not limited to the provisions of the various labour laws that are not only obsolete, but incompatible with the present situation. In addition, the awards given are seldom respected and in most cases not enforceable. It is the search for non-adversarial relationship in the workplace that led the ILO to come up with a contemporary policy that will promote peace in the enterprise. One of such policies is referred to as Social Dialogue.

What is Social Dialogue?

The ILO (1980, 1996) defines social dialogue to include all types of negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. Social dialogue plays a key role in achieving the organization's objective of promoting opportunities for workers to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity. How social dialogue actually operates varies from country to country and from region to region. Effective social dialogue depends on:

- Strong, independent workers' and employers' organizations with the technical capacity and knowledge required to participate in social dialogue;
- Political will and commitment to engage in social dialogue on the part of all parties;
- Respect for the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining;
- Appropriate institutional support.

The main goal of social dialogue itself is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work. Successful social dialogue structures and processes have the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability and boost economic progress.

The world of work is diverse and is constantly adapting to meet new challenges. Elements within it, such as the health and safety environment, the impact of globalization and technology, what training and skills are needed, as well as the aspirations of workers and employers, are constantly changing.

These changes can bring about opportunities as well as conflicts for workers and employers.

Ensuring that these changes are managed in the most effective and mutually beneficial manner requires relevant labour laws,

effective social dialogue and efficient and responsive labour administration.

The State's Actions and Workers Reactions

The range of industrial relations actions taken by various governments in Nigeria, whether military or civilian at the national level, has been determined by substantial differences between the three most affected actors (the State, employers and their associations, and the workers and their representatives). The state has introduced different levels of economic development policies, economic structures, social and political arrangements and institutions. The timing and severity of the crisis in them varies. These policies, though external to the organization, have aggravated the expected peace in the work situation. The timing of the approach, hitherto had not carried other major actors in the industrial relations along, in term of adequate consultation, and had subsequently, engendered unending but avoidable crises. Massive unemployment, retrenchment, underemployment, child labour, importation, merger and acquisitions, commercialization, privatization and other vices have resulted in several trade disputes, work stoppages and loss of labour hours.

Forms of Social Dialogue

Social dialogue takes many different forms. It can exist as a tripartite process, with the government as an official party to the dialogue or it may consist of bipartite relations only between labour and management (or trade unions and employers' organizations), with or without indirect government involvement. Concentration can be informal or institutionalized, and often, a combination of the two. It can take place at the national, regional or at enterprise level. It can be inter-professional, sectoral or a combination of all of these. Social dialogue institutions are often defined by their composition. They can be bipartite, tripartite or "tripartite plus". The key tripartite actors are the representatives of government, employers and workers. Although, depending on specific national contexts, the tripartite partners may choose to open the dialogue to other relevant actors in society in an effort to gain a wider representation, to

incorporate the diverse views of other social actors and to build a wider consensus. Examples of this are prevalent in Nigeria where traditional rulers, religious leaders and other opinion leaders have at one time or another been involved in settling industrial disputes between government and labour, especially the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

Social dialogue can take a variety of forms, ranging from the single act of exchanging information to the more developed forms of collaboration. The most usual forms of social dialogue identified by the ILO (1980) have in this paper been reclassified and relabeled as follows:

- **Information-sharing:** This is one of the most basic and indispensable elements of effective social dialogue. In itself, it implies no real discussion or action on the issues but it is nevertheless an essential part of those processes by which dialogue and decisions take place. This is important to help all the parties especially when preparing for collective bargaining. Information that will help the parties articulate their positions should not be denied, especially on the part of management.
- **Consultation:** This goes beyond the mere sharing of information and requires an engagement by the parties through an exchange of views, which in turn can lead to in-depth dialogue. This aspect is necessary to create harmonious industrial relations. In cases of re-engineering, retrenchment, merger and acquisition, the management of an organization should as a matter of fact consult with the workers' representative so as to assess the implications of such actions and ways to ameliorate them. The perennial social problems and strike actions that constantly follow increase in the pump price of fuel could be traced to lack of adequate consultation by the state with other stakeholders or their representatives before such decisions are taken.
- **Tripartite or bipartite bodies:** Tripartite cooperation is defined as referring "to all dealings between the government and workers' and employers' organizations concerning the

formulation and implementation of economic and social policy" (International Labour Conference, 1996). Tripartism is reflected in the structure where various bodies or instruments that influence change in the industrial relations setting are composed of equal numbers of government, workers' and employers' representatives. The Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) specifically requires effective consultation between government, employers' and workers' representatives at each stage of ILO standards-related activities. A number of other conventions - for example, those regarding minimum wage fixing, private employment agencies and the worst forms of child labour - foresee consultation between government, workers' and employers' organizations in their implementation.

These bodies can engage in negotiations and the conclusion of agreements. While many of these institutions make use of consultation and information sharing, some are empowered to reach agreements that can be binding. This principle has not been followed in toto in the Nigerian situation. Most of the institutions, for example, the Nigeria Industrial Court (NIC), the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP), more or less aggravate situations with their delay in giving a ruling or making an award as well as the obstacles placed in their ways by the state policies that established them. In most cases they have no mandate to pass an award, and subsequently serve in advisory capacity to ministries, legislators and other policy-makers and decision-makers. This phenomenon is a hindrance to industrial harmony.

- **Collective bargaining:** This is not only an integral – and one of the most widespread – forms of social dialogue, it can be seen as a useful indicator of the capacity within a country to engage in national level tripartism. Parties can engage in collective bargaining at the unit within an enterprise, enterprise, sectoral, regional, national and multinational levels. Collective bargaining serves a dual purpose. It provides a means of determining the wages and conditions of work applying to the group of workers covered by ensuring agreement through free

and voluntary negotiations between the two independent parties concerned. It also enables employers and workers to define by agreement the rules governing their relationship. These two aspects of the bargaining takes place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations, on the one hand and one or more workers' organizations, on the other (ILO, 1980).

For workers, collective bargaining ensures adequate wages and work conditions by providing them with a "collective voice". In addition, it also allows them to influence personnel decisions and to achieve a fair distribution of gains from technological progress and productivity increases. For employers, it helps to stabilize industrial relations by maintaining industrial peace that are otherwise disrupted by labour unrest. Employers through collective bargaining, can also address the need for adjustment to facilitate modernization and restructuring.

- **Teamwork:** Many have misconstrued the concept of teamwork. Many believe that the spirit of teamwork is practicable among all the actors, or should be exercised between workers and employers. This is far from the truth because both workers and employers have their different goals and objectives in an organization. Teamwork is therefore encouraged among trade union members or federations because of their common goals. Management teams also desire teamwork for effectiveness and efficiency that the workplace desires.
- **Partnering:** Labour and management should emphasize the concept of partnering because despite the differences in their goals, they are partners in progress. This will enable both parties to work towards reaching agreement favourable to both parties in any given situation, with the spirit of give-and-take and not win-lose. This is also applicable to all the parties in industrial relations matters.

Consensus Building

According to the *New Webster's Dictionary of English Language* (2000), the definition of consensus is:

- (a) General agreement;**
- (b) The judgment arrived at by most or all of those concerned; and**
- (c) Group solidarity in sentiment and belief**

Consensus building, also known as collaborative problem solving or collaboration, is essentially mediation of a conflict, which involves many parties. Usually, the conflict also involves multiple, complex issues. While consensus building is probably most often used in environmental disputes, it is applicable to many other kinds of public policy disputes as well at the community, state, and international levels (Spangler and Burgess, 2003).

Spangler and Burgess (2003) further assert that like a town meeting, consensus building is based on the principles of local participation and ownership of decisions. Ideally, the consensus reached will meet all of the relevant interests of stakeholders, who thereby come to a unanimous agreement. While everyone may not get everything they initially wanted, “consensus has been reached when everyone agrees they can live with whatever is proposed after every effort has been made to meet the interests of all stake holding parties” (*ibid.*).

Importance of Consensus Building

- **Addressing diversity in groups and different interests:** Consensus building is important in today's interconnected society because many problems exist that affect diverse groups of people with different interests. As problems mount, the organizations that deal with society's problems come to rely on each other for help—they are interdependent. The parties affected by decisions are often interdependent as well. Therefore it is extremely difficult and often ineffective for organizations to try to solve controversial problems on their own. Consensus building offers a way for individual citizens and organizations to collaborate on solving complex problems in ways that are acceptable to all.

- **Cooperative attitude of actors:** Consensus-building processes also allow a variety of people to have an input into decision-making processes, rather than leaving controversial decisions to government representatives or experts. When government experts make decisions on their own, one or more of the stakeholder groups are usually unhappy, and they can litigate the government, slowing implementation of any decision substantially. While consensus building takes time, it at least develops solutions that are not held up in court.
- **Common understanding and framework to develop solution:** Stakeholders always possess a wide range of understandings or perceptions of a problem. The consensus-building process helps them to establish a common understanding and framework for developing a solution that works for everyone. The process also fosters the exploration of joint gains and integrative solutions and permits stakeholders to deal with interrelated issues in a single forum. This allows stakeholders to make trade-offs between different issues, and allows the development of solutions that meet more peoples' needs more completely than decisions that are made without such widespread participation.

Characteristics of issues in Consensus Building

Problems that may be effectively addressed with a consensus-building approach tend to share some general characteristics. Some of these characteristics, as identified by Spangler and Burgess.(2003), are if:

- ◆ The problems are ill defined, or there is disagreement about how they should be defined.
- ◆ Several stakeholders have a vested interest in the problems and are interdependent.
- ◆ These stakeholders are not necessarily identified as a cohesive group or organization.
- ◆ There is a disparity of power and/or resources for dealing with the problems among the stakeholders. Stakeholders may have

different levels of expertise and different access to information about the problems.

- ◆ The problems are often characterized by technical complexity and scientific uncertainty.
- ◆ Differing perspectives on the problems often lead to adversarial relationships among the stakeholders.
- ◆ Incremental or unilateral efforts to deal with the problems typically produce less than satisfactory solutions.
- ◆ Existing processes for addressing the problems have proved insufficient and may even exacerbate them.

Process of Building Consensus

There are four primary determinants of a successful consensus process (Gray, 1989; Spangler and Burgess, 2003).

- ◆ First, the stakeholders must be interdependent so that none of them can achieve on their own what the group will be able to achieve through collaborating. There must be an incentive for people to work together and cooperate. If someone can satisfy their interests without the group, they probably will.
- ◆ Second, participants must deal with their differences in a constructive way. That means that differences in value, needs, and interests must be recognized, worked with and respected. This requires “good-faith” participation by stakeholders because destructive attempts to undermine a party’s differing interests will likely cause the process to break down.
- ◆ Third, there must be joint or group ownership of the decisions made. Participants in the consensus-building process must agree on the final decisions and be willing to implement those decisions themselves.
- ◆ Fourth, consensus building or collaboration must be an emergent process. In other words, the decisions and outcomes of stakeholder collaboration must be carried out in a flexible way. How the group works together must be allowed to evolve over time, so that it does not become a static approach to

problem solving. If the collaborative process is successful, new solutions emerge that no single party could have envisioned or implemented on their own.

Spangler and Burgess (2003) further assert that at a more specific level, there are further criteria by which to evaluate the success and effectiveness of consensus building. These criteria fall into two main categories of assessment—process and outcomes. The criteria serve as ideal guidelines, and will not all be met perfectly by all consensus-building efforts, successful or not. Process criteria focus on the nature of a consensus process, and the more of these criteria a process meets, the more likely it will succeed. Consensus building should also be evaluated by the type and quality of the outcomes it produces. Both short-term and long-term outcomes should be evaluated. Again, the more criteria that are met by the outcomes, the more successful a consensus process is considered (Innes, 1999).

Conclusion

The main goal of social dialogue itself is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work. Successful social dialogue structures and processes have the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability, boost economic progress, promote employment policies, improve social protection policies, safeguard fundamental rights at work and ensure progress on other employment conditions. It is therefore imperative for all stakeholders in industrial relations in Nigeria to put all their machinery in place to effectively implement this instrument of industrial peace and harmony. In order to create appropriate conditions for consensus building to thrive in the workplaces, the following roles are prescribed for the identified stakeholders:

The State

- a. *Creating a Stable Political and Civil Climate:* For social dialogue to work, the State cannot be passive even if it is not a direct actor in the process. It is responsible for creating a stable and

civil climate, which enables autonomous employers' and workers' organisations to operate freely, without fear of reprisal. Even when the dominant relationships are formally bipartite, the State has to provide essential support for the parties' actions by providing the appropriate legal, institutional and other frameworks, which enable the parties to act effectively and efficiently.

- b. *Building Institutional Capacity:* The present weakness of institutions of dialogue in the country is the major constraint in promoting meaningful participation. The promotion of freedom of association—on which it is based—is fundamental to the promotion of dialogue. There is the need for increased workplace democracy. Sound industrial relations are critical for the prevention of disputes: with the lower rate of economic growth the need is now more urgent, since rising job losses risk increasing labour disputes.
- c. *Strengthening Individual Organizations:* This is of key importance to promoting dialogue and, in the current climate, improving the channels through which labour disputes can be prevented. The mechanisms of social dialogue also extend to the resolution of disputes.
- d. *The Role of Labour Inspection:* This can also function as an early-warning system for enterprises where labour disputes are likely. Government should train labour inspectors and equip them with new techniques to detect problems in labour-management relations and foster a climate of labour-management cooperation.
- e. *Involvement of other Parties in Policy Making:* It must be noted that financial markets affect workplace relations. This is a fundamental justification for the involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in dialogue on macroeconomic and social policy choices. Participation in this dialogue, however, requires strengthening the capabilities and knowledge of trade unions and employer participants.

The Trade Unions

- a. Trade unions intervention should focus on providing information and improving analytical capacity. They should assist the state in its analysis of the impact of the financial and economic crisis on Nigerian workers and its preparation of a trade union policy response. The impacts of various government policies on employed and unemployed workers and on trade unions, implications for policy, and strategic directions for the trade unions must be highlighted and the possible redress sought.
- b. The three labour centres (The Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, the Trade Union Congress, TUC and the Congress of Free Trade Union, CFTU) must come together on issues of national interest that affect all workers, analyze the effects of the policies and the possible crisis and forge a common strategy, thus helping the unions play a more effective part in tripartite dialogue in Nigeria.
- c. Trade unions should intensify workers' education projects. A major objective is to strengthen trade unions' capacity to defend workers' interests in the formal and informal sectors.
- d. Labour must reject every attempt of the state, in collaboration with the employers, to water down workers' rights.
- e. Trade unions should be adequately represented on the monitoring body set up to oversee the implementation of the various government policies.
- f. Trade unions should seek to strengthen their relations with the regional and international financial institutions, whose policies are being implemented in the country. Expanding the information and analytical base on which trade unions can draw is an increasingly important prerequisite for social dialogue.
- g. Beyond its necessary focus on helping to build the institutions through which dialogue can occur, trade unions must be materially involved in expanding the opportunities for social dialogue on solutions to labour crisis.

- h. A regular national tripartite seminar on termination of employment will also help focus attention on the immediacy of crisis-related problems. This should include a comparative overview of the social impact of labour crisis and the extent to which social dialogue had served to mitigate job losses, and a practitioners' panel on alternatives to retrenchment.

The Employers

- a. Employers' Associations should improve their ability to offer effective assistance to enterprises/industries affected by the economic downturn and various government policies.
- b. In cases of merger and acquisition, employers should treat workers' information, consultation, and participation as essential when facilitating the agreement, and not merely as a technical detail. Although in cases of merger, national law will govern the resulting merged company; shareholders are obliged to take into account the existing rights of workers in each of the companies concerned before the merger take place.
- c. Employers should respect collective agreement.
- d. There is the need for adequate consultation with the workers on vital issues that will affect them. The input of workers is paramount to industrial peace.
- e. Employers should avoid unfair labour practice in all its ramification.
- f. In term of negotiation or collective bargaining, employers like other parties are to negotiate in good faith.

When social dialogue and consensus building are allowed to triumph, the state will also avoid the effects of unresolved crises on national security, the national economy and its potency for affecting international politics, unemployment, inflation, political instability, and other vices that negatively affect the workplace.

REFERENCES

- Aturu, Bamidele (2005) Nigerian Labour Laws: Principles, Cases, Commentaries and Materials, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Lagos.
- Central Bank of Nigeria (2004) *Statistic Bulletin* Vol. 15, December.
- European Trade Union Confederation ETUC (2005) Co-determination is not an Alien Concept in Europe: <http://www.etuc.org/a382>.
- European Trade Union Confederation ETUC (2005) *European Parliament vote on Cross- Border Mergers Supports the Obligatory Rights Co-determination is not an Alien Concept in Europe*: <http://www.etuc.org/a/1256>.
- Fajana, Sola (2005): *Preparing for Social Dialogue and Collective Negotiations: Issues involved and Information Required*" Industrial Relations Seminar NUPENG, PENGASSAN and Management Representatives of Chevron/Texaco Nigeria Ltd.
- Fashoyin, Tayo (1992) Industrial Relations in Nigeria, Longman, Nigeria.
- Gray, Barbara (1989) Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems. San Francisco: Jessey Bass Publishers, 11-16.
- Innes, Judith E. (1999) *Evaluating Consensus Building* in Susskind, L., McKearman, S., and Larmar, J. T., (eds.) *Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*, Thousand Oaks, C. A. Songs Publications .
- ILO (1980) *In focus Programme on Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration* <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/sd/index.htm>.
- ILO (1980) *Dispute Prevention and Resolution* <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/themes/ds.htm>.
- ILO (1980) *Collective Bargaining* <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/themes/cb.htm>.

ILO (1980) *Social Dialogue: Tripartism* <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/themes/tri.htm>.

International Labour Conference (1996): Tripartite Consultation at the National level On Economic and Social Policy.

Spangler, Brad and Burgess, Heidi, (2003) Beyond Intractability: Consensus Building.

International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict
Consensus Building Conflict Research Consortium, University
of Colorado, USA.

The New Webster's Dictionary of English Language (2000)
International Edition, Lexicon International Publishers Guild
Group, New York..