

Agenda to the Biennial Conference
12|13 April 2016 City Hotel, Derry

FAIR EMPLOYMENT
DECENCY AT WORK
FAIR CONDITIONS
AT WORK **FAIR**
A LIVING **EMPLOYMENT**
WAGE DECENCY
A LIVING WAGE **AT WORK**
FAIR EMPLOYMENT

A Better Fairer Way

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

**Standing Orders for Conferences of
Affiliated Organisations with
Membership in Northern Ireland**

FAIR EMPLOYMENT
DECENCY AT WORK
FAIR CONDITIONS
AT WORK **FAIR**
A LIVING **EMPLOYMENT**
WAGE DECENCY
A LIVING WAGE AT WORK
FAIR EMPLOYMENT

A Better Fairer Way

1. Northern Ireland Conference

- 1.1 The Northern Ireland Conference shall meet biennially. The place and date shall be decided by the Northern Ireland Committee, subject to the approval of the Executive Council.
- 1.2 The Chairperson for the Sessions of the Conference shall be the Chairperson of the outgoing Northern Ireland Committee.
- 1.3 A Conference Arrangements Committee of five persons and two substitutes, elected at the previous Northern Ireland Conference, shall be responsible for the arrangements of the business of Conference, and generally take charge of the meeting place.

2. Representation

Only bona fide members or full-time officials who are members of an affiliated trade union and resident in Ireland may be appointed as delegates in accordance with the following scales:

- a. Trade unions with an affiliated membership in Northern Ireland of less than 1000 members = **one delegate**

Trade unions having an affiliated membership in Northern Ireland of:-

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-------|---|----|-----------|
| 1000 | members but less than | 2000 | = | 2 | delegates |
| 2000 | " " | 3000 | = | 3 | " |
| 3000 | " " | 4000 | = | 4 | " |
| 4000 | " " | 5000 | = | 5 | " |
| 5000 | " " | 6000 | = | 6 | " |
| 6000 | " " | 7000 | = | 7 | " |
| 7000 | " " | 8000 | = | 8 | " |
| 8000 | " " | 9000 | = | 9 | " |
| 9000 | " " | 10000 | = | 10 | " |
| 10000 | " " | 11000 | = | 11 | " |
| 11000 | " " | 12000 | = | 12 | " |
| 12000 | " " | 13500 | = | 13 | " |
| 13500 | " " | 15000 | = | 14 | " |
| 15000 | " " | 16500 | = | 15 | " |
| 16500 | " " | 18000 | = | 16 | " |
| 18000 | " " | 19500 | = | 17 | " |
| 19500 | " " | 21000 | = | 18 | " |
| 21000 | " " | 22500 | = | 19 | " |
| 22500 | " " | 24000 | = | 20 | " |
| 24000 | " " | 25500 | = | 21 | " |
| 25500 | " " | 27000 | = | 22 | " |
| 27000 | " " | 29000 | = | 23 | " |
| 29000 | " " | 31000 | = | 24 | " |
| 31000 | " " | 33000 | = | 25 | " |
| 33000 | " " | 35000 | = | 26 | " |
| 35000 | " " | 37000 | = | 27 | " |
| 37000 | " " | 39000 | = | 28 | " |
| 39000 | " " | 42000 | = | 29 | " |
| 42000 | " " | 45000 | = | 30 | " |

and **one delegate** for each 3000 members above 45000 and up to 75000 and thereafter in accordance with Paragraph 37 of the Constitution of Congress.

Trade Unions must include women delegates in their delegation in accordance with the following scale:

- b.** Trade Unions having an affiliated membership in Northern Ireland of more than 500 but less than 1000 women shall appoint at least one woman delegate.

Trade Unions having in Northern Ireland:-

| Women Membership | | Women Delegates | | |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|---|
| 1000 | but less than | 5000 | at least | 2 |
| 5000 | " | 10000 | " | 3 |
| 10000 | " | 15000 | " | 4 |
| 15000 | " | 20000 | " | 5 |

and at least one woman delegate for each 5000 women members above 20,000.

- c.** Local Councils of Trade Unions may appoint delegates (who must be members of affiliated trade unions) to the Conference in accordance with the following scale:-

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Up to 6500 affiliated membership | 1 delegate |
| Over 6500 affiliated membership | 2 delegates |

3. Motions

- 3.1 Affiliated organisations may submit up to three motions for the Conference Agenda. Motions must be signed by the authorised official of the organisation and forwarded to Congress not later than the date specified in the notice to organisations.
- 3.2 The Northern Ireland Committee may submit up to three motions for the Conference Agenda.
- 3.3 Motions must be within the scope of the Objects of Congress as set out in the Constitution. They must relate to the matters provided for in Paragraph 37 of the Constitution, viz "matters relating to the internal, industrial, economic and political conditions of Northern Ireland, and of direct concern to Northern Ireland members only". The Executive Council shall determine whether motions submitted are in order and its decision shall be final.

4. Business of Conference

The business of Conference may include the following items:

- a. The Report of the Northern Ireland Committee
- b. Special Reports from the Northern Ireland Committee
- c. Motions from affiliated organisations and the Northern Ireland Committee
- d. Guest speaker/s invited by the Northern Ireland Committee

5. Election of Northern Ireland Committee and Conference Arrangements Committee

The election of the Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) will be conducted using the single transferable vote system. The Congress Constitution provides that the election of the Northern Ireland Committee must result in the election of at least four women.

In the event that only four women are nominated for election to the Northern Ireland Committee, prior to the vote commencing these candidates will be declared elected and an election will be held to elect a further 14 members of the committee using the single transferable vote system.

In the event that there are more than four women nominated for election to the Northern Ireland Committee a single election will be held using the single transferable vote system. If the outcome of the election of the Northern Ireland Committee results in less than four women being elected then the following procedure should apply. The last man to be elected amongst the 18 should be replaced by the last woman to be eliminated. In the event that this does not result in four women being elected then the second last man to be elected shall be replaced by the second last women to be eliminated and so on until the minimum requirement of four women is met.

Nominations of persons for election as members of the Northern Ireland Committee (18 members, including four Reserved Seats for Women and one Reserved Seat for Councils of Trade Unions) and of the Conference Arrangements Committee (5 members plus 2 substitutes) may be made by any affiliated trade union entitled to representation at the Conference. Each nomination must be signed by the authorised official of the nominating union and must be forwarded so as to reach Congress not later than four weeks prior to the date of Conference. Nominations must be confined to persons who are delegates to Conference. A nomination shall not be made without the expressed consent of the person nominated.

Nominations for the Conference Arrangements Committee must be persons who are delegates to Conference, and may not be a member of the incoming Northern Ireland Committee.

A list of persons nominated as members of the Northern Ireland Committee and of the Conference Arrangements Committee will be sent to each affiliated organisation and to delegates not later than two weeks prior to the date of Conference.

6. Methods of Voting on Motions and Reports

Voting at Conference shall be confined to delegates and be by a show of hands, each delegate having one vote. Four delegates shall be appointed as Tellers.

7. Limitation of Speeches

The Conference Arrangements Committee shall make recommendations to Conference on time limits of speeches. No speaker shall speak more than once on the same question except the mover of a motion replying to the discussion.

8. Executive Council

Executive Council members and Congress Officials are entitled to attend Conference. Officials may speak as appropriate on motions or reports.

9. Other Matters

Matters not covered by these Standing Orders in principle shall be dealt with in accordance with the Standing Orders of Congress.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

SESSION 1 TUESDAY 12 APRIL: 10.00am – 1.00pm

Fraternal Greetings from representative of Derry Council of Trade Unions

Conference Opening by Mayor of Derry & Strabane District Council,
Councillor Elisha McCallion

Conference Arrangements Committee Report No. 1
(circulated)

Conference Arrangements Committee Report No. 2
(to be circulated if appropriate)

Additional Reports as necessary (verbal)

Appointment of **SCRUTINEERS AND TELLERS**

CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS – Jackie Pollock

GUEST SPEAKER – Office of the First and Deputy First Minister

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ADDRESS – Patricia King

Section A Introduction & Obituaries

Section B 2014 Conference Resolutions

A Better, Fairer Way

NIC Speaker to introduce the Debate

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Motion 1 | Protecting the Peace Process <i>UNISON</i> |
| Motion 2 | The Peace Process <i>FBU</i> |
| Motion 3 | Economy/Political/Anti Austerity <i>UNITE</i> |
| Motion 4 | Fresh Start Agreement <i>Derry Trades Council</i> |
| Motion 5 | Anti-Austerity <i>NIPSA</i> |
| Motion 6 | Tax Justice <i>PCS</i> |

Together with Section E of the Report

LUNCH

Lunchtime (1.15pm–2.15pm)

Fringe Meetings: All welcome! Refreshments will be available.

Campaign for Civil Marriage Equality – Where to Now?

Venue: The Alexander Suite

Fringe meeting hosted by the Trade Union Friends of Palestine

Venue: The McCorkell Suite

SESSION 2 TUESDAY 12 APRIL: 2.30pm – 5.30pm

Fraternal Greetings from the TUC

Economic & Social

Debate introduced by Paul Mac Flynn, NERI

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Motion 7 | European Union Referendum <i>USDAW</i> |
| Motion 8 | Manufacturing Support <i>UNITE</i> |
| Motion 9 | Public Housing <i>NIC</i> |
| Motion 10 | TTIP <i>Craigavon Trades Council</i> |
| Motion 11 | TTIP <i>CWU</i> |
| Motion 12 | UTV <i>Equity</i> |
| Motion 13 | Rural Jobs & Services <i>Omagh Trades Union Council</i> |
| Motion 14 | Benefits 'Sanctions' <i>Belfast & District Trades Council</i> |

Together with Section E of the Report

Trade Union Organisation

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Motion 15 | Trade Union Bill <i>GMB</i> |
| Motion 16 | Trade Union Bill <i>NIPSA</i> |
| Motion 17 | Employment Rights in Northern Ireland <i>USDAW</i> |
| Motion 18 | Equality in Employment Law for all Workers <i>PCS</i> |
| Motion 19 | Workers Advisory Clinic <i>PCS</i> |
| Motion 20 | Retired Members <i>Fermanagh Trades Council</i> |

Together with Section C of the Report

ADJOURNMENT at 5.30pm

SESSION 3 WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL: 9.00pm – 1pm

Fraternal Greetings from STUC and WTUC

Equality and Human Rights

- Motion 21 Violence against Women and Girls
UTU
- Motion 22 Cohabiting Couples
Craigavon Trades Council
- Motion 23 Clare's Law
GMB
- Motion 24 Action against Racism
NIPSA
- Motion 25 Age Discrimination Legislation
Retired Workers Committee
(Proposed to Conference by the NIC)
- Motion 26 Unconscious Bias
Prospect
- Motion 27 Alliance for Choice
UNISON
- Motion 28 Grandparent Carers
USDAW
- Motion 29 Workers with a Disability
NUJ

Together with Sections F & G of the Report

Health

- Motion 30 Maximising the public health workforce
CSP
- Motion 31 Health and Social Services
UNISON
- Motion 32 Cancer Care
Fermanagh Trades Council
- Motion 33 NHS Funding
Fermanagh Trades Council

Together with Section I of the Report

Employment

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Motion 34 | Charter of Rights <i>SIPTU</i> |
| Motion 35 | Industrial Relations <i>SIPTU</i> |
| Motion 36 | Industrial Democracy <i>Belfast and District Trade's Union Council</i> |
| Motion 37 | Collective Bargaining <i>Belfast and District Trade's Union Council</i> |
| Motion 38 | Exploitation of seafarers <i>RMT</i> |

Together with Section H of the Report

LUNCH

SESSION 4 WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL: 2.15pm – 5.15pm

Education

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Motion 39 | School Governance <i>NASUWT</i> |
| Motion 40 | Support for Skills & Education <i>UNITE</i> |
| Motion 41 | Flexible Working <i>NASUWT</i> |

Together with Section D of the Report

Any remaining motions which have been postponed due to the guillotine will be taken, providing time allows.

BDC 2016 Motions by section

Sections for the agenda

1. A Better Fairer Way
2. Economic and Social
3. Trade Union Organisation
4. Equality & Human Rights
5. Health
6. Employment
7. Education

A Better Fairer Way

Motion 1 – UNISON

Protecting the Peace Process

Conference congratulates the Northern Ireland Committee on its strategic response to the Fresh Start Agreement which recognises the political pressure exerted on parties in NI while rejecting all aspects of the Agreement which run counter to trade union principles and policies. This includes our rejection of all austerity measures and welfare cuts, the failure to implement commitments and equality and human rights, and the betrayal of victims and survivors of the conflict by unacceptable arrangements to deal with the past.

The tactics deployed by the UK Government as signatory to the Peace Agreement are a betrayal of its obligations to that Agreement. The general response of the Irish Government as co-signatory fell far short of its obligations.

However nothing in that unfortunate process absolves those political parties in Northern Ireland which precipitated the crisis, from their failure to work collaboratively in the best interests of the People. They must now learn the lesson that playing party politics with the core Peace Agreement commitments destabilises the Peace Process itself.

Consequently this Conference reaffirms our commitment to campaign for a just, equal and peaceful society based on the centrality of equality and human rights. To this end we call for the inclusion of core trade union demands in the forthcoming Programme for Government including:

- a) The implementation of the 2-tier workforce agreement.
- b) The Programme for Government to have at its core an anti-poverty strategy based on objective need
- c) That all NI public sector procurement utilises the provisions of the EU Procurement social and environmental clauses
- d) The Programme for Government to include a sustainable public health model
- e) The Programme for Government to seek to place education at the heart of social and economic policy
- f) That pay increases owed to those public sector workers be honoured and scheduled under the PfG
- g) A commitment to the non-privatisation of public service delivery
- h) The PfG to include a core element of equality centred on objective need in terms of employment and infrastructure policies

- i) The establishment of a manufacturing cross-departmental and stakeholder body to draft a sustainable and Northern Ireland-wide economic development and manufacturing strategy which maintains and grows skilled employment and develops the Green economy
- j) That an Economic & Social Council, comprising stakeholders and relevant Ministries, be established to develop a growing economy which aims to address the persistent social problems of Northern Ireland
- k) That the membership of the trade union movement, as the largest civil society organisation in NI, be reflected in the composition of public bodies proposed under the Fresh Start Agreement.

Motion 2 – FBU

Peace Process

Conference supports the Northern Ireland Committee on its response to the Fresh Start Agreement which acknowledges the importance of maintaining the Northern Ireland Assembly, holding our elected representatives to account while rejecting the Tory-led welfare reform agenda.

Conference reaffirms our commitment to continue to lobby and campaign against the welfare reform agenda and to help protect all elements of our society.

Motion 3 – UNITE

Economy/Political/Anti Austerity

Conference calls upon the incoming Executive to work with its affiliated unions to:

- Demand the NI Executive brings forward a Northern Ireland economic growth strategy underpinned by public-led investment with a particular focus on an activist manufacturing strategy;
- Oppose the current proposals to reduce corporation tax levels at the cost of even deeper cuts to public services and social spending;
- Promote the special circumstances of Northern Ireland and the need for these to be reflected in increased funding, for both revenue and capital expenditure, by HM Treasury.
- Promote a wage-led growth strategy and develop and roll-out strategies to end poverty pay;
- Oppose the austerity cuts to public services and social welfare provision dictated by the Westminster government; and enforced through the Fresh Start Agreement;
- Seek the transfer of tax-varying powers to the NI Executive and the full use of existing progressive fiscal levers to resource and sustain world-class public services, vital infrastructural investment and investment;

- Demand the NI Executive repeal anti-trade union legislation restricting workers' and union rights and extend collective bargaining across the economy, particularly those sectors afflicted by poverty pay.
- That NIC/ICTU must continue to give the lead in the anti-austerity campaign and the fight for jobs. Leading protest campaigns and building support for co-ordinated industrial action involving Northern Ireland Public and Private Sector workers.

Conference pledges to continue its opposition to the UK government's policies of penalising the poor for the economic crisis. To this end conference commits to continue a vibrant opposition to austerity in collaboration with our colleagues in the TUC, STUC and WTUC.

Motion 4 – Derry Trades Council

Fresh Start Agreement

Derry Trades Union Council notes that the "Fresh Start" Agreement between the DUP, Sinn Féin and the British and Irish Governments;

Paves the way for brutal cuts to benefits which will not be mitigated by limited and temporary extra funding and a stepping up of harassment of welfare recipients, driving vulnerable people further into poverty and desperation.

Will see Stormont borrow £700 million to fund around 20000 public sector redundancies, which will have a devastating impact on the economy, public services and rob young people of job opportunities.

Aims to cut corporation tax to 12.5% by April 2018, transferring hundreds of millions directly from public services to the profits of big business and beginning an unwinnable race to the bottom.

Lays the basis for the selloff of public assets and new austerity taxes as Stormont aims to meet "challenging cost reduction targets" across departments.

This Council believes that "Fresh Start" is a bad deal for workers, young people and the people of Northern Ireland in general. This Council also believes that this deal is fundamentally no better and in some ways worse than the Stormont House Agreement which the Northern Ireland Committee of ICTU rejected and which provoked the public sector strike on 13th March 2015.

This council notes with concern the statement from NIC ICTU regarding "Fresh Start" which reflects a begrudging acceptance of this deal. This Council calls on NIC ICTU and all bodies of the Trade Union movement to reject this austerity deal and work together to rebuild meaningful resistance to Tory and Stormont cuts through campaigns, demonstrations and crucially co-ordinated Industrial Action across all sectors.

There is an alternative!

Motion 5 – NIPSA

Anti-Austerity

Conference acknowledges the main NI political parties have sold Northern Ireland short by reaching agreement on a range of austerity measures which will be bad for workers, bad for their families and bad for the citizens of Northern Ireland. While it is acknowledged that some elements of devolution have been a positive development for Northern Ireland, the future political and socio-economic direction must be determined on the basis of what is best for its citizens. This will not be achieved through an austerity agenda, public expenditure cuts and cross sectoral job loss. The Northern Ireland Committee needs to reinvigorate its campaign to defend public services, defend public and private sector jobs and oppose the introduction of a reduced rate of Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland.

The Fresh Start Implementation Agreement has seen thousands of public sector jobs lost to the economy of Northern Ireland. Despite the constant rhetoric of growing the private sector this has also not borne fruit and instead we have seen thousands of medium and high value jobs lost from the private sector.

In addition the NI Assembly abdicated its responsibility for the most vulnerable in our society and handed the power to Westminster to introduce the NI Welfare Reform Bill. While it is accepted there is some amelioration for NI citizens through enabling legislation, these statutory revisions are minor in nature, will be short-lived and are in part to be delivered through a repackaging of existing social funds.

Conference instructs the Northern Ireland Committee to engage meaningfully with all constituent unions to draw together a united and sustained campaign to protect trade union members, their families and wider society from the pro-austerity parties and the pro-cuts agenda which is dismantling public services both now and for generations to come.

In addition the Northern Ireland Committee, as part of this campaign, should engage with wider civic society through bona fide organisations to build a united campaign of opposition and to build a better society for all.

Motion 6 – PCS

Tax Justice

Conference reaffirms its agreed opposition to and commitment to fight; austerity, welfare cuts and all attacks on jobs and public services.

The Fresh Start Agreement, designed to attack the poorest and most vulnerable in our society whilst protecting the wealthiest, is one of the greatest cons in our history, sold to us by the DUP, Sinn Féin, the British and Irish Governments and the media on the basis that austerity and cuts are necessary.

The DUP and Sinn Féin made much of the questionable additional loaned money they secured from the British Government, yet neither party demanded billions of pounds for the NI share of the UK tax gap to ensure no cuts were made.

The UK tax gap is estimated in 2014 to be £119.4 billion by the calculations of Richard Murphy of Tax Research UK, which would more than pay for better welfare provision, public services and pay down the deficit. Yet the UK government has consistently refused to adequately legislate to stop tax evasion and avoidance or to resource the collection of the taxes owed. It is an ideological choice to make the poorest pay and the richest richer. A choice that is being forced upon the people of N Ireland by the NI Assembly, due to their failure to demand tax justice.

This conference calls on the NIC to;

- Campaign against the implementation of Welfare reform and Austerity which will be implemented through the Fresh Start Agreement.
- To co-ordinate industrial action against cuts
- Work with NERI and Tax Research UK to produce economic information on the impact of the tax gap on N Ireland society.
- Work with affiliates to deliver a campaign demanding Tax Justice including the production of materials for use by trade union activists and for the wider community and public.
- Lobby the NI Assembly and all political parties on the tax gap and the Tax Justice campaign.
- Organise protests, demonstrations at companies and businesses who have been exposed as tax dodgers, to raise public awareness of the Tax Justice Campaign.
- Campaign against the closure of HMRC offices across N Ireland and for a reversal of the cuts to staffing in HMRC to close the tax gap.
- Campaign against the privatisation of HMRC work.

Economic and Social

Motion 7 – USDAW

European Union Referendum

Conference notes that the referendum on membership of the European Union (EU) will be held by the end of 2017 and could be as early as June/ July 2016. This will be an important decision for workers in Northern Ireland.

A number of key workers' rights and employment protections come from European Union Directives such as TUPE, redundancy consultation, working time protections, part-time workers' rights and anti-discrimination legislation.

Conference strongly opposes the UK Government's renegotiation strategy which has attempted to get opt-outs from employment protections and scapegoat migrant workers by restricting access to in-work benefits.

Conference is in favour of a social Europe with employment protections and workers' rights.

Thousands of jobs in Northern Ireland rely, directly or indirectly, upon close links with the EU. Conference expresses concern that exit from the EU could put these jobs at risk.

Political and economic co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland facilitated and supported by both being members of the EU, helps to support the peace process. This co-operation benefits both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

UK exit from the EU could disrupt the cross-border links and could undermine this important part of the peace process.

Conference believes it is in the political and economic interests of workers in Northern Ireland for the UK to remain in the EU.

Conference calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to campaign in the run-up to the forthcoming referendum to urge workers in Northern Ireland to vote to remain in the EU.

Motion 8 – UNITE

Manufacturing Support – Energy and Transport.

Conference calls upon the incoming Executive to work with its affiliated unions to:

- Campaign for the return of Northern Ireland Electricity to the ownership and control of Northern Ireland allowing the adoption of a pricing policy which will support the retention of our manufacturers;
- Continue to campaign for the accelerated delivery of the north-south energy interconnector, which is vital to the development of the all-island energy market;
- Demand that the NI Executive brings forward proposals to develop our huge potential for renewables production in wind, wave, tidal and biomass energy on a basis that does not undermine competitiveness;
- Demand action by the Executive to ensure large-scale independent generators are facilitated in connecting to the electrical grid;
- Demand the NI Executive investigate the competitiveness of freight operators on the Irish sea with a view to lowering the cost of shipping to Northern Ireland businesses;
- Campaign to ensure the NI Executive brings forward plans to extend our rail infrastructure in full public ownership across all parts of Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on developing rail freight volumes and plans for full rail electrification within a ten year period;
- Campaign to ensure the NI Executive brings forward plans for a British-Irish rail interconnector with a twenty-year development timeline;
- Demand the NI Executive brings forward plans for full interconnectivity, both passenger and freight, with rail connections to both airports and major ports within the short to medium-term.
- Campaign to demand the Executive proactively seeks to roll-out sectoral bargaining across those sectors of the economy with the lowest rates of pay.

Motion 9 – Northern Ireland Committee

Public Housing

Conference notes that a large number of Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants received letters in mid-February telling them that it is proposed to sell their homes to housing associations.

Conference believes that the interests of tenants and of the working-class people of the North generally are best served by retaining NIHE stock within the public sector. Conference is concerned that the proposed sales to housing associations could lead on towards full-blown privatisation of our public ("social") housing.

The creation of the NI Housing Executive in 1971 represented a major achievement for the civil rights movement and for the trades union movement in the North. Trade unions, individually and through trades councils, had been calling for many years for a rapid expansion of public-sector housing and the removal of control of housing allocation from local councils and for the introduction of a housing points system. The achievement of these goals should be a source of pride to all who worked to bring it about. This achievement should not be set aside easily.

Conference calls on the Department of Social Development to call a halt to the sell-off of NIHE houses, and calls on the incoming Executive to introduce legislation to empower a reformed Housing Executive to borrow on the market to fund a crash building programme of much-needed social housing.

Conference calls on the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister to end the role of the unaccountable Strategic Investment Board in relation to the Housing Executive and to return control to a updated and accountable Housing Executive board.

Conference declares its solidarity with trades unionists in the Housing Executive in their efforts to protect jobs and fend off privatisation. Conference reaffirms its opposition to the privatisation of public assets and reaffirms the determination of the trades union movement to defend the public sector.

Motion 10 – Craigavon Trades Council

TTIP

Conference notes the ongoing campaigns to oppose the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership. While some public events have been organised to raise awareness of the impact on local communities and services, conference notes that not enough is known generally about TTIP.

Conference calls on NIC-ICTU and its affiliates to redouble their efforts to raise awareness with their members, the public and local businesses. Conference also demands that we engage our political representatives to ensure they oppose this disastrous agreement in all its forms.

Motion 11 – CWU

TTIP

This Conference is extremely concerned by ongoing international trade negotiations that will most certainly endanger government's ability to regulate, and citizens' rights to access basic public services; e.g. water, health and energy all for the sake of corporate greed.

The European Union's (EU) CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) with Canada, the ratification of which is expected to be rolled out in 2016, and the ongoing 'secret' talks on TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) with the United States pose a threat which could lock public services into a commercialisation from which they will never recover!

Multi-National business has achieved huge success as CETA is set to be implemented in 2016.

This in effect could mean all services are subject to liberalisation. The same could be applied in TTIP where the European Union members are under extreme pressure to meet Multi-national business demands.

The biggest threat to public services comes from the far-reaching investment protection provisions enshrined in CETA and also foreseen for inclusion in TTIP.

Under 'Investor State Dispute Settlement' (ISDS) thousands of US and Canadian corporations can make claims in a private court (established by them). These kangaroo courts will cripple a country's right to govern and must be opposed.

It is not hard to image the EU member states being subjected to regulatory changes and court action across the services sector because of diminishing corporate profits, potentially leading to multi-million euro pay-outs in compensation.

The complex reservations and exemptions in CETA and TTIP are currently totally inadequate in offering protection to the public sector.

In the most recent draft TTIP services text, severely restricts the use of USO's (Universal Service Obligations) and curbs competition by public postal operators mirroring the wishes of big private courier companies such as UPS and FEDEX, who would wish to 'cherry pick' when and where they deliver.

The sole purpose of these types of agreements is to extend Corporate Investor Rights.

Therefore this Conference calls for:

- That the ICTU will fully support a concerted campaign of unified trade union opposition to both CETA and TTIP and similar trade agreements, which threaten workers job security, basic health and safety standards and economic growth.
- The ICTU will also lobby government across both jurisdictions to ensure total opposition to these and any future proposed similar agreements. Our elected representatives both at local and national level must relay this message of opposition to the European Union.
- That the ICTU will also ensure adequate resource is available to establish a 'working party' which will deal exclusively with opposing CETA, TTIP, and any such trade agreements. This to include drafting a report which identifies the implications of ISDS private arbitrations and their impact on public services, worker's rights, and any economy recovery in Northern Ireland.

Motion 12 – EQUITY

UTV

Ulster Television was an independent cash rich television broadcasting company that paid very little for its television franchise yet continued to maximise its profits without really investing much in its programme and broadcasting production output within Northern Ireland. This was particularly the case in Drama production which was an insult to the talent base that lives here.

Given that the company has now been snapped up by ITV for £100 million we are seeking through Congress that ITV redress the years of underproduction within Northern Ireland by producing and commissioning high end Television drama production within Northern Ireland using local talent both behind camera and in front of camera.

Motion 13 – Omagh Trades Union Council

Rural Jobs & Services

Conference recognises that austerity's affects are most severe on the most vulnerable, both individuals and communities.

Conference notes with alarm that rural communities have suffered worst from cuts to services, which have had a severe impact on the economy of country towns and villages. These have knocked on to local small businesses

Conference calls on the ICTU to put pressure on the Assembly's Executive, in all ways it sees fit, to defend jobs in rural areas, and to use the public sector to create jobs in those areas.

Motion 14 – Belfast and District Trades Union Council

Benefits 'Sanctions'

Congress recognises the importance of due process in ensuring that trade union members are afforded rights to information and full disclosure, representation, appeal and presumption of innocence when going through workplace disciplinary processes or formal legal proceedings.

Between October 2014 and October 2015 there were there were 21,386 'sanctions' and 'adverse decisions' where people on Job Seekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance in Northern Ireland had their money stopped - an average of almost 2,000 a month. There are many more incidents across other social security benefits.

The impact on individuals and families is severe. Many are evicted from their homes, made homeless, go without essentials like heating, food and electricity, are forced to use food banks and loan sharks, and suffer deteriorating mental and physical health.

We support the Right to Work: Right to Welfare group's campaign for international human rights, under International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (General Comment 19) ratified by the UK government in 1978, to be enforced when people reliant on social security are subjected to allegations and disciplinary processes. This includes:

- a) An opportunity for genuine consultation with those affected;
- b) Timely and full disclosure of information on the proposed measures;
- c) Reasonable notice of proposed actions;
- d) Legal recourse and remedies for those affected; and
- e) Legal assistance for obtaining legal remedies.

We also believe that the system should not allow any form of 'sanction' to be imposed until after a full, just and transparent appeals process has been completed.

Under no circumstances should an individual be deprived of a benefit on discriminatory grounds or of the minimum essential level of benefits.

We call for the NI Executive generally, the Department of Social Development (soon to be Department of Communities) and management at the Social Security Agency to ensure these basic rights are upheld for some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Trade Union Organisation

Motion 15 – GMB

Trade Union Bill

This conference notes with concern the proposed changes in legislation affecting the Trade Union movement in the rest of the UK.

While we appreciate that Minister Farry has stated he will not implement the Bill in Northern Ireland, we must not become complacent.

NIC ICTU must ensure that any attempts to introduce elements of the legislation are vigorously defended. In particular we must ensure the continuation of “check off” facilities.

We call on NIC ICTU to vigorously campaign to change the legislation relating to the method of conducting industrial ballots to ensure wider participation and engagement with members. This should include investigating alternative methods of casting votes such as workplace ballots and electronic voting.

Motion 16 – NIPSA

Trade Union Bill

Conference is opposed to the ongoing attacks by the Westminster Government on a raft of anti-trade union legislation such as the Trade Union Bill and other employment laws. Conference welcomes that the NI Assembly have not sought to introduce these draconian laws and instead are proposing to retain aspects of local labour law that are less regressive than the GB legislation in relation to the qualifying period for unfair dismissal or reduction in the consultation period for collective redundancies.

Conference also welcomes in the initial statements from the Minister for Employment and Learning that he did not endorse nor recommend local application of the Tories' 2015 Trade Union Bill. However, while these facts acknowledge no immediate political rush to make things worse, they also show the unsurprising failure to look to a broader framework of employment law that would empower the voice of a key element in the workplace – the trade union movement. The reason for this approach may be a lack of imagination or objectively (as suggested by the failure to ban exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts) an ideological choice. Whatever the motivation, the labour movement locally cannot let its consequences go unchallenged.

Conference therefore calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to seek to build a campaign that does not merely accept that it is sufficient that employment laws do not merely get worse, but to proactively campaign for the creation of employment legislation that re-empowers and gives a stronger voice to the fight for economic justice and democratic accountability that the trade union movement can offer.

Motion 17 – USDAW

Employment Rights in Northern Ireland

Conference welcomes the decision not to introduce the Trade Union Bill in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Executive Minister, Stephan Farry, in making this announcement correctly stated that this piece of legislation was “disproportionate to the problem, or perceived problem, with industrial action”.

He went on to identify the positive role that trade unions play in civic society and the fundamental rights to organise. He also stated that he did not believe “that there would be any prospect of agreement on such legislation ... given the viewpoints of parties in the Assembly and the Executive”.

The devolution of employment legislation and the view of the parties in the Assembly on employment legislation means that the trade union movement in Northern Ireland is in a different position to the situation in Britain.

Over the last few years, the trade union movement in Northern Ireland have been able to win a better deal on key employment rights compared to changes implemented in Britain by the Conservative/Coalition Governments. For example:

- Workers in Northern Ireland have protection against unfair dismissal after 12 months, instead of two years as is the case in Britain.
- Employment tribunal fees have not been introduced in Northern Ireland.
- There is a 90 day consultation period for large scale redundancies whereas this has been reduced to 45 days in Britain.

Workers in Northern Ireland now have employment rights that are significantly better than the rights enjoyed by our trade union brothers and sisters in the rest of the UK.

Due to the balance of power between the different parties in the Executive and Assembly the potential exists for us to lobby and get improvements to employment rights in Northern Ireland.

Conference calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to prioritise lobbying the Executive and Assembly for improvements to employment rights in Northern Ireland

Motion 18 – PCS

Equality in Employment Law for all Workers

Conference condemns the continued casualisation of labour with ever increasing use of short term, casual, zero hours contracts etc. creating insecure work and mass under employment.

Conference notes that workers on these contracts are not afforded the same protections under employment law as those deemed “employees” creating a disparity in the treatment of workers due to employment “status” and a divisive hierarchy of worker in the workplace. This in turn creates difficulties for unions trying to organise workplaces where the majority of staff are deemed workers and do not have day 1 rights which leaves employers free to treat staff abysmally and hire and fire at will. Conference acknowledges the success of ICTU and their affiliates political lobbying to prevent the introduction of the Tory Trade Union Bill and Tory reforms to Tribunals, which demonstrates the power our movement has to affect change. We must use this power now to force the NI Assembly to change employment law, to remove the concept of employment status from legislation to ensure that all workers have the same rights and further that those rights are enhanced by the repeal of the existent anti-trade union legislation.

Conference call on the NIC to:

- Work with affiliates to campaign and lobby for a change in NI employment law to give all workers parity of protections, removing the “employment status” from the legislation
- To make zero hours and casual contracts unlawful
- To campaign and lobby for the repeal of current anti- trade union legislation.

Motion 19 – PCS

Workers Advisory Clinic

Reductions in the funding for Citizens Advice Bureaux and other advisory services has left workers in non-unionised workplaces without adequate access to employment advice and support. Employers are able to breach employment law, behave despicably, particularly against, young, female and disabled employees and get away with it unchallenged.

To protect non-unionised workers, to challenge the worst abuses of employers, to encourage non-unionised workers to join a union, to bring new people into the labour movement, to support our communities, we must pool our resources and expertise to provide advice and where appropriate, representation, through "Workers Advice Clinics". Workers Advice Clinics would be staffed by volunteers from affiliated trade unions, the NIC - ICTU retired workers committee and Trades Councils. This service would be only for non-unionised workers / workplaces where unions had no presence or were not trying to organise.

Conference calls on the NIC to:

- Set up a subcommittee of affiliates working with Trades Councils to bring forward a proposal to the NIC, to set up and launch Workers Advisory Clinics, within 6 months of conference.

Conference suggests:

- Affiliates are asked to provide resources being; meeting space, volunteers etc.
- A six month pilot to start, with a workers advisory clinic in Derry and Belfast

Motion 20 – Fermanagh Trades Council

Retired Members

That this conference is concerned that Retired Workers still have no avenue by which to submit directly and speak in support of motions to BDCs. The NIC is therefore instructed to bring forward whatever change of rules are necessary, to enable one motion to be accepted from the Retired Workers Committee for each NIC BDC. The content of this motion to be issues which are of concern to Retired Members.

Equality & Human Rights

Motion 21 – UTU

Violence against Women and Girls

Conference is appalled at the level of violence against women and girls in all parts of our society, including at the workplace.

Conference notes the survey undertaken by the Women's Committee in 2014 on the impact of domestic violence on the workplace which had nearly 2,000 responses. Worryingly, a third of those responding noted that they had experienced domestic violence and that this had impacted on their work in relation to issues such as being forced to take time off work due to physical injury and restraint.

Respondents to the survey indicated that workplace policies in relation to domestic violence could have made a positive difference to their circumstances.

Conference calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to:

- Campaign to introduce legislation similar to the Violence against Women and Girls Act in Wales which places a positive duty on Ministers and public bodies to introduce, monitor and evaluate strategies to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls;
- Work with affiliates and employers to develop workplace policies on domestic violence and introduce it as part of the bargaining agenda.

Motion 22 – Craigavon Trades Council

Cohabiting Couples

Conference notes the case –Brewster v NILGOSC – and efforts to obtain cohabiting couples equal rights under pension legislation. Conference notes that cohabiting couples are required to complete a declaration to obtain pension rights should a partner die while couples in a marriage or civil partnership do not. This has led to pensions rights not transferring to partners.

Conference calls on NIC-ITCU and affiliates to support the case being taken forward by Denise Brewster. Conference also calls on NIC-ICTU to engage local political parties to seek a change in the legislation to ensure cohabiting couples the same rights with regards their pensions.

Motion 23 – GMB

Implementation of Clare's Law in Northern Ireland

Domestic abuse affects 1 in 4 women. PSNI respond to a domestic incident every 23 minutes. Many perpetrators are serial perpetrators going from woman to woman.

Presently women do not have the right to know if their partner has a history of domestic violence. Clare Wood was murdered by her ex-partner, a known convicted abuser across a number of jurisdictions. Police and Social Workers were legally prevented from sharing information with victims.

Following a successful campaign by Clare's father Michael Brown and reporter Michelle Livesey, Clare's law has been rolled out in England, Scotland and Wales.

Under Clare's Law, otherwise known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, men and women can request information about their partner, or third parties such as friends or relatives can make requests if they are "concerned".

Police and other agencies including social services then consider whether releasing information on someone's past is "necessary, lawful and proportionate" to protect someone from their partner.

Women here should be afforded the opportunity to 'ask or be told' to protect both themselves and their children, potentially saving lives. The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) has undoubtedly saved lives and we believe that women in Ireland should be afforded the same protection.

Conference calls on the Northern Ireland committee of ICTU to develop a public awareness campaign and to lobby the Justice Minister and the assembly for the full implementation of Clare's Law. We deserve the full protection of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme be extended to Northern Ireland.

Motion 24 – NIPSA

Action against Racism

Conference is concerned at the current crisis whereby over a million citizens of Syria and other Middle Eastern countries are displaced because of the political and humanitarian crisis in these countries. No-one can fail to have been moved by the pictures which have spread around the world of people in desperation fleeing their homes, risking their own lives and that of their families, to seek a better, secure and safe future for them.

Conference notes the growing evidence of heightened racism fed by a concerted campaign of misinformation about the impact resettlement of displaced families will have on local communities and local economies. It is disgraceful that some politicians and community leaders are scaremongering indicating that migrants will take the jobs of local people, scrounge off the social security benefits system and be able to queue jump on the social housing waiting lists. However, it is a well-established fact that migrants make a positive and significant contribution to our economy and society. Conference acknowledges the tangible support given by many community organisations and the trade union movement in welcoming the migrant population and assisting in addressing the many challenges they face integrating into their new lives in Northern Ireland.

Conference therefore calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to ensure that all forms of racism together with the sore of sectarianism is tackled head on and that we engage with all political representatives and community leaders some who are part of the problem so that it is stamped out at grass roots level and that an education programme be developed to ensure that the scourge of racism is not allowed to grow and develop.

Conference also calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to reinforce the anti-racism message of the trade union movement at every available opportunity.

Motion 25 – RWC (Proposed by NIC)

Age Discrimination Legislation.

The mandate of the NI Assembly passed in march without the completion of legislation designed to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of age, a requirement under the 1998 Belfast Agreement, and the subject of equivalent legislation in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

The proposed legislation presented last year for consultation from OFMDFM is far from perfect, but it represents an important first step.

The age sector believes that age discrimination legislation in relation to goods, facilities and services must:

- be framed with a strong purpose clause containing a series of clearly articulated goals
- include the public, private and voluntary sector in its scope
- include strong protections for older people across all areas of goods, facilities and services, in particular health and social care and financial services
- include people of all ages in the scope of the legislation

Conference calls on the NIC to pursue this matter with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister during its Bi-Lateral forum meetings and also to ensure that the passage of this legislation is included in the Programme for Government for the incoming NI Executive.

Motion 26 – PROSPECT

Unconscious Bias

Conference is concerned that the hollowing out of the labour market is leading to a growing gulf between low paid and often insecure employment and top level professional roles, with fewer opportunities for individuals to progress through mid-range specialist, technical and supervisory jobs.

These trends have a disproportionate impact on women and minority groups because of the widespread prevalence of unconscious bias - for example affecting recruitment and promotion decisions. This is not only inequitable for individuals but also means that organisations are losing out on a large part of the talent pool.

Conference calls on the ICTU Northern Ireland Committee to highlight the insidious impact of unconscious bias and to act as a central point for sharing guidance and case studies of good workplace practice.

Motion 27 – UNISON

Alliance for Choice – Trust Women

Conference applauds the Alliance for Choice campaign – 'Trust Women', and calls on all candidates in the forthcoming Assembly elections to:

- TRUST WOMEN to make decisions about their own lives
- Ask for LEGAL CHANGE to allow greater access
- Push for a FREE VOTE on any progressive changes

Motion 28 – USDAW

Grandparent Carers

Conference recognises that finding childcare on bank holidays, at weekends, in the evening and/or early morning remains a serious challenge for parents in Northern Ireland. Paying for this care presents parents with yet another challenge. Given this, many workers rely heavily on informal care arrangements to cover gaps in formal provision.

Conference acknowledges the crucial role working grandparents play in providing childcare. Recent research by USDAW reveals the extent of informal care arrangements – half of women and a quarter of men aged over 50 provided regular and substantial childcare for their grandchildren.

However, more than half report that they find it difficult to get their caring responsibilities taken seriously by their employer.

Informal arrangements, as important as they are as part of a package of care that parents rely on, pose their own difficulties. Grandparents in particular lack any specific employment rights. The right to time off in an emergency is limited in its scope and unpaid. The right to request flexible working although open to grandparents offers no guarantees and when refused is difficult to challenge.

Conference calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to:

- Support affiliates in the work they are doing to campaign for improvements in grandparents' rights at work.
- Share best practice to assist unions to negotiate improvements to existing agreements.
- Continue to make the case to the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly for more robust employment rights for grandparents and extended, accessible and affordable formal childcare provision.

Motion 29 – NUJ

Employment and Advancement of Workers with a Disability

In light of the extent of disability in developing countries and the lack of employment legislation enforcement even when acceptable such legislation has been passed; and given the implacable hostility of most employers to the employment and advancement of workers with disability; this conference;

Calls upon the trade union movement in Ireland to support the international trade union movement in developing disability support programmes.

And In this regard Conferences further calls:

for NIC-ICTU to commit formally, resources for the global implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, including greater solidarity with trade unionists in developing countries who are seeking justice for those with disabilities.

Health

Motion 30 – CSP

Maximising the Public Health Workforce

The Public Health Agency (PHA) recognises that reducing health inequalities is central to ensuring economic and social progress and that reducing entrenched health inequalities is not something that the PHA alone can achieve.

In 2015 the Royal Society of Public health published "Understanding the wider public health workforce" which highlighted the need to look beyond the public health workforce to people who are able to encourage people to lead healthier lives and support them to change

NIC ICTU is the representative body for 34 trade unions with over 215,000 members across NI and prides itself on being the largest civil organisation in Northern Ireland

Congress calls on the Northern Ireland executive committee of the Irish Congress of trade unions to take steps to develop its membership to allow them to become the wider public health workforce in Northern Ireland.

We also call on the committee to ask the Northern Ireland Assembly to initiate discussion across all government departments, and with professional bodies, employer organisations and the trade unions movement around who should be involved in supporting the public's health. These discussions should ensure that education and training is provided to the wider workforce ensuring that they are equipped with the requisite skills, competencies and confidence to deliver the public health message across a variety of settings.

Motion 31 – UNISON

Health and Social Services – Time for Radical Change

Our health and social care system is once again awash with a series of reviews. This continuous review syndrome has been used as a smokescreen to avoid the radical change necessary to produce a public health system to meet the needs of the people. Meanwhile, our energies have been diverted into unnecessary campaigns to stop the closure of residential homes, the erosion of in-house homecare services and the continuous threat to hospital services.

While we have been largely successful in these campaigns, we cannot continue with a model of healthcare based on an accountancy framework, rather than a public health framework, which increasingly puts public health workers and their unions in conflict with decision-makers. The time for radical change is now.

Conference notes that:

- Health inequalities are increasing from a base of existing crisis, and remain unaddressed;
- The health of the people faces increasing damage from ongoing austerity;
- Ongoing cuts have reached crisis level and, despite commitment and professional standards from all health workers, the provision of many services is at the point of compromise to patient safety;
- The financial envelope is unsustainable and under-resourced, while performance on key metrics is in a tail spin of decline;
- The current commissioner-provider split structures are demonstrably not fit for purpose, and cannot deliver performance, standards of care, financial stability or address inequalities.

Conference therefore calls on Congress to continue its campaign calling for radical reform in which the voice of health workers is heard loud and clear. Campaign priorities should include:

- The immediate restoration of the Partnership Forum, which enables trade union input and contribution into all key policy issues, including those addressed by the Donaldson Report;
- The progressive elimination of health inequalities through a public health model;
- An end to austerity cuts;
- Workforce inclusion on the basis of respect for trade unions and their members;
- Ending the commissioner provider split and the consequent restoration of 'Trusts' to a collaborative healthcare system;
- Transparent funding and resource allocation not only in health but across Government Departments;
- Cessation of outsourcing of health and care services, and the return in-house of privatised services;
- Health and social care services free at the point of use;
- Honesty of information to workers, patients and clients, reversing the current weakening of performance standards in an attempt to gloss over the current crises;
- The restoration of health as the number one priority in the Programme for Government.

Motion 32 – Fermanagh Trades Council

Cancer Care

This conference notes that 30,000 men in GB are living with terminal prostate cancer but are not being offered enough care and support to combat the disease.

This Conference instructs the NIC to join with other interested organisations to obtain from the Government their agreement to prioritise prostate cancer care as a number of sufferers are more than double those with breast or bowel cancers.

Research funding for this most common of male cancers fall well behind other cancer research programmes.

Motion 33 – Fermanagh Trades Council

NHS Funding

This Conference is concerned at the continued under-funding of the NHS. This is putting lives at risk and is causing Patients' anxiety and distress in particular when treatment is cancelled.

The underfunding has resulted in the local NHS trusts having to outsource to private companies who will in turn make a profit from the sick.

The NHS needs the funds to survive or it will go under therefore this Conference instructs the NIC to work with other organisations and bodies to put pressure on the Stormont Assembly to increase funding for the NHS

Employment

Motion 34 – SIPTU

Charter Of Rights

This conference wishes a greater focus upon employment rights in the forthcoming Assembly elections and seeks that NIC ICTU issues a Charter for Fair Conditions at Work to be distributed to all Political Parties standing in the election. The Charter should include commitments on Fair Hours of Work, Public Procurement, Living Wage, Respect in the Workplace & An External Appeals System.

Affiliates can then ensure that members are aware of the political parties support for the Charter for Fair Conditions at Work.

Motion 35 – SIPTU

Industrial Relations

Conference calls on Congress to renew the campaign for a review of Industrial Relations procedures and the establishment of new models which will be a vehicle for the resolution of collective and individual disputes without the requirement to resolve them by industrial might.

Motion 36 – Belfast and District Trades Union Council

Industrial Democracy

Conference believes that good citizenship and active participation in the wider political sphere can be fostered by the introduction of 'Industrial Democracy' in the workplace. Allowing workers to have a greater say in decision-making at work helps improve political democracy by reducing the imbalance that exists in society on account of the unfair advantages enjoyed by those with wealth and social influence.

The tenets of democracy, namely freedom of expression, access to information, participation in decision-making and equality of opportunity, must be made available to every member of society in order that there can be a truly democratic system. These principles must extend into every facet of life, not least of all, the workplace.

Given the importance of work as a means of making a living, and the very prominence that work has in the lives of most people, having a say in the conditions and future of the workplace is of vital importance.

Conference recognises that Industrial Democracy must have trade unions at its core and rejects the forms of workers participation introduced by employers to exclude trade unions and purely to benefit the agenda of the employers.

Conference calls on the incoming NIC to:

- Organise a seminar to examine the benefits of, and opportunities for pursuing Industrial Democracy in the NI context.
- Produce an Industrial Democracy Charter that can be used to build campaigns around.

Motion 37 – Belfast and District Trades Union Council

Collective Bargaining

Under the cover of 'austerity' many governments have seized the opportunity to advance the neo-liberal agenda and slash public services, public employment and the provision of services. In consequence, living standards have dropped for the mass of the people, wealth has increased for the tiny minority, inequality has accelerated and the markers of civilised society are being systematically destroyed. Austerity, far from reversing the recession, has exacerbated it.

The policy of driving down wages and benefits reduces demand in the economy, which has an adverse knock-on effect of reducing consumption of the products and services of all enterprises. It also deprives the government of tax revenues with obvious consequences.

To halt the destructive race to the bottom that would impair economic recovery conference calls on the incoming NIC to examine the introduction of collective bargaining as a way of reducing inequality, enhancing employee voice in the workplace, and raising wages and generally improving terms and conditions of employment. Similar initiatives having been adopted by governments of all political stripes across the world over the last hundred years, in response to economic crises such as the one we are now encountering.

The UK was first in the development of collective bargaining (from 1917 to 1921, and from 1934 to 1979), and then in the attack on collective bargaining from 1980 until today. Historical statistics demonstrate that the decline in collective bargaining coverage in the UK is mirrored by the growth in inequality.

Conference also notes that the promotion of collective bargaining is a requirement of international law imposed by a series of Treaties ratified by the UK and therefore binding on it.

The aim would be to create a framework of sectoral bargaining arrangements to regulate terms and conditions of employment which would set minimum standards for the sector as a whole covering terms and conditions of employment for the sector as a whole (wages, overtime and shift rates, hours of work, holidays, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, and so on) as well as other matters such as health and safety, workforce planning, training, apprenticeships, skills and productivity and pensions. They could also develop procedures for the resolution of disputes both collective and individual, allowing an opportunity for workplace problems to be resolved without the need to seek redress before the courts and tribunals.

Conference calls on the incoming NIC to consider the trade union movement's past experience of collective bargaining, existing agreements, as well as considering models operating in other countries, with a view to producing a proposal for the introduction of collective bargaining arrangements for relevant sectors.

Although industry-wide collective bargaining is essential to the ambition for economic growth, reflation and social justice, the right to collective bargaining must be underpinned by other fundamental labour rights: the right to organise and the right to strike. Therefore, conference also calls on the incoming NIC to reinvigorate the campaign for the repeal of the anti-trade union legislation introduced by UK governments from 1980 to 1993.

Motion 38 – RMT

Exploitation of seafarers

Conference remains deeply concerned at the impact on domestic seafarers from ferry operators trading in the Irish Sea who recruit crews from outside the minimum wage.

For example, Conference notes that Polish seafarer ratings employed by freight operator Seatruck have been paid £3.66 per hour to work on routes in the Irish Sea.

Conference is dismayed that this pay discrimination against seafarers from other EU and non-EU countries is a consequence of political failure to enforce employment law, particularly National Minimum Wage legislation but also due to the exclusion of seafarers from the full protection of minimum wage and equality legislation.

Conference also notes the effect that this exploitation has on major employers in the Irish Sea, particularly the largest employer of Irish seafarers Stena Line which is consistently undercut by the low cost crewing practices of other operators.

Conference agrees to support the campaign to enforce and, if necessary, amend legislation in support of domestic seafaring skills and again urges the Governments of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to formulate a joint approach to eliminate the exploitation of seafarers in the Irish Sea.

Conference is concerned that if such nationality-based exploitation of seafarers is allowed to continue unchecked then Northern Ireland will lose their seafarers by the beginning of the next decade with damaging consequences for the economic, social and strategic future of these islands.

Finally, Conference supports the views of the independent report 'Maritime Futures' into the future of seafaring by Cardiff University, commissioned by the RMT that:

- 1) That protection is introduced for island cabotage reserving such trade to UK-flagged vessels.
- 2) That nationality requirements are introduced for seafarers employed by UK vessels operating island cabotage.
- 3) That trainee ratings positions are linked to the tonnage tax on a mandatory basis.
- 4) That support is provided for accommodation and travel costs for ratings' shore-based training.
- 5) Stronger national wage legislation and a review of equality legislation.

Education

Motion 39 – NASUWT

Governance of Schools

Conference asserts that the current school governance arrangements in Northern Ireland schools increasingly are not fit for purpose.

Conference pays tribute to teacher governors who seek to hold their boards of governors to account and who represent the interests of teaching staff in difficult circumstances

Conference is, however, concerned, by the increasing number of examples of boards of governors attempting to marginalise and exclude teacher governors from decision making

Conference is further concerned by the growing evidence of abuse by boards of governors of indefinite precautionary suspension of staff, with the consequent adverse impact on teachers' health, welfare and careers, on the continuity of teaching and learning and on the cost to the public purse.

Conference calls on the ICTU to:

- Lobby for a comprehensive review of the governance of schools and
- Highlight the abuse of the precautionary suspension procedure.

Motion 40 – UNITE

Support for Skills and Education

Conference calls on the incoming Executive to work with its affiliated unions to:

- Campaign to demand the NI Executive fully restores the full Educational Maintenance Allowance payment to students pursuing education and training opportunities and aged 16-18;
- Campaign to demand the restoration of full maintenance grants for third-level and higher education students – with a particular focus on ensuring a higher uptake by those coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds and educationally-disadvantaged groups;
- Demand the conduct of a NI skills audit with a view to ensuring provision of key skills necessary to attract investment, in particular in the Manufacturing sector;
- Campaign to force the NI Executive to legislate for Living Wage minimum pay levels for all Apprentices during their apprenticeships and to oblige employers to retain apprentices who complete their training on a fair basis;

- Demand that the NI Executive moves to strictly enforce the Working Time directive for all workers, in particular for apprentices, and act to punish those employers found to be guilty of transgressing this regulation;
- Campaign to ensure the NI Executive excludes employers who fail to pay a Living Wage or who fail to take on apprentices (minimum requirement ten percent of the workforce) from all public procurement contracts and eligibility for grant-aid; and that they legislate to ensure that contractors cannot escape these obligations by sub-contracting their responsibilities.

Motion 41 – NASUWT

Flexible Working in Education

Conference is concerned at the growing number of education employers who resist and actively discourage requests for flexible working.

Conference notes with concern the evidence which shows that many workers are denied access to flexible working based on spurious arguments, feeble excuses, blatant discrimination and on other grounds that are contrary to the provisions of the legislation, regulations and statutory codes of practice governing flexible working.

Conference is deeply concerned that discriminatory employer attitudes, coupled with increased freedom and flexibility for employers, are resulting in many more women having their family lives blighted, or being driven out of the teaching profession, or being threatened with dismissal or redundancy as an alternative to flexible working.

Conference calls on the ICTU to:

- Research and expose the extent to which women in Northern Ireland are being denied access to flexible working;
- Work with affiliates to continue the campaign for a legal right to flexible working.



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