



"Situation and perspectives of trade union organizations: inputs of the process of strengthening and transformation of trade unions to organize and represent the entire working class"

BASE DOCUMENT

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1. Introduction

As of its creation, the strengthening and transformation of the working class (Trade Union Self-Reform) has been one of the TUCA's priority lines of action. This will increase the power of the trade union movement and improve workers' living and working conditions. The Conference states: "The trade union movement must be a space that reflects the society we aspire to. Democracy, participation, transparency and representativeness are conditions to gain legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of workers and society. TUCA's actions aim at a modern, open, plural, democratic and participatory trade union model, with equal treatment and equal opportunity for men and women, with dialogue and consensus-building, without discrimination, and which articulates trade unionism with the population as a whole" (3rd TUCA Congress, 2016).

We promote a socio-political unionism that represents the diversity of the current working class, promotes organizing per industry, direct affiliation and organizing per territory to give true power to the working class. Similarly, the struggle for a new hegemony must be based on the power of transformation and mobilization of workers, including women and youth. We have reiterated that: "Trade unionism must focus on the most vulnerable sectors of the working class, regain its militancy, achieve better working conditions, and renew unity and solidarity. It is essential to incorporate methods and technologies that enhance and multiply the capacity of the trade union movement to act as instrument of change and transformation." (Resolution, 3rd TUCA Congress, 2016).

At present we are entering a new stage with the highly relevant Continental Conference "Transforming and Strengthening the Trade/Labor Union to Represent and Organize the Entire Working Class". This process has required multiple preparatory actions, which have served as inputs to develop this Base Document to foster the discussions and generate agreements on a concrete and definitive roadmap to strengthen and transform the regional labor/trade union. We underscore the contributions of all the federations that responded to the questionnaire emailed by the TUCA, which included reflections and key proposals, and helped us generate a continental landscape of the priority themes. Based on these inputs, on the TUCA's documents and resolutions, and together with the systematization of the information provided by numerous sources, we developed specific reports on the situation and perspectives of trade union organizations for all the subregions. These were presented and enriched at the Subregional Meetings held in October and November 2020, with the participation of

approximately 300 delegates from our affiliated and fraternal federations. In-depth information was shared at these meetings where concrete proposals were presented and which are now part of this document and of the roadmap to strengthen and transform of the labor/trade union to be discussed at the Continental Conference.

Lastly, after presenting their subregional reports, the federations made more contributions in writing to the TUCA. Therefore, the contents herein are the concrete result of the collective, responsible and solidary efforts of affiliates, constituting solid grounds to advance actions and measures with actual impact in the short and medium term.

Likewise, as part of the initiatives adopted in recent years in the Americas, the work carried out in conjunction with the ITUC, within the framework of the Global Academy of Organizers, should be highlighted. During this period, we have developed processes to train and expand union organizing teams, which have contributed to advocacy and membership campaigns for various organizations in the region.

The present international and regional reality is extremely complex, despite the recent improvements in some countries that put an end to authoritarian governments. The weakening democracies, the economic and social crises, the effects on employment, income and labor relations are cause for much concern. However, we understand that this must not interfere with the current and future advances of this trade union transformation. Ultimately, self-reform is only viable based on true trade union autonomy, so it is necessary to continue strengthening and improving the functioning of the trade union movement regardless of the limitations imposed by regulatory frameworks, conservative governments and corporate power.

Stronger unions and federations are the best way to defend the attainment of democracy in our region, as well as the rights gained through democracy: mainly freedom of association, the right to organize, collective bargaining and the right to strike. There can be no real democracy without these fundamental union rights.

2. Brief overview of the economic, social and labor situation of the region

Evolution of the main economic and labor indicators of the region

Informality, income concentration and social inequality are integral features of our societies. However, in the last decade (2000), the region showed positive trends in labor market dynamics and income distribution, in part associated with the period of economic growth with social inclusion that characterized most of the countries of the region, a turning point in the political and economic scenario. As of the last decade, this virtuous period was interrupted, causing a marked reduction in economic growth and strongly impacting employment and the strategies to reduce poverty and social inequality in most countries. Therefore, the quality of employment of most of the employed population in Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be poor and, in several countries such as Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, short-term contracts accounted for 20% to 30% of all salaried employment, a reality that has scarcely changed in recent years.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, average annual unemployment rates were about 8% between 2016 and 2019, i.e. between 25 and 25.5 million people in the region without a livelihood. Brazil alone accounted for more than 50% of that total, while Mexico about 8%. Poor economic dynamism in the region led to a rise in unemployment of 1.5% in 2019, compared to 2018. Our region is highly heterogeneous with multiple manifestations of discrimination which, interconnected with gender discrimination, become more complex and take their toll in the lives of Afro-descendant women living in different LAC contexts. In some of our countries, the unemployment rate among Afro-descendant women reached 12.5% at the end of the 2000s, with the biggest differences in Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador and Panama, with unemployment among Afro-descendent women reaching 25% in some Brazilian regions. Consequently, analyzing unemployment in LAC necessarily needs to consider gender and ethnic-racial differences as a component of the region's social inequality matrix. Young people are also affected by the high unemployment rates which, although they dropped in 8 of the 11 countries analyzed, continue to be among the highest in the world.

Informality and inequality continue to be a unique characteristic of LAC. Although there was a generalized decline in the 2000s from 8% between 2009 and 2015, in stark contrast to the 1990s, according to the ILO informality in the region reached 53% in 2018. In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, informality affects over 70% of the population. Informality is a very important

dimension of the precarious work generated by some companies, whether legal or not, where new forms of contracts are consolidated under different names such as outsourcing, subcontracting, self-employment, app work, unprotected flexible, dynamics that transfer the instability of the labor market to workers. About 45% of wage earners in LAC work in informal situations.

Informality also widens the wage gap and affects those at the bottom of income distribution. Women are more affected by informality and employers' non-compliance with minimum wage requirements than men (ILO, 2019). Poverty rates among women workers and Afro-descendants are cause for great concern. Gender and ethnic-racial inequality, poverty and informality are closely interrelated, women are mainly responsible for domestic chores, limiting their effective participation in the labor force and, when they can access employment, it is in highly vulnerable conditions. More poverty increases the difficulties for women to enter the labor market.

Extreme and moderate poverty affected 19.2 million in 2019. As of 2008 poverty, informality, and social exclusion have mutually reinforced each other, once again fostering circles of poverty and intergenerational deprivation in the region. The solution is to improve the region's economic capacity, address structural problems, reduce the levels of economic dependency and regional disparities through development with social inclusion and income redistribution. The persistence of informality is incompatible with advances in decent work and social protection. Social security coverage is low in our countries due to the high number of precarious jobs paying wages that are barely sufficient for survival.

Current economic, social and labor situation (2020): effects of the Covid-19 crisis

The economy of our countries was already suffering an economic slowdown when the sudden health crisis became a huge crisis, even greater than that of 2008. By affecting most of the countries, it upset any positive economic outlook for 2020 and generated a massive change. As of that moment, the scenario has become one of greater uncertainty on the effectiveness of the mechanisms to address the crisis due to lack of political coordination, especially in countries enforcing neoliberal policies and following fiscal austerity rules. There is no appropriate way to address the crisis once it exposes the contradictions of a form of production and economic and social organization based on the social exclusion of millions who cannot access adequate healthcare, work and income.

According to the ILO, the loss of working hours increased in the first semester of 2020, reflecting the deteriorating scenario, especially in our countries. Estimations indicate that the loss of work hours in the second quarter of 2020, compared to the last quarter of 2019, will reach 14.0% worldwide (equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs), with the largest loss (18.3%) occurring in the Americas.

The effects of the health crisis on economic activities and employment are visible and evidenced in the figures published by the ILO for the region. All countries suffered a drop in the employment rate of about 10 percentage points, with an estimated loss of 47 million jobs for all LAC countries. The impact on employment mostly affected the disadvantaged and vulnerable population.

The impact also varies according to sex. A separation has been established between those whose income and protection of life is secure, and those who need to continue working and endangering their existence. Unlike previous crises, women's employment is at greater risk than men's, mainly due to the impact of the slowdown on the service sector. In addition, women account for a large proportion of front-line workers, especially in the health and social care sectors. The increased burden of unpaid care, due to the crisis, is also carried by women and girls.

Most of self-employed workers are now unemployed and have started to depend solely on the government's emergency policies. The measures involved income reduction through reduced work hours and wages, the suspension of contracts or the rise of underemployment in Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Chile and Mexico, among others. Self-employment and paid domestic work suffered the greatest drops of about 20.5% and 32.2%, respectively for Latin America and countries such as Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Peru and Mexico. Instead, informality declined as many abandoned the labor force of the most affected sector, with the worst drops suffered in Argentina (-10.7%), Peru (-8.1%) and Costa Rica (-6.6%), compared with the first and second quarter of 2020. The employers' survey indicates that the main initiatives were dismissals, adoption of teleworking, advance of vacation leave and reduction of work hours and wages. In Brazil and Chile, advance of vacation leave and teleworking prevailed; in Colombia, the reduction of work hours; in Costa Rica, the reduction of work hours and teleworking; in Mexico, teleworking; in Paraguay, advance of vacation time and new employment models; in Peru, alternating in-person and virtual work, with flexibility and reduced work hours.

The need to address the current crisis by strengthening workers' organizations

The crisis has given telework and app work a new dimension and is challenging trade union organizations to revisit their traditional organizing models. App delivery workers have organized strikes for the recognition of their rights in several countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico.

The health crisis also exposed the weaknesses of global production chains. As of 2007, international flows have been impacted by the financial crisis. The share of global chains in international flows accounts for approximately 50%, with the contraction of international trade further affecting delocalized production chains, and not proportionally. Some suppliers and subcontractors have seen their businesses downsized or closed. The incompatibility of times is also an incompatibility of spaces, with areas of the regional economy unevenly affected. For example, the slowdown in emerging countries leading to capital outflows and the drop in commodity prices will contribute to the region's contraction.

The results of TUCA's survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the public policies adopted in the region to face Covid-19 are cause for concern. Said results suggest a rise in the violation and loss of rights and in the exclusion of trade union organizations as relevant stakeholders in the context of the crisis. Using the crisis as justification, employers closed negotiation channels and promoted massive layoffs. Unjustified layoff was mentioned by 72.0% of the entities that responded to the survey; 62.8% stated reduction in wages; 60.5% indicated an increase in violence and harassment in the workplace; 41.9% confirmed the lack of spaces of dialogue for public policymaking; 62.8% declared that the trade union organization was not included in the spaces of dialogue; 74.1% stated that the main measures adopted were protection and safety protocols at work (63.0%); and according to 39.5% of the entities interviewed, collective bargaining had been suspended .

However, the current crisis includes a new component, i.e. the preservation of life, showing the importance of the State to guarantee essential public policies, especially in terms of healthcare, but also in terms of employment and income preservation policies.

We are entering historical times in which the solutions to the crisis are the construction of a social force on the side of the working class, of social and grassroots organizations, building the capacity to resist the dismantling of rights, creating a field of resistance and struggle centered on the preservation of life, work and income.

It is critical to strengthen trade union organizations to put pressure governments and public institutions to preserve jobs and income. Similarly, organizations must act to contain attempts by employers to impose liberal agendas and flexibilize labor relations under the guise of job preservation.

Fragmentation dismantles the foundations required for union organizing. Outsourcing, the hiring of legal entities or freelancers, promotes fissures in the forms of hiring the workforce, leading to individually-negotiated rights, further undermining the role of trade unions. These segments became even more fragile during the crisis as the suspension of service contracts by companies is enough to fully suspend (non-dependent) workers' income.

These challenges call for actions to reverse the traditional style and orientations of trade unionism and to provide new strategic alternatives than those with which stakeholders responded to the changes of capitalism in the late 20th century. Therefore, trade unions must be open to this capacity to respond of the union agenda. In addition to analyzing the current transformations of contemporary capitalism and their impacts on the regulation of labor relations and, mainly, on the capacity of collectives to respond to this scenario, stakeholders must show their capacity to renew their repertoires of action and seek new strategies without losing their identity, the purpose and characteristics inherited from their own track-record of struggle and resistance.

By producing a global working class, the changes in the global economy are also creating the conditions for a trade union movement that can act beyond national borders and open new opportunities to internationalize trade union actions aimed at a dialogue with civil society and alliances with other social movements, focusing on the gender issue, the fight for human and ecological rights, among others, and rejecting the hierarchical and subordinate format still prevailing in most trade unions.

All these dimensions are core challenges for the trade union movement and are reflected in the **Development Platform of the Americas** (PLADA), the strategic commitment of the regional trade union movement to defeat the rationale of the neoliberal model by placing decent work, human rights and democracy at the center. The PLADA is a living tool that interprets reality, reinforces the role of trade unionism and fosters its role as actor of democracy. It is a political interpretation of the current situation from the perspective of different trade union and social organizations. This living document interprets reality and accounts for the importance of trade

unionism as actor for the transformation of society, reflecting the diversity of visions on the realities of the Americas. It is a tool to foster democracy.

3. Brief overview of labor regulations, their application and perspectives

ILCs ratified by country (in particular on freedom of association and right to organize, collective bargaining and tripartite consultation).

The main conventions relating to freedom of association and the right to organize, to collective bargaining and tripartite consultation are No. 87, No. 98 and No. 144. However, although not fundamental conventions, other relevant conventions are Convention No. 135 on Workers' Representatives; Convention No. 141 on Rural Workers' Organizations; Convention No. 151 on Labor Relations (Public Service) and Convention No. 154 on Collective Bargaining. The ratifications of these instruments in the American continent are detailed below.

Table 1. Ratification of the core conventions on freedom of association in the Americas

<i>Country</i>	<i>Conventions</i>							<i>Total</i>
	87	98	135	141	144	151	154	
Antigua y Barbuda	X	X	X		X	X	X	6
Argentina	X	X	X		X	X	X	6
Bahamas	X	X			X			3
Barbados	X	X	X		X			4
Belice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Bolivia	X	X						2
Brasil		X	X	X	X	X	X	6
Canadá	X	X			X			3
Chile	X	X	X		X	X		5
Colombia	X	X			X	X	X	5
Costa Rica	X	X	X	X	X			5
Cuba	X	X	X	X		X		5
Dominica	X	X	X		X			4
Ecuador	X	X		X	X			4
El Salvador	X	X	X	X	X	X		6
Estados Unidos					X			1
Granada	X	X			X			3
Guatemala	X	X		X	X		X	5
Guyana	X	X	X	X	X	X		6
Haití	X	X						2
Honduras	X	X			X			3
Jamaica	X	X			X			3
México	X	X	X	X	X			5
Nicaragua	X	X	X	X	X			5

<i>Country</i>	<i>Conventions</i>							<i>Total</i>
	87	98	135	141	144	151	154	
Panamá	X	X			X			3
Paraguay	X	X						2
Perú	X	X			X	X		4
República Dominicana	X	X			X			3
San Cristobal y Nevis	X	X						2
San Vicente Y Las Granadinas	X	X			X			3
Santa Lucia	X	X			X		X	4
Suriname	X	X	X		X	X	X	6
Trinidad Y Tobago	X	X						2
Uruguay	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
República Bolivariana de Venezuela	X	X		X	X			4
TOTAL por Convenio	33	34	15	12	29	12	9	144

Source: Information System on International Labour Standards, ILO.

The continent's normative landscape regarding the ratification and application of ILO conventions shows a disturbing situation with the effects of the pandemic exposing the shortcomings of the policies and regulations regulating the relations between the State, employers and workers.

Upon ratifying a convention, the country commits to presenting regular reports (every two or three years) describing the domestic measures implemented for compliance purposes. The States are responsible for this report, but require the participation of workers' and employers' organizations that may include comments in the reports, a mechanism that governments have not fully complied with, resulting in the lack of rigorous information and a flagrant violation of the regulatory framework.

Complaints filed to the ILO Committee of Experts and the Committee on the Application of Standards.

The control mechanisms for the application of international labor standards play a fundamental role in reviewing compliance with labor regulations. A very clear conclusion that emerges from the preparation of this continental report is the importance of the actions undertaken by trade union organizations to prepare and consolidate proposals to champion and guarantee workers' rights, and consolidate their position in the processes of legislative reforms and social dialogue, in order to achieve legislation that incorporates the interests of the working class, in accordance with effective compliance of international labor law.

The most recent report of the Committee of Experts issued in February 2020¹ states that, during 2018-2019, there were breaches of compliance in the tripartite consultation to prepare the reports for the ILO. In this regard, workers' organizations filed complaints on non-compliance, making it clear that social dialogue needed strengthening, and union actions are required to enshrine equal standing in tripartite consultation processes, especially in a pandemic scenario.

Overview of countries' normative characteristics accounting for the different realities in terms of freedom of association, trade union autonomy, social dialogue and collective bargaining.

During the last 25 years, through various studies and reports, the academic sector and certain international organizations came to realize that the regulatory framework (constitutions, labor codes, etc.) of countries of the American region incorporate ILO fundamental rights and principles included in the eight core Conventions, as follows: (a) freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or obligatory labor; (c) the effective abolition of child labor; and (d) the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation. This substantive advance must not fail to recognize that, according to the 1998 Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, these core conventions are mandatory even if any of these instruments has not been ratified, given that States must recognize them simply because they are members of the ILO and subject to its Constitution.

Furthermore, any analysis of the application of the right to freedom of association in the region should also underscore the multiple mechanisms contained in national legislation to seriously limit the exercise of autonomy, collective bargaining and strikes. Just as the labor policies implemented are prone to flexibilize and weaken control over the compliance with the standards regulating individual labor relations, quite the opposite happens with collective relations, where those same policies aim at, for example, establishing a gamut of restrictions, such as:

- hampering the creation of trade unions by imposing excessive requirements or subjecting their recognition to arbitrary decisions of the labor administration;
- limitation of collective bargaining, subjecting it to red tape, deleting certain contents or declaring them illegal;

¹ https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/109/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS_736217/lang--en/index.htm),

- various types of restrictions to strikes, controlling union mechanisms for their adoption, binding strikes only at the time of the collective bargaining agreement, prohibiting them in certain sectors or facilitating mechanisms to declare strikes illegal, etc.

Brief reflections on the difficulties observed in the application and control of labor standards in many countries of the continent.

There are deep voids in the compliance with labor standards as pointed out by different international organizations, evidencing the systematic weakness of inspection and control mechanisms of the legal system and, consequently, the weakness generated in the trade union movement. For the region's trade unionism, the most important regulatory concern has been non-compliance, as well as the constant violation of human and labor rights. Despite this scenario, international labor standards have had a significant impact on the development, enforcement and evolution of labor legislation in the region.

Main tendencies to deregulate labor relations and main workers' categories affected.

In the current Covid-19 context, the structural weaknesses of the continent's economic model have been further aggravated by the region's political and socio-labor uncertainty. In this regard, State entities either confront the employers' sector or partner with it to promote labor flexibility.

The inputs collected indicate that unemployment is extremely relevant, but we should not disregard that, in general prior to Covid-19, the economies of the region were unable to generate enough jobs under decent work schemes, leading to the immediate rise of informality.

The analysis of union leadership in Mexico, Dominican Republic and Panama includes the reversal of labor benefits, the loss of purchasing power, generalized salary reduction, all of which coincides with the other answers detailing the obvious increase in job precarity to which workers are exposed.

The same pattern occurs in Central America, but these cases are worsened by structural violence and the States' weakness to address labor issues. Affiliated organizations indicate that workers are the weakest link in the chain, hence the market's structural failures and respective consequences are reflected in few opportunities to achieve a decent life. It should be noted that this situation pushes thousands of Central Americans to informal work or to consider migration as the only way to survive. The situation in the Central American subregion is further affected by the precarity of labor contracts, together with the closing of companies and the advent of

telework in disadvantageous conditions for workers. The situation of the free zones of the region, with their transnational corporations, is particularly complex. Repeated violations of their labor rights have been denounced, as well as difficulties to organize trade unions.

In general, the categories most affected by deregulatory tendencies are those related to technological platforms, jobs in the rural and informal sectors, mostly affecting women, migrants and young people.

By way of conclusion, we can affirm that, due to the effects of the pandemic, a marked violation of national and international labor standards has occurred in the continent (as indicated in the latest ITUC report, 2020), deepening the precarity of employment contracts, while simultaneously promoting telework - not as a solution to meet the demands of the labor market - but as an opportunity to promote wage flexibility, all based on same intent of not complying with basic workers' guarantees, facilitated by non-existent or ineffective controls .

4. The continent's trade union centrals: characteristics, problems and challenges

Trade union organizations of the American continent experience very different realities in several dimensions. In the levels of coverage and membership, in the structure and type of organization, in the integration of different workers, in the levels of union unity and alliance with other social movements, in their relevance as social and political actors.

Unionization and Unity

The number of workers represented in trade union organizations and national federations is, undoubtedly, a key dimension. Higher levels of unionization are always linked to better working conditions, more social dialogue and stronger democracies. Organizing and representing a broad-based group of men and women workers is a decisive factor at the time of fighting for political power to transform economic and social development models.

A few countries have relatively high unionization rates, such as Argentina, Bermuda, Bolivia, Cuba and Uruguay, as shown in Table 2. Although the rates are not as high at the global level, except for Cuba, we should take into account that they refer to the percentage of unionized workers in relation to total employed workers, therefore, considering that informal workers, self-employed workers or workers without recognition of their dependency relationship are very

frequent in the continent. In these countries, the level of unionization is indeed high among dependent salaried workers registered in social security (formality).

It is followed by another group of countries with medium-level rates at the continental level, such as Brazil, Canada, United States, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and Venezuela, with unionization between 9% and 16% of total employed workers. The rates are very low in the other countries, with membership concentrated almost entirely in the public sector.

The trade union tradition of countries with medium and high rates of unionization is linked to more advances in terms of working conditions and collective bargaining. Even with significant differences between countries and over time, trade union organizations and federations continue to be highly relevant social and political actors. However, the situation is more complex in most of the continent, where low unionization clearly indicates the substantial adversities which union activities face politically, socially and economically, and the difficulties for trade union organizations to develop.

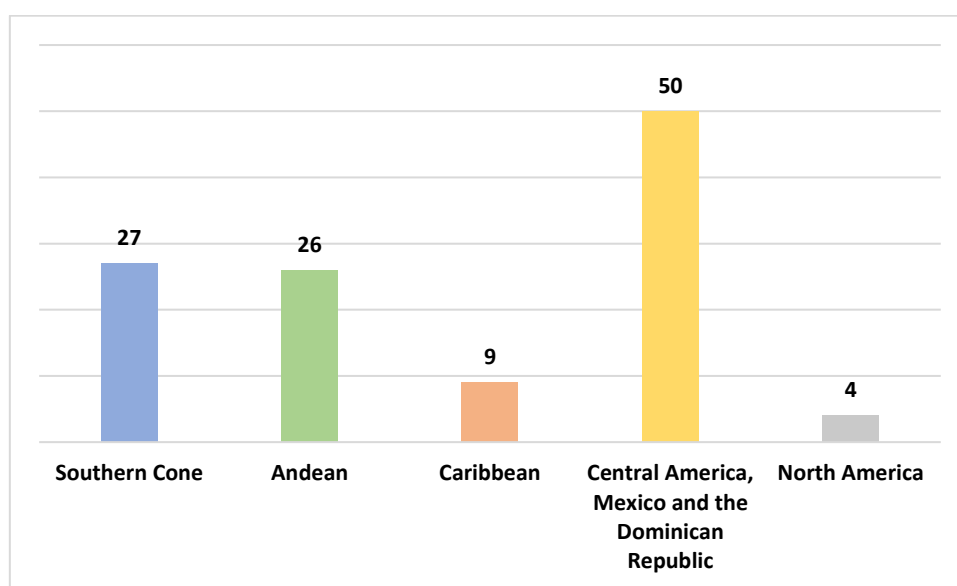
Table 2. Total employed workers and unionization rate per country. Estimation 2019

<i>País</i>	<i>Total Ocupados</i>	<i>Tasa Sindicalización</i>	<i>País</i>	<i>Total Ocupados</i>	<i>Tasa Sindicalización</i>
Antigua y Barbuda	43.000	7,8	Granada	47.000	17,0
Argentina	12.041.100	26,0	Guatemala	6.935.863	1,6
Aruba	52.400	4,8	Guyana	387.581	0,0
Barbados	139.146	10,8	Haití	4.394.703	2,5
Belice	151.000	5,3	Honduras	3.918.800	15,3
Bermuda	35.748	25,7	Jamaica	1.244.900	---
Bolivia	5.535.200	18,1	Martinica	130.800	---
Bonaire	11.257	4,4	México	54.993.600	4,5
Brasil	92.603.000	11	Nicaragua	2.804.967	9,3
Canadá	19.055.700	12,8	Panamá	1.919.900	8,3
Chile	8.501.400	4,7	Paraguay	3.385.800	8,4
Colombia	22.816.000	6,6	Perú	18.139.700	3,9
Costa Rica	2.175.100	6,3	Puerto Rico	-	0,0
Cuba	5.014.900	67,8	R. Dominicana	4.663.200	11,7
Curaçao	60.700	15,5	St. Lucía	82.700	4,8
Dominica	35.757	12,1	Surinam	154.905	7,1
Ecuador	7.853.200	3,7	Trinidad y Tobago	649.000	7,0
El Salvador	2.908.100	2,8	Uruguay	1.538.400	26,0
EUA	157.538.100	9	Venezuela	11.499.178	13,1
TOTAL CONTINENTE				453.461.805	9%

Source: Union Map, TUCA.

The number of trade unions and trade union federations varies significantly, as well as their size and characteristics. On average, countries of the continent have between 3 and 4 trade union federations, with a large group of countries with 1 or 2 (among them, Bolivia, United States, Jamaica, Uruguay); another large group has between 3 and 5 federations (Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic); and some countries have 7 to 10 federations (Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Venezuela). The following figure summarizes the number of active trade union federations per subregion, for 2019.

Figure 1. Number of active centrals per subregion. 2019

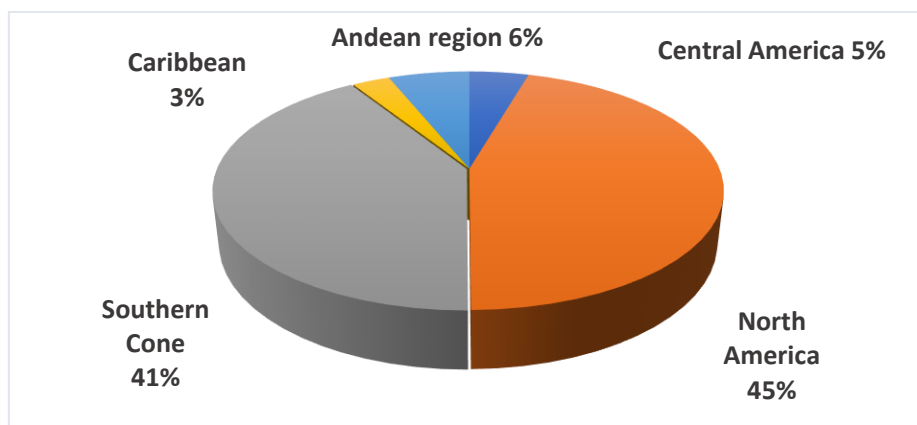


Source: Union Map, TUCA.

The figure shows that the number of trade union federations is not directly linked to unionization levels. Therefore, the number of workers affiliated to unions can grow and become stronger both under the umbrella of a single federation, as well as where several federations coexist in one country.

The relevance of some trade union federations is notable in the continent because of their outstanding national and international track-records and the large numbers of organized workers they continue representing to date. There is also a large number of trade union federations representing less workers, some of recent creation, which generally operate in more unfavorable contexts.

Figure 2. Estimated number of unionized workers per subregion. 2019



Source: Union Map, TUCA.

The unity of the trade union movement and its organizations is a key dimension, with very different realities. It is a very relevant strength in a few countries, with federations developing joint agendas and sharing spaces of social dialogue and institutional representation, in this case also including the experiences of single national federations, as well as union plenary sessions or other forms of strong and permanent political coordination. In this regard, the spaces of unity of action, arising particularly to reject government models and measures that harm workers, and defend the gains (some very recent) of the trade union movement throughout history, and which are of great value to the working class.

In contexts of greater restrictions on union activity and less organizing strength, trade union confederations of many countries of the American continent have experienced a gamut of divisions due to different positions and conflicts over time, which have hampered the generation or maintenance of levels of unity to build the union movement and result in greater representation of the entire working class. Nonetheless, efforts have been made to foster union unity in certain difficult times in recent years, which have created new opportunities to fortify the social and political prominence of organized workers. In all cases, alliances with other social movements have resulted in a strength that requires nourishing and constant care.

The efforts and difficulties to achieve unity can also be seen in the membership of the national federations and in international and continental confederations. In some countries, all federations are affiliated to the TUCA, while in other countries federations coexist yet are affiliated to different international confederations. There are fraternal federations, but not affiliated to the TUCA, and some other federations are not affiliated to any continental or international confederation.

Structure and Affiliation

The general structures and functioning of the trade union federations of the Americas have several similarities. There always have centralized national management bodies, other areas of management that less broad-based and represent, to a greater or lesser extent, the sectoral structure and representative bodies at the territorial level. Most federations have a president, secretary general or similar, and successive positions (vice president and other roles), while the leadership of a few federations is collegiate. In all cases, the structure is complemented and operates with thematic and/or crosscutting bodies, secretariats or commissions, such as Finance, Communication, Training, Gender, Youth, among others.

As for organizing, the most important difference between the continent's federations is the type of affiliation, with most integration and affiliation occurring through trade unions, mainly industry unions and in some cases company unions, and a few federations combine union affiliation, with affiliation of other social organizations and direct affiliation of workers, including unemployed and self-employed workers (without employees).

Different dynamics develop in this framework for the election of union leaders and to become part of the leadership of federations. In most cases, unions elect their representatives or delegates to the different leadership bodies, which are made up of representatives of different unionized sectors. Although there are criteria to define the number of union delegates according to size (number of members), the presence of all sectors in leadership bodies is prioritized, therefore, they become spaces for coordination and decision-making to integrate all affiliated grassroots organizations. The experiences of direct voting to integrate the leadership of federations occur more often in federations with direct membership of workers. Even so, to the extent that direct membership is developed to complement membership through organizations, the leadership also includes sectoral representation. Territorial representation in these federations tends to be more relevant, defining to a greater extent the characteristics of national leadership.

Sector of activity and category of occupation

Even considering the significant differences in unionization, it is clear that union organizing is stronger in the public sector and in the most relevant economic sectors and, within these, in the largest and most formal companies of the economy. In other words, there are strong unions in the public sector, particularly healthcare, education, construction, finance, transportation, mining, the automotive or metallurgical sectors, among others.

This also involves another set of economic activities, with situations of flexibility and job precarity, which are not integrated into trade union organizations and whose demands and representation are extremely weak. In all countries, workers who perform their activity through the digital platforms of transnational corporations (passenger transport and delivery services) account for a new sector characterized by job precarity and scarce unionization, which has begun to organize and demand the regularization of their situation. The sectors traditionally with most informality, so numerous in the region, have a lower level of unionization and their organizations, where they exist, are notoriously weaker.

Despite some significant improvements, such as the organizing of domestic workers in some countries, very little progress has been achieved in the formation and development of trade union organizations where precarious working conditions prevail, such as the maquilas, rural activities, most services and retail business, among many other sectors.

All the continent's federations emphasize that the changes that have occurred in the labor markets have strongly impacted trade union organizations. Both the changes associated with the introduction of technology, the use of digital platforms and the expansion of telework, as well as with the phenomena of job precarity in micro and small enterprises, were further intensified by the healthcare, social and economic crisis caused by Covid-19 and inadequately addressed by States.

The role played by the trade union federations in all these processes is essential, both to achieve concrete results for adversely affected workers, and to strengthen and legitimize the trade union movement in general.

Regarding category of occupation, strongest organizing and representation is among public employees, followed by private employees with social security who work in highly formalized economic sectors and where large companies prevail. Wage earners in small enterprises, wage earners in informal economic units, together with the majority of self-employed workers, constitute large groups of the working class whose integration into trade union organizations has not been at all easy. Different positions or perceptions can be observed in this dimension.

These realities are a priority for some federations at the time of strengthening integration and participation in the union structure, including the promotion of institutionality and the

deployment of actions for this purpose. For other federations, these situations of vulnerability constitute issues of the working class which require actions and intervention, but their integration into the structures of organizations will be inadequate until the conditions or characteristics of labor relations are modified.

Despite the potential of promoting direct membership, so far these experiences have not generated significant membership growth in the trade union organizations where it has been implemented. This result does not discredit the potential of direct membership formulas becoming an important contribution to facilitate the admission of more workers into trade unions and increasing the capacity to represent the diversity of the working class.

Ultimately, all the continent's union federations face difficulties in growing their organization by incorporating workers in precarious and informal situations, as well as those who work in unregulated activities with strong presence of outsourcing, or who have employers that are less identifiable and more difficult to control (platforms, transnationals, global production chains).

This reality is also traversed by the characteristics of the workers themselves, with low education levels, poor, migrant workers who suffer discrimination, among other vulnerabilities. Women are notoriously affected by these realities, they are discriminated against in the labor market (in employment and remuneration) and are almost entirely responsible for care and household chores. The response that trade union organizations and federations can provide to these sectors of the working population is decisive for their growth and strengthening.

Participation of women and youth

Although the participation of women at the different levels of the trade union organization has grown in most of the region, it is still far from attaining the ideal parity, particularly in terms of leadership, institutional representation and social dialogue. Most federations have regulations on a minimum percentage of women's participation in the leadership bodies, which now stands at about 30%.

Similarly, there are still a few federations with no regulations for women's participation in their leadership. Only two federations have been identified as having a statutory rule on gender parity (50%) for their executive committee or similar. Please note that these percentages of women's participation are defined for certain hierarchical bodies, not for all areas. The inclusion of gender

quotas is relatively recent, in some cases very recent, and federations have unanimously highly valued these advances.

Regarding in union activity, women continue to face discrimination and other obstacles to their participation in the same conditions and with the same legitimacy as men. Ultimately, the almost exclusive assumption by women of care and household tasks is one of the main sources of inequality, also in terms of exercising leadership and taking on responsibilities in trade union organizations.

Some organizations have sought to improve their structures or dynamics in order to facilitate women's participation, such as the creation of childcare spaces in the framework of union activity, but these efforts have not succeeded in transforming reality and achieving greater co-responsibility between women and men. In any case, there is widespread agreement among the affiliated federations of the continent on the need to advance much more in this dimension, with concrete actions addressing the different situations suffered by women within organizations.

Parity between men and women, considered as representation and participation, is a process that leads to a change in the conception of union policy and strengthens the workers' movement. The statutes of organizations are an instrument to promote equal participation and representation in trade union leadership, guaranteeing violence and harassment-free trade unions, as well as unionization strategies for unorganized workers.²

Scarce youth presence in trade union organizations, and more so in their leaderships, is a generalized characteristic in all countries. Union membership of young workers is very low, almost nil in some countries, both due to the characteristics of young workers in the labor market (temporary jobs, informal employment, high turnover, outsourced or digital platform work), as well as the considerable difficulties of trade union organizations to attract youth.

Most trade union organizations in the region have prolonged leaderships and slow turnover of leaders, with irruption of new representatives usually brought about by conflicts and divisions in the organizations. A statutory definition or regulation for the participation of young people in federations is practically inexistent (with a few exceptions) and most federations state that their

² 2nd TUCA Women's Conference (2019).

political and strategic resolve to promote youth participation in their leadership, although the most common way to achieve this continues to be the creation of youth secretariats or commissions.

Undoubtedly, trade union training is a key tool to strengthen careers and foster the prominence of young people in trade unions. However, at present, the union training provided is quite limited, with valuable experiences in some countries, and most trade unions and federations facing considerable external and internal difficulties to promote and implement political training actions, especially targeting young workers. National federations and international confederations play a fundamental role as actors with actual capacity to generate training spaces and programs, take advantage of positive experiences, promote exchange between countries, manage logistical and economic support with other organizations, give continuity and foster constant upgrading, among other training-related activities.

In other words, trade union organizations have not innovated their structure or organization to favor the integration of different groups of young people, address their specific needs, their concerns, expectations and aspirations, and ways of relating and communicating, which, ultimately, requires strong democratic dynamics of participation, transparency and accountability, as fundamental values to generate trust and legitimacy.

Communication and transparency

Good external communications from trade union organizations to society and the different groups and individuals, is a decisive dimension to strengthen trade unions and federations that face the widespread perception of trade unionism associated with "problems" and "conflicts". Communication is a basic instrument to reinforce and give sustainability to the legitimacy of trade unions as social and political actors that seek to improve living conditions and ensure democracies, even when it means facing the worst conditions. In short, trade unionism in the region should not disregard communication as tool to show its identity and reinforce its social credibility.

However, the reality in our continent is that the vast majority of unions and federations do not have clear, well-defined communication strategies; they have developed few tools and limited professionalization; they are among the social and political actors that least use of Information & Communication Technologies; and they continue to use tools or perform activities that are obsolete and with limited impact.

By way of illustration, please note the few trade unions and federations have up-to-date, tidy and attractive webpages that help easily understand the characteristics, integration and activities carried out. In many cases it is difficult to find the statutes, congress resolutions, action plans, minutes of the leadership bodies, pronouncements or lawsuits, the conflicts addressed or any other actions undertaken. There is much room for improvement also in use of social networks.

Internal communications are also extremely relevant to ensure democratic, consistent and sound internal functioning. Honesty, transparency and accountability are principles of the region's trade union culture that must be safeguarded and constantly strengthened. In order to enhance the actions of trade union organizations, it is necessary to develop tools and specific activities. These issues are particularly relevant when designing actions to integrate the people and collectives that are furthest from trade unions, who will tend to come closer and join together to the extent that they identify capacity and strength in trade union organizations to champion their rights and interests, in a framework of struggle for greater social justice and citizen participation.

Some studies³ describe the changes that have taken place in people's trust in trade unions in terms of their magnitude and composition. In particular, nowadays young people and those with less education trust trade unions less. These data reveal that, despite the low appraisal of trade unions in several countries, there are opportunities to rebuild trust through actions targeting the different age, sex or socioeconomic profiles of the population.

Summary of the main issues and challenges identified

Most federations consider that their current organizing models are not appropriate to address the new scenarios of the labor market, they fail to capture the individual interests of the most vulnerable workers, they do not respond accordingly to the reduced differences today between the industries, they are not articulated effectively to respond to global production chains, they fail to attract workers who do not work together in an establishment or do not have a clear employer, and usually they do not adapt to the use of new Information & Communication Technologies, an issue that can be associated with the generation gap between leaders and

³ Trust in Latin America. 1995-2015. 20 years of Latin American public opinion.

young workers. Interestingly, the region's federations emphasize lack of renewal and fragmentation among the main difficulties to implement organizational changes.

Among aspects that should change in trade union organizations to face the new challenges: Firstly, we mention the need for *“affiliation and representation in the confederation of the diversity of the working class through associations, cooperatives and others (informality, migrants, women, youth, peasants, etc.)”*. This necessarily requires the modification of trade union organization, so that the incorporation of these “new” workers and collectives is effective, i.e. achieve their full participation, their empowerment to make decisions at all levels and, ultimately, gain concrete benefits that lead to better working conditions and adequate minimums of social protection.

Secondly, the need for *“organizing per industry”* federations of several countries where it faces serious difficulties. In other words, this requirement is associated with union needs in countries with very limited or concentrated labor relations and collective bargaining in the public sector and in some of the large companies. However, to strengthen organizing per industry and production chain is the objective of all federations, given the changes in production processes and current labor dynamics.

It is necessary to better understand the operating dynamics of global production chains and the way in which they coordinate and modify the different industries to achieve an articulated union action against transnational enterprises.

In order to present the chapter on the recommendations to be addressed at the Continental Conference, the figure below summarizes the issues encountered and the changes required in certain aspects of trade union culture, and which become priority political challenges.

Table 3. Organizing Issues, Cultural Changes, Political Challenges

Organizing Issues	Cultural Changes	Political Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low union membership and density, which does not allow building power for an effective dialogue with governments and employers. • Trade union organizations concentrated in public sectors, in very few private industries and in large companies. • Weak union management (with few people engaged in multiple responsibilities and tasks). • Structures with scarce turnover and renewal. • Limited technical support from federations and confederations towards the grassroots structures. • Lack of resources due to low membership or to non-payment of union dues. • Limited communication strategies and tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to consider and incorporate other collectives and not only the part of the currently affiliated working class. • Need for more openness to new leadership, allowing generational renewal. • Materialize the participation and power of women in trade union leadership. • Affiliation promoted and generated with more and improved political training and active militancy. • Reduce union atomization and the dispersal of resources and energy. • Prioritize transparency and accountability as the basic aspect of any trade union organization. • Need to make the functioning of the labor/trade union independent (constitution of the trade union, union activity, regulation of strikes and collective bargaining) of the limitations imposed by the regulatory framework in force in several countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen union autonomy of companies, governments and political parties. • Build the strategy of socio-political unionism, acting as promoter of more democratic, socially just and discrimination-free societies. • Strengthen trade union unity and articulation with other social movements. • Undertake high-impact actions and initiatives, in accordance with the current reality experienced by workers. • Develop in-depth trade union education and training, which generates solid grounds for union policy management. • Eradicate patriarchal practices in trade unions and achieve gender parity. • Give rise to new leaderships and generational replacement. • Make communication and transparency true political priorities.

5. Recommendations to be addressed at the Continental Conference

Based on the analyses and recommendations of the TUCA as of its creation and, in particular, in the 2016-2020 period, and based on comments in the questionnaire, subregional reports and the discussions at the Subregional Meetings, we highlight some main themes and dimensions to be considered at the Continental Conference and to guide the design of a **Roadmap to transform and strengthen the trade unions and union federations**.

This roadmap must consider the different times and dynamics of our countries, so as to recommend (and then agree and implement) short, medium and long-term actions leading to the accumulation of sound, concrete and visible results for union organizing and the entire working class.

Growing with inclusion of the diversity of the working class

It is a priority for the roadmap to include the strengthening of integration and actual participation, taking into account the diversity and plurality of all workers. It is necessary to increase membership and contributions to trade unions and to open more spaces and different forms of participation of workers and their collectives. To achieve this, we need to review the internal organization, generate actual areas open to the workers furthest from organizations, in addition to implementing different methodologies and tools. In this regard, we need to advance regardless of the regulatory restrictions that various countries impose on union activities, as well as vis-à-vis political parties, governments and employers (union autonomy). Strengthening participation and adapting structures in trade union organizations cannot depend on labor regulations nor on the deregulatory and detrimental tendencies of the dominant economic model.

More concretely, the main challenge is to build and reinforce trade unions, incorporating those in precarious situations (informality, outsourcing, digital platforms) and self-employed workers without employees (most of whom are also vulnerable).

For most federations with organizing and membership through sector unions (industrial and other variants), we propose the following question: Is it relevant and necessary to modify the organizing structure to increase the number and diversity of affiliated workers? To the extent that organizing associated with the production structure is an important strength for these federations, the growth strategy will require changes in organizing and affiliation strategies at

the industry level, i.e. in their trade unions and federations. They will be able to better understand the new and more complex realities of the different production sectors and identify the best way to incorporate informal, outsourced, temporary, and self-employed workers into each industry and production chain.

Therefore, first question can be complemented with the following ones: Is direct affiliation of workers to industry or sector trade unions possible, particularly of informal and/or self-employed workers? Are there mechanisms to incorporate unemployed workers into these structures? Based on this sectorial perspective, we must take into account the diffuse boundaries between some production sectors, given the multiple global production chains and their transnational enterprises.

It is relevant for workers to strengthen coordination and unity between trade unions in related industries and/or that are part of the same production chains, to incorporate the different realities of labor into union priorities. We reiterate that the region shows several examples of federations that have already incorporated “other sectors”, such as autonomous or informal, in spite of the difficulties and weaknesses involved, which are concrete responses to the proposed initiatives.

As mentioned above, there are trade union organizations and federations in the region to which other social organizations are affiliated and direct affiliation of all working people, including unemployed and informal workers, self-employed workers without employees and even retirees. These structures contemplate the possibility of affiliating the diversity of the working class. Notwithstanding the relevance of the organizations of an industry or sector to these federations, they share the need to strengthen their territorial and crosscutting (thematic) bodies.

The affiliation of workers furthest from a trade union requires the inclusion of other demands and needs, in general from a more vulnerable standpoint, whereby the territorial organization that is aware of this reality has a key role to play. Similarly, it is possible that the motivation of those workers to join a local organization, which is already aware of their problems, is greater than at the national or sectoral level where other realities are more present (that of registered wage earners of the private sector with stable jobs). This does not mean that membership in a national organization is not of interest, as was underscored at the beginning of this section. Joining a trade union also arises from an interest in a specific or crosscutting area of the world

of work, among which we emphasize gender equality. Membership mechanisms *per se* do not overcome these challenges, which require strategies to attract workers who may be interested in certain areas and intend to practice union activities based on their motivation and for those purposes.

The possible forms of growth of trade union organizations could be summarized in two important alternatives: expansion of the organizing structure or growth within the structure. In any case, the fundamental issue seems to be the capacity and strength of representation that these organizations achieve for said workers. Therefore, some questions in this regard are: What strengths and improvements can trade union representation generate for informal and self-employed workers? What does the trade union contribute to environmentally-concerned young workers? What possibilities does affiliation to a trade union organization provide to fight for gender equity? Although these questions may have multiple answers, herein we highlight two clear priorities: social protection and social dialogue (collective bargaining).

Trade unions and union federations or confederations play and must play, a prominent role in the struggle for universal social protection, whereby the union struggle always has a relevant perspective for society as a whole. Dialogue and negotiation are both goals and fundamental instruments for every trade union movement, as the reality of the region shows, and they are spaces in which to incorporate and achieve improvements in the other non-traditional dimensions of the world of work or that are insufficiently addressed in labor relations (gender, environment, housing, sport, culture).

Work for union unity and social alliances

At present, the unity of the trade union movement is a challenge for all federations to the extent in which its materialization is as important as its permanence. Unity must be promoted in specific contexts with breadth to develop different strategies and areas. The starting point (or consolidation, depending on the case) is a broad-based agreement in favor of the unity of workers and their organizations, based on common principles (defense of democracy, social integration, poverty reduction, decent work and social protection, among others).

This process requires strengthening class unity based on unity of action, for the agreement to have visible implications for the working class and society as a whole, i.e. unity of action based on concrete agreements on certain priorities and strategies. Starting with a minimum consensus-building agenda to generate strength based on specific and actual achievements for

the working class and their organizations. This also allows sharing risks and problems, raising the possibilities of reversing the difficulties. Actions agreed and implemented with unity contribute decisively to broaden and grow the trade union movement, strengthen its tools of fight for and increase its actual influence.

The process of trade union unity includes organizing challenges. To move forward in this regard, a certain degree of structure is required that must be planned and agreed between organizations. Based on trade union federations and on what has been accumulated by the TUCA throughout this process, the recommendation is to reinforce unity from spaces of coordination and articulation at the different levels of the trade union organizations and in their various lines of action and theme areas. In some cases, we propose (and in some cases we have materialized) permanent spaces for: coordination between national leaderships (plenary sessions of the National Councils or the like); articulation between territorial and/or sectoral leadership bodies (where applicable); and the regular development of inter-union (and inter-social) activities that summon a broad-based audience.

Crosscutting unity is built on theme areas and programmatic pillars, which generate other areas of articulation, with specific purposes and concrete activities. The premise of this proposal is that belonging to the working class must always be fostered in unity, because unity offers the real possibility of attaining better living conditions for all. The number of trade union members and affiliates of federations increases to the extent in which awareness is raised on the unity of the trade union movement at the national and international levels.

Indeed, in the international arena, building unity must continue as a priority that directly supports trade unions and federations. In this regard, some specific actions relate to regional or global aspects, such as mapping the global production chains linking their workers' organizations in different countries, and organizing vulnerable migrant workers, including the fight against human trafficking and forced labor.

A dimension directly linked to trade union unity is the construction of alliances with other movements and social actors. This strengthening and transformation of the labor/trade union, the socio-political unionism promoted by the TUCA and affiliated federations, need reinforcing through alliances with progressive and democratic social movements and stakeholders of the region. There are many examples in the continent, both historical and recent, among which we underscore the feminist movement.

The construction of alliances also helps trade unions access networks, collectives and key people from different realities and communities where there is a working class. These connections can broaden the range of interests and agendas that trade unions seek to represent, expanding their power to represent the poorly represented segments of society.

Create and dispute workers' associations by class and other forms of organizing workers, identifying certain groups with guidelines related to the world of work and the possibility of creating an association when not represented by current entities. Broad-based alliances between trade union entities, urban and rural grassroots movements, student, youth, women, black, LGBT and human rights movements, as well as other civil society organizations, intellectuals and activists, constitute real opportunities to consolidate allies for the demands of the diversity of the working class.

Towards gender parity

Although we emphasize the advances of the gender perspective in the continent's trade union organizations, important deficits still persist in participation and in leadership, as well as in terms of content and mainstreaming the definitions and actions of the organizations. The formal incorporation of quotas for women's participation has shown concrete results and been commended in the federations. Thus, based on the agreements reached in TUCA Congresses and the results of the 2019 Women's Conference, trade union organizations make a first recommendation: to move towards parity (50%) in all bodies of trade union structures, also moving forward to quotas in grassroots bodies.

This measure is necessary, but not sufficient to modify the predominance of men in organizations and their leadership bodies. It needs to be framed in an overall strategy to incorporate more women workers into trade unions, prioritizing the form of affiliation and participation that they deem most appropriate. Especially summoning the most feminized sectors of the economy, such as healthcare or domestic work, effectively prioritizing the fight against the disadvantages and forms of discrimination suffered by women in the world of work. The agendas and actions to eliminate the barriers to the participation of women in the world of work, the "glass ceilings" (impediments to professional careers), and the exclusive responsibility of care and household chores, are priorities of trade union organizing.

Some specific aspects to be included in the roadmap are the incorporation of the issue of sexual, moral and discriminatory violence against women in trade union organizations and in the negotiation arenas; development of activities and events to discuss the concrete possibilities of women's participation; generation of specific supports, such as childcare (nurseries) in organizations and their events, particularly in grassroots organizations; proposal of specific unionization campaigns; articulation of actions with feminist movements incorporating their guidelines.

Increasing the participation of young workers

Advances in youth participation in trade unions and federations have been notoriously limited. Neither in formal (statutory) terms nor in the reality of organizations and their leadership bodies, has there been a sustained and dynamic integration and hierarchization of young people.

The TUCA's process and the reflections of affiliated federations provide some key fundamentals to advance in this regard. Firstly, it seems reasonable to specify the quota of young people in the short term in at least some of the bodies of the federations, as per the percentages suited to each case, in order to generate specific spaces and provide clear signals. Secondly, young people's interests need to be prioritized in union plans and actions. Among their interests, we see insertion in the labor market, the first employment and the link between education and work, as well as access to housing and parenthood, among other issues. Trade unions have tools to work on these issues with more or less difficulty, but they are not always prioritized at the time of other urgencies and demands that arise in the complex realities of our countries. The association of trade unions and student movements is a very important instance in many countries of the region.

Thirdly, the forms of youth participation differ from those prevailing in trade unions, as well as in other areas that mostly include of non-young adults. Therefore, it is essential to create a space for young people to develop their own dynamics. The link with Information & Communication Technologies, in particular, creates a generation gap in most organizations. Lastly, the importance of trade union training should be highlighted, which provides the political and technical tools for union activity, including the new trends and global, regional and local challenges, among others.

Redesigning communication and strengthening union culture

There is a widespread opinion in favor of improving the communications of trade unions and federations, both internally and externally (as mentioned above, many federations do not have a webpage or social network, have no published statutes, and no communication plans). The integration of migrant workers or collectives of informal workers, to mention just a few challenges, always requires communication strategies and their specific tools. In this regard, we need to harness ICTs as tool to pursue trade union organizing. At present, these relatively easily accessed tools and devices are a remarkable opportunity that also includes various threats, in particular, the misuse of social networks that notoriously undermines trade union dialogue and image.

The promotion of new women leaders and young leaders should be especially considered in any strategy to strengthen the trade union organizing. We see a vision in favor of renewal and turnover in the leadership of trade union federations and in the different areas of the union organization, as well as in the social dialogue bodies.

With clear and transparent rules, with trade unions with democratic clauses, we are achieving decisive progress in the defense of the union culture promoted by the TUCA and the federations, and this needs to be visible to societies and their various stakeholders and organizations. Some organizations have presented more horizontal proposals as tool to attract more workers, particularly those who show interest in participating.

Constantly underscored aspects to be strengthened relate to transparency and accountability, partly linked to financing and resource management, and also relate to the agreements reached or the conflicts developed. In short, this dimension is directly linked to communication because of the need to improve internally and to improve the political and social positioning of trade union organizations.

Expand and fortify trade union training

An indispensable part of the strategy to strengthen and transform the trade union organizations of the continent is the political formation of organized workers and of those wishing to join. All the dimensions analyzed in this report and, particularly, all the recommendations herein, will be effectively addressed in the medium term once our organizations develop powerful and sustained training actions.

The TUCA is preparing its Conference on Trade Union Education & Training, and proposes:

- analysis of the challenges of training and comprehensive lifelong education and of trade union training and professional training as tools for disputes in the world of work, and in ideological, political and cultural aspects;
- accompanying the transformations of the world of work and of trade unionism towards a change in the organizing model for inclusion of all groups, to increase membership and to build the propositional capacity to challenge neoliberalism and ongoing production processes;
- formulating a proposal and strategy for systematic and tiered trade union training and education that is inclusive, coordinated and unitary for the Americas through networking and focusing on shared visions, but taking into account the particularities of each subregion and country, and contributing to the construction of a more just, fraternal and democratic society and a sustainable development model.

The role of the TUCA and the roadmap to strengthen and transform trade unions

Despite the differences between countries and trade union federations, they are all facing substantive challenges: from global trends (global production chains, changes in the production structure, the market and the culture of work) to the effects of the current crisis (drop in employment and wages, informality, precarity, deregulation, weakening of collective bargaining), the emergence of conservative and authoritarian political projects, and even challenges relating to the reality of the organizations themselves (participation, functioning, articulation, autonomy, among other areas).

The importance of the TUCA continuing to act as the “powerhouse” of alternative thinking for trade unionism of the Americas is generally recognized. It provides a transformative strategic vision and projection that encourages its affiliates to commit to progressive political initiatives and to overcome conservative projects.

In this regard, the role that federations have defined in the TUCA at this point in time, and in this particular instance, involves moving forward with operational planning and the definition of concrete actions throughout the region to strengthen and transform the labor/trade union. In this framework, at the Continental Conference the TUCA presents: *“Transforming and Strengthening the Labor/Trade Union to Organize and Represent the Entire Working Class”*, a proposal for a Roadmap covering the 2021-2025 period that, after discussions and the necessary inputs, can become the tool of all federations to plan, implement and monitor this extremely decisive process for the future of our trade unions and workers.