

Joyce Chilufya Nonde Simukoko

General Secretary

Zambian Union of Financial Institutions & Allied Workers (ZUFIAW)

4,000 members from 28 finance, banking, building societies, pension funds, insurance & all financial related institutions

Profile

Joyce Chilufya Nonde Simukoko has been General Secretary of ZUFIAW from 1998 to date. She became the first female to hold this position in ZUFIAW since its formation in 1970. Born in 1957, from one of the first district commissioners after independence, Ms. Simukoko is married to a lawyer Godfrey Simukoko.

After completing her secondary education in 1974 at Roma Girls in Lusaka, Ms. Simukoko went on to graduate with an AAT diploma in accountancy at NIPA, Lusaka. She also holds a diploma in planning management and curriculum development for workers education institutions from Israel, a certificate in industrial relations from PCC, now Mulungushi University in Kabwe and a certificate in trade union leadership and management from Switzerland.

Her working career started at the Zambia National Building Society (ZNBS) in 1975 where she rose to the position of revenue accountant in 1997 and blossomed in February 2011 when she was appointed board chairperson of the same organisation. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (London) and the Zambia Association of Arbitrators, as well as a mediator of the Zambian Court annexed to mediation. In 2010 she was elected Chairperson of the Zambia Centre for Dispute Resolution, the 1st female to hold this post.

Ms. Simukoko ascended to the position of General Secretary of ZUFIAW at a time when winds of change were blowing across Africa which culminated in political and economic reforms in Zambia, heralding the advent of multiparty politics in 1991.

This period was very crucial to the labour movement in Zambia where deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation opened up the economy to global competition. This brought about a downward pressure on workers' rights. Globalisation and technological revolution saw a mushrooming of financial institutions in Zambia some of which started to collapse due to mismanagement.

These corporate failures, mergers and acquisitions spurred Ms. Simukoko and her union to prioritise job security, the ILO decent work agenda and defending workers' rights. In 2002, ZUFIAW spearheaded a **"Save Our Parastatals"** campaign which ensured that Zambians retained ownership of the national commercial bank, ZANACO, that was privatised. This saved thousand jobs in the banking sector and maintained banking services in rural areas. And in 2003, Ms. Simukoko was the only trade unionist that was appointed to sit on the Constitutional Review Commission, a unique experience that enabled her to travel the breadth and width of Zambia to experience the life and challenges of rural communities.

Her union life spans nearly 30 years. She was first elected as ZUFIAW branch chairperson at ZNBS in 1984. In 1993 she was elected to ZUFIAW's advisory committee and a year later appointed ZUFIAW's Director of Education. In 1993 she became the 2nd female to be elected deputy general secretary of ZUFIAW and in 1998 she was elected the 1st female general secretary of the union. And in 2002, she scored another first when she was elected President of the Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia (FFTUZ), the first female to head a national centre in the country.

A product of **gender equity** herself, Ms. Simukoko has ensured that women are empowered with a voice both at the workplace, in the union and society at large. ZUFIAW now boasts of women and youth structures and a 50% women's representation in the national executive committee. In 2003 ZUFIAW coordinated a

protest action and petitioned the government on **“Child Sexual Abuse & Defilement”** an action that led to the stiffening of legislation on child sex offenders and defilement.

As the world shrinks to a global village, Ms. Simukoko worked tirelessly to integrate ZUFIAW’s work with that of the international labour movement. In 1998, she was elected the 1st female vice president of Afro-FIET and was elected Executive Member of UNI Global Union in 2000 after FIET merged with three other international labour organisations. In 2001 she was elected Board Member of UNI Global Union and became Vice-President of UNI Africa in 2003 up to 2009; she is presently a member of the Finance Committee of UNI Africa Global Union.

In response to today’s **knowledge economy** which is dominated by young workers, ZUFIAW has acquired buildings to be turned into a training centre, a move that would ensure **skills and employability**. Such is the commitment Ms. Simukoko has to promote the interests of young workers in the finance industry.

Her passion and commitment to trade union work has not gone unnoticed. ZUFIAW honoured her with a **Women’s Top Achiever’s Award** in 2006 in recognition of her achievements. She is also among the 60 prominent women featured in the second edition book titled **“Zambian Women Celebrated”** authored by Marsha Moyo. And her former school, Roma Girls Secondary School, also honoured her with an award in recognition of **“Outstanding leadership and unfailing commitment”** to the school.