

Abstract

This paper seeks to review the country's retrenchment strategy as it relates to key governance issues of stakeholder ownership, level of preparedness of the target group and respect for worker rights. Using primary data collected from a sample of 78 workers and selected labour support institutions, it was established that neither the workers nor their unions participated in the design and implementation of the retrenchment strategy. In addition, no mechanism was put in place by the government to sensitise and prepare workers for retrenchment. Consequently, most of the retrenched workers were caught unawares and this increased their suffering. In implementing the retrenchment policy, workers were not duly accorded their right to freedom of association and collective bargaining as enshrined in the country's constitution, existing labour laws and core international labour standards. It is emphasised that the current targeted early voluntary retirement scheme can only succeed if government deliberately solicits the buy-in of the workers and their union, and encourages full participation of various stakeholders in the process. Reform ownership is an important determinant of policy success that the government cannot afford to ignore.