

Communiqué of the ITUC-Africa Forum on Africa's Development and Industrialisation

1. Trade union leaders from 30 African countries representing national centres and Global Union Federations gathered at a forum under the theme “moving Africa’s development and industrialisation agenda forward: trade union alternatives” in Accra, Ghana from 23- 25 September, 2013 under the auspices of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) to further the aspirations of Africa’s transformation agenda.
2. Parts of the objectives of the forum were to improve and deepen trade union organisations and the general public’s awareness on Africa’s development and industrialisation and the Africa Mining Vision, which has been adopted by the African Union as a critical fulcrum for Africa’s industrialisation take-off. The forum also provided a platform to deepen trade union consultation on the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals. There were also discussions around the need and how to advance the implementation of the social protection floor to advance the fight against poverty and inequality. Equally, participants had the space to make inputs into domestic possibilities for financing Africa’s development and industrialisation.
3. The forum noted that the incidence of grinding poverty and widening inequality between people, communities and countries are serious concerns which are exacerbating discontent, restiveness and disillusionment in Africa and elsewhere.
4. It also noted that Africa’s development to which we all aspire is one that will contribute to and effectively address the issues of food security (including issues of climate change, land and agriculture); socio-economic inequalities and social justice; peace and security governance; political participation, human rights and transparency; regional integration; trade and investment, and women empowerment within a sustainable arrangement.
5. The forum also observed that whereas Africa is a rich and endowed continent, its wealth has not benefited its citizens. Specifically, the current economic growth across the continent has not translated into poverty reduction rather the gap between the poor and the rich have further widened largely because of the failure of the market and national economy management failure to effectively distribute the gains. The forum therefore emphasized the urgency of re-directing Africa’s current commodity export-led development path to one that places primacy on the beneficiation of Africa’s mineral and other natural resources for the purpose of promoting the prospects for jobs and wealth generation.
6. Furthermore, the forum agreed that Africa’s organised labour together with their progressive civil society allies will continue to work to support the genuine efforts of African governments to re-negotiate mining and mineral extraction contracts and licences with a view to increase government revenue to provide and improve social services provisions.

7. Equally too, organised labour will sustain the efforts to escalate the awareness of the African Mining Vision as well as mobilize active vigilance for the effective implementation of the vision.
8. Celebrating the successes as well noting the challenges of Africa in the last 50 years, it was stressed that the lessons of yesterday demand that a new Africa should be defined by its wealth rather than its challenges. The resolve is therefore to cease to lament the challenges of Africa's under-development, rather trade unions have elected to recommit to making tangible contributions to the mobilization of their members, peoples and communities for nation-building and transformation.
9. An industrialised and developed Africa requires a culture of visionary, accountable and transparent leadership. Efforts at bringing about this culture must be consciously engineered and aggressively pursued by trade unions together with other members of the civil society community.
10. Post-independent Africa was founded on the unity of purpose and aspiration to grow prosperity that can be equitably shared amongst its peoples. Economic industrialisation based on intra-African trade must be one of the priorities to pursue.
11. Africa's development agenda requires the participation and ownership by the citizens of the continent. The forum therefore calls on the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to take an inclusive and decentralised approach in developing the Africa Union Vision 2063.
12. The importance and usefulness of the provision of social protection floor as an urgent and necessary intervention to mitigating the effects of poverty and inequality was passionately canvassed. The forum agreed that African governments should be encouraged to aggressively pursue the provisions in an effective and sustainable manner. The forum therefore decided that African trade unions will work assiduously with other stakeholders at the national level to popularize as well as achieve the implementation of the benefits contained in ILO Recommendation 202 (Social Protection Floor).
13. Recognising the gains and gaps brought by the MDGs, the conference demands that the post-2015 agenda with respect to Africa should address the structural causes of poverty and inequality. Specifically, the forum calls for post-2015 goals that take cognizance of the provisions of the Decent Work Agenda, which includes job creation, social protection provisions, respect for fundamental rights at work and the space for genuine social dialogue.
14. The Forum agreed that in order to have meaningful contribution in the Post 2015 Development process and safeguard the needs and aspirations of African Workers in the Post 2015 Development Frameworks, ITUC Africa and its National Affiliates should develop labour – friendly Goals, Targets and Indicators on Social Protection and Decent Work in preparation for consultations at the national level.
15. Still on the post-2015 MDGs, participants call for the inclusion of effective governance that places premium on accountability, transparency and responsiveness to be included as part of the goals.
16. The forum acknowledges the negative impact of Illicit Financial Flows and other forms of tax dodging on Africa's development, especially with respect to the erosion

of financial resources for the provision of social goods such as education, health care provisions, sanitation and hygiene and nutrition.

17. The forum therefore agreed to mobilise African workers and organisations such as the Sub-regional organisations (EATU; SATUCC); Global Union Federations in collaboration with progressive movements such as Tax Justice Network –Africa and ActionAid International under an advocacy tax justice campaign to fight to defeat and end harmful tax incentives, tax dodging, illicit financial flow, assets theft and tax haven so as to increase chances for domestic resource mobilisation. The campaign will also struggle for the adoption of Financial Transaction Tax so as to further increase the chances for financing of the post-2015 MDGs. It was agreed that moments such as Africa Industrialisation Day (November 28), May Day (May 1) and similar other important commemorative dates will be maximized to increase awareness and action for change.
18. The forum reiterated the importance of and the need for trade union to invest in research and development for evidence based intervention to contribute to moving Africa’s development and industrialisation agenda forward by proposing trade union alternatives.