

Pre-Congress Activity Workshop on "Decent Work and Social Economy"
Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg, November 24, 2011

Concept note

1. Background and rationale

The analysis of the socio economic situation in African countries shows that employment in Africa is characterized by four main features:

- An abundant supply of young and unskilled labor;
- A demand of labor oriented towards primary activities, self-employed and largely informal thus resulting in precarious and informal jobs;
- A relatively low urban, female unemployment, with excessive urban youth unemployment and a high massive underemployment, especially rural
- Low level of decent work.

These features are now exacerbated by the perverse effects of the economic and financial crisis that led to deterioration in the employment situation throughout the world and Africa. Also, the decent work concept championed for years by the ILO, in recent years has emerged as a central issue of socio-economic policies and development strategies implemented in Africa. The African Union in 2004 and 2009 dedicated special meetings with the strong involvement of social actors, including trade unions. In specific, the ILO has held several consultations on the continental theme. The symposium in Ouagadougou in December 2009 and the conference of October 2010 in Yaounde on decent work are the most significant initiatives in this area.

However, in the promotion of decent work in Africa, ITUC-Africa believes that the actions must be permanent to spur a significant and profound change in working conditions. It is thus committed there. Evidence, it organized two forums in 2009 and 2010 on economic crisis and financial crisis, the Global Jobs Pact fall into this category. There was a workshop on the development of policy documents on decent work in October 2010 as well as the New Year forum back in January 2011.

These initiatives have helped to deepen the responses of African trade union movements to the economic and financial crisis from the perspective of effective ownership of the guiding principles of the Global Jobs Pact, and implementation of country programs for work (DWCPs) recommended by the ILO in African countries. They also allowed the various stakeholders of ITUC-Africa:

- A better understanding of decent work as a tool for promoting development in Africa;

- A better understanding of the approaches advocated for the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact and to assess the industrial action for the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact and identify best practices

According to ITUC-Africa, the low level of decent work on the continent is one of the causes of the deterioration of living conditions of workers and the high incidence of poverty. Africa needs to make growth more employment-friendly and more favourable to the poor to achieve MDG 1 (halving extreme poverty and hunger) in 2015. It is therefore essential that frequent discussions and consultations are conducted on strategies and union priorities concerning the promotion of decent work in Africa.

Therefore, this workshop on 'Decent Work and Social Economy', during the next Congress of ITUC-Africa provides an opportunity for African trade unions affiliated to ITUC-Africa to continue their discussions and debates on the subject and provide their guidance to the Global Jobs Pact and Decent Work Agenda which are at the heart of development strategies in Africa.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the workshop is to strengthen the capacity of African trade union leaders to devise and implement strategies for decent jobs in order to influence their implementation in African decent work Policy, particularly in the context of country programs (DWCPs) and the Global Jobs Compact.

The specific objectives arising are:

- Being informed and educated on strategies for promoting decent work in Africa, particularly through the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and the implementation of the Global Jobs Compact.
- Appreciating the industrial action for the implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and the implementation of the Global Jobs Compact and identifying best practices.
- Reflecting on union priorities concerning decent work and identifying strategies to achieve union priorities.
- Reflecting on some areas of trade union strategies to end the crisis in the context of alternative models to neoliberalism and the creation of decent jobs;

3. Format

The workshop will be a forum for discussion, information sharing and reflection. It will take place in one day with three main sessions around the following topics:

- Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP) and the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa - an overview.
- Union action in the implementation of Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP) of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa - Best Practices.
- Priorities and trade union strategies to promote decent work in Africa.

4. Target Group

The target audience consists of leaders and union leaders of national organizations affiliated to the ITUC-Africa and its bodies. It is in this case:

- Presidents and General Secretaries of affiliated unions;
- The technical staff of the Secretariat.

In addition to members of the Secretariat and resource persons, twenty leaders of affiliated organizations of the ITUC-Africa will be stakeholders in the workshop.

They are:

South Africa (FEDUSA) - Angola (CGSILA) - Benin (COSI) - Burkina Faso (ONSL) - Burundi (COSYBU) - Cameroon (USLC) - Green Cape (UNTC-CS) - Gabon (CGSL) - Ghana (GFL) - Guinea (ONSLG) - Kenya (COTU-K) - Madagascar (USAM) - Mauritania (UTM) - Morocco (UTM) - Niger (USTN) - DRC (TDC) - Senegal (UDTS) - Sierra Leone (COCOTU) - Togo (CNTT) - Zambia (ZCTU).

5. Budget

The budget for this activity amounted to thirty thousand nine hundred seventy-five Euros (€ 30,975)