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ITUC-Africa statement on the commemoration of the 2013 International Migrants' Day

ITUC-Africa affirms that migration is a human reality and will continue to occur in the interest and wellbeing of people, families, communities and economies. Particularly, we note the many positive contributions of migrants and their families to the development of national economies and the growth of global wealth. Sadly, migrants and their families, like the many working poor, have been short-changed in the distribution of the gains from global prosperity. Today, we join millions of voices in the defence of the cause of migrants and their families to demand that governments the world over make conscious and genuine effort to improve the rights and wellbeing of migrants and their families.

We remember those migrants who in the quest to further their wellbeing have lost their lives. In particular, we extend warm consolatory messages to the families of those who lost their loved ones in the sea disaster of Lampedusa; as well as in the Sahara desert and the many others who have been victims of natural disasters in their places of sojourn.

We agree that poverty, massive unemployment, sectarian conflicts and political instability have been some of the factors and root causes that have forced people to migrate. We therefore reiterate our call on African governments and institutions to marshal imaginative and robust policies and programmes that will promote employment and provide social protection benefits to those who would otherwise migrate under difficult conditions.

We again repeat our call on African governments and the African Union to re-commit to effective and practical efforts to rein in civil conflicts and guarantee peace and security. The number of victims of avoidable sectarian and civil conflicts on the continent is growing alarmingly high and the conditions of internally displaced persons and refugees are worsening. We express our concern regarding recent disturbing developments in the Central African Republic and the Republic of South Sudan. Victims of these conflicts must be properly attended to, especially their nutritional, medical and sanitation needs, while efforts to restore enduring normalcy are explored.

We welcome the outcomes from the United Nation's High Level Dialogue process that are expressed in the 8-point agenda as contained in the "Making Migration Work" document.

In particular, we commend the declaration that migration should be seen and managed as a human rights issue. In essence, the human rights of migrants and their families should be preserved, observed and promoted. The 8-point agenda denounces discrimination against migrants and the deprivation of children of migrants from accessing social services such as education and health care. We affirm our commitment to popularize and further the effective implementation of the 8-point agenda.

We urge African governments ***to ratify and effectively implement*** international instruments related to international migration, including the core international human rights instruments; relevant ILO Conventions; the Palermo Protocol to suppress, prevent and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children and; the Convention relating to the status of Refugees.

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