



Lomé, 07 March 2024

Commemoration of 2024 International Women's Day: "Invest in social protection provisions to improve women's empowerment and accelerate progress".

As we mark International Women's Day 2024, the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa www.ituc-africa.org) joins her teeming women members, all affiliates, and the rest of the world to celebrate our amazons and heroines across.

ITUC-Africa stands in solidarity with and salutes all women across formal and informal economies and sectors, rural and urban communities, the continent and the globe in appreciating their sacrifices and services and celebrating their contributions, achievements, resilience, and unwavering commitment to progress.

This year's theme, **"Invest in women: Accelerate progress"**, emphasizes the critical importance of prioritizing investments in women's rights, empowerment, and economic inclusion to drive sustainable development and social justice.

Africa is full of dynamic and talented women of all ages who contribute significantly to every facet of society, from the economy to politics, culture, and beyond. The number of women in the global labour force has grown much faster than men over the past few years.

However, despite their invaluable contributions, women continue to face persistent barriers to full equality and participation partly because of pervasive discriminatory practices and unequal access to education and employment opportunities. Also, limited representation in decision-making spaces remains a formidable challenge that must be urgently addressed.

We know that promoting, through adequate financing of women and girl-child education, expanding healthcare provisions and ensuring more employment opportunities for women will positively impact transformative changes in the economy and society. Investing in women is imperative for advancing social justice and inclusive and sustainable development. When women are economically, politically, and socially empowered, entire communities and nations thrive. Investing in women's education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and leadership can unlock their full potential to live completely free lives.

Therefore, as we celebrate these women on this momentous day, we reiterate our unshaken resolve to stand with them in challenging and working with them to counter patriarchy, stereotypes, misogyny, discrimination and gender-based violence. ITUC-Africa shall also continue to campaign against other socio-economic, political, religious and cultural practices that oppress, undermine and suppress the rights of women to strive and attain their potential. We shall not be silent on those who are often forgotten, such as the many women from all walks of life who impact changes in their communities but were targeted and forced into silence.

Further, ITUC-Africa calls upon governments, employers, civil society organizations, and international partners to redouble their efforts to invest in women and girls. This can be achieved by elaborating and implementing gender-responsive policies and legislation. We shall continue to raise our voices in the pursuit of "pay for equal work", advocate for access to quality free and compulsory education and healthcare, promote women's leadership and representation in decision-making bodies, and strengthen mechanisms to prevent and address gender-based violence. We shall continue to pursue our campaigns against debt overhang and Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) so that our economies can secure improved resources necessary for financing social protection.

Furthermore, ITUC-Africa reaffirms its commitment to advancing gender equality and women's rights across the continent. Through our advocacy, campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives, we will continue to mobilize workers and trade unions to champion gender equality, eliminate discrimination and violence against women, and promote women's empowerment in the workplace and society.

Happy Women's Day!



Akhator Joel ODIGIE
General Secretary