



Mody GUIRO

President

Président

Kwasi ADU-AMANKWAH

General Secretary

Secrétaire Général

Route Internationale d'Atakpamé

Centre FOPADESC Agoè – Nyivé

B.P. : 4401 – Tel. : 00228 225 07 10

Fax : 00228 225 61 13

LOME - TOGO

Email : info@ituc-africa.org

Web : www.ituc-africa.org

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY PRESS STATEMENT

2023 International Workers' Day Commemoration: *fight insecurity, debt and Illicit Financial Flows and advance participatory democracy to promote peace, shared prosperity, well-being and inclusion.*

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa: www.ituc-africa.org) salutes all African working men and women and their counterparts in other parts of the world for their relentless sacrifices, service, energy and dedication to work and productivity.

We continue to celebrate Workers' Day because despite the dire conditions, we have remained staunch survivors. We say cheers to our individual, collective and communal doggedness and grit to survive and fight on. We pay glowing tribute to our brothers, sisters and comrades that have succumbed. May their service and sacrifices never be in vain.

ITUC-Africa is commemorating this year's International Workers' Day under the theme "***Fight insecurity, debt and Illicit Financial Flows and advance participatory democracy to promote peace, shared prosperity and well-being and inclusion***". *This speaks to our concerns, especially as life and living in Africa remain dire and an endless struggle for survival on account of the difficult socio-economic, political, cultural and environmental situation subsisting in our economies.*

We are concerned that democracy is being manipulated and exploited to benefit mainly the rich and powerful to the exclusion and detriment of the majority of our populations. State capture continues to grow and is manifested by unashamed stealing of public resources and corruption by ruling elites and their cronies and stooges. The people that have invested their trust, hope and aspirations in expectation of the dividends of democracy have been left high and dry. In Eswatini, Africa's last and absolute monarchy, the people's legitimate and progressive call for participatory multiparty democracy continues to be met with naked and criminal brutality and fatal force, which have led to the deaths of hundreds of defenceless and unarmed citizens.

We are also concerned that post-COVID-19 effects have continued to exert debilitating effects on workers, households, our communities and economies in various ways. For instance, civil liberty spaces have shrunk considerably, and state

paranoia has spiked. Attacks on the freedom of association, assembly and expression are growing, as we are witnessing in Liberia, Madagascar, Sudan, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Nigeria, Togo, Somalia and Angola, to mention just a few. Systematic, administrative, legislative and political assaults are engineered to undermine and undercut these rights. We condemn and reject these attacks and will continue to work with our affiliates, their members and allies to resist and counter these harsh and oppressive actions until justice is attained.

ITUC-Africa is also concerned that the effects of heavy debt servicing payments, untamed Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs), illicit trade through counterfeiting and adulteration of goods (especially food and medicines), endemic corruption through contract inflation and other asset looting practices by politicians, their sponsors and public servants remain rife. These actions continue to undermine State ability to effectively institute expanded and inclusive social protection measures to counter poverty, misery and inequality. We ask that these unsustainable debts be cancelled or rescheduled under reasonable terms and timelines by the creditor groups. We urge our governments to muster the courage and sincerity to fight IFFs, illicit trade and corruption. Africa's organised labour will remain steadfast in our campaigns and mobilisation against these vices.

Peace and security are critical issues for African peoples and workers. The continent's insecurity and seemingly endless violent outbreaks undermine stability and are worrisome. We call on African governments to promote peace and security and provide an enabling environment for our people, workers and communities by developing and deploying an inclusive security architecture. Also, we urge the international community to muster the will to rein in the arms industry which is one of the main beneficiaries of this state of affairs.

Climate change and the difficulty to transition to a low-carbon economy are significant challenges affecting African workers. We will continue to lend our voices and action to the call for industrialised economies to make the necessary financial contributions to enable poor and less-developed economies that are more affected by climate change to develop adaptation and mitigation capacities. Also, we urge African governments to adopt policies that promote a public pathway to a just transition and low-carbon economy and prioritise investment in renewable energy, green jobs and sustainable agriculture.

Importantly, we recognise that all these issues affect women more adversely. Women workers face unique challenges and vulnerabilities, including discrimination and violence in the workplace. We call on African governments to adopt gender-responsive policies that address women workers' specific needs and challenges. The ratification, application and enforcement of the ILO Convention 190 will go a long way in creating a conducive policy environment to tackle violence and harassment in the world of work.

In conclusion, ITUC-Africa calls on African governments to prioritise policies that promote decent work, protect workers' rights, and improve their living and working conditions. These policies will benefit workers and contribute to achieving the Africa Union Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We urge African governments to adopt the necessary indicators to measure progress in these areas and ensure accountability in the implementation of these policies.

Amka Afrika!



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa
30th April, 2023.