

## **Communiqué of the ITUC-Africa General Council on Gender Equality**

1. Trade union leaders of ITUC-Africa's affiliates from 30 African countries meeting at the General Council of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) affirm their determination to further the aspirations of the programme for Africa's transformation.

The Council observed that the never-ending global financial and economic crisis continues to cause precarious jobs, thereby bringing about a very strong discrimination and competition. Compulsory or involuntary migration, in which an increasing number of men and women in search of more rewarding jobs are involved, is often carried out in conditions characterised by total lack of social protection. Women form the bulk of this category of workers. With the moral responsibility of catering for their family, they make difficult and sometimes suicidal decisions by accepting to continue to work in conditions of total injustice, insecurity and unsanitary workplaces.

1. The Council observed that the salary gap continues to grow in the private sector with violent situations as a result of pent up emotional and psychological burdens that the two sexes have to cope and deal with at the work place. Economic and intellectual poverty of women and the youth, domestic work, social protection and maternity, the new sophisticated forms of harassment continue to pose challenges to the African labour movement in the promotion of equality and the rights of working men and women in Africa.
2. The Council observed the results obtained in the area of promoting gender mainstreaming in national organisations and in our countries but a lot of efforts remained to be made so as to make the results more visible in their internal functioning and structuring.
3. The Council agreed that workers' organisations represented in the General Council and their Trade Federations should become models of gender mainstreaming, starting by really applying the decisions of the General Council relating to gender mainstreaming. They will continue to work tirelessly to support the real efforts of their governments to renegotiate contracts and national laws on gender mainstreaming and social protection and more particularly for the entire stakeholders of the informal sector.

4. Workers' organisations will also support efforts aimed at creating better awareness of the vision on gender mainstreaming, mobilising and actively ensuring that this vision is actually achieved.
5. As we celebrate the challenges and successes of Africa after 50 years, lessons of the past require that a new Africa be defined based on its wealth and not its challenges. It is therefore time to stop lamenting in view of Africa's under-development challenges; turn goodwill to action through the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming issues in trade union organisations and change of behaviour. There is need for a paradigm shift within the African labour movement for a better gender mainstreaming which should remain a priority.
6. Trade unions present agreed to recommit themselves to make contributions and changes through the concrete application of the decisions of the General Council in respect of gender mainstreaming so as to mobilise their members, particularly women, around the economy, social dialogue and transformation.
7. For Africa to develop and industrialise, there is need for a visionary, responsible, and transparent leadership sensitive to gender mainstreaming. Efforts aimed at promoting this culture need to be deployed and pursued more aggressively and gradually.
8. Africa's development agenda requires all hands being on-board. The General Council therefore calls on trade union leaders to adopt a decentralised inclusive approach mainstreaming gender by developing an ITUC-Africa vision and drawing from the Maputo Protocol on gender equality.