

**PRE-CONGRESS WORKSHOP ON
Decent Work: A component of a program for African emancipation**

Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg (South Africa) 24th November, 2011

Concept note

1. Background and rationale

According to African trade unions, the problems related to employment and working conditions are pernicious and recurring. They persist for years and concern mainly:

- Job insecurity and unemployment
- Low purchasing power of workers' incomes
- Lack of social protection
- Lack of hygiene, safety and health in work places
- Non-compliance with international standards and social legislation.

These problems are related to the context of the global economy characterized by the rule of neoliberalism, poor economic and political governance in African countries, the weakness of African states, weak institutional structures to protect workers and the low capacity intervention of African trade unions.

ITUC-Africa believes that decent work is necessary to do away with poverty. This concept advocated by the ILO in recent years has emerged as a central issue of socio-economic policies and development strategies both nationally and globally through a view clearly expressed by the ILO. This view is supported by many reference documents of which the last two are:

- ILO Declaration of 2008 for Social Justice for a Fair Globalization
- The resolution after the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2009 the theme "Overcoming the Crisis: A Global Pact for Employment."

On the issue of employment, Africa is no exception; the African Union in 2004 and 2009, dedicated special meetings with the strong involvement of social actors, including trade unions. The ILO has held several consultations on the continental level. The symposium in Ouagadougou in December 2009 and the conference of October 2010 in Yaoundé on decent work are the most significant initiatives in this area.

This is why since 2000, the African trade union movement engaged in actions for the promotion of decent work. Also, since its inception, ITUC-Africa has invested in the

implementation of initiatives to educate its members. 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 has commitments here. Evidence, it organized two forums in 2009 and 2010 on the economic crisis and financial crisis, the global pact for employment also falls in this category. There is also the workshop on the development of policy documents on decent work in October 2010 and the New Year School in January 2011.

However, given the magnitude of the uncertainty prevailing in the labor market in Africa, given the expanding informal sector, deteriorating conditions of workers and given the low level of decent work on the continent, African trade unions must mobilize to make decent work a reality for African workers through the establishment of a program for the emancipation of 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 the implementation in African-centered programs of African emancipation consistent with the real improvement in conditions for workers.

The specific objectives arising are:

Being informed and aware of the initiatives on the instruments for the promotion of decent work in Africa: Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007-2015; the road map after the symposium in Ouagadougou in 2009 on the implementation of global pact for employment in Africa, the recommendations of the 2nd African Conference on Decent Work, held in Yaoundé in October 2010.

Reflect on the priorities and trade union strategies to support operational initiatives to promote decent work in African countries in terms of economic sectors for the implementation of a program for African emancipation.

3. Format

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

- The instruments of the implementation of decent work in Africa;
- Priorities and strategies for the operationalization of union initiatives 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 union leaders of affiliated organizations of the ITUC-Africa will also be stakeholders in the workshop.

They are:

South Africa (COSATU) - Angola (CGSILA) - Benin (CGTB) - Burkina Faso (USTB) - CAR (CSTC) - Côte d'Ivoire (USTCI) - Congo Brazza (CSC) - Ghana (GTUC) - Guinea (CNTG) - Mali (CSTM) - Mauritania (CGTM) - Morocco (CDT) - Niger (CNT) - DRC (CSC) - Senegal (CNTS) - Sierra Leone (SLCC) - Chad (UST) Togo (CSTT) - Uganda (NOTU) - Zimbabwe (ZCTU).