



**Mody GUIRO**  
President  
Président

**Kwasi ADU-AMANKWAH**  
General Secretary  
Secrétaire Général

Route Internationale d'Atakpamé  
Centre FOPADESC Agoè – Nyivé  
P. : 4401 – Tel. : 00228 225 07 10  
Fax : 00228 225 61 13  
LOME - TOGO

Email : [info@ituc-africa.org](mailto:info@ituc-africa.org)  
Web : [www.ituc-africa.org](http://www.ituc-africa.org)

Mr Essam Sharaf

Prime Minister

Magless El Shaàb Street

Al Kasr El Einy

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202-2795-8048

Email: [pm@cabinet.gov.eg](mailto:pm@cabinet.gov.eg)

Friday, 2nd September, 2011

O/R.: 810/2011/SG/RB

Dear Prime Minister Sharaf,

### Egypt – Trade Union Rights

I am writing to you on behalf of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) to express our concern regarding the continued lack of trade union rights in Egypt. For years, workers have struggled for the creation of decent work in a country where low wages and abysmal working conditions were the norm. The near total absence of independent trade unions made changing that situation extremely difficult, leaving millions of workers with little hope for a better life.

Important changes are now underway. Earlier this month, the interim government disbanded the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) board, effectively ending the hegemony of the official trade union and opening up space for independent trade unions to form and to operate openly. The interim government also recently instituted a new minimum wage of 700 LE to take effect in October 2011 for most employers in most sectors. These moves are welcome.

However, we remain deeply concerned that two laws which severely restrict trade union freedoms remain in place today, namely the Trade Unions Act No. 35/1976 and Decree No. 34/2011, which criminalizes strikes. I understand that the Labour Minister has recently circulated a draft of a new Freedom of Association Law. We urge you to ensure that the law fully complies with International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 87 and Convention 98, and is the result of full consultation with social partners – including, of course, independent trade unions.

Egypt's workers have waited far too long to see their fundamental rights realized in law and practice. We sincerely hope that they need not have to wait much longer.

Yours Sincerely,

**Kwasi Adu-Amankwah**

**General Secretary**