

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION
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AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANISATION

ORGANISATION REGIONALE AFRICAINE



WORKSHOP ON THE FORMULATION OF POLICY DOCUMENTS ON DECENT WORK

ITUC-Africa, Lomé, 21-22 October 2010

FINAL DECLARATION

We young trade union leaders from the African region meeting at ITUC-Africa's headquarters in Lome, Togo, on 21 and 22 October 2010 during a workshop on the formulation of decent work policy documents, after assessing the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) in our various countries, have noted the following:

Today, the international economic and financial crisis has made the situation of African peoples, in general, and workers, in particular, more difficult. The impact on poverty rate and the quality of work is dramatic. There are nearly 50% poor people, 30% unemployed or under-employed, especially among the youth and women with an expanding informal economy.

African economies are more and more marginalised by the solutions provided to the consequences of the crisis by developed countries which seem to take advantage of this situation to increasingly siphon the wealth of Africa and make it vulnerable to future crises. In the area of promotion of decent work and implementation of decent work policies in Africa, initiatives and actions are needed to bring about a significant change in working conditions.

Decent work country programmes (DWCP) are the main framework by means of which the ILO provides support to policy formulation and capacity building in order to achieve the MDGs. These programmes are the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on social justice for a fair globalisation, which was adopted in June 2008 at the International Labour Conference in Geneva. They are so relevant to our countries that they may be an alternative to the negative consequences of the economic and financial crisis.

Although the situation is urgent, out of the 53 countries in Africa, only 21 have already signed their DWCP. In 25 other countries, these programmes are being formulated or signed. Africa is therefore late in implementing the reforms contained in the ILO Declaration on decent work. African countries are aware of the ILO indicators but, unfortunately, they do not have the necessary means to implement them.

The weak performance in the formulation and implementation of DWCPs in Africa is also due to the lack or low involvement of trade union and workers' organisations in the formulation and implementation of the development policies of their countries. This is not likely to ensure that workers' main concerns are taken into account.

In view of the above, young trade union leaders agreed that it was necessary to take urgent measures in the following areas:

- The commitment of governments to formulate and implement Decent Work Country Programmes which take into account the concerns and realities of peoples who should be consulted beforehand.
- The Global Jobs Pact and the Decent Work Agenda should guide the economic restructuring policies undertaken to relieve the populations.
- The support of the ILO to build the capacity of human resources within the framework of the DWCP.
- The effective involvement of trade-union organisations in building the capacity of workers to better monitor the implementation of the DWCP.

In connection with the above, the young union leaders made the following commitments:

1. To have access to information, to own and popularise the content of the GJP and the Decent Work Agenda.
2. To establish at the national level, a trade-union monitor during the implementation of the DWCP.
3. To facilitate the development of the DWCPs in their respective countries and participate actively in their implementation.
4. To create at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, strategic alliances in order to achieve trade union unity of actions in favour of the DWCP. With this intention, to use this workshop as starting point to set up a network of young trade unionists for decent work.
5. To learn to read, decipher and analyse documents of economic and social policy with the aim of improving the participation of trade unions in the implementation and the monitoring of reforms which are required to get out of crisis.
6. To work towards the unionisation of the informal economy workers in order to improve their living and working conditions.
7. To formulate and publicise, within their umbrella trade-union organisations, concrete proposals to accelerate job creation, reinforce social protection systems, guarantee the respect for labour standards and improve the quality of social dialogue.

Done in Lomé on October 22, 2010