



ITUC-AFRICA'S STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF AFRICA DAY, MAY 25, 2012

Africa's current situation is a challenge for all mankind and especially the African trade union movement which needs to show solidarity with all workers who are denied in Africa and elsewhere their trade union and human rights.

On the occasion of the celebration of **Africa Day, May 25, 2012**, ITUC-Africa calls on African workers and people to continue the anti-colonial struggle and the struggle for democracy and political stability in Africa and beyond.

In East Africa, ITUC-Africa deplors the political instability in Somalia where for more than two decades it has proved impossible for central government to operate in peace and security. This grave situation has forced thousands of Somalis to flee to neighbouring countries and needs to be addressed urgently. South Sudan is also becoming a major area of concern where the country's newly acquired statehood is under threat. There is urgent need for Sudan and South Sudan to cooperate and resolve their differences over borders and other issues peacefully.

In Southern Africa, democracy is suppressed in Swaziland by a State of Emergency that has been in place since 1973. In its most recent act of authoritarianism, the Swazi Government has de-registered a trade union federation, TUCOSWA, which was properly registered in January, 2012. ITUC-Africa calls for recognition of trade union rights to exist and operate freely and also for the government to unban political parties, release all political prisoners unconditionally and to hold multiparty democratic elections to elect a legitimate government. In Zimbabwe, there is continuing need to support the struggle of trade unions for independent existence and for the realization of full democratic rights by the people at large.

In West Africa, there are major challenges for democracy in Mali and Guinea Bissau where the constitutional order has been violated by coups that have toppled democratically elected presidents. We affirm the validity of the rule of law and democratic institutions and call for the restoration of constitutional rule and democracy in these two countries. By the same token, we call for the respect of democratic rights in Mauritania where rights violations are fast becoming the order of the day.

In North Africa, Western Sahara is identified as the last remaining bastion of colonialism on the continent. ITUC-Africa affirms the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination in keeping with a number of UN resolutions and calls for decisive action and support for the people in their struggle. Again, following the major upheavals that have taken place in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya since the beginning of last year, ITUC-Africa calls for support for the continuing struggles of the workers and peoples of these countries to push back the frontiers of tyranny and absolutism.

Outside the African continent, ITUC-Africa expresses solidarity with the millions of Africans in the African diaspora in the Western and Eastern Hemispheres who are denied their basic human and trade union rights. Again, ITUC-Africa calls for the respect for the rights of all African migrant workers.

We also express our solidarity with the people of Palestine, following the serious threat to peace and justice posed by the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The people of Palestine are fighting for freedom from occupation and aggression and for human dignity and the right to statehood and deserve support from all progressive minded people.

ITUC-Africa extends its solidarity to all the people of in Syria, Yemen, and other parts of the Arab world who are fighting for freedom from dictatorship. ITUC-Africa calls for greater international solidarity for the just struggles for democracy and self- determination.

Burma has one of the worst human rights records in the world. Recent gains for pro-democracy forces have to be supported and consolidated for Burma to move away from decades of dictatorship towards democracy, peace and political stability.

ITUC-Africa also expresses its solidarity with the people of Cuba in their struggle against imperialism and for their right to self-determination and the pursuit of an alternative model of development.

This statement has been issued in Lome, Togo, on May 24, 2012