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To
the President of Labour and
Social Affairs Commission
African Union

12 February, 2010

Dear Sir,

PROTEST AGAINST AFRICAN LABOUR MINISTERS DECISIONS ON ITUC-AFRICA REPORT

The Executive Bureau of ITUC-Africa expresses its dismay at the reaction of the African Labour Ministers to the Report of ITUC-Africa to the Seventh Ordinary Session of the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC), which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28 September to 2 October 2009.

The Executive Bureau noted with surprise that ITUC-Africa's Report to the Commission was considered by the Labour Ministers in a closed session with the following decisions:

- i. *that the report of ITUC-Africa (Doc. LSC/EXP/12(c)) should be withdrawn;*
- ii. *to review the role of organisations with observer status in the Labour and Social Affairs Commission;*
- iii. *in future, documents submitted to the Labour and Social Affairs Commission by these organisations should not be presented under the AU emblem;*
- iv. *the report may not be reproduced and distributed.*

The Executive Bureau believes that the decisions of the African Labour Ministers are unilateral and undermine the spirit and practice of social dialogue in Africa. The decisions taken by this important continental body can influence some governments to act in similar manner at national level when they disagree with the trade unions and thereby impact negatively on the practice of social dialogue and tripartism in Africa as a whole.

The AU LSAC was set up primarily to deal with labour and social policies and issues in Africa. Denying a regional organisation of constituent members the space and freedom to express its views is tantamount to a violation of democratic rights which are enshrined in the statutes of the African Union. In the context of the crisis of democracy, governance and development that confront Africa, workers' views should not be arbitrarily suppressed and rejected by governments. The African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission needs to move towards strengthening its tripartite character and avoid excluding social partners whose presence is essential for deepening democracy, tripartism and social dialogue, which should remain the hallmarks of this continental Commission.

The Executive Bureau of ITUC-Africa urges the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission to review the decisions of the African Labour Ministers quoted above and to create an atmosphere for social partners to participate fully in all future meetings of the Commission on an equal footing so that no one constituent of this tripartite body will impose its will on the rest.

We take this opportunity to affirm our belief in the application of the ideals of freedom and human rights enshrined in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

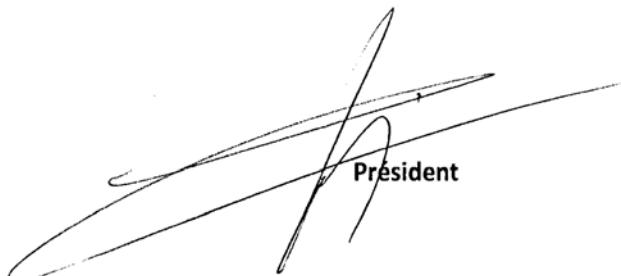
Signatories:

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah



General Secretary

Mody Guiro



Président

Cc:

- President of the African Union Commission
- AU Commissioner For Social Affairs
- ILO Regional Director
- Secretary General, OATUU
- Executive Secretary, Pan-African Employers' Confederation (PEC)
- All Affiliates of ITUC-Africa