

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

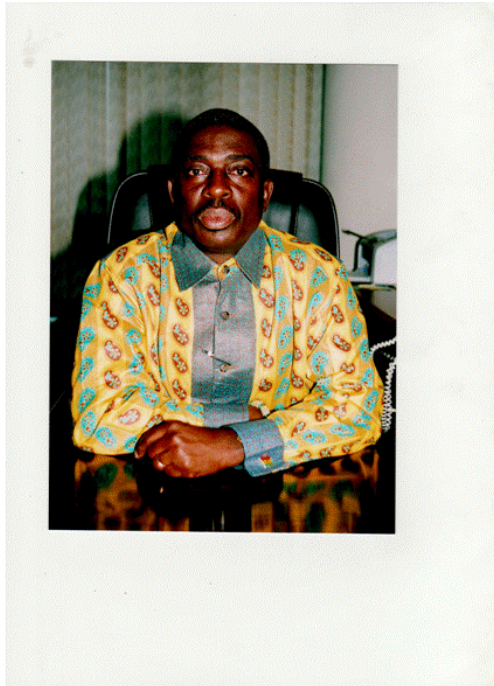
AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANISATION

(ITUC-Africa)



SOLIDARITY MESSAGE

By



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On the occasion of

ZIMBABWE - SWAZILAND SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE
HOSTED BY THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE
UNIONS
(COSATU)

At

ST. GEORGE'S HOTEL, KEMPTON PARK SOUTH AFRICA

On

10th -11th AUGUST, 2008

On behalf of ITUC-Africa and millions of African workers we salute the workers and progressive forces of Zimbabwe and Swaziland for their heroism and continuing struggle for fundamental rights, for democracy and for social progress.

ITUC-Africa also salutes COSATU and its affiliates for their heroism and solidarity and for hosting this important conference on “Oiling the wheels of democracy in Southern Africa through democratic elections in Zimbabwe and Swaziland”. The organised labour movement in Africa is grateful for this initiative that keeps the searchlight on Zimbabwe as well helps to raise from obscurity the continuing brutal repression that characterises political life in the Kingdom of Swaziland.

The constant harassment, intimidation and repression against trade union and democracy activists in Zimbabwe has become well known, particularly highlighted by the international attention that the country received in recent months around its presidential elections and run-off. The economic and social crisis that has engulfed Zimbabwe in the wake of its political crisis has also received widespread attention.

On the other hand, the crisis of political governance in Swaziland, characterized by decades of repression and exclusion and the

accompanying economic and social crisis has not received its due share of international attention and condemnation.

ITUC-Africa salutes again the heroism of the workers of the two countries in their continuing struggle under difficult conditions. The solidarity work of COSATU in both countries in the past decade and more, particularly since the Swaziland blockade of 1996 represents a valuable expression of solidarity among African workers. It affirms the validity of COSATU's slogan of 'An Injury to one is an injury to all' beyond South Africa's borders and highlights the oneness of African workers. The African labour movement thanks COSATU for this work of solidarity than makes an important contribution to the recognition of the oneness of the African people.

The Southern African sub-region and its history of migration and movement of its people, its common heritage, language and shared history, epitomize the artificial boundaries imposed on Africa by colonial predators and which led to the modern nation-states of Africa that have been struggling to survive in the last fifty years.

The solidarity work of COSATU and the forging of common links among the workers of the Southern African sub-region are important for pointing the way to the unity of our people in the sub-region and is a valuable example for the rest of Africa's working people.

The increasing pace of globalization in the world today, the growing power of multinational and centralizing capital, the strengthening of regional economic and trading blocs on the one hand, and on the other hand, the widening pauperization and misery of the majority of the people of the South and non-industrialized countries raise their critical challenges for the organisation, unity and struggle of the workers and peoples of Africa.

The unprecedented growth in information and communication technology on the other hand provides immense opportunities for our organisation, solidarity and united action.

But these will forever simply remain opportunities until we translate them into realities and gains and use them to advance the well-being of our people.

We must continue to work together, indeed strengthen our working together, to help ourselves and to stake our claims forcefully and with all the strength at our collective disposal, full in the knowledge that freedom, democracy and social progress can only arise and endure as the fruits of tenacious struggle that mobilizes the people and places them squarely in the driving seat of their destiny.

ITUC-Africa salutes this Zimbabwe-Swaziland Solidarity conference and wishes for a successful outcome.