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IN COMMEMORATION OF YOUTH DAY – 12th AUGUST: A message of felicitation and change for African youth by ITUC-Africa

On the occasion of International Youth Day (IYD), ITUC Africa congratulates the youth of Africa for their forbearance and their many initiatives towards building a better continent and world. This year's International Youth Day marks the 25th anniversary celebration of the occasion and is being celebrated under the theme of 'Change Our World'. This theme chosen by the United Nations for the 2011 celebration does not only express the kind of impact that young people strive to achieve, but also reflects the notion of global community which is one of the core principles of the UN.

Since the beginning of the year, the youth in Africa have been a critical part of a number of uprisings that have taken place in particularly North Africa. In those countries of North Africa and elsewhere, the young women and men have used diverse forms of social networking to initiate campaigns aimed at fighting for social justice and transformative change. Our youth have clearly joined the struggle for achieving a society that can cater for their aspirations.

Africa's youth accounts for about 70 per cent of the continent's one billion people and carries the heaviest part of the burden of unemployment and underemployment that afflicts our people. Everything must be done to create the necessary avenues for developing and making use of the intelligence, skills, innovativeness, dynamism and passion of our youth. This is essential for restoring the hopes of the future and securing their places in our society.

On this occasion of IYD, ITUC-Africa urges all the youth of Africa to remain steadfast and to rededicate themselves to the development and progress of Africa. We urge all youth who are in employment to join unions and to become active in them. For those who are already union members we urge them to become more active in their unions to ensure that youth interests and issues will feature strongly on the agenda of African trade unions. The future of change lies in the commitment and perseverance of the youth and we urge you not to relent in this.

Finally, we call on African governments to rededicate themselves to youth wellbeing and welfare through closer attention to education and vocational and entrepreneurial training that empower the youth to take full charge of their individual futures and those of our societies. We congratulate once again all the young women and men working hard for a better tomorrow for themselves and for our people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'K', 'A', and 'S' in a stylized, cursive font.

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah