



COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD) 2019: WINNING THE 50/50 BET

As the world commemorates today, March 8, the International Women's Day, the African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation, www.ituc-africa.org, congratulates the millions of women, mothers, educators, and counselors for their many struggles over the past years. The many current economic and sociopolitical changes in the world, and for that matter on the African continent, are exacerbating inequality thereby making it a recurrent phenomenon and widening income gaps thereby negatively affecting development within countries and between countries.

Women who were already a vulnerable group are increasingly exposed to greater instability and socio-economic insecurity.

The launch of the "Count us in" campaign in 2013 by the global trade union movement was an important turning point in the recognition of the principle of equality between women and men and the commitment to respect it. Its provisions in favor of gender equality are an important outcome of several years of work to change mentalities. In recent years, actions for change have gained ground, mainly through the determination of activists, human rights organizations and labor organizations. The emergence in Africa of women at the head of some trade union organizations is a concrete sign of hope that, today, demonstrates the validity of all theories that promote gender equality.

According to a recent report from the UN World Women's Organization, 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced physical and / or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from another person at some point in their life. These acts, which are human rights violations, have gradually given rise to a global scourge fueled by silence and impunity. To accept gender equality is to say no to discrimination and to commit to fighting all forms of violence and harassment.

In its approaches to mainstreaming the gender dimension, the African trade union movement, like the International trade union movement, is called upon to guide its programs and strategic plan with particular emphasis on education and training; employment and equal pay; social protection with a focus on maternity and women's access to health care; harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace and freedom of participation. This to serve as a pledge to future generations.

Today, it will no longer be enough to have a woman at the head of a union but we need go beyond leadership and integrate women into all decision-making structures thereby obtaining a quota of 50/50 in our workforce and union structures to win the bet for future generations. This is an opportunity for us to congratulate one of our large affiliate organizations in South Africa, which for the first time in its history has elected National Office Bearers of 50% women and 50% men.

Achieving equality between men and women should also involve promoting unity of action among women's organizations or structures themselves. That is why in ITUC-Africa we have put the establishment of women's committee networks to promote the Unity of Action on the field of gender mainstreaming at the heart of our actions. We also salute the efforts of women activists from our affiliated organizations who have succeeded in pooling their achievements for the establishment of dynamic platforms and networks of women such as in Benin, Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and others.

To promote synergy of action not only within the trade union movement but to deepen our collaboration with the civil society and the other social partners will be our motto for the next years so that, little by little, we manage to win the bet of 50/50.

Beyond parity, we urge workers in Africa and around the world to mobilize and strengthen their advocacy work with their governments and employers for the adoption this year of a new ILO normative instrument to "End violence and harassment in the world of work".
Forward with equality of women and men.

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