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## **ITUC-Africa welcomes Qatar's labour industrial reforms: calls on Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to emulate same**

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) joins the global trade union fraternity to commend and welcome the decision and commitments made by the government of Qatar to progressively reform her industrial relations practices. The reforms will help to eclipse, in Qatar, the kafala employment sponsorship system that has plunged thousands of migrant workers including African migrant workers into slavery and exploitative working and living conditions as well as create spaces for the enjoyment of other work place rights, including the right to voice and representation.

For ITUC-Africa, this is momentous and novel occasion that can help to improve human and workers' rights conditions in the entire Gulf region.

Given that the preservation and guarantee of civil liberties engender democracy, development and social justice, we strongly urge other Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to emulate the commendable gesture of Qatar. These three countries account for over 85% of African migrant workers in the Gulf Coordinating Council (GCC) states. We shall step up our campaign to focus on these countries with the view to improving industrial relations legislative, administrative and practices frameworks and climate in these states and region.

We also welcome and commend the constructive and supporting roles of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the gains we have made so far. We applaud its decision to establish an Office in Qatar to help in the effective implementation of the commitment. On our part, we shall continue to monitor the implementation processes and efforts as well as working to ensure that this positive development is replicated in the other Gulf States.

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