



Mody GUIRO

President

Président

Kwasi ADU-AMANKWAH

General Secretary

Secrétaire Général

Route Internationale d'Atakpamé

Centre FOPADESC Agoè – Nyivé

B.P. : 4401 – Tel. : 00228 2225 07 10

Fax : 00228 2225 61 13

LOME - TOGO

Email : info@ituc-africa.org

Web : www.ituc-africa.org

ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY, AUGUST 12, 2016

The Youth Committee of the African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) marks the United Nations International Youth Day 2016 with a focus on youth contribution to combatting insecurity and growing threats to peace and stability. Peace and security are the bedrock of development and prosperity and therefore insecurity and the absence of peace impede development where the young tend to suffer the most.

Global discourse on young people has tended to consider the “youth bulge” as an opportunity, which when properly harnessed will provide the human resources so essential for economic, social and political development. Young people tend to have vast and largely untapped capacity for peace building. However, this can only be realized when appropriate investments are made in the lives of young people. Early and adequate investments in education and training would help the human capital of youth and turn them into productive assets for security, peace and development. Failure to invest in youth development has the potential to turn the youth bulge into a threat to security and peace. Given the rapid spread of extremist ideologies, uneducated young people, lacking in skills and remaining unemployed for a long time, could easily be won over by extremists.

Furthermore, unemployment, job insecurity, low pay and public service cuts all tend to limit the potential role of young people in peace and security and national development.

It is important that we focus on the positives of how the young can be aided with appropriate investments in their human capital to build our societies. In addition, we can rely on a well-developed infrastructure of young brains to build an inclusive society where conflicts and violence have no place. Already a large majority is working and contributing in diverse ways to the resilience of their communities and the inclusiveness of their societies. Our focus should be on them while assisting the few in conflict situations as either victims or perpetrators to come out of such situations.

Finally, the positive roles that young people can and do play in building peace and promoting recovery and development, or simply supporting their families and

communities during and after war and violence, are insufficiently acknowledged. With a dearth of national and international funding for youth organisations and initiatives, young people have often initiated, led and funded their own programmes. These have included initiatives to provide or revitalize basic services, to promote dialogue and reconciliation, to increase the economic and political participation of young people, and to engage in advocacy and protests to bring about social and political change. Young people need to link up more with each other and learn more about these initiatives and their impacts so that we can invest in supporting the next generation of youth to lead fulfilled and productive lives free of violence.

Happy International Youth Day!

In solidarity,
Jane Muthoni Njoki
Youth Committee President
ITUC-AFRICA