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Wednesday, 11 January 2023

ITUC-Africa Declaration on the commemoration of International Women's Day 2023: "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality"

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (www.ituc-africa.org) would like to congratulate the millions of African women and activists around the world for their valuable contribution towards Africa's socio-economic transformation.

Innovation and technology have the potential to play a significant role in advancing gender equality and the theme of this year **DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality** points to the recently flagged issue of the need to push for digital rights for ALL.

Digital touches every aspect of our lives and to survive in the digital world, we all need to respond appropriately to stay relevant. However, various studies have shown an imbalance between men and women in honing digital skills or leading digital initiatives.

Technology can help bridge the digital gender divide by providing greater access to digital resources and education for women and girls. This can help increase their participation in the digital economy and improve their employment opportunities.

Despite a growing demand for digital specialists, only few girls and women are involved in a digital sector career. The recent covid 19 pandemic has revealed the gender digital divide, with women facing more challenges in accessing information and communication technologies (ICTs), disproportionately impacting their education and employment opportunities especially in rural areas, resulting in many disadvantages and limited opportunities.

On the other hand, innovation and technology have the potential to create a more equal and inclusive world for women. In the African context, mobile banking and digital payments can make it easier for women, particularly those who live in rural or remote areas, to access financial services. Women's access to technology is necessary to achieve gender equality, close the skills gap and improve economic outcomes around the world.

On the commemoration of this year IWD we draw attention on the need to focus more on empowering women to play a more active role. This can be done through promoting:

1. Better access of women to internet, including affordable and reliable internet connectivity;
2. Protection and effective law enforcement, as well as education and awareness-raising to help women stay safe online;
3. Freedom of Expression: Women must have the right to express themselves freely online, including their political, social, and cultural views, without fear of censorship or repression;
4. Access to digital training and skills and knowledge necessary to use the internet effectively and safely.

In summary, digital rights for women are crucial to ensure that women can participate fully in the digital world and enjoy the same opportunities. It is important for policymakers, civil society organizations, and all stakeholders to work together to promote and protect these rights.



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