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Martha Tinny MOLEMA
President
Présidente

Akhator Joel ODIGIE
General Secretary
Secrétaire Général

Route Internationale d'Atakpamé
Centre FOPADESC Agoè – Nyivé
B.P. : 4401 – Tel.: 00228 22 25 03 90
LOME - TOGO
Email: info@ituc-africa.org
Web: www.ituc-africa.org

ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA: IN DEFENCE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE DIGNITY OF WORKING PEOPLE

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa, **www.ituc-africa.org**) stands in firm solidarity with the people and workers of Cuba as the United Nations once again considers the longstanding United States of America's economic, commercial and financial embargo. For decades, ordinary Cubans have borne the human and economic consequences of restrictions that constrain livelihoods, production and access to essential goods. Their hardship cannot be treated as an acceptable cost of geopolitical disagreement.

Our position is rooted in the Pan-African tradition of internationalism. As Samora Machel declared, "Solidarity is not an act of charity. It is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains towards the same objective, which is to further the development of humanity". Cuba's contribution to African liberation is part of that history. Yet our solidarity today rests not only on historical bonds, but on a common conviction that sovereignty, self-determination and social justice belong to every people.

The question before the United Nations is therefore larger than Cuba. It is a test of the authority of international law and the credibility of multilateralism. The principles of sovereign equality and peaceful international cooperation cannot be selectively invoked. An international system in which one powerful state can impose its will at pleasure, while the expressed position of an overwhelming majority of nations carries no practical consequence, is a system whose foundations are being steadily weakened.

If power alone becomes the measure of what is permissible, the international order will cease to be a community of states governed by common rules and will instead become an arrangement in which the strongest call the shots. That prospect should concern Africa profoundly. Our continent knows from its own experience why international law must protect the weak as well as restrain the powerful.

For Cuban workers, this debate is not a contest of diplomatic language. It concerns wages and livelihoods, the functioning of workplaces and public services, access to medicines and essential supplies, and the prospects of young people. The people and workers of Cuba have endured enough suffering. Their dignity and welfare must not remain secondary to the calculations of international politics.

ITUC-Africa therefore calls for the end of the embargo and for renewed, credible diplomatic engagement consistent with the United Nations Charter. We urge member states and relevant

international institutions to move beyond familiar speeches and recurring votes towards practical steps that ease restrictions, enable economic and social development, and produce measurable improvements in the lives of ordinary Cubans. The United Nations must not become a talk show in which resolutions are adopted year after year while the people concerned see no change.

We equally affirm that the rights of Cuban workers, including decent work, freedom of association, social protection and meaningful participation in shaping their country's future, must remain central to any path forward. International solidarity must be measured by its contribution to human dignity, not merely by declarations of political alignment.

For Africa's trade union movement, the defence of Cuba is inseparable from the defence of a fairer international order. Multilateralism will retain legitimacy only when collective commitments carry weight and when international law is applied consistently. The people of Cuba need more than another expression of concern. They must see change.

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Akhator Joel Odigie
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa