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ITUC-Africa Statement on the Occasion of World Day for Decent Work 2021: Putting decent work at the heart of Africa's social and economic development policies

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa www.ituc-africa.org) strongly affirms that decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

With decent work, everyone wins – workers, businesses and the economy. Evidence shows that decent work is the only sustainable way to accelerate the growth of production and employment to increase the pace of poverty reduction and to build genuine democracy and social cohesion.

The World Day for Decent Work is a day where workers, their unions and their supporters around the world are mobilizing for decent jobs for all and respect for the rights of workers. As African workers, we are joining the rest of the world today in commemorating the World Day for Decent Work (WDDW) and we would like to recognize the sacrifice of millions of workers who lost their lives in the COVID-19 pandemic due to the lack of decent working conditions at the time and inadequate provision of necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, almost half of the population in Africa lived below the poverty line and more than 140 million people were low-income workers who did not have the means to sustainably meet the needs of their families. These situations have worsened and the hardship of workers and their families continues

The COVID-19 crisis has uncovered the huge decent work deficits that still prevail in 2021. In particular, the crisis highlights the vulnerability of millions of working people and the lack of social protection coverage. Women and informal economy workers are more adversely exposed to the harsh and hard socio-economic effects that this global health crisis has thrown up.

The ITUC-Africa wants to restate the need and urgency for the continent to consciously and systematically work towards the development of a robust and inclusive social

protection arrangement that can accord effective and improved coverage and provisions for all. We are equally sad to note that once again, big businesses and the rich amongst us continue to show reluctance to pay taxes needed for shoring up national resource mobilization opportunities that will be utilized for public provisions financing. This is exactly what the recent Pandora Report that exposed High-Net Individuals and businesses patronizing tax havens to hide their monies away from being fairly taxed has shown. We condemn this and call on African governments to continue to work to fix tax loopholes and to work with the international community to outlaw tax havens.

As always, African organized labor resolves to continue to organize, mobilize and take collective action to ensure that our people are enjoying jobs that are -productive and deliver on a fair income; secured and dignified; premised on social protection for families; and based on better prospects for personal development and social integration. Equally important is for such jobs and working conditions to be founded on the principles of freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and expected to accord equal opportunities and treatment to working women and men.

As ITUC-Africa, we will continue to work towards the promotion and attainment of the decent work agenda through strategies and actions that will foster the involvement of trade unions in national economic and social policies, combined with strong autonomous social dialogue and effective collective bargaining arrangements.

Signed: Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary