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ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

The world celebrates on August 12 of each year the International Youth Day. This year it will be celebrated under the theme: **“Youth Civic Engagement.”** »

This is an opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to youth related issues and to highlight the potential of young men and women as key actors for change.

At the global level, the opportunities are few for young men and women to get involved politically, economically and socially in their countries or communities with the struggle to achieve sustainable development. However, their involvement in decision making processes, their implementation and monitoring are highly required. The International Youth Day is an occasion to raise awareness about the importance of civic engagement by young men and women and their impact on development. For trade unions, the theme for this year is: **«Economic Independence for Youth»**

While some African countries are experiencing forms of economic growth, young people are left aside and the question of youth empowerment is still at a rhetoric stage.

Economic independence is a key factor in raising the status of young men and women in society an enable them to live in dignity.

In both developed and developing countries, the rate of unemployment and underemployment among young people has reached alarming levels. This situation is particularly worrying in developing countries and especially in Africa, where most young men and women find themselves in informal and precarious jobs.

According to the latest figures from the International Labor Organization, youth unemployment reached a peak of 81 million and many more are underemployed and having poor quality jobs. Currently, young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. The majority of vulnerable people in the world are young people who are subject many factors of discrimination, especially in the labor market.

It is necessary to put in place policies to help our youth overcome these challenges. Also, to achieve economic independence of young people, it is important to promote the entrepreneurial spirit among this section of the population.

Trade unions must assert their belief that young people deserve to have an impact on society and that; through their innovations they are capable of creating stable sources of income.

The African regional organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) urges Governments to put greater investment in quality entrepreneurship education programs and business support programs while placing particular emphasis on young men and women.

Long live the youth, and happy celebration of International Youth Day. !

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