

**PRE-CONGRESS WORKSHOP ON**  
**“The Global Financial Crisis: proposed solution for a sustainable development”**

Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg (South Africa) 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

**Concept note**

**1. Background and justification**

In spite of the implementation of different development policies for several years and of the continent's abundant natural resources ( diamond, gold, oil, uranium, zinc, timber, cotton, coffee, cocoa, tea, etc.) most African countries are still facing major developmental problems which hamper the improvement of workers' living conditions. Besides, the international crisis that started in 2007 continues to visit extremely disastrous consequences on population groups in Africa.

ITUC-Africa again observes that the causes of this crisis which started from the United States of America and other industrialised countries, can be traced to the exploitative relations and neoliberal contradictions of the capitalist model imposed on developing countries over the past three decades. This crisis continues to compound the different food, energy, climatic and governance crises already plaguing Africa and have led to worsening precariousness and poverty. The signs of recovery in some countries of the continent as a result of the hike in export prices notwithstanding, Africa is yet to recover from the fall in incomes, reserves and all the economic activities with their attendant loss of employment and drastic cuts in social programmes. Also, Africa still faces a threat from another form of destructive crisis, that of indebtedness.

ITUC-Africa observes with concern that the responses to the crisis are still dominated by the powerful countries of the world, brought together under the G20, which protects their interests to the detriment of the developmental interests of Africa. Furthermore, African governments were neither, at the continental and international level, able to focus their attention systematically on the systemic issues that determine the crisis in Africa, nor pay attention to the systemic contradictions and internal economic fragmentation arising from the dependence of African economies on exportation of staple goods.

ITUC-Africa, aware of the ineptitude of the neoliberal model based on the dogma of deregulation and liberalisation of all sectors of the market and the failure of development policies over the past fifty years, is calling for in-depth study and actions for the development in African countries of promising development strategies capable of bringing a

meaningful change in the socio-economic situation for a significant improvement in the working and living conditions of the peoples of Africa. To this end, there is need for a paradigm shift with the drafting and implementation of an African model. Such a model, based on lessons from the recent economic history of Africa and drawing from the experiences of other regions ( Asia, Latin America and Northern Europe in particular), should adapt to the socio-economic and cultural context of the continent. The new paradigms and development strategies, based on such a model should be centered on long term visions of 10 to 30 years with five-year development plans, and on the needs and priorities of African peoples ; a central role should be assigned to the State while recognising the place of the market ; a socio-political environment conducive for development should be created and maintained, and regional integration should be promoted.

Within this context, ITUC-Africa has already organised fora on the crisis, a workshop on the new model of development and a trade union New Year school. All these actions ended with conclusions and recommendations.

## **2. Objectives**

The main objective of this workshop is to provide African trade union leaders with a platform to brainstorm over the end-of -crisis strategies with a view to implementing an alternative model of development for Africa.

Below are the related specific objectives:

- Discussing the development issues and challenges facing African countries;
- Mapping out strategic guidelines in industrialisation, regional integration, promotion of agriculture and services in Africa for sustainable development;
- Coming out with a road map for the implementation of the strategic guidelines identified

## **3. Format**

The workshop will be a platform of exchanging ideas, information and brainstorming. It will be a one-day activity and will focus around two main sessions on the following themes:

- Development issues and challenges of Africa;
- Strategies for promoting industrialisation, regional integration, agriculture and services for sustainable development in Africa.

## **4. Target Group**

The target audience comprises trade union leaders and senior officials of national organisations affiliated to ITUC-Africa and its bodies. They are:

- Presidents and general Secretaries of affiliated trade union centres;
- Technical staff of the Secretariat.

Apart from members of the Secretariat and resource persons, about twenty trade union leaders of ITUC-Africa's affiliated organisations will be expected to attend the workshop. They are: South Africa (COSATU) - Benin (CSA) - Benin (UNSTB) - Burkina Faso (CSB) - CAR (USTC) - Eritrea (NCEW) - Gabon (COSYGA) - Ghana (GTUC) - Guinea (USTG) - Liberia (LLC) - Madagascar (SEKRIMA) - Mali (UNTM) - Morocco (UGTM) - Mauritius (NTUC) - Mauritania (CGTM) - Rwanda (COTRAF) - Senegal (CSA) - Chad (CLT) - Togo (UNSIT) - Tunisia (UGTT)