

Declarative statement from the Pre-Congress activity on advancing progressive rights-based migration governance made in Abuja, Nigeria on the 19th November 2019 as part of the events of the 4th Delegates Congress of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa)

We note that indeed, migration is a historic feature of our humanity. We are concerned that migration has been subjected to all manners of interpretation and engagements, which are evident in the politics, policies, practices and programmes of politicians, political party, governments and groups to promote division, hate and extremism.

By their actions, they want to force a global narrative on humanity that we have a global migration crisis to contend with. We reject this narrative and opine that it is migration governance crisis that exists, which in itself is surmountable.

Further, we reaffirm that migration is a human right and has been part of the human experience throughout history, and we recognize that it has been and will continue to be a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world with benefits that can be shared. It is, therefore, our shared conviction that migration's impacts and known benefits can be harnessed by improving migration governance.

We aspire to the shared belief that migration should be voluntary and not forced. However, we note that the structural economic fault lines evidence in mass unemployment, poverty, inequality and hardship, as well as issues of insecurity, global warming and climate change effects, political intolerance and corruption all contribute to push people to migrate in search of safety, survival and better life.

We reject and denounce hate and violent crimes against migrants, members of their families, businesses and properties. Migrants are not criminals; they are economy and community builders. We equally denounce the situation where African labour migrants are subjected to slavery-liked living and working conditions, especially in the Middle East and the Gulf Cooperation Council States.

We welcome the adoption of the African Union Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, and also the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as well as other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and national policies and programmes. We consider these instruments as complementary tools necessary for the advancement of multilateral engagement on migration governance at the national, continental and global levels.

We take note of and commend the modest efforts African trade unions and their local and international allies have initiated in their contributions towards the struggle to achieve a rights-based approach to the governance of migration that is necessary for the better protection of the rights of migrants and members of their families. In particular, we welcome and appreciate the

creation and activism of the African Trade Union Migration Network (ATUMNET) and the Réseau Syndical Migration Méditerranéennes Subsahariennes (RSMMS) that have given essence and actions to the ITUC-Africa 2015 Dakar Congress resolution on Migration.

Nevertheless, we note that in spite of these efforts, the spaces for civil liberties enjoyment continue to shrink and migrants are worse impacted.

From the above, therefore, we commit to the following:

- We commit to develop and adopt a charter that all affiliates of the ITUC-Africa will make conscious and sustained effort to the effectively implement in the pursuit of the protection and defence of the rights of migrants and members of their families.
- We will continue to work with our governments to engineer and deploy pragmatic, imaginative and genuine efforts to ensuring that migration pushed factors such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, insecurity, political persecution, corruption and global warming effects are reined in. On our part, we commit to support and complement the efforts of our governments to ensure that Africa works for all her peoples and communities.
- To continue to push for the ratification, application and enforcement of enabling standards and legal architectures that are necessary for organizing progressive migration governance such – AU Free Movement Protocol; relevant ILO Conventions and Protocols; UN Convention on the rights of migrants and members of their families, other.
- The fourth industrial revolution evinced by digitalisation, automation, innovation and robotics are technological advancements that will enhance life and living. We shall work with our governments and other stakeholders to ensure that these technological advancements do not pose hindrances to life and living and exacerbate forced migration.
- To continue to advance a robust and sustained organising campaign of migrant workers into unions so as to give them voice and representation necessary for the better defence and protection of their human and labour rights.
- Engage our governments to adopt and implement a fair recruitment agenda in line with the ILO fair recruitment guidelines.
- Continue to push for social dialogue to ensure the genuine participation of trade unions in bilateral labour migration agreements as part of the implementation of the UN Global Compact.
- Advocate for the right to work, resettlement and equal treatment for refugees.
- We shall do all the above in a well-coordinated, coherent and sustained manner with our affiliates and partners.