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Petteri Orpo

Prime Minister of Finland

Government Palace Snellmanninkatu 1 A

Helsinki

16 November 2023

Dear Prime Minister Orpo,

Urgent Appeal to the Government by the ITUC-Africa Regarding Ambitious Labour Market Reforms and Their Impact on Working Life in Finland

I am writing on behalf of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa, www.ituc-africa.org), a pan-African trade union organization comprising 101 affiliates across 52 African countries, representing 17 million members. We express our steadfast support and solidarity with the Finnish trade unions in their tireless advocacy for fair labour policies and the welfare of Finnish workers.

We have learnt about the recently proposed labour market reforms that have sparked considerable apprehension in Finland. The proposed reforms and anticipated policy adjustments have the potential to thrust a considerable segment of the workforce into financial precariousness. The erosion of safety nets and social protection, including cutting unemployment benefits and easing worker dismissals could aggravate income inequality, leading to further impoverishment and increased dependence on public assistance programs. The impending reforms have encountered substantial disapproval from trade unions in Finland because they are seen as an encroachment on the right to industrial action, negotiation systems, and the entire trade union movement. This is clearly retrograde for Finland, long held as a model for social dialogue and national consensus.

We reiterate the government's responsibility to uphold the economic well-being of all citizens, ensuring that trade unions are central to negotiations and dialogue. We implore the government to act reasonably in this matter, for upholding economic stability and safeguarding the living standards of the populace is a fundamental obligation of any government.

We earnestly urge the government to reassess the economic implications of these reforms and engage in meaningful dialogue with the trade unions and other stakeholders.

We implore you to heed this urgent appeal, considering the economic impact on your citizens, particularly vulnerable groups, and prioritizing the economic well-being of the Finnish people.

We eagerly anticipate a positive response to this urgent appeal and remain committed to supporting endeavours aimed at ensuring economic justice and workers' rights.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kwasi Adu-Amankwah'.

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary