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ITUC-Africa May Day Message 2019

ITUC-Africa congratulates working women and men in Africa who join the rest of the world's working people in celebrating International Workers' Day on May 1st 2019. We recall the heroism of earlier generations of workers who struggled and sacrificed to secure gains for working people in the world of work and in society at large. We remind ourselves that the 8 hour working day which many workers around the world enjoy today as a matter of right was the result of years of struggle and has become the major reference point for international labour solidarity. The workers' struggle has also been important for securing the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, improved conditions of employment including better wages, health and safety at work, employment security, maternity rights, pension rights and others.

We celebrate these achievements of the workers' struggle at a time when the gains have come under vicious attack by neoliberal forces whose overriding goal is for profit and profit to the detriment of the well being of the working people. The world of work is undergoing massive transformation with the introduction of new technologies and changes in working conditions and labour relations that contribute to a severer exploitation of working people. Absence of secure jobs, declining incomes for workers, widespread unemployment for young people, growth in informal jobs, destructive impact of climate change, all contribute to the immiseration of working people.

We use the occasion of May Day to call on workers to renew the struggle for better conditions of work and life for working people. ITUC-Africa calls on African workers to rise up to the ITUC call for a New Social Contract between workers, governments and business. This means that African trade unions must join the rest of the world's workers in the advocacy and campaign for:

- Rights for all workers, whatever employment arrangements they have.
- Fairer wages, including minimum wages on which people can live decently.
- More control for people over their working time and more oversight over their bosses to make sure they can't discriminate or evade responsibilities.
- Building justice into the climate and technology transitions.

The ILO Centenary Declaration which is due to be negotiated in June this year provides an opportunity for a major step towards the achievement of this New Social Contract. We call on all trade unions in Africa to bring pressure to bear on their governments and employers to support a Declaration that embodies the elements of the New Social Contract.

ITUC-Africa again calls on all trade unions in Africa to renew organisation and activism at national level in a manner that places the struggle for decent work and decent life at the heart of trade union preoccupation. We must organise, organise, organise, to build strong trade unions and push harder in defending and promoting the rights and interests of workers before our governments and employers.

We salute the courage and express our solidarity to the workers and people, particularly the youth and women, of Algeria and Sudan who have made important strides in recent weeks in challenging decades of authoritarian rule in their countries. We extend also our solidarity to the workers of Zimbabwe in their continuing struggle against dictatorial rule.

We call on African trade unions to close ranks and unite in struggling for decent work and decent life for all workers.

Long Live international workers' solidarity! Long Live!



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
General Secretary