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## ITUC-AFRICA MAY DAY MESSAGE- MAY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2012

ITUC-Africa congratulates working women and men in Africa and the world on the occasion of this year's International Workers' Day celebrations. We salute working families for their services and contribution to wealth creation and nation building as well as for their sacrifices and commitment to social justice. Indeed, these contributions and sacrifices speak eloquently and attest to the historical symbolism of the May Day celebrations.

As we celebrate this year's May Day we recall the many challenges facing African working families, households and communities. These include the deepening and widening effects of the global economic crisis, which continue, in combination with other factors, to exacerbate poverty and inequality. Others include growing insecurity, rising terrorism, sectarian and elections related violence, renewed threats to constitutional democracy, increasing scale of human and trade union rights abuses, growing internal suppression, failing social services delivery and jobless growth.

African workers have, however, refused to just sit back and lament. Rather, these challenges compel us to demand that African governments at all levels act with a sense of urgency. Governments should make real and genuine commitments to formulate and implement policies that will address these challenges.

Fiscal austerity policies and measures that compel workers and the poor to pay for the financing of economic recovery should be discontinued forthwith. Rather, African governments' policies must be seen to work for the majority of the people that have been further pushed into hardship by globalisation and the economic crisis.

Specifically, we urge African economic managers to demonstrate real and practical commitment to provide social security benefits to our people with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women and youth. There must be focused and imaginative policies to address the concerns of food, nutrition and health of the people. Renewed commitment must be paid to education and human capacity development so as to be able to increase the continent's share in the global economy. In the same vein, we ask that serious attention be paid to the development of an effective continental security architecture to secure peace and stability. Our pledge and resolve to defend and promote democracy remain unwavering. We demand more transparent and accountable governance. We also urge African governments to pursue

policies and practices that guarantee and promote participatory democracy, which engender citizen mobilisation for nation-building.

As we pledge our unwavering support to the pursuit of these goals, we are not unmindful of the dire need for accountability and justice in Africa. We call on African leaders to demonstrate the necessary political will to rein in impunity and provide spaces for the enjoyment of trade union rights and other human rights.

We urge African workers that as we celebrate this occasion we must continue to remember our colleagues in Swaziland and Zimbabwe and elsewhere who are not allowed to gather and celebrate this year's May Day because their governments desire otherwise. We must continue to extend our solidarity and support to them for their injury is our injury.

Finally, ITUC-Africa hopes that this year's commemoration of the International Workers' Day will give strength to African workers to continue the struggle for a better Africa and world. Let us continue to move forward in unity.

Viva African working families!

Viva workers of the world!

Happy May Day celebrations!



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah  
General Secretary