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Dr. Joseph N. Boakai

President-Elect,

The Republic of Liberia,

Monrovia,

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Dear President-Elect,

Congratulations and contributions of input to enrich your service to the workers and people of Liberia

On behalf of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa: <https://www.ituc-africa.org/>), I congratulate you on your historic election as the President of Liberia. The people of Liberia have spoken loudly and resoundingly to confer their trust in you by electing you as their president.

Your ascension to this esteemed position without violence not only signifies the robustness of Liberia's democratic processes but also heralds a new era of hope and opportunity for the nation. In the words of your soon-to-depart predecessor, President George Opong Weah, "Liberia has won"! ITUC-Africa congratulates everyone who has made Africa proud by this election's peaceful and fair conduct.

Mr President-Elect, your victory is a testament to the faith, and trust reposed in your leadership, characterised by qualities such as a commitment to peace, adherence to due process, and a steadfast belief in the principles of justice. As you embark on this pivotal journey to guide Liberia, we acknowledge the tremendous responsibilities that lie ahead. However, given your staunch dedication to steering the country toward progress and prosperity, we are optimistic that you will succeed.

Mr President-Elect, amidst this triumph, we wish to suggest one input that your in-coming administration should quickly and justly consider. It is imperative to address a longstanding and critical issue that has plagued Liberia's industrial relations landscape—the denial of the fundamental rights of public sector workers to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Regrettably, Liberia stands as the sole country in Africa, if not the world, where public sector workers are unjustly barred from joining a trade union of their choice.

This unsettling reality starkly contradicts the principles enshrined in Liberia's own constitution, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as international instruments such as International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions 87 and 98 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—commitments that Liberia, as a responsible member of the global community, has ratified.

Moreover, recent interference by previous administrations, notably the intrusive conduct of trade union elections by the former Minister of Labour, has blatantly disregarded established

ILO provisions. Such actions not only subvert the essence of fair and democratic union elections but also undermine the rights and freedoms of workers, a cornerstone of any democratic society.

Your presidency presents a unique opportunity to rectify these deep-seated anomalies. During your initial 100 days in office, we implore your administration to prioritise the restoration of the rights of public sector workers, ensuring their freedom of association and the practice of collective bargaining. This rectification aligns not only with Liberia's constitutional obligations but also with international norms and commitments.

ITUC-Africa remains steadfast in supporting your government in addressing these longstanding injustices. Successive governments have needlessly politicised these relatively simple industrial relations issues without success. A well-organised public sector workforce offers immense public administration and service delivery benefits. Therefore, we strongly urge your in-coming government to prioritise and deal swiftly with this matter.

The International Labour Conference (ILC), through the Committee on the Application of Standards (2022 and 2023), has proffered helpful conclusions on these issues. By restoring these fundamental rights, Liberia can reclaim its rightful place within the ILO as Africa's oldest member, acting responsibly and commanding the respect of all stakeholders at the sub-regional, continental and international levels.

Mr President-Elect, we are mindful that Liberian workers and people have elected you at this time so that you will renew their hope and mobilise them effectively for the cause of nation-building, improved collective welfare and well-being and justice for all. Liberia's public sector workers need justice.

Once again, Mr. President-Elect, we restate our commitment and readiness to assist your government in effectively resolving this matter. We are confident that the Liberian industrial relations milieu will be the winner for it.

As we await your favourable response, we wish to restate our best wishes for a successful tenure, God's wisdom, guidance and strength. We shall continue to pray for and with you, Mr President-Elect.

With the highest regards,



Akhator Joel Odigie
GENERAL SECRETARY