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ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY, 2016

Keeping Hope Alive – transforming hope to lift workers, families and communities out of want, misery and despondence

ITUC-Africa congratulates the working people of Africa and the world on International Workers Day and salutes the heroism of the millions of workers and working class martyrs whose sacrifices have earned us our freedom, democracy and wellbeing.

African workers celebrate this year's International Workers' Day, mindful of the depressing developments on the continent. Unemployment and under-employment are ballooning to dangerous heights and poverty is rising. Our non-diversified economies are reeling from the continuous fall in commodities prices on the international market, with rising inflation, devaluation of currencies, hikes in fuel and utility prices, all combining to raise the cost of living astronomically in the face of falling real incomes of wage earners and other vulnerable groups across the continent.

Attacks and criminal activities from terrorist groups and other agents of violence are on the increase, destroying lives and properties, disturbing the peace of communities and dampening hope. Coupled with xenophobic attacks, climate change and environmental degradation effects, Africa is presently witnessing an alarmingly high incidence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and migrants. The fault lines and fatalities from the desperate journeys across the Sahara Desert and through the Mediterranean Sea as seen from the heart-wrenching news flashes and clips partly mirror this grim reality.

On the other hand, we are privy to the weak defence and protection of civil liberties, as well as the harsh and extreme management of protests. Besides, while our governments provide lame responses to the myriad crises confronting and mystifying our people, they continue to make concessions to and furnish businesses and the elite with obscene privileges to the detriment of their constituencies and constituents.

We use the occasion of International Workers Day to remind ourselves of the role of mobilization and struggle in securing essential gains for the working people and citizens. ITUC-Africa calls on African trade unions to renew pressure on African governments to

genuinely commit to the structural transformation of Africa with focus on industrialization based on the effective utilization of our minerals and natural resource wealth. We urge African trade unions to push governments towards implementation of the African Mining Vision.

Again ITUC-Africa reiterates that State driven service delivery of health care and sanitation, potable water and affordable education, represent some of the effective means to reduce inequality and fight poverty. We call on our unions to press their governments to commit to the genuine implementation of the social protection floor as enshrined in the ILO recommendation 202 adopted in 2012.

In order to mobilize resources to help finance development, ITUC-Africa re-echoes the call to African governments to commit to the effective implementation of the Mbeki Panel Report on halting Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) from Africa. The conservative figure of \$50 billion that leaves Africa annually through tax avoidance can contribute to changing lives in Africa if successfully blocked.

ITUC-Africa wishes to commend the efforts of our governments in their counter-terrorism efforts. We salute the gallant efforts of the men and women in the frontlines battling these perpetrators of doom and destruction. We urge our unions to continue to support and work with our governments in the struggle to effectively secure our communities and peoples. We further call on our governments to steadily and progressively address the root causes of exclusion, marginalization and deprivation that make recourse to violent self-help options attractive.

It is important to keep hope alive for our peoples. It is even more important to work to transform hope into real gains that our people can share, enjoy and celebrate. Commitment to decent job creation, especially for our teeming youth; the establishment and implementation of a minimum living wages; open spaces for negotiations and constructive social dialogue; and the guarantee of the defence and protection of civil liberties are viable prescriptions for transforming hope into tangible gains for our people and communities.

ITUC-Africa salutes the sense of service, sacrifice and solidarity of the African workers. We urge African workers to continue to remain active, safe, healthy and productive, as well as to continue to organize, mobilise and unite in the struggles to achieve social justice in our work places, communities and societies at large.

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah – General Secretary ITUC-Africa

Issued from Lome – Togo, 29 April, 2016