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International Women's Day 2020: *Renewing our commitment to ensure that women and girls exercise their human rights fully*

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation - ITUC-Africa (www.ituc-africa.org) would like to congratulate the millions of women and activists for their unwavering commitment to working with us for a fairer world.

This year's commemoration coincides with the UN Women's new multi-generational campaign **#GenerationEquality**, which marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women which held in Beijing, China, the Beijing Platform for Action is considered the most progressive roadmap for the empowerment of women and girls worldwide.

The Beijing Platform for Action is a global policy framework and the most comprehensive plan of action for gender equality and fundamental rights for women and girls worldwide. It covers 12 key areas of concern that have still relevant such as: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment and girls.

Current statistics on the working population in Africa show that the continent has 40% of working women. It should be noted that these statistics greatly underestimate the number of women involved in the informal and agricultural sectors. However, even though an increasing number of women have entered the labour market, their jobs continue to be focused on low-paid casual work and activities that cannot attract decent wages or benefits.

The impacts of globalization and liberalization continue to be felt by women in Africa. The feminization of poverty has become spiral in many countries. In addition, the global economic crisis has dealt a heavy blow to African women, with particularly damaging consequences for girls.

The promotion of the effective implementation of the objectives aimed at achieving gender equality in the labour market, ensuring equal access for all to the benefits of social security systems as well as to social and economic development programmes has always been central to ITUC-Africa's actions.

Projects and programmes, in addition to the other objectives of trade union organisations, must contribute effectively to the empowerment and full participation of women in trade unions, employment and society. We need to establish a permanent link between trade union priorities and specific women's projects, especially in the field of education, training, research and vocational training, so that women's issues are fully integrated into trade union policies and practices.

Today, ITUC-Africa joins the ITUC and the entire international trade union movement in calling on all stakeholders to renew their commitment to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in its entirety in order to:

- Guarantee freedom of association and collective bargaining as fundamental rights for all women workers;
- Guarantee a social protection floor and access to social protection for all workers, including those in the informal economy that can be done effectively and sustainably through progressive tax administration and the fair payment of taxes by the rich and businesses;
- Invest in Care for Gender Equality and Development ;
- Eliminate gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work;
- Promote women's leadership through a feminist approach to leadership.

Long live women!

Long live African women trade unionists!

Long live African Labour Movement!

Issued in Lome on 6 March 2020

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