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## ITUC-Africa Statement on the Commemoration of World Day for Decent Work 2023

### *Wage Justice: Stop wage suppression to grow the economy*

On this occasion of the World Day for Decent Work, the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation – ITUC-Africa ([www.ituc-africa.org](http://www.ituc-africa.org)) joins the millions of African workers and human rights advocates worldwide to amplify our collective voice for decent life and decent work.

This year, the global trade union movement commemorates World Day for Decent Work (WDDW) under the theme: **"It's Time for a Pay Rise"**. ITUC-Africa underscores the pressing need to alleviate the immense strain borne by working people and their households due to soaring prices of food and fuel driven partly by the effects of the war in Ukraine and corporate profiteering and greed. Inflation has weakened African workers' consuming power and thrown many into hunger, misery and despondency. The army of the working poor is growing and posing fundamental challenges to national cohesion, stability and progress.

Across the African continent, we have witnessed the resilience and determination of workers who, despite facing unprecedented challenges, continue to contribute their skills, talents, and hard work to fuel economic growth and development. These workers are critical for our economies, and their concerns should be at the heart of economic and social policies.

The world economy has undergone dramatic changes at a breathtaking pace in the past two decades. These changes are mainly due to the globalisation of the world economy, the growing importance of market intervention by multinationals and the failure of African economies to create decent life opportunities for their citizens. With the widespread use of fixed-term contracts, flexible working hours and dismissal procedures, the increasing precariousness of work has led to a high degree of insecurity. Adding to that, the gender pay gap continues to erode women's economic power. Despite attempts to narrow the gap, women in 2022 still earned 17% less than men on average.

Today, we are all reminded of the urgent need to address African working men and women's socio-economic hardships. Therefore, ITUC-Africa is calling on African governments, employers, and other stakeholders across the continent to take decisive

action to address the wage gap and ensure that all workers receive a just and decent wage. We know that the path to decent work includes genuine respect for workplace rights and an unshackled space for utilizing collective bargaining spaces and processes.

We strongly urge our governments to take the lead in developing, adopting and applying a Continental Minimum Wage and keep wages out of competition. Furthermore, we urge governments to prioritise social protection measures that shield vulnerable workers from the negative impacts of inflation and economic instability, including those in the informal economy. Access to quality healthcare, education, and affordable housing should be every worker's and their families' fundamental rights.

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