



ITUC-Africa

"Workers Deserve Peace and Democracy"

Background and Context

The 2024 theme for the World Day for Decent Work, "Workers Deserve Peace and Democracy," resonates deeply with the current socio-political and economic landscape across the globe. With ongoing armed conflicts, economic inequalities, climate crises, and digital disruptions affecting workers, trade unions are stepping forward to champion not just decent work, but also the foundational elements of democracy and peace that make sustainable livelihoods possible.

Peace, Democracy, and Workers' Rights

Decent work is inseparable from peace and democracy. Without peace, workers are deprived of stable and secure environments, which are crucial for maintaining livelihoods and ensuring personal safety. The lack of democracy in many workplaces and regions further compounds this by denying workers their right to participate in decision-making processes that directly affect their lives. As highlighted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC, 2024), democracy goes beyond political representation and includes workplace democracy, where workers have the right to unionize, bargain collectively, and participate in shaping policies that affect their labour conditions.

Furthermore, democratic governance is vital for addressing global challenges such as economic inequality and environmental crises, both of which directly affect workers' lives. In regions with weak democratic structures like Africa, workers are more likely to face exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and reduced access to social protections.

The African Context

In Africa, many countries are grappling with conflict, political instability, and economic distress, all of which undermine the conditions for decent work. The African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) has consistently advocated for stronger democratic systems as the backbone for ensuring peace and creating environments conducive to labour rights. It stresses the need for a new social contract, one that focuses on inclusive economic policies, social protection, and labour rights, especially for marginalized groups such as women, youth, migrants, and informal workers.

Ideas for Trade Unions in Africa to Commemorate World Day for Decent Work

To make this year's commemoration of the World Day for Decent Work, ITUC-Africa is suggesting the following as possible ideas that affiliates can use as they see fit:

1. **Public Forums on "Peace and Democracy at Work"**: Organize public forums or town hall meetings where union leaders, workers, civil society organizations, and government officials can discuss the role of peace and democracy in achieving decent work. These forums could provide a platform to advocate for stronger labour protections and democratic engagement at the workplace.
2. **Workplace Democracy Audits**: Unions could launch a campaign to audit workplaces across the country, focusing on workers' ability to participate in decision-making processes, collective bargaining rights, and adherence to international labour standards. The results could be used to demand policy reforms.
3. **Solidarity Marches for Peace and Democracy**: Organize peaceful marches or demonstrations across major cities calling for stronger democratic structures and peaceful resolutions to conflicts affecting workers. These events can also raise awareness about the connection between democracy, peace, and labour rights.
4. **Workshops on Digital Democracy and Workers' Rights**: Host workshops that focus on the growing impact of digital technologies on workers' rights and how digital platforms can be leveraged to enhance democratic participation. The workshops can provide tools for workers to use technology for collective bargaining and policy advocacy.
5. **Engagement with Young Workers**: Host youth-centered activities such as debates, creative contests (e.g., posters, poems, short films), and interactive sessions to highlight the role of young people in advocating for peace and democracy in their workplaces. Young workers' involvement is crucial in shaping future labour movements.
6. **Collaborate with Media Outlets**: Partner with local radio stations, newspapers, and online platforms to create special programs that discuss the theme of "Workers Deserve Peace and Democracy." Such initiatives can spotlight workers' stories and amplify union efforts for peace and democratic reform.
7. **Social Media Campaign**: Leverage social media to raise awareness about the importance of workplace democracy and peace. Unions can share worker testimonials, infographics, and short videos to engage a broader audience, especially the younger generation, on how democracy and peace contribute to decent work.
8. **Advocacy for Policy Reforms**: Use this day to engage with policymakers, pushing for legal reforms that protect workers' democratic rights, including freedom of association, collective bargaining, and social dialogue. This could include submitting petitions or proposals to government offices.

It is our hope that by focusing on these activities, trade unions can not only commemorate the World Day for Decent Work but also make substantial strides in advancing the broader goals of peace and democracy across African labor markets.

