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## **Empowering African Workers: Trade Union Capacity Building and Engagement Workshop for Informal economy actors**

**[Nairobi, November 25, 2023]** Today, we are thrilled to announce the recommendation from the Trade Union Capacity Building and Engagement Workshop for Informal economy actors which will be put before the 5th Delegates' Congress of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), taking place in Nairobi, Kenya on November 28, 2023.

For far too long, Africa has been entangled with post-colonial economic disruptions with little room for economic growth. Africa accounts today for 17% of the world's population, but less than 3% of global GDP. The share of intra-African exports as a percentage of total African exports has increased from about 10 percent in 1995 to only 17 percent in 2017, but it remains low compared to levels in Europe (69 percent), Asia (59 percent), and North America (31 percent). AfCFTA, therefore, provides a unique opportunity for Africa to be re-born.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents one of the most ambitious and transformative initiatives ever undertaken on the African continent. Launched in 2018, AfCFTA is set to create a single, unified market for goods and services across the vast expanse of Africa, with the potential to accelerate intra-African trade, stimulate economic growth, and promote the free movement of people across borders. The AfCFTA agreement is not just about governments and businesses; it is about the workers who drive the African economy.

Drawing from the aforementioned, the outcomes of the just ended workshop on trade, youth, women, and the informal sector, the workshop participants (*trade focal persons, ITUC-Africa delegates, and advocates*) have come out with the following recommendations for trade unions, and governments.

**That, as ITUC-Africa, we demand that AfCFTA member states and Trade Unions will embark on the following:**

1. **ITUC-Africa will** continue to advocate for policies and programmes that focus on sustainable production and value addition to promote economic transformation and sustainable growth. A renewed push for implementing the African Mining Vision (AMV) will be vital, including the advocacy for consistent investment in Research & Development.
2. **ITUC-Africa will Encourage its affiliates to** engage with their states to pursue and implement agricultural revolution through policies and programmes that guarantees sustainable food sufficiency and sovereignty and support employment and rural development.
3. **ITUC-Africa will** Build, improve and strengthen the capacities of trade union activists that will support the creation of a pool of experts within trade union organisations (at national, sub-regional and continental levels) and network with other relevant CSOs on the Trade, Investment and industrialization, especially on the AfCFTA to properly follow up related processes and make alternative proposals in the interests of workers and populations.
4. AfCFTA member states and **ITUC-Africa will** Ensure Women, youth & Persons With Disabilities representativity in all activities in connection with issues on trade and investment (with a specific focus on the AfCFTA), industrialization and structural transformation in Africa
5. Collectively push for the regulation and redistribution of economic benefits of the society for all through the implementation of fiscal policies such as

progressive taxation, adoption of minimum living wages, and the provision of basic social protection floors for all. Adoption of these policies is crucial for bridging the enormous inequality gaps existing in society today as we are Building Back Better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. **Realign** efforts to pursue the continent's structural transformation in the different spaces of social dialogue at the national, sub-regional, continental and international levels.
7. Renew and achieve the plan to drive a focused engagement with the African Union by establishing an ITUC-Africa Office in Addis Ababa as liaison with the AU.
8. The member states of AfCFTA must establish National Implementation Planning Committees that include representatives of the TU movement, women, youth and informal economy actors.
9. Establish mechanisms for meaningful social dialogue with the National Institutions, sub-regional institutions especially the Labour Divisions of the Regional Economic Communities and at the continental level especially with the AfCFTA Secretariat.
10. Trade unions should advocate for the simplification of AfCFTA Trade Regime to enhance the informal and formal cross-border trading.
11. Trade unions should adopt innovative organizing strategies for the informal economy workers both at the National, sub-regional and continental levels.
12. Promote Occupational Safety and Health, social protection and elimination of SH & GBV and elimination of corruption especially extortions at the border points.

We call on all stakeholders – governments, businesses, trade unions, and civil society – to support and engage with this essential initiative, ensuring that African workers are not left behind in this transformative journey. Together, we can make trade a catalyst for economic growth, job creation, and equitable development across the African continent.

**Kwasi Adu-Amankwah**

General Secretary of ITUC-Africa