

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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Bamako WSF: promoting the agenda for decent work in Africa, the key to success in the fight against poverty

BRUSSELS, 19 January 2006 (ICFTU Online): Within the framework of the Bamako Polycentric World Social Forum, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the Global Progressive Forum (GPF) and Solidar are to hold a work session on the progress of the agenda for decent work in Africa.

As underlined by the ICFTU, the ILO agenda for decent work in Africa states that the success of any poverty reduction strategy lies in the promotion of employment, workers' rights, protection and representation. The measures taken by the Bretton Wood institutions have generally impacted negatively on the welfare of Africa's citizens, undermining, in turn, the democratic process being developed on the continent for many years. The ICFTU, the WCL, the GPF and Solidar are insistent that poverty reductions strategies can only succeed if they are firmly geared towards the creation of decent work.

Decent work implies improved living standards, increased production and the creation of a virtuous circle of growth and equality. A job is not just a source of income; it is a source of personal dignity, family stability, peace in the community, and true democracy.

Full employment is a crucial objective. Yet the formulas currently being applied in Africa do not identify job creation as an explicit objective of development policies. Economic growth is essential to bringing the poor out of poverty, but it alone is not sufficient. Africa is in urgent need of growth that generates decent jobs and benefits the poorest segments of society.

The ILO agenda for decent work defines a framework for sustainable development that benefits all by favouring the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. By focusing on the creation of productive jobs carried out in a climate of freedom, equality, security, representation and human dignity, this agenda constitutes the opening Africa needs to rid itself of poverty.

These considerations will form the core of the debate involving representatives of the ICFTU, ICFTU-AFRO, the WCL, Solidar, the Global Progressive Forum and civil society organisations from Africa. The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. The ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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