

ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNION UNITY (OATUU)



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International Women's Day Declaration

Every March 8, the trade union movement celebrates International Women's Day, a symbol of struggle and solidarity. This day is a moment of reflection, evaluation, mobilization, and action to promote women's rights, gender equality, and social justice. It recalls the historic struggles carried out by generations of women across the world for dignity, recognition of their rights, and their full participation in economic, social, and political life.

This year's International Women's Day takes place in a particular and worrying international context, marking a decisive turning point in contemporary world history. Current geopolitical tensions will undoubtedly have harsh consequences on the world and on the African continent, already facing multiple economic and social challenges.

For more than a century, women have mobilized for equality, freedom, and justice. Their struggle for emancipation has led to important advances: access to education, participation in the labor market, political representation, and the progressive recognition of their fundamental rights. However, despite these achievements, inequalities persist and demand continuous mobilization from all social forces, particularly the trade union movement.

It is essential to recall that African women played a considerable role in the struggles for the independence of the continent's peoples. They were fighters, activists, educators, and mobilizers, carrying high the values of freedom and dignity. In unions, associations, and popular movements, they contributed to organizing resistance, defending workers, and building the foundations of national sovereignty. Their engagement in these historic struggles demonstrates that women's emancipation is inseparable from the emancipation of African peoples. Today, this trade union and activist heritage must inspire new generations to continue the fight for equality and social justice.

Today, women continue to play a crucial role in economic and social development. They represent a significant share of the workforce, particularly in agriculture, trade, and the informal economy, and contribute fully to the stability of families and communities. However, their contribution often remains insufficiently recognized and valued. African women still face numerous obstacles limiting their access to decent jobs, social protection, productive resources, training, and decision-making positions.

Despite progress in several countries, many challenges remain: wage and professional inequalities, the strong concentration of women in the informal economy, limited access to economic and financial resources, gender-based discrimination and violence, underrepresentation in political, economic, and trade union decision-making bodies, the effects of economic, climate, and social crises, and conflicts that particularly affect women, as well as the precariousness of domestic and migrant workers, often deprived of rights and social protection. These challenges call for strong and lasting collective responses.

Africa's future cannot be envisioned without the full participation of women in all sectors of society. Investing in girls' education, ensuring women's access to decent jobs, promoting their leadership, and strengthening their participation in decision-making processes are major priorities.