



Our Ref:

*Press Statement.*

***Trade Unions Should Hold Governments Accountable For  
Fundamental Human Rights.***

One of the most fundamental achievements of humanity is the proclamation, exactly sixty five years ago, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a basic standard applicable to all peoples and nations.

The Organisation Of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) congratulates humanity for this great achievement, and declares that the immediate, and greatest challenge today, is its implementation.

Of all fundamental human rights, the most basic, is the right to life which is enshrined in Article 3. But tragically, in some parts of the world, a dog has a better chance to life than a human being. Today, from the cities of Iraq, through the alleys of Syria, to the streets of the Central African Republic, human life count for little or nothing in the increasingly insane art of warfare.

As we know, virtually all wars are caused by the acts of commission or omission of human beings while most of the foot soldiers are propelled by hunger and poverty. Humanity has to bid farewell to wars by embracing the trade unions insistence that poverty be abolished, Social Dialogue enthroned, and social justice ensured for all.

OATUU views the rational for so called low intensity conflicts, as irrational as the argument that there should be no universal nuclear disarmament because there are countries that are matured enough to have nuclear arms.

Wars, conflicts and insecurity are the greatest dangers to attaining the Universal Declaration as they violate all its Articles including the right against torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, and the right to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, family and press freedom.

OATUU calls on all labour leaders to fight for the full implementation of the Declaration particularly the right to life, and Article 23 which states that:

“(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests”

It should be the basic duty of all trade unions to ensure that the government in their respective countries, implement Article 24 which states that: “Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay” and

Article 25 which provides that:

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.


Also fundamental in every trade union agenda, should be Article 26 which declares that:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”

The immediate future and well being of the world, rests on the implementation of the Universal Declaration Of Human Rights, and labour leaders have the duty to be in the forefront of this struggle.



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Secretary General.

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