

## **PEC AND ICFTU-AFRO JOINT DECLARATION**

### **FIGHTING HIV/AIDS TOGETHER**

The PanAfrican Employers Confederation (PEC) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions-African Regional Organisation (ICFTU-AFRO) have jointly recognized the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the workplace. This joint statement gives voice to this mutual recognition and calls upon the PEC and ICFTU-AFRO affiliates and member organizations to make the fight against this pandemic in the work place a top priority as well as take a lead role in the fight against HIV/Aids in Africa. HIV/AIDS has become a major threat to global development and has had a devastating impact on working people, business, individuals and their families and communities particularly in Africa. This pandemic has had a particularly devastating effect on women and youth, and it must be tackled aggressively in these demographic groups if we are to make progress in the war against HIV/AIDS.

Workers and workers organizations as key stakeholders have recognised the common interests that exist on this issue and have already initiated co-operation at the work place as well as at national and international levels. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is not only threatening socio-economic development but also the very survival of workers and enterprises.

Our commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS in the workplace and communities around Africa is reflected in the outcome of the recent joint HIV/AIDS Review Workshop on the theme “Workers and Employers Together Against HIV/AIDS ” held from 7-9 April 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya. This event was organized by ICFTU-AFRO in collaboration with the International Employers Organization (IOE) and Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE). The event brought together trade unionists, employers’ representatives, government officials and key partners in international organizations as well as people living with HIV/AIDS. The event came up with conclusions and recommendations focusing on partnerships between workers and employers in the fight against HIV/AIDS based on the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work.

Our work on the fight against HIV/AIDS will be built around the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. We strongly believe that this code is comprehensive

enough and covers all areas of concern including education, prevention, training, workers rights, issues of discrimination, occupational health and safety to mention but a few. Furthermore, the code was developed through tripartite consensus in which the ICFTU and IOE played a major role.

The fight against HIV/AIDS infection, the protection of vulnerable workers, and the elimination of stigma and discrimination at the workplace require increased sensitisation campaigns by the workers (through their unions) and employers (through their federations/associations).

ICFTU-AFRO is working with partners in the Global Unions, the ILO and other relevant international organizations in the implementation of a comprehensive programme on trade union action against HIV/AIDS. Several of ICFTU-AFRO affiliates are already carrying out work in this area, often jointly with employers. ICFTU-AFRO has also developed and is using “A Training Manual for Shop Stewards on HIV/AIDS in the Workplace”. This manual is available in English and French. Work on the Portuguese version is still in progress.

In conjunction with the Federation of Kenya Employers, PEC has published a study on HIV/AIDS in the workplace in Africa. Aimed at establishing the extent to which employers’ organisations in Africa are involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the workplace, the study is an important mobilisation tool for more concerted action in the war against the pandemic.

PEC is also working closely with a number of its affiliates to intensify the campaign against the HIV/AIDS scourge. The publication of the “Employers Handbook on HIV/AIDS: A Guide for Action” by the IOE to which PEC is affiliated has already begun to inspire employers towards good/best practice in support of the ILO Code of Practice. Some employers in Africa have developed company codes on HIV/AIDS and are providing drugs to workers living with HIV/AIDS to not only prolong their lives but also make them more productive at work.

Our aim is to enhance the role of PEC and ICFTU-AFRO in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. In order for PEC and ICFTU-AFRO to play a lead role in this issue the two have agreed in principle to develop a programme framework for collaboration on joint initiatives

and activities to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The action to realize these activities will be implemented at the following levels: enterprise, national and regional.

PEC and the ICFTU urge African governments to view HIV/AIDS as a regional disaster and give it priority in policy funding and implementation. We shall also support African government efforts in making cheaper and affordable drugs available to persons living with HIV/AIDS in their respective countries.

As part of their joint commitment, both the PEC and ICFTU-AFRO will explore opportunities to identify and develop joint action programmes. Some of the identified areas of joint collaboration will include

- Capacity building to educate and train trainers
- Engaging in social dialogue
- Resource mobilization
- Lobbying law and policy makers
- Development of Codes of Practice
- Networking and creating wider partnerships.

PEC

ICFTU-AFRO

Tom D. Owuor  
Representative of the Pan African  
Employers Confederation

Andrew M. Kailembo  
General Secretary of the  
International Confederation of  
Free Trade Unions-African  
Regional Organisation

Done this day of 24<sup>th</sup> September 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya.

