TOGETHER AGAINST COVID 19 AND ITS EFFECTS

On the occasion of the celebration of this year’s May Day, the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), on behalf of the Executive Committee of OATUU and on behalf of the millions of African Workers, wishes to congratulate Workers all over the world and Africa in particular for the continued struggle in protecting, defending and promoting Workers interest and rights at work as well as contributing to the socio-economic development of the Africa.

In particular, we wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our frontline health workers, and other organisations and institutions who have contributed and continue to contribute in diverse ways in the fight against the Coronavirus – COVID 19 Pandemic which has become an albatross to the world. As we take stock of our achievements, let us not also forget the current challenges confronting the African Workers, their families and the population at large especially in the area of employment, decent work deficits, lack of basic needs, health and education amongst others.

As Workers, we are concerned that this year’s May Day celebrations is overshadowed by the COVID 19 and its negative impact on the economy, employment and workers’ rights. Workers in the Informal Economy are the most affected. Furthermore, women and the youth are greatly affected because most of them are found in the Informal Economy. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 25 million jobs were threatened by the new coronavirus. The expected economic crisis over the world will be far worse than the 2008-9 financial crises.

This years’ May Day will be marked in a different way in the sense that it cannot permit Workers to celebrate with the pomp and pageantry that accompanies. Workers gatherings will be prohibited due to the deadly novel coronavirus- COVID 19 Pandemic which spreads from humans to humans.

However, as usual we celebrate this very significant day -May Day to remind ourselves of this global workers’ day that dates back to May 1-4, 1886 when some courageous trade union leaders fought for an eight-hour working day and workplace occupational health and safety issues. Therefore, the COVID 19 should not be used as an excuse to violate workers and trade union