



AFRICAN FEMINIST COMMON POSITION ON DECENT AND DIGNIFIED WORK IN THE PLATFORM ECONOMY

Preamble

As African feminists, workers, and activists in social justice movements, we are organising at a historic juncture where the digital economy is rapidly reshaping our societies, economies, and everyday lives. This transformation, however, has unfolded along paths that reproduce and exacerbate colonial patterns of extraction, exploitation, and inequality.

Across our continent, digital labour platforms are expanding into vital economic sectors, including transportation, domestic and care work, and content moderation. Yet these new forms of labour are marked by old injustices—precarity, disposability, and violence—particularly for women, gender expansive persons, migrants, people living with disabilities, and those already marginalised by intersecting systems of oppression.

We reject the narrative that the digital economy is inherently inclusive or empowering. In reality, it has entrenched corporate dominance over data, technology, and livelihoods while eroding rights, protections, and democratic spaces. Under the guise of flexibility and innovation, the neoliberal capitalist platform model continues to commodify our labour, bodies, and communities, trapping us in algorithmic systems that surveil, exploit, exclude, and concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a few.

We approach the question of dignified and decent work in the platform economy through a decolonial, intersectional, and Pan-African feminist lens, centering the experiences, leadership, and agency of African women, gender expansive persons, youth, migrants, informal workers, and other marginalised groups. As a continent long exploited by neoliberal capitalist interests, we denounce the continued disparity in the treatment of African gig and platform workers compared to their peers in the Global North, despite performing work of equal value.

Furthermore, we recognise that the digital and platform economies are deeply intertwined with environmental and climate justice. Our vision is for a digital economy inseparable from ecological sustainability and the restoration of communities harmed by these intersecting crises. It is part of our ongoing calls for economies that prioritise the well-being of people and the planet.

Recognising that the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference presents a

historic opportunity to secure feminist, rights-based, and Africa-centered standards for decent and dignified work in the platform economy.

Acknowledging that this moment demands courage, clarity, and collective action. We are calling for a radical reimagining of the digital economy from the standpoint of feminist digital justice, where all workers, communities, civil society, and the public reclaim power over technology, data, and platforms. Where the rules of the economy are rewritten to center humanity, care, dignity, ecological sustainability, and people's sovereignty over profit.

Affirming and building on feminist scholarship and the lived experiences of African platform workers, we enter the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference and the discussion on decent and dignified work in the platform economy with a clear demand:

Global standards must uphold African feminist visions of justice, ensure binding protections for all workers, including platform workers, dismantle neocolonial patterns of digital extractivism, and advance a worker-led and feminist digital future.

This is not a future that will emerge on its own. We must fight for it, and the time is now!

Our Key Demands



1. Decent and Dignified Work is Non-Negotiable

- Fair, living wages.
- Safe, dignified working conditions.
- Access to social protections—healthcare, including psycho-social support, pensions, and parental leave.
- Recognition of inherent labour rights, including freedom of association, the right to organise and bargain collectively.
- Equal pay for equal work and zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment.

2. End Exploitation of African Labour and Data

- Platform companies must stop profiting from women's unpaid and underpaid labour.
- An end to models that shift risks onto workers while harvesting Africa's data and resources.
- Bridge the digital divide that marginalises rural, indigenous, and poor African women, and gender expansive persons.
- Justice for workers and their families whose lives have been affected by the status quo of the platform economy.

3. Center Feminist and African Alternatives

- Promote cooperative, community-owned, and solidarity-based digital platforms.
- Invest in African women and gender expansive people's leadership, skills, and digital

innovation.

- Challenge Big tech monopolies over Africa's digital economy and demand for implementation of fair global practices that protect workers.
- Adopt African, communal, and indigenous approaches to data and knowledge produced by workers.

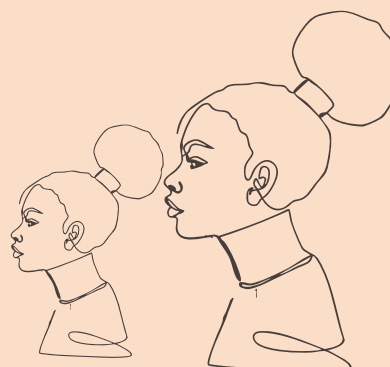
4. Adopt Gender-Transformative Laws and Policies

- Ensure platform economy laws are inclusive and participatory.
- Protect all gig and platform workers, regardless of classification.
- Expand universal social protection floors to include gig and platform workers.
- Strengthen enforcement mechanisms and accountability to ensure laws translate into real protections.
- Adapt and update laws and policies to protect marginalised communities as the digital technologies and economies evolve.
- Establish an independent, worker-centred body mandated to uphold ethical standards and protect the rights and voices of platform and gig workers.

5. From Surviving to Thriving

- We envision a future where African women, gender expansive persons, and marginalised communities thrive in dignified, rights-based, and people-centered economies.

Our Position



1. Decent and Dignified Work in the Platform Economy is Non-Negotiable

Decent and dignified work, as defined by the ILO, is a fundamental right and must be adapted to African realities. We call on the ILC to adopt strong, binding standards that guarantee decent and dignified work in all forms of platform work, including:

- ☐ Full recognition of platform and gig workers as workers, entitled to labour rights, social protections, and collective bargaining—irrespective of classification.
- ☐ Addressing the specific gendered dynamics of the platform economy, where women and gender expansive persons face lower pay, unpaid care burdens, discrimination, algorithmic bias, and safety risks.

2. Reject Neocolonial, Heteropatriarchal Capitalist Models of Platform Work

The platform economy in Africa is reproducing colonial-era labour, extractivism, and heteropatriarchal capitalism, masked as digital innovation. We reject the normalisation of exploitative work models in the platform economy that profit from women's and gender expansive people's unpaid and underpaid labour, and from Africa's digital and economic

extractivism. We demand:

- ☐ Transparency and accountability from platform companies.
- ☐ Resistance to models that externalise risks onto workers while extracting profits from African labour and data.
- ☐ An end to the digital divide that systematically marginalises African women and gender expansive persons, rural workers, and workers in the informal sector.
- ☐ An end to data colonialism, surveillance, and algorithmic exploitation that African workers are subjected to.

3. Center African Feminist and Worker-Led Alternatives

We call for African feminist alternatives to the current platform economy, which are rooted in collective ownership, care economies, and solidarity-based digital models.

We advocate for:

- ☐ The recognition and support of African-owned, cooperative, community-driven, and solidarity-based digital platforms as viable models.
- ☐ Investment in African women's leadership, innovation, and governance in platform work and the broader digital economy.
- ☐ Adoption of African, communal, and indigenous approaches to data and knowledge produced by workers and prioritising data initiatives that lead to worker ownership and control of data, transparency on data-led decisions, and accountability for data misuse by platforms.
- ☐ The dismantling of Big Tech monopolies and prioritisation of African digital sovereignty.

4. Gender-Transformative, Inclusive, and Participatory Standard Setting at the ILC

We call on the ILC to:

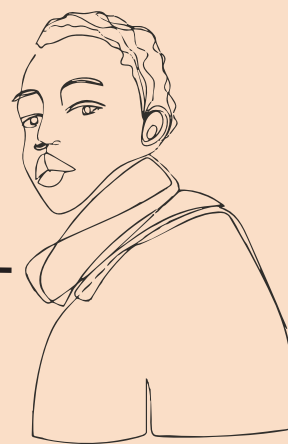
- ☐ Ensure inclusive participation of feminist movements, informal workers, platform and gig workers, and grassroots voices, from Africa and beyond.
- ☐ Develop binding standards that embed intersectionality, gender justice, and decolonial approaches in regulating the platform economy.
- ☐ Enforce labour protections for all workers, regardless of employment classification.
- ☐ Ratification of fundamental ILO conventions that address key labour rights relevant to platform workers.
- ☐ Prioritise gender impact assessments and audits in all policy and standard-setting processes.
- ☐ Expand social protection floors for gig and platform workers, including health care, parental leave, and pensions.
- ☐ Develop inclusive justice and implementation models that guarantee open, legally binding, and bias-free accountability systems, created and run by workers to advance data justice and technological sovereignty.
- ☐ Establish an independent, worker-centred body, such as a Digital Work and Platform Accountability body or Ombudsperson, that is mandated to uphold ethical standards

and protect the rights and voices of platform and gig workers. This body must function as a transparent, accessible, and trusted space where workers can report exploitation and harm without fear. It must have the authority to investigate unethical practices, issue binding decisions, and compel platforms to provide accountability and redress when workers' rights are violated.

5. From Survival to Thriving: Reclaim Economic Justice for African Women in the Platform Economy

- We reaffirm that economic justice is inseparable from gender, racial, climate, digital, and social justice.
- The 'future of work' must be reclaimed from Big Tech and shaped by African workers, women, gender expansive persons, and communities for dignity, rights, and collective wellbeing.
- Thriving also means ensuring platform work does not become a trap for those fleeing conflict and disasters. Special attention must be paid to the needs of workers in fragile and humanitarian contexts, where exploitation is rife and formal oversight is minimal. Global standards must include additional protections such as safety guarantees, real trauma-informed support services, and legal protections against exploitation to safeguard worker protections.
- African feminists envision a platform economy where women, gender diverse persons, and marginalised communities do not merely survive precarious labour but thrive in dignified, rights-based, and people-centered economies. Digital economies must work for people, not profit!

Our Call to Action



Our immediate call for action at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC): **The ILC must stand with workers, not platform owners!**

- Member States: Champion Africa-centered, feminist, rights-based positions and standards on platform work.
- Social Partners: Support African feminist labour justice demands and center platform workers' voices.
- ILO & ILC: Commit to binding labour standards, data rights, and gender-responsive regulations that challenge exploitative digital capitalism and recognise African feminist leadership. The ILO to commit to developing binding international labour standards that reflect Africa's diverse realities, feminist principles, and decolonial visions for the future of work.

We urge:

- African governments to adopt feminist, rights-based regulatory frameworks for the platform economy and broader digital economy.
 - African governments to institute implementation processes that ensure that regulatory frameworks are used to serve the needs of workers.
 - Platform companies to recognise and respect African workers' rights and leadership.
 - Platform companies to institute implementation processes that ensure that regulatory frameworks are used to serve the needs of workers.
 - Trade unions, feminist movements, and civil society to build solidarity, alliances, and campaigns that center the voices and agency of African platform and gig workers.
 - The 113th Session of the International Labour Conference must be a turning point to ensure the platform economy works for all, and not against the most marginalised. The platform economy must deliver decent and dignified work for African workers, especially women and gender expansive persons!
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