



UNION OF INFORMAL WORKERS' ASSOCIATIONS (UNIWA) OF TUC (GHANA)

PRESS STATEMENT ON PROPOSED DECONGESTION OF ACCRA On 1ST FEBRUARY, 2022

The attention of the Union of Informal Workers' Associations (UNIWA) of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has been drawn to the proposed plans by Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) to decongest Accra on Tuesday 1st February 2022.

In principle, UNIWA of TUC and our 21 Associations that organize over 180,000 informal economy operators across the country are not against the efforts by the city authorities to make our city more organized.

But we call the attention of the Greater Accra Regional Minister and other authorities to the following facts:

1. Informal economy is not synonymous to illegality. Informal economic activities are open and taxed by Government. Our activities are the main sources of most of the goods and services in the country;
2. Millions of the workforce earn their livelihoods directly and indirectly in the informal economy. Informal economy operators support several dependents;
3. These informal economy operators who the city authorities seek to drive away have economic rights that are guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution. We have rights to work;
4. Over the years, several decongestion exercises that have been paid for by tax payers have failed to decongest our city. This shows that the approaches used in the past and what is going to be used on Tuesday 1st February 2022 is not the way to go. It would not work; and,
5. The proposed decongestion exercise shall have serious consequences for millions of the city's residents. We are all aware of the difficulties that COVID-19 and the economic situation has brought on many people. Destroying the livelihoods of millions of people in the proposed decongestion exercise would add to the prevailing socioeconomic difficulties.

It is in the light of the above that the UNIWA of TUC calls on Government to engage further with all relevant stakeholders to discuss and find lasting and sustainable solutions to informality in the country. UNIWA and our Associations are willing to work with the city authorities in this direction. In the meantime, immediate efforts should be made to offer alternative spaces in the city for those informal economy workers who would be displaced by the 1st February 2022 decongestion exercise.

Deborah Freeman
General Secretary