The last two decades have shown us that all of this cannot be left at the hands of the market. This dire economic situation calls for a strong, visionary and decisive leadership. We need an alternative development strategy, which can take various forms, ranging from auto-centric development to socialist development paths.

All reports show poverty trends in South Africa confirm our fears that the socio-economic status of the majority in South Africa is deteriorating whilst few people are getting richer due to economic policies that favour the rich. When applying the food poverty line, which is the rand value below which individuals are unable to buy food for adequate health.

About 14 million people that are extremely poor and unable to obtain enough food to provide them with sufficient diet for healthy development. These figures should not come as surprise as 17 million people are dependent on social grants.

Poverty is a product of wrong economic policies and is not natural. South Africa is endowed with minerals, which are in demand in the world’s automotive medical construction electrical, energy industries, land, skills, and ability to manufacture high technology products such as a rooivalk helicopter. It is a scandal and unacceptable that we have highest poverty levels and unemployment.

South Africans are poor not because SA is poor but because firstly of inherited colonial apartheid laws which sought to deprive black Africans of their main source of living which is land and to entrench a docile weak labour for the SA mining sector and secondly the apartheid economic policies that have been adopted by the democratic government. Since 1994, the government on the advice of colonial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF has focused on supply side economics or trickle down economic policies which promoted reduction and elimination
of taxes on business transactions, and taxes on individuals and companies, reduction in wages and right to hire and fire, subsidies to private monopolies in the form of tax credits and tax breaks and privatisation of profitable state owned companies such as Telkom to the private individuals. The major policy failure was to allow free movement of capital that entailed allowing SA companies to take profits produced by SA labour from the Republic to other countries and taking the form of tax credits and tax breaks and enforcement agencies must make sure every citizen feel safe! Enforcement of the laws that were meant to ensure that they remain docile cheap labour with no right to run businesses. When the black labour revolted against repressive laws in 1973, the gold mining industry responded by cutting jobs and introducing more capital and technology. Therefore, it is not surprising that black Africans constitute 90% of the poor. This is very disappointing because black Africans constitute 80% of the population and the inability of government to liberate them from pro-corporate monopoly capital democracy is a danger to democracy. Between 2011 and 2015 the percentage of black Africans and coloureds living in extreme poverty increased from 43.4% to 47.7% for blacks and for coloureds from 20.2% to 23.3% and regardless of sex, black Africans have always had high numbers of people living in extreme poverty. Contrarily, the percentage of poor Indians and Asians decreased from 2.9% in 2011 to 1.2% in 2015 and for poor whites decreased from 0.5% to 0.4%.

Black Africans and coloureds require more intervention from the state to help them move out of poverty compared to white and Indians/Asians. This means that we must urgently revisit our employment equity laws and BEE laws to re-define and establish a hierarchy of historically disadvantaged persons and economically marginalised to ensure that the beneficiaries are firstly blacks and coloured and then others. Current policies have clearly benefited white women and Indians/Asians and have entrenched the apartheid colour bar rule in the workplace whereby firstly white women are given training and promotion opportunities followed by Indians.

This is the last edition of Shopsteward and we wish all of our readers happy holidays and a safe festive season. We need to spend wisely this festive season and relax and recharge so that we can start the new years with vigour to fix what is wrong with the country.

Happy Holidays to everyone!
SADTU holds a successful National Congress at Nasrec

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) convened its 9th National Congress at NASREC Conference Centre in Johannesburg from 25 - 28 September, 2019 under the theme ‘Claiming Our Right to have Our Human Dignity and Safety Protected and Respected in Pursuit of a Decolonised Quality Public Education’.

‘The National Congress is the supreme governing body of the Union. It meets at least once in five years to among others, elect new leadership, adopts policies by means of resolutions.’ Addressing SADTU National Congress delegates, COSATU General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali expressed a view that ‘We must first do the honourable thing, by expressing our sincere gratitude to SADTU, our effective affiliate whose remarkable contribution to building COSATU is outstanding and a source of inspiration to us.

We are registering this appreciation because the evidence of such a contribution could be traced to your efforts in assisting other Cosatu affiliates both in terms of human and financial resources. But such contributions have been extended to our Alliance partners. This is informed by your understanding that SADTU would not succeed if other Cosatu affiliates are struggling.’

‘Comrade President, the Federation acknowledges the honesty, integrity and collective leadership that have worked so hard in building genuine unity of the union. This hard work has ensured that SADTU is the future union and union of choice for educators. SADTU is the leader in education in our country and therefore, directly involved in most of our community work. Teachers are community leaders or the light of every community and therefore, through you we are expected to lead our communities and guide on critical issues. But to do that, we need to be the example and light that inspires confidence and that’s why we salute you that you have been outspoken in even difficult issues that affect our children, our communities, our country and our alliance too.’

He urged delegates to ‘spend quality time discussing the environment in which educators find themselves in. There is no doubt in everyone’s mind that a society without educators would be a lost society. Every life starts with a teacher from the early childhood development and through our living journey there has to someone imparting knowledge to the society. If that is a case then why teachers are not celebrate and recognised for the critical almost prerequisite for anyone to succeed? Many working parents leave their kids at the hands of teachers even at early stages. Educators teach them to speak, to eat, to learn etc. teachers produce lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists, ministers and presidents. Why then the society does not recognise this? Why when one educator as a member of the society does something wrong, all teachers are painted with that brush?'

On tackling the Economic Crisis!

Ntshalintshali said ‘the crisis we face do not mean we must lament about them, but directly confront them in order to rejuvenate the confidence of workers to get back their organised power and rights. And the following fundamentals are important elements of our programme;

• A progressive macro-economic policy and enough of Treasury’s over-reaching influence of our economy and its orientation. A progressive economy means one that creates jobs, develops our communities, build capacity to manufacture and industrialise our country, invest in skilling our people and distribute the economy equitably for all. In this regard, the CEC has expressed clearly that the current paper by Treasury is not taking us in that direction. It has also not been a proper product of NEDLAC and alliance consultation processes, which further questions its relevance to the national momentum to roll back the triple crisis of poverty, inequalities and unemployment. We call for a full recognition of proper dialogue amongst partners at NEDLAC, as we also call for an alliance thorough discussion on the economic policy direction of the country. This is the crux of the matter, as we seek a new path of development for our country and its people.

• Building a democratic, developmental state that serves the needs of the people and has capacity to build social cohesion and empower the most vulnerable. The state must have capacity to fight and defeat corruption, parasitism, private sector collusion in price fixing, monopoly dominance in the economy, racism and sexism, abuse of power and a culture of quality public service.

• Fighting against state capture, corruption and looting of public resources. This campaign is very important in all aspects and faces of our society. We must reject the assumption that corruption is normal and here to stay, not only in public, but even with vigour too, in the private and community spaces. But it also requires a fundamental shift in ethics, outlook and character development.

• We are fighting against all and any form of inequality, discrimination and abuse against the most vulnerable in our society, particularly women and children.

• We are building the true and substantive unity of workers in action by decisively representing and articulating their most profound aspirations and interests, our campaigns are about workers and united action for workers freedom from capitalism, patriarchy, racism, poverty and joblessness.

• Building an effective, united and actively robust tripartite alliance at the helm of which should be a highly organised and resolve working class movement. The alliance is an important instrument of the NDR dear Comrades; its mission remains unfulfilled as yet, hence its continuing relevance and centrality. The role of each alliance partner remain as critical as ever, hence our duty to build the capacity of each of our organisations to their optimal levels.

• Working class internationalism remains our banner forever and we must be as resolute as ever in building the regional, continental and international trade unions movement towards a global force against all and every form of exploitation, oppression and for workers rights and dignity for all.

COSATU is a campaigning federation!

COSATU General Secretary called for unions to support each other on the picket lines and enhance the spirit of “an injury to one is an injury to all”.

He called on education workers to support vulnerable workers in every sector of the economy and the banking workers, who are facing retrenchments due to automation and digitalization.

Even more critical for all of us as workers, activists and members of the federation is our tradition of responding to issues that affect workers and society as a whole. We have time to do analysis, but the result must be to make things happen. The CEC has prioritized the following campaign areas for action;

He said ‘That’s why the CEC adopted a clear call for a Section 77 Strike action against retrenchments and for the overall transformation of the sector to make a lasting contribution to creating jobs, fighting poverty and developing our country.’ We are also actively mobilising for the scrapping of the parasitic IPPs, in which case the CEC further resolved to use the Section 77 and to engage our lawyers regarding a legal opinion on the agreement signed by government.

This must never be confused with our clear stand on climate change, but a just transition is about protecting jobs and livelihoods as we move towards the new climate dispensation.’

Ntshalintshali alluded that ‘the CEC further launched a renewed wave of mass recruitment of workers into COSATU-affiliated unions. We are aiming at the target of 2 million workers by the time we hold our 2020 Bargaining Conference, which means we aim to recruit 400 000 workers into the COSATU fold between now and the Conference. Every worker deserves a home and COSATU is the home of every worker.’ SADTU 9th National Congress resolved, amongst others, on the following aspects:

• Commit to fight for the protection and respect for the dignity of education workers and learners

• The union shall campaign against gender based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace

• Commit to encourage all its members to be on duty, on task and professional
South Africa has been exposed by media for the recent attacks on migrant workers across provinces. And many in society have asked questions on what has gone wrong? Many in communities admit that the socio-economic factors facing the poor working class communities such as the growing unemployment and poverty may have fueled the situation. But many argue that some citizens have not digested a universal view that ‘migrant workers are workers too’. On the other hand, many citizens blame the Department of Employment and Labour, the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) for lack of policy direction on how migrant workers are employed by employers, on how the movement of migrants is regulated by Home Affairs and how the status of refugees is handled by DIRCO in countries of destination. This has been a thorny issue as in many quarters as many employers are blamed for paying workers against each, by setting different wages to migrants and denying locals employment opportunities in favour to migrants. The worst case scenarios, many locals were labelled ‘lazy’ by some employers.

And the Minister of Employment and Labour, Honourable Thulas Nxesi held a view that ‘we need to help facilitate regulation and bring order to this difficult area, mindful of the sensitivities involved, including – relations with our neighbours to the north, the divisive cheap labour policy being adopted by employers.’ But, what we must argue as is that the violent and unlawful attacks on non-nationals and their property that we have witnessed – can never, under any circumstances be justified’. The Department of Employment and Labour through the Labour Chief Director: Public Employment Services (PES) Branch, Ms. Esther Thione responded by saying that South Africa is on track to have a draft National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) by March 2020 – to deal with labour movement management. She said the implication was that while developing the country’s draft National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP), “we have to strike a balance to manage the movement of labour. South Africa is one of high receiving countries when it comes to migrants, and this is posing serious challenges for the country. The dynamics in South Africa are also very unique”. She said that “migration was a global phenomenon, saying according to the recent International Labour Organisation (ILO) statistics, there was an estimated 280 million migrants worldwide. Migration was occurring not out of choice, “migrants were moving due to political instabilities, lack of employment opportunities, climate change and other pull and push factors’. ‘The policy we are developing should not replace South Africans. We need to strike a balance – this process is a multi-departmental area that needs co-ordination while taking consideration of international conventions,” she cautioned.

Commit to eradicate improper relations between teachers and learners
Commit to engage the employer to provide basic infrastructure which include safe learning environments, manageable class sizes, learning materials, teacher development and support
Commit to engage the employer to ensure all education workers, including temporary teachers, are paid on time
Commit to push for decolonization of the education system and radical transformation of the curriculum in order to restore the dignity of the African working class
Commit to intensify the campaign against the privatization, commercialization, commodification of and education in order to protect the basic education value chain against eduro-preneurs and capitalist private hands, who want to make profit out of education
Commit to convene Branch-based community multi-stakeholder engagement forums to tackle issues related to school safety and violence.

The newly-elected General Secretary, Mugwena Maluleke said ‘the 9th National Congress resolved that all workers in the education sector should be designated under one sectoral Bargaining Council in order to enhance service delivery and be consistent with the current arrangements as far as the designation of sectors within the public service. The following collective leadership were duly elected by Congress;

President: Magote Maphila
Deputy President: Lucky Mahatho Cele
General Secretary: Mugwena Maluleke
Deputy General Secretary: Nikosana Dolepi
National Treasurer: Lindiswa Motshwane
Vice president for Gender: Dorcus Sekatate
Vice president for Education: Faseega Solomun
Vice president for Sports, Arts and Culture: Nolitha Mboniswa.

Why is Labour Migration a Trade Union Issue?

South Africa on track to finalise draft NLMP by March 2020
Thione said in developing the draft policy, South Africa focused on the African Union and SADC protocols; various international agreements such as Convention 97 and Convention 143, the Sustainable Development Goals, the SA constitution and Employment Services Act. South Africa was developing the NMP as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreement of Ministers of Employment and Labour to develop national frameworks on NLMP as far back in 2013. The deadline for SADC member states is November 2019 for countries to develop their policies.

In 2016, the department formalised its Road Map for the development of a National Labour Migration Policy. The NLMP aims to equip South Africa with a technically sound policy instrument, which will strengthen the country’s approach to labour migration, and contribute to the socio-economic agenda. Thione said ‘the NLMP would also help turnaround time and streamline work visa processes; assist in reviving and clarification of 60/40 ratio (for business visas); implementation of the skills transfer plan; improve collaboration domestically and externally.’

The International Labour Organization Bureau for Workers’ Activities published a Manual for Trade Unions, titled ‘In Search of Decent Work: Migrant Workers’ Rights,’ in 2008 which was aimed to empower the working class to address issues related to labour migration. The manual argued that ‘Migrant workers are workers too’. Migrant workers, regardless of their rights status, are first of all workers. As such, they have rights, including freedom of association—the right to form or join a trade union. It is also important to remember that, unless specified otherwise, all labour standards adopted by the ILO apply to migrant workers. Too often, labour migration is linked to exploitation, the extreme cases of which can be trafficking and child labour. Trade unions are in the business of protecting all workers, not just their members. This is why trade unions fight equality; for decent work for all, for social protection and against child labour or forced labour, although not all these workers will be union members. This is because trade unions care for society as a whole, and of course the higher their membership, the higher their capacity to influence.

An injury to one is an injury to all one of the best-known trade union slogans and is the main reason for considering labour migration as a trade union issue. As migrant workers are among the most vulnerable groups of workers, they are in need of particular attention in organizing efforts, and at the negotiating table. For trade unions, migrant labour concerns rights, equality, equal treatment and equal opportunity; it concerns health and safety at work, jobs, vocational training, social security and union organization. All groups of migrant workers are entitled to the rights and protection of trade unions. As trade unions are the working class voice, our membership should be reflected in the workplace, and in the organizing process, to ensure that these rights are not undermined or ignored. In South Africa, we have to strike a balance. We need to help facilitate regulation and bring order to this difficult area, mindful of the sensitivities involved, including—relations with our neighbours to the north, the divisive cheap labour policy being adopted by employers.’ But, what we must argue as is that the violent and unlawful attacks on non-nationals and their property that we have witnessed—can never, under any circumstances be justified”.

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Worker Issues

Decent Work Deficit
The principle reason why workers decide to move from one country to another is the search for decent work, because of the lack of decent work opportunities at home. Too many workers have been left behind by globalization. While globalization has produced many benefits, these have not been evenly or fairly distributed. Inequalities between countries and within countries are growing. Inequalities and injustices are union concerns. And the historic role of trade unions in fighting poverty everywhere is an important contribution to reducing migration pressures and ensuring that when migration occurs, it is out of choice and not for mere survival. However, labour shortages in most of the industrialized countries, together with unemployment and population growth in developing countries, will continue to drive labour migration and it will remain a major source of growth in the global economy. Promoting Decent Work, and avoiding a situation where governments and employers resort to migration as a source of cheap labour or as a means of regulating labour markets without granting migrant workers rights, or in an attempt to undermine existing rights for all workers, will continue to require special attention by the trade union movement.

A source of strength and survival for the trade union movement
Beyond the moral obligation of right and solidarity, one very good reason for recruiting and organizing migrant workers is to provide "new blood" for the trade union movement. Recruiting members and organizing in sectors traditionally outside the union movement—excluding those where many migrant workers can be found—has become critical to the survival and growth of the trade union movement. Indeed, many trade unions are now targeting migrant workers, which increasingly include undocumented migrant workers in their recruitment drives. This is why it is important for trade unions to be seen as leaders in promoting the rights-based approach to labour migration.

Support for restrictive migration policies and repression of workers who are in a irregular situation will only make potential members of the trade union movement reluctant to join. In fact, migrant workers are among those who want and need unions and are willing to join. Many of the complainants brought before the ILO concern attempts by migrant workers to organize, and their being denied freedom of assembly. Migrant workers make up an increasing percentage of the workforce in agriculture, construction, health care and domestic services, electronics, textiles, manufacturing, food processing and the hotel and restaurant trade. These are often industries built on high levels of exploitation, low wages, and poor working conditions. "A rights-based approach to migrant workers is the best way of protecting all workers'.

Labour migration is now a major arena for the struggle between labour and capital over the division of wealth, the extent of regulation (or deregulation) of working conditions and worker protection, and the ability of workers to organize themselves into unions. What happens to migrant workers may well be the precedent for what happens more widely across working populations.

Globalization has had a dramatic impact on mature industrialized economies. Workers have seen the quality of their jobs decline, as hours and stress have increased and unionization levels fallen. Unemployed workers use migrant workers as a "reserve" of workers ostensibly willing to work for less pay for longer hours, and in worse conditions than national workers, and without the protection of unions. The present trends of temporary work, precarious contracts, subcontracting, flexible schedules, employer dependence and undocumented workers were all tried out first on migrant workers before being extended to all workers.

What is the solution?
The answer is to ensure that labour a law and collective agreements are applied to migrant workers, that labour inspectors make sure they are not exploited, and that migrant workers are organized in the trade union movement. If they are paid the same wages and enjoy the same benefits as national workers, then they cannot be used as a testing ground for ways of undermining national workers. Particular attention should be paid to undocumented workers. When migrant workers refuse to work, they often become an employer's worst enemy. They have a strong weapon to use against any effort to organize workers or fight for better conditions. When migrant workers are vulnerable, their second-class status is not uniquely used against them, but against other workers as well. A right-based approach to labour migration would not only prevent the exploitation of migrant workers, it would also help to fight those unscrupulous employers who want to place national and migrant workers in competition with each other.

Having a voice in policy-making
Governments are sovereign and may decide whom they admit to their territory, providing they meet the international obligations and respect human rights. But since migration policies are a labour market issue, trade unions have every right to be involved, and their voices should be listened to when labour migration policies are being considered. Unions (and employers) are uniquely places to assess the real labour market needs. Labour migration is not a law and order issue, nor one of border control. Migrant workers are workers. Trade unions are interested in the conditions of workers and the world of work. Government policies on labour migration are often based on short-term considerations and electoral prospects. By promoting a right-based approach (including the ratification of international instruments to protect migrant workers), trade unions are promoting a more stable and predictable migration process, which can maximize the benefits for all. If we want our say, we have to raise our voices now. At the global level, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and regional trade union organizations, as well as Global Union federation (GUFs) at the sectoral level, has increasingly put concern for migrant workers high on their list priorities and are campaigning for a right-based approach.

Fighting racism and xenophobia
At the start of the twenty-first century, many countries are becoming multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-lingual, and multi-religious. At the same time, there are increasing manifestations of hostility and violence against non-national nationals, migrants, refugees, immigrants, even students and tourists. Extreme nationalist groups propagate myths about migrant workers. This is a long-standing problem. The ILO’s Migration for Employment Recommendation [Revised] (No.86), adopted in 1949, asked countries to “take all practical steps against misleading propaganda relating to immigration and immigration’. [Annex, Article, 2]

It should also be noted that these extreme chauvinist groups which raise the issue of migrant workers are never the friends of trade unionism. They seek to divide workers on the basis of race, religion or nationality. Trade unionists know that division is fatal to our cause. These same parties are always in favour of reducing trade union power. The trade union movement plays a leading role in fighting racism and xenophobia. In December 2007, the International Trade Union Confederation drew up a trade union strategy, Mammouta Case, ITUC Deputy General Secretary said: “The fight to combat racism and xenophobia and to promote human right, equality and diversity forms an integral part of trade union organisation’s mission. Migrants in particular are often exposed to racism.’

Gender discrimination
A significant change in patterns of migration is the increasing percentage of women migrants. In earlier years, women migrated [sometimes with their children] on the basis of ‘family reunion’. They were seen as housewives. Increasingly, women are migrating for work on their own. They are frequently found in low-paid, ‘reproductive work’ such as domestic work, cleaning services, hospitality, care-giving, and in the health care and hospitality sectors. This work is largely undervalued. In this increasing ‘ feminization of migration’, families are separated [when a family reunification option is not allowed] and children suffer the most. These are high social costs that are not considered in measuring the benefits of migration. The trade union movement is committed to the fight against gender discrimination at all levels and this must include the double discrimination that women migrant workers suffer.

Conclusion
Migration for work, or labour migration, is an issue for trade unions because it is part of the world of work. Labour migration concerns rights, equality, equal treatment and equal opportunity; it concerns health and safety at work, social security, and union organization. It is linked to trafficking, child labour and exploitation. Labour migration concerns discrimination and vocational training. All of these are trade union issues. Labour migration is part of the world of work, a ‘bread and butter’ issue that cannot be ignored. Governments are already putting forward policies and introducing legislation on migrant workers. If we want our say, we have to raise our voices now.

The Task for Trade Unions
There are four areas where trade unions can work:
1. Trade unions must become involved in the policy debate about managing migrations so that the benefits are maximised for workers, and the costs minimized. The trade union position is that migration and migrant workers are not ‘problems’ to be dealt with. Migrant workers are people trying to improve their lives and must be treated accordingly.
2. Information and awareness-raising campaigns for workers and the public at the country level. Racism and ethnicity are often used to divide workers. Unions must reach out and inform members and workers about the facts, and fight the myths and lies spread by racist organizations.
3. Cooperation with trade unions in other countries: this must involve unions in both countries of origin and countries of destination of migrant workers. International solidarity is not an option, or even a duty for trade unions. In a globalized world, it is a necessity.
4. Organizing migrant workers: Trade unions know that the best way to protect workers is for them to be organized. Organizing is the key to improvement. There are also many examples, of trade unions working to support and organize migrant workers.

Reference:
he Congress of South African Trade unions and its affiliate, the National Union of Mineworkers held a successful in Marikana on the 17th November 2019. Indeed the rally was a major success given the fact that we have not been able to hold a major event in that area since 2012 and the rally was attended by more 6 000 workers drawn from all affiliates and all the regions.

The Provincial Secretary of COSATU North West, comrade Kopano Konopi said ‘There have been no events reported at the rally except for the taxi hooligans who extorted money from some of our taxis which were taking workers to the rally and a case of extortion has been opened with the police. In this regard we call on the law enforcement urgencies act with the necessary speed and make sure that these hooligans are arrested.’

Konopi said ‘The rally has proven that South Africa is indeed a democratic country and everyone has a freedom of association and the right to form and participate in the activities of the trade union of their choice. This rally was a beginning of the beginning and there will be more activities taking place in Marikana and as COSATU and NUM we will work tirelessly until we regain the members we have lost in the platinum belt.’

COSATU ordinary Central Executive Committee held this year took the decision to hold jointly the Marikana with the National Union of Mineworkers. COSATU CEC demands on Marikana were as follows;

- Reinvestigate the killing of all workers in Marikana
- Investigate the payment of all affected families which must include the first 10 killed people before police killed 34 workers.
- Investigate the relationship between Amcu and Lonmin management, including the Marikina trust fund.
- The Police minister must demand all cases opened against the killing of other workers after the Marikina tragedy
- The Minister of labour must make sure that the constitution of our country is respected, and workers are allowed to join unions of their choice without intimidation.

‘The CEC also instructed all affiliates and structures of the federation to work to improve the level of our cooperation with other trade union federations. We resolved to implement our congress resolution to build bridges and making sure that we build cordial relations with other federations as part of our campaign to unite the workers and the working class. And NUM Special Congress must debate how to strengthen the federation in that regard’, said Solly Phetoe, COSATU Deputy General Secretary.

COSATU would like to encourage the workers in the mining industry to continue to join the National Union Mineworkers as it has proven that it is the only reliable, democratic and trusted mineworkers unions in the country. ‘COSATU and NUM would like to take this opportunity to thank all the workers who took their time and attended the rally’, concluded Konopi.
COSATU addresses NUM Special National Congress in Durban

COSATU National Office Bearers participated in the Special National Congress of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at the Isikosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The Special Congress received addresses from Alliance leadership and urging ‘NUM to be strengthened to fight for safety in the mining sector. The Congress, amongst others, resolved ‘to engage NUMSA about collaborations to strengthen workers’ struggle in the industrial sectors facing job bloodbath.’

On the Young Workers structure, the Congress resolved ‘to convene the Young Workers Conference’ which was theretofore processed by the preceding National Executive Committee to have the conference hosted by Free State in Boerfontein in November 2019. The Congress resolved to convene a Workers’ Rally in Marikana around November 2019.

‘This is a rally that is jointly organized by COSATU and NUM. The aim is organizing the rally in Marikana to try and resuscitate the NUM in the platinum belt. Since the start of the rampant killings of our members there in 2012, we have never held a national rally in the area. Our members have long been calling for such a rally but due to logistics, we have been unable to hold it. COSATU affiliates from the surrounding areas will be in full attendance. The rally will also be address by Alliance partners. We are expecting between 15 000 and 20 000 members to attend from the NUM regions such as Free State, Carletonville, Mamatseta, North East, Highveld, Kimberley, and PWV,’ said David Sipunzi, NUM General Secretary.

COSATU deployed its 2nd Deputy President, Lesina Thipe to deliver the message on behalf of the federation.

Resuming her input Cornrade Thipe said ‘We acknowledge the presence of COSATU Central Executive Committee members at this Special Congress to continue to reiterate our respect for our founding principles on workers’ solidarity, enhancing workers’ control and also promoting international solidarity with our allies across the globe.’

‘Let’s strengthen COSATU as a shield of all workers in South Africa’. 

‘COSATU welcomes the NUM Theme for this Special Congress on the ‘Power of Unity’, as it resonates with the 14th National Congress Resolution of the federation around Deepening ‘Going Back to Basics’, with a clear programme of Consolidating the Struggle for the attainment of the Vision of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and finally strengthening our trade movement to achieve Socialism in our lifetime.’

‘The NUM leadership collective has briefed us about the critical importance of this Special National Congress ‘to finalize the work of the National Congress held in 2018, with a major focus on Constitutional Amendments, Policy Matters and obviously Strengthening the Union.’

Thipe said ‘This Special National Congress is taking place as we mark the 46th Anniversary since the Durban Strikes. This Special National Congress is taking place as we mark the 33rd Anniversary since workers died fighting for the recognition of NUM at JCI mine and 35th Anniversary since NUM members protested against the Bophuthatswana regime [a Bantustan established by apartheid regime] which was burning South African unions. This Special National Congress is taking place as we mark the 25th Anniversary since we lost the NUM and COSATU founding President, comrade Elijah Barayi.’

‘Going Back to Basics!’

She said ‘NUM must and should be the union of choice to fight against brutal killings of our workers by AMCU and all those who hates the hegemonic influence of the National Union of Mineworkers since its inception in 1982 and we acknowledge that this year marks 37th Anniversary celebrations. We salute the bravery of our founding leaders in the Trade Union Movement such as the NUM founding President, Elijah Barayi, John Nkabinzi, Emma Mashinini, Chris Dlamini and countless others. We must preserve the contribution of former trade unionists and keep their legacy. We acknowledged that the founding President’s grave is has been declared as a Provincial Heritage Site and we must appreciate the efforts of our founding members across all affiliated trade unions. This Special National Congress is taking place as we mark the 98th Anniversary since the SACP was founded and also the 107th Anniversary since the ANC was formed.’

She said ‘We must strengthen the Alliance and COSATU’s position has been clear on reconfiguration of the Alliance to deliver on the vision of the National Democratic Revolution and achieve radical socio-economic transformation in South Africa. The CEC has acknowledged Cde Cyril Ramaphosa’s efforts to unite the Alliance as a leader of both the ANC and government. The comprehensive consultation over cabinet appointments have been followed by his steady implementation of some Alliance endorsed ANC policies. Despite the recent political gridlock and commotion, we have already seen a gradual progressive policy shift in the economic policies by the ANC’s sixth administration. 

• Introduction of the National Minimum Wage.
• Implementation of Free Education
• The release of the NHI Bill
• The exploration of the introduction of a State Bank.
• Commitment to the Amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution.
• The signing of the Debt Relief Bill.

“This commitment to the progressive resolutions of the 54th National Conference is welcomed although some within the ANC and National Treasury are trying to exploit the current economic crisis to push their rightwing agenda. COSATU will defend the progressive resolutions of the ANC and will continue to be a constructive partner of the sixth ANC administration on policy questions, as long as it delivers on the Manifesto commitments and sticks to ANC policies. Any attempts to abandon ANC and Alliance policies will antagonize the workers and they will be amongst the most formidable adversaries of the administration.’

‘The Federation wants to see the Alliance and government at all levels intensifying the war against unemployment, poverty and inequality. Unless we deal with the problems honestly and urgently, the Alliance will likely face, not reduced participation and support in the elections, but rather the on-going protest action, political divisions, demobilization and alienation, with potentially devastating consequences for our longer-term aims.’

‘We are unhappy, though, with Luthuli House’s failure to convene Alliance meetings consistently. We demand an Alliance Political meeting in the next two months so that we can debate the possibility of an Alliance Economic Summit to deal with the crisis. This Special National Congress is taking place as we mark the 26th Anniversary since the Vaal Reefs Disaster which compromised lives of around 105 miners at the Vaal Reef mine and such cases still persists such as the Lily Mine Disaster and many others NUM has spoken against today.’

Investing in our Organizing Machinery

Thipe said ‘Comrades, the CEC acknowledged that COSATU remains the biggest civil society formation and the biggest membership-based movement in the country. The following affiliated unions (NUM, SACITU, POPCRO and SADTU) will be convening their respective National Congresses in the coming months and we wish all of them well. This proves that COSATU unions still cherish the discipline and principles of democratic centralism and worker control that are the foundation of this federation. The CEC welcomed the progress that has been made to stabilize both SAMWU and SATWU. While this is a work-in-progress, we are happy that internal democracy is being revived in these two important COSATU unions.

The CEC has resolved to intensify our ongoing recruitment campaigns in the build-up to next year’s planned Collective Bargaining Conference. Multichoice has announced a plan to retrain 2 194 jobs and we must support CWU to demand job security in the ICT sector.’

Other speakers were SACP General Secretary, Blade Nzimande and ANC President, Cyril Ramaphosa.
Let’s all the labour unions, mining industry bosses and government ministers revisit the framework for a sustainable mining industry, a government’s peace pact aimed at stabilising labour relations.

The killing last week of Kaizer Lungisa Madiba, a member of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and an employee at Sibanye-Stillwater by unknown assailants at Lonmin’s Roland shaft, next to Marikana, is bringing more questions than answers.

Who should account for that loss of precious life?

Madiba was on his way to work when he was shot and killed next to Roland Shaft. He has been so instrumental in making sure that workers are perfectly represented on their labour related matters and his affiliation to the NUM could be the main reason why he was brutally shot and killed.

It is a matter of concern because a number of people have been assassinated irrespective of their rights to join a trade union of their choice. Without any doubt, the killing of Madiba is a sure case that could easily raise speculation that it is the latest violent incident in the on-going platinum belt. This latest atrocity demonstrates that the framework agreement for a sustainable mining industry is simply not being effectively implemented.

The peace pact, brokered by the then Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, was aimed at resolving the issues bedevilling the mining sector. It was signed in 2013, and up to today, it is still very much questionable why the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union’s (Amcu) refused to sign it. Some of the key factors of the agreement is to ensure that workers and managers not be harmed for exercising their constitutional right to join a trade union of their choice, declare disputes, strike and engage in any form of peaceful protest.

It aimed at ensuring that all matters pertaining to labour relations, including union recognition agreements, verification of membership and wage negotiations, were conducted within the Labour Relations Act. The peace pact also forces labour unions to maintain peace during protests relating to labour disputes and protecting life and property. The NUM remained shocked but not surprised by the latest killing.

This is because of a rally that is jointly organized by COSATU and NUM. The union is finalising logistics to jointly host a massive rally with COSATU in Marikana on the 17th November 2019. The aim of organising the rally is simply to reclaim lost members and resuscitate the NUM in the platinum belt. Since the start of the rampart killings in 2012, the NUM have never held a national rally in the area. Mineworkers have long been calling for such a rally.

About 20 000 workers are expected to attend the rally. The union is concerned that Sibanye-Stillwater’s pre-occupation with profits and the police incompetence may once again lead to a serious bloodbath in the platinum sector. Sibanye-Stillwater is one company that has all signs of being unpatriotic.

The NUM members will be marching to Sibanye head office on a date yet to be decided to raise concerns, including the continued violent incidents and intimidations at work places. It appears that the police and all other law enforcement agencies were doing very little to stop the killings in Marikana area. Poor people, in particular mineworkers were gradually losing confidence in the ability of the police services to protect innocent civilians.

Luphert Chilwane is the Media Officer at the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)
SACTWU holds its 14th National Congress
he Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (SACTWU) 14th National Congress held its 14th National Congress in Durban around September 2019 under the Theme, ‘United Together, Let’s Build SACTWU, Our Industry, Our Economy and our Continent.’ The National Congress is the ‘highest decision-making constitutional structure’, convened once every three years. The last one was held in September 2016, in Cape Town. The Congress commenced with all delegates remembering all shop stewards, staff and Congress Movement Cadres, who passed in the period under review.

SACTWU over the recent years has upped their games in modelling a ‘modern union’, willing to engage directly with communities through its HIV/AIDS Clinics, unleashing of circumcision programmes every and also Winter Schools for learners. Such organisational strides were extended to saving jobs such as the call for EDCON intervention, by resuscitating factories through its Investment Fund, fighting eloquently for decent wages by seeking mandates from workers through balloting processes, by campaigning on the streets against cheap products in the market, by strengthening collective bargaining in all its sectors such as tailoring and footwear, and by defending the implementation of the national minimum wage through a research-based argument as a ‘springboard to eradicate poverty wages and ending the growing number of precarious population in the labour force.’

Congress delegates unanimously agreed that ‘shopstewards need to be educated on new technological developments to ensure discussions are more easy to mitigate against job losses through the introduction of the 4th Industrial Revolution, automation and other new technological gadgets who leads to job cuts.’ ‘We must fight for full implementation of local procurement policies and promote the buy local campaign launched many years ago,’ argued delegates.

The Minister of Trade and Industry has urged ‘all South Africans to support the Buy Local Campaign, to boost locally produced goods and services.’ There is no quick fix if we want to build a high-growth, high employment and high inclusion economy,’ Patel said ‘we must build confidence and trust in government and between government and our social partners, namely business and labour.’ ‘Any industrial strategy is the set of broad policies and measures undertaken to lift the rate of growth, stimulate economic activities, including to boost economic growth and innovation.’ The merger of the two departments is part of building a capable state, able to do what it says it will do, focus on practical actions, break policy paralysis and coordinate across the state to ensure a good mix between incentives and outcomes such as jobs and youth opportunities.’

The Minister added to the fact that government will finalize tariff schedule, listing products covered by the AICFTA and the rules of origin which sets what qualitative as a locally-manufactured article. The outstanding rules of origin, include clothing and textile, autos and sugar. We will engage business and labour at Nedlac on these areas and finalize agreements between all countries by the end of the year. ‘The clothing textiles and footwear sector has a support system in place that stabilized the industry over the past 8 years and saved thousands of jobs.

To promote local fashion and jobs, we will finalize an industry Master Plan, containing proposals dealing with the future of the incentive scheme. The Invest SA will be supported and upgraded to be a stronger one-stop shop to unblock obstacles to investment projects getting off the ground.’ Amongst the distinguished guest at the Congress were the South African President and ANC President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, SAPC 1st Deputy General Secretary, Mr Solly Mapaila, Cde Isla Aremu, IndustriALL Vice President for Africa, Minister of Employment and Labour, Hon Thulas Nxesi and Hon Ephraim Patel, the Minister of Trade and Industry.

The ‘Congress of South African Trade Unions wishes its affiliate the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union a successful 14th National Congress. The 14th National Congress of SACTWU represents the union’s firm commitment to the principles of democracy and workers control’, said COSATU President, Comrade Zingiswa Losi representing thousands of workers in South Africa across all sectors of the economy. Zingiswa said ‘We wish all the delegates productive discussions and hope they will continue the union’s tradition of firm unity and insightful analysis of issues facing the labour movement. SACTWU is one of the federations most innovative and forward-looking unions that never disappoints in tackling issues facing the workers and the working class.

She said ‘Workers are grappling with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, remunerations and prolonged economic stagnation. There is also deterioration in workplace safety and the righting hardliners inside and outside of government are trying to exploit the economic crisis by reimplementing the failed policies of the past. This Congress should be used to come up with answers that will help the labour movement to better defend the workers and the working class. We hope to see a stronger and more united SACTWU coming out of this 14th National Congress.

Zingiswa Losi concluded her message of support to the delegates by saying ‘We wish SACTWU a successful congress and productive session of a Workers’ Parliament.

The following collective leadership were duly elected by the 14th SACTWU National Congress:

• President: Comrade Themba Khumalo
• 1st Deputy President: 2nd Deputy President: Comrade Sicelo Gumedze
• General Secretary: Comrade Andre Kriel
• Deputy General Secretary: Comrade Membinkosi Vilina
• National Treasurer: Comrade Freda Oosthysen
• 1st National Organizing Secretary: Comrade Bonita Louwer
• 2nd National Organizing Secretary: Comrade Michael Shabalala

SACTWU celebrates 30th Anniversary. We thank all our members for your contribution to our union and industry. Thank you for you fights for workers’ rights and improving the lives of the working class. You have made SACTWU what it is today. United together, Let’s Build SACTWU, Our Industry, Our Country and Our Continent

2019 marks the 30th Anniversary since the formation of the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union. Anniversary of a progressive trade union reminds its members about a shared history and heritage of the evolution of vibrant labour formations, which inspired the workers in general to join and fight for the freedom of this country and made significant progress to attain democracy and a labour legislation promoted on social justice and respects for labour rights. SACTWU was launched at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on the 16th-17th September 1989. SACTWU newly elected General Secretary, Andre Kriel said ‘Our union’s roots can be traced back to 1918, with the formation of the Winewatrand Tailors’ Association (WTA), a craft union. The period from 1918 to 1989 was a period of consolidation, of merging the many different trade unions in our industry into one coherent trade union.’

SACTWU has been traced as far back as 1917, with the formation of the Tailors’ and Tailorers’ Union in Cape Town, a year later in 1918 with the Winewatrand Tailors Association in Joburg and in 1919 with the establishment of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union. SACTWU contributed immensely in the liberation of South Africa and its founding members were real champions for non-racialism. Many may recall the revolutionaries such as Mama Lillian Ngoyi and countless others, who led the well-known 1956 Women’s March against Pass Laws and a policy of racial segregation by the apartheid regime.

COSATU, all affiliated trade unions and the IndustriALL congratulated SACTWU and wished the union many more years of vibrancy in fighting for social justice!

To mark the 30 years of existence, SACTWU held a special 30th Anniversary Gala Dinner ceremony and recognised many individuals in the sector and structures for their significant contribution in the class struggle for living wages and dignity of clothing and textile workers. A Special Award for Comrade Theo Steede, who previously was a clothing worker, and a SACTWU shop steward, a SACTWU Branch Organiser and new COSATU Head of Organising at the headquarters for her ‘Significant Contribution to the Labour Movement’.

Cde Amos was the first President of SACTWU, elected at the founding Congress in September 1989. Other SACTWU 14th National Congress presented were as follows:

SACTWU Pretoria Branch received an Award for Best Membership Growth

An award for Best Membership Growth was receive by KwaZulu-Natal Province

Award for the Longest Serving Shop Steward was presented to Comrade Mymiwa Williams

Award for Most Gender Sensitive Province was awarded to SACTWU’s Western Cape Province

Award for the Most Significant Strike was presented to the Footwear Sector, for the 2018 national footwear wage strike management

Award for the Longest Serving Staff member in SACTWU was received by the current General Secretary, Comrade Andre Kriel for having spent almost thirty-one years with the union

Congratulations to all the recipients!

Long Live SACTWU Long Live!
The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) held its successful 9th National Congress from the 5th November until the 8th November 2019 and sealed the Workers’ Parliament with a National Rally to celebrate the formation of the union in Durban at the Chief Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre and the Curries Fountain Stadium respectively. The Congress was held under the Theme: “30 Years of Working-Class Consciousness, Defending Workers’ Rights and Building a Self-Sustainable Union.”

Many argued that the holding of the 9th National Congress and the celebrations at the Curries Fountain Stadium [where COSATU was launched in 1985] “as a true testimony of what POPCRU has stood and fought for in its 30 years of existence.’ Opening the 9th National Congress, POPCRU President, Zizamele Cebekhulu painted the early steps taken by the police and prisons civil rights union in 1989. Cebekhulu said ‘This ninth [09th] National Congress of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union is convened when this movement completes 30th of its existence. It was on Sunday, the 05th of November 1989 at Strand Street in Cape Town when police and correctional officers took a conscious and well calculated decision to launch a trade union movement with a progressive apparatus. In taking this bold step, POPCRU directly challenged the candour of the apartheid machinery and made a critical influence towards total dismantling of the system itself in South Africa. The fact that we have been in existence for three decades and have incrementally grown to representing over 150 000 police, correctional and traffic officers in South Africa is an unblemished signal of the undisputed confidence that these members have in POPCRU.’ He said ‘During the period travelled, POPCRU has been determined to transfigure itself into becoming an effective, democratic and innovative organisation under various conditions of struggle. It did this by drawing from its traditions of self-transformation. It had to constantly adjust to new approaches, new structures and new ways of working where these will reinforce it and facilitate it to deal with new realities.

At the centre of these endeavours has been to build and an effective and dynamic organisation within the Criminal Justice Cluster. To achieve this POPCRU had worked to ensure that it has clear goals, policies and strategies to attain those goals whilst creating the required ability to implement them. Its policies and strategies had to be applicable for accomplishing its objectives. We remain humbled by the vote of confidence from the membership in our organisational capabilities. We comprehend this as a strong message to all of us gathered here to carry on with our current trajectory and to further reinforce our coordination in line with our newly developed 4-Year strategy. We take this opportunity to mirror back on the path that we have journeyed with a great sense of nostalgia to be where we are today. We are reminded of historical generations of activists like Andriena Rode, Nombulelo Shuping & others from whom we continue to draw ground-breaking and innovative inspiration. Comrade Andriena Rhode, the first General Secretary of POPCRU, was a correctional officer and community activist at heart who understood that rehabilitation across colour line has a central role to play in the struggle against a discredited and illegitimate apartheid regime.’

Zingiswa Losi delivered the message on behalf of the federation and acknowledged the trade union in the criminal justice cluster for supporting COSATU and all the campaigns led by the federation. ‘We have stabilized COSATU’, argued Losi. ‘All affiliated trade unions must participate actively in the defence of jobs in very sector and also POPCRU and all other unions must demand accountability in the use of PIC monies as it belongs to workers.’ ‘Workers around Marikana have told us that they are still subjected to harsh conditions and severe brutality of being killed for just wearing a red t-shirt of NUM.’ ‘The federation is calling on all workers to rally behind the planned workers’ rally in Marikana in November and this must serve as a push-back against criminality in the mining sector,’ said Losi. ‘More workers are joining COSATU affiliated trade unions and we must continue to engage all workers who are keen to rejoin the federation after splinter unions. The working class cannot be divided further,’ declared Losi. ‘We call on all COSATU affiliated trade unions to campaign against gender based violence’, urged Losi to all delegates. She said ‘COSATU calls for the insourcing of all government services to create jobs for all.’

‘COSATU acknowledges POPCRU for their revolutionary collegiality in supporting the course to advance socialism in South Africa and practically working closely with the SACP,’ said Losi. ‘COSATU reiterates its pledge on the its international solidarity with the people of CUBA, Western Sahara, Swaziland, Palestine, Venezuela and also the Kurdish people facing violence and killings.’ ‘And we salute the immense presence of POPCRU on such solidarity actions.’ ‘We call on all COSATU affiliated trade unions and all its members for celebrating the thirty years of existence.’ ‘SACP thank POPCRU for purchasing a building for the Party in Johannesburg as its headquarters and we wish this 9th National Congress a success.’ Nzimande said ‘Take a lead in the struggles against gender based violence in our communities. You at the heart
of the struggle because POPCRU has many female members and POPCRU and the rest of COSATU unions must lead these struggles. SACG General Secretary shared with delegates that ‘we must unify the working-class and rebuild our mass movement. And the key organisational challenge facing the working-class in our country in the present period is that of intensifying efforts to build strong organisations all on fronts. The first and most important step is that of seeking to forge the widest possible front of progressive trade unions behind key common demands of the working-class, including the ones just outlined, as well as fighting against retracements and casualisation. Whilst we must still pursue the goal of one country one federation, the starting point for this must be in forging common struggles of the working-class on the ground, here and now.

Your Congress is taking place at a time when the trade union movement is highly fragmented, and perhaps spending too much time checking itself rather than concentrating on unifying workers to defend their interests. It is also no longer enough just to focus on defensive struggles, but to also define clearly the role of the trade union movement both inside and outside of the workplace.

On the coming SACP Special National Congress
Nzimande said ‘Unity is essential for the working-class to achieve greater progress and major breakthroughs on all fronts of the struggle to end economic exploitation, secure social emancipation and ultimately ascend to the position of ruling-class through a socialist disposition. It is these struggles we must wage now so as to realizes, amongst others, the SACP’s strategic and programmatic slogan of SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE, BUILD IT NOW! In other words, without unity in action the working-class will be an ineffectual or sentimental quantity not capable of achieving any serious victory in any front of class struggle.’

Nzimande argued that ‘This is our message of unity not only to you and your entire membership, comrades, but also to our own structures and members of the SACP ahead of our 4th Special National Congress in December. There is no substitute for building working-class unity and power on the ground and in everyday struggles of the working-class.

It is therefore important to take this opportunity to underline that, rather than party-political power, our programme as the Communist Party in regard to the state is to build working-class unity and power, and democratically secure working-class hegemony over the state, and thus raise the working-class to the position of ruling-class. This is one of the reasons why we are very concerned with the state of working-class mass organisation at the moment. Our Special National Congress in December will therefore delve deeper into the state of working-class mass organisation and its implications for the national democratic revolution and socialism, as well as, organisationally, for the SACP as a working-class Party. This is an essential focus in our analysis of the class balance of forces and the strategies necessary to secure working-class advances and ultimate democratic victory in the course of class struggle.

The importance of rebuilding our mass movement and building working-class and popular power cannot be overemphasised. In this regard, forging a Left popular front and pushing the reconfiguration of the Alliance, as directed by the 14th National Congress of the SACP in July 2017, should be seen as mutually reinforcing organisational tasks, rather than as mutually exclusive. The task of building a widest possible patriotic front in defence of our democratic achievements as a people is also important, especially against the background of the state capture agenda and its fightback manoeuvres.

Our Special National Congress will receive Central Committee reports regarding the implementation of these organisational tasks and adopt the way forward towards the 15th National Congress of the Party, which is scheduled to take place in July 2022.

The progressive trade union movement and other progressive formations have been invited to participate at the Special National Congress of the SACP next month. We are looking forward to your contribution. Coming out of our Augmented Central Committee in September, as the SACP we have called upon the workers to take up the task of rebuilding the ANC and its branches as well as reclaiming the revolutionary values of our movement and defeat factionalism, gate-keeping and greed.

On Alliance Politics
Nzimande alluded that “...as the SACP we have called upon the workers to take up the task of rebuilding the ANC and its branches as well as reclaiming the revolutionary values of our movement and defeat factionalism, gate-keeping and greed. Our country still requires the ANC as a broad movement that is at the centre serves as the glue to unify and lead the principal motive forces of the national democratic revolution. It would therefore be irresponsible for workers to celebrate or take their focus away from a deeply divided ANC.’

The 9th National Congress, amongst others, resolved, to:

- Demand for the Nationalization of Traffic with a view to have a single police service to serve the public and as a first step towards harmonization of working conditions, service standards and equitable distribution of resources, the introduction and implementation of an Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) for Traffic officials, professionalization of Traffic.

- Enhance recruitment of workers within the Criminal Justice cluster who are unorganized and augment the membership figures in line with the strategic plan for 2019-2023 which is 3% annual growth. And Shop stewards and leaders are should be always available and visible to give account at all workplaces to members to enhance quality membership service.

POPCRU’s 30th Anniversary was celebrated with the broader masses at Curries Fountain stadium after the ordinary Congress. POPCRU presented a historical account about the early years of trade unionism in the criminal justice cluster to date.

We present the political journey travelled by this organisation since its inception on the 05th of November 1989. In doing so, we make reference to the country’s historic background, which is inevitable. This had an effect on the thoroughfare the organisation had to endure as it scuttled to its current directorial physique. The history of South Africa is known throughout the world because of its system of white domination, a special form of colonialism which has been carried to extremes under the Nationalist Party policy of apartheid. Nowhere else, other than in South Africa, was national and racial oppression practised so disrespectfully and brazenly, with such systematic viciousness and disregard of human rights and dignity. It was built on crude colonial injustice and criminal disregard for the indigenous African majority. During the sixties, only three million whites held a control of political rights and economic opportunities. They alone could vote for and be elected to Parliament and other governing bodies. They were strengthened behind a wall of privilege in the public service, in jobs and professions, in educational opportunities and a hundred other capacities. Eighty seven per cent [87%] of the land was reserved for white ownership. Moreover, the white capitalists owned and controlled the mines, factories and banks and most of trade exploitations. Their government indocrinated a dishonest and offensive philosophy of race superiority. Being white was definitive in status and success during apartheid.

The majority of the population, which was black, suffered merciless national oppression. They have been robbed of their ancestral lands and only thirteen per cent [13%] of land set aside for their occupation – the so-called reserves or homelands. Starvation and the network of pass laws and special taxes drove blacks to work in mines, industries and farms, where they were appallingly subjugated and poorly paid. African languages were despised and undeveloped and the growth of national cultures was restrained. Africans were predestined from birth to little or no education, to the status of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

And in dealing with the political thoroughfare sailed by POPCRU, it is worth touching a bit on the broader struggle. Resistance movements began to rise in the entire African continent where European settlers robbed Africans of their land through conquest and later through Acts of Parliament. More land was taken from African people and given to Europeans for settlement. After these developments, some chiefs organised rebellions against colonial authorities. White people held a monopoly of political rights and economic opportunities hitting at the bottom of everything pertaining to mistreatment and unovering abandonment of black people. The trade union movements in South Africa played a significant and strategic role in the struggle against apartheid and class oppression. One thing certain is that trade unions are not political parties. Trade Unions are organisations of workers – uniting to fight for the rights of workers and to defend these rights on the shop floor. Trade unions committed themselves to fight for a society in which all workers are free. On the other hand, they have a political role to play

During this period, veteran trade union leaders were forced to waste
their lives rotting in apartheid prisons. What was their crime? It was for involvement and active participation in the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa, devoid of all forms of racial oppression and class exploitation. The workers built up their trade unions into a powerful fighting force during the 1970s and 1980s. To a certain degree, the unions were successful in improving the material conditions of their members while, at the same time, taking on the labour imbalances shaped by the ruthless apartheid state.

The unions kept the flag of freedom flying and became a symbol of anti-apartheid resistance, whilst the liberation movements were banned. This was also evident in the late 1980s, when other components of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) were politically muscled up. A deepening recession, increasing industrial domination and sophistication of management strategies, tightening state repression and the penetrating intensification of township struggles enlarged the pressure on industrial unions to take up political issues and on general unions to establish a strong shop-floor presence. The “unity talks” finally culminated in the launching of COSATU in December 1985, bringing together three political traditions, namely: the well-organised industrial unions drawn from the shop-floor tradition; the general unions drawn from the national-democratic tradition; and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which broke away from the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) to join COSATU.

The apartheid government has gone out of its way to give black officers an inferiority complex, to give them false impression that they were powerless to change things, and that struggle was useless. It was expected of them to ensure that the vicious system was successful and confirmed. Black workers within the apartheid machinery in the form of police and prison officers felt the same social and economic conditions which all black workers and the masses endured. These workers developed consciousness promoted by their realisation that they had to unite in order to gain strength to change their horrible conditions within their sectors. These were workers who, like all black workers, suffered from oppressive measures and were subject to low wages, job discrimination, had to enforce pass laws they did not favour themselves, etc. Without doubt – directly and forthright, these members also suffered varying forms and degrees of national oppression and economic exploitation.

Within this exposition, the political journey travelled by POPCRU is depicted as we illustrate below. Shunned Gude, a writer, graduate student, activist and assistant contributor at Jacobin [a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics, and culture] wrote an article about the horrifying conditions within the police during apartheid. He stated that in the 1980s, black police officers in South Africa were enforcers of their own subordination. Internally, they were mired in low-level positions and lacked collective-bargaining rights; externally, they could not suppress unrest that threatened to topple the racist Afrikaner government. Economically desperate and typically lured from rural areas by the promise of a pay check, some, having coarsened once on the force, patrolled restive townships unsympathetically.

These events directly affected police, prison and traffic officers, both as workers and as people who had to identify themselves with the struggle for a free and just South Africa. The strong trend towards national identity developed and grew stronger with time. This national identity was fortified and underlined by the hostility of white members towards black members’ aspirations, which inhibited the growth of non-racial class consciousness. The time arrived when these members had to broadcast their normal agenda about their workplace grievances for social change. They had to align themselves with social movements for racial justice, gender equality and total liberation of the oppressed. By implication, a new era of political consciousness to members within the security environment ushered in.

The strength of trade unionism lies in its ability to unite workers in the workplaces with the possibility of stopping production. This happens mainly around some of the immediate problems facing workers in that workplace. During the late 1980s leading towards the formation of POPCRU in 1989, members united against the horrible conditions they experienced within their workplaces. For example, labour actions took place around the country, notably at: Stutterheim Prison: The prison was closed after all 131 black warders were downed tools. The prisoners were transferred to Ford Glamorgan, and the warders were suspended without pay.

Cape: Police and warders at East London, Ford Beaufort, King Williams Town, Kirkwood, Oudtshoorn, George, Mossel Bay, Brandwyl, Worcester and Paarl have all participated in work stoppages. Pollsmoor Prison: warders went on strike and 87 were suspended without pay. The Prisons Service attempted to evict 31 warders from their houses on prison property, POPCRU took legal action against such evictions. Diepklkof Prison: At Diepklkof Prison 400 warders staged a sit-in over working conditions. There emerged a sense of urgency and a widespread belief that the time was right to launch a trade union within the police and prison departments, as it successfully occurred on the 05th of November 1989. The main aim of POPCRU’s establishment was to organise the unorganised workers within the sectors to fight for the improvement of the material conditions of its members in particular and workers in general. It also wanted to ensure the maximum involvement of workers in the national democratic struggle. It was POPCRU’s contention that if police and prisons are expected to behave “democratically”, it was important for them to experience democratic engagement within the organisations in which they work. POPCRU has brought to light grievances in the prisons and police which were similar to those of workers in companies throughout the country. It has also shown that the political support of the police and prisons service could not be taken for granted since it was a subject for political organisation. For example, up until 1990, no black officers could be promoted above the rank of lieutenant colonel, except in the Bantustans. Since political consciousness chiselled in, the members were quite aware and ready for the dire consequences of their labour actions of challenging the authorities. And indeed, the response of the authorities against their actions was harsh because those who participated were suspended without pay and others dismissed from the service. In total, by the end of March 1990, 707 prison warders were suspended and 39 policemen dismissed. Despite this POPCRU claimed 5 000 membership increase as at the end of March 1990. Due to POPCRU’s political consciousness, it declared that it did not limit its denunciation of the prisons and police to its members own economic interests only, but also objected to the following aspects:

- Prisoners being segregated on racial lines;
- Black warders not being allowed to work with white prisoners;
- Black prisoners being fed inferior food;
- Overcrowded prison cells for black prisoners than whites;
- Black prisoners sleeping on the floor while whites have beds;
- Black juveniles being locked up with hardened criminals whilst whites were sent to special youth institutions.

To dismantle the ruthless system of apartheid, there was a need for conscious police and prison officers including the armed forces to augment the liberation struggle waged by the political formations. As was reported by POPCRU’s former General Secretary, Peter Nkuna that POPCRU abhorred the attacks on the black policemen by APLA as much as they abhorred certain acts of some members of the police. He further said the police force had to be democratised and that POPCRU would be involved in dismantling the then security forces.

“Police and prison officers had to make sure that the machinery which the apartheid regime relied on to enforce its discriminatory practices was weakened. It became evidently vibrant that indeed, the machinery was waning when the role of the military in the Bantustans became affected as well. There was an attempted Bophuthatswana coup in 1988, the successful one in Ciskei, Transkei, Ciskei and Venda. When the masses protested against the counterfeiting independent government of Bophuthatswana, police refused to action against protesters. All these actions gave testimony of the consciousness of the armed forces in South Africa. It is a political statement that black policemen, soldiers and prison warders shared interests with...
the mass of South Africans – they too were oppressed and exploited. Consequently, men and women of courage took a stance against a powerful system from within and declared that enough was enough. This was the first fundamental political posture adopted to directly oppose that brutal system and it became evidently clear that the system would inevitably collapse. Some of the changes brought about by POPCRU are articulated in a research paper penned by S. Singh when saying amendments to the Prison Act No 8 of 1959 to the looked at the abolition of apartheid in the prison system. Most fundamental in this respect was the removal of the requirement that ‘white’ and ‘non-white’ prisoners had to be housed separately.

Reference to race was removed and prisons were desegregated. The gradual release of political prisoners during the course of 1980 and 1991 meant that the prison authorities could look forward to a period in which prison management would not necessarily be linked to major national political questions. A key factor in change was POPCRU. This organisation was committed to the recognition of the civil rights of all members including equal treatment of inmates. Moving forward, POPCRU became determined to bring about change within the police and prison sectors. The organisation fully participated in structures that had to demolish the status quo at the time, for example, Transformation Forum, Monitoring Committee, Training and Development Committee including formation of bargaining structures. All these structures were effectively utilised to change policy directions within these departments. Affiliation to Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU] In 1995, a political discussion arose within POPCRU for possible affiliation to COSATU. COSATU was then invited to address POPCRU National Executive Committee. In considering whether or not to affiliate, a number of factors and fundamental principles were considered by the NEC. The following became handy as per the presentation by COSATU: Commitment to a unified democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation; Singh S. “The historical development of prisons in South Africa: A Penological perspective”. Department of History, University of KwaZulu-Natal. p.29.

Worker Issues

the policy and ideological training of the capacity of all its members, POPCRU has consistently cards, cashback & investment making its members to value new products and benefits their membership by developing their to bargaining for decent 2006 at Maseru in Lesotho, and 2009 at Gaberone in Botswana in promoting the unionization of the African workers. • Establishment of a Higher Institution of Learning to specialize on education offering such as Police Science, Traffic Management, Security Studies, BA Degree in Corrections, Cyber-Crime Investigation, Ballistic Work and DNA studies, Forensic Sciences to resolve all kinds of sophisticated crime. And POPCRU is working closely with the University of Zululand and Free State University and their consultants mostly come from UNISA, University of Pretoria and University of Johannesburg. The Union has signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Mississippi Valley State University [MVSU] and Mississippi College of Law [MCL], in the Delta and the City of Jackson around student and lecturer exchanges, community policing, rural policing; which includes stock theft, malicious damage to property, crime against the old, women and children.

POPCRU plays its international solidarity role with its sound relations with ICPPRA and WFTU and other international bodies championing the interests of the working class.

POPCRU honoured its founding members, current shopstewards and workers at a 35th Anniversary Gala Evening. Meanwhile, the elective 9th National Congress elected a collective leadership to lead the trade union for the coming four years and also adopted a Declaration.

9th POPCRU National Congress elected NOBs:
• President: Zizamele Cebekhulu
• 1st Deputy. President: Marurung Khehla Masemola
• 2nd Deputy. President: Bonny Marekwa
• General Secretary: Nkosinathi Theledi
• 1st Deputy. Secretary: Rankele Mointo
• 2nd Deputy. Secretary: Nomalanga Mabolokela
• Treasurer General: Thulani Nsele

Justice For All!
The objective of these workshops was for the PSCBC to engage stakeholders and get inputs from them in order to develop and implement dispute prevention strategies encompassing, stakeholder capacity building and enhancement of the dispute resolution process. The focus of these workshops would be to make presentations on the relevant legislative frameworks impacting the Public Service, with emphasis on labour law amendments and case law developments.

The workshop sessions were facilitated by the PSCBC General Secretary, Mr. Frikkie De Bruin and the PSCBC Chairperson, Ms. Ingrid Dimo. The Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), who are important stakeholders of the PSCBC were invited to partake in the programme. The GEPF spoke on the progress of the implementation of Resolution 01 of 2017 (additional voluntary scheme), preservation fund, reduction factors and the clean break principal. The PSC’s presentation was on the PSC rules and grievance referral. The General Secretary of the PSCBC, Mr Frikkie De Bruin and the Resident Panellist of the PSCBC, Adv. Mnulabeni Ntshibilhethe made insightful presentations on relevant legislative frameworks impacting the Public Service, labour law amendments and case law developments. The presentations were well researched and compiled. The topics presented were able to generate adequate interest from delegates who engaged in robust discussions, questions and suggestions.

The workshops were well attended and received excellent support from both employer and labour parties. The workshops further allowed for open discussions, engagements and any other points of clarity including research areas which may arise from the discussions and engagements. The PSCBC would like to thank parties for the interest shown in the workshops and for their positive input. The workshops proved to be a success as attendees left the various venues with a sense of being enlightened on many matters that were discussed. There was a loud call from the delegates for further workshops of this nature. All of the presentations may be attained from the following link: https://www.pscbc.co.za/index.php?option=com_docman&view=list&layout=table&lug=pscbc-dispute-resolution-workshops&own=0&Itemid=406

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**COSATU Gauteng launches Inaugural Elijah Barayi Games**

2019 has been a remarkable year in the history of COSATU as the founding president, comrade Elijah Barayi was honoured by the Gauteng government led by the African National Congress.

The Premier of Gauteng, Hon David Makhura announced that the Carletonville’s R501 road will be renamed after the late trade unionist and liberation hero, Elijah Barayi. He was a great human and a dedicated cadre of COSATU and the Congress Movement’, said Premier Makhura when Gauteng government declared his burial site ‘a Provincial Heritage Site’, around Carletonville.

Elijah Barayi played a crucial role during the dark years when black trade unions were not recognized by the apartheid regime. He was one of the pioneers who championed for the active participation of trade unions in the politics of the country to attain liberation and freedom. To him, social justice was the best trophy to present to the future generations.

Elijah Barayi engaged in a class struggle to ensure COSATU was build from factory to factory, site to site to fight for decent wages and also end the policy of segregation at the workplaces. COSATU Gauteng resolved in its Provincial Executive Committee meeting to declare 2019 a year of Elijah Barayi and honour his contributions to the liberation struggle for a better future for all. Elijah Barayi was a founder member of COSATU in 1985 and became the first President of the federation until 1991.

The inaugural games were held in township such as KwaThema, Carletonville to name a few, in which workers and affiliated members engaged in competitive sports such as Netball and football, amongst others.
A Shopsteward as a Social Justice campaigner at a COSATU Local

COSATU has over thirty years of existence organized and mobilized workers in locals as the basic structure in terms of implementation of the Back To Basics Campaign and empowered workers to tackle massive substantive issues affecting workers in particular and the working class in general.

Those strides have at COSATU Locals have inspired workers that the workforce at the workplace have the capacity to resolve issues but have shown the tenacity to win those local battles, only if affiliated trade unions worked together. Those victories are a testament to the collective will of progressive organized labour and the optimism in a class struggle.

In this edition of a series of articles on ‘Going Back to Basics’, we unpack the existence of a Local structure called ‘COSATU Local’ as enshrined in the Constitution of the federation and venture of modalities and new ways of organizing to make the structures viable, vibrant and strong to become a workers’ voice in rural and town-based organization.

“...If the aim of the Labour movement is a real social reconstruction, then, in spite of all the hindrances thrown in the way by those interested in the preservation of the existing order, it must enable its members to attain a full and clear knowledge of the facts about society...”-Marx

The struggle for economic justice must be led by shopstewards at the point of production, to eradicate exploitation of man by man.

The role of shopstewards becoming Social Justice Campaigners therefore becomes critical. Shopstewards at every local must be influential to assist workers with implementation of efficient, affordable and effective public transport systems in those local municipalities to enable workers to go to work with ease. Many workers in various COSATU Locals are still burdened by the challenges of changing public transport four to five times before reaching their workplace every single day at a high cost.

Functioning COSATU Locals must be a platform to tackle such issues as workers who are left stranded after knocking late from night shifts and are left vulnerable to be mugged and raped by thugs. Shopstewards must address such issues collectively at COSATU Locals!

What is Social Justice?

In this context, social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and can be defined as “the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society”. A number of movements are working to achieve social justice in society.

Social Justice Issues
- Race.
- Gender.
- Age.
- Sexual Orientation.
- Religion.
- Nationality.
- Education.
- Mental or Physical Ability.

What are the 4 principles of social justice?

The principles of social justice are an essential part of effective health promotion. There are four interrelated principles of social justice; equity, access, participation and rights.

First, social justice focuses primarily on the evaluation of institutions, not individual actions. Second, social justice is concerned with outcomes, rather than procedures. Third, the justice in social justice refers to fairness understood as equality—usually social or economic—not adherence to existing law. Social justice is important for the...
welfare of society as a whole. Having social justice and responsibility leads to satisfaction and pleasure of life, as well as the respect and loyalty to the leaders. People who are treated unjustly eventually rebel and make the abuser pay dearly. Social justice is nothing but to emphasise equitableness, equitableness, even-handedness, fair-mindedness, fairness, impartiality, goodness, righteousness, virtue, honor, integrity, uprightness.

**What is a campaigner?**

**COSATU Locals must lead local campaigns**

We need first to unpack what is a campaign. A campaign is a series of military operations intended to achieve a goal, confined to a particular area, or involving a specified type of fighting. It is to get those who agree with their ideas to support them when running for a political position. The message often consists of several talking points about policy issues. The points summarize the main ideas of the campaign and are repeated frequently in order to create a lasting impression with the voters. Campaigns in many instances have elements which makes it successful.

COSATU Locals must establish such structures to plan issues around target groups for all campaigns, delivery methods of the campaign and how to establish sustainable follow-ups to maintain standards. COSATU Locals need a well-drawn campaign strategy which must be debated by all workers to ensure that their inputs are incorporated. A campaign strategy is a proposed pathway to victory, driven by the understanding of who will vote for the candidate and why they will do so. ... Once a strategy has been identified, campaigns should direct resources to key groups of potential voters and nowhere else, in order not to waste time or money.

Any campaigner must digest the processes of establishing a communication strategy in a particular locality to achieve the goals and objectives set for all members. In simple terms, a communications strategy, outlines key messages, and the channels and tools by which the campaign will communicate with the target audiences. The resource mobilization strategy, which maps available and required resources (financial, institutional, networks, etc), and outlines the campaign fundraising plan. Localos must plan their campaigns as planning is a scientific execution of developmental plans to change society.

Social justice is a concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity, and social privileges.

**COSATU Constitutional provisions**

COSATU Lephale Local holds a recruitment campaign launch in 2019. The Constitution of the federation as amended has alluded to ‘calling all workers who identifies themselves as the working class to join in the class struggle.’ It further declares that ‘we call on all trade unions to strive to unite their members in their ranks without discrimination and prejudice. And seek to protect and further the interests of all workers under the universal slogan of ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’ At every workplace there are workers employed in a particular site, shopfloor or factory or mine. Thus the existence of COSATU Locals is a given factor on the basis that in every locality, an economic zone or rural town, there will always be economic activities wherein workers sell their labour power.

The Constitution identifies the establishment and functionality of ‘Local Structures as enshrined in section 8, subsection 8.1[1] [2][3] which says ‘the federation must encourage affiliates to set up COSATU Local offices to facilitate closer liaison between affiliates’, and all provinces must establish Localos which consists of all members of shopstewards committees in that locality, and compose Local Executive Committees to ensure functionality of those structures.’ Such structures when established, in terms of the Constitution must have a chairperson, deputy chairperson, treasurer and secretary, elected in good standing to hold office for a period of three [3] years until the next election. Their powers and duties, amongst others, must be to:

- Ensure the smooth running of the union local structures
- Deal with any issue referred to it by the provincial structures for a decision or a recommendation to execute
- Raise the level of understanding of the federation policies, amongst all members in the area where the Local operates
- Coordinate campaigns and organizational activities of the federation with the Local
- Appoint functional sub-committees in support of the work of the Local Executive Committee and ensure the Local is regularly represented in the Provincial structures and ensure the interests of the Local are taken up and a feedback is provided to all members on [re] solutions.

Participations on any Local established is guided by the founding principles of the federation on pay up membership [that all workers shall have their membership dues up-to-date]. And all shopstewards must have been elected by workers to adhere to the principle of workers’ control.

**Organizational Discipline is a must to do as ‘must attend local shopsteward councils without failure as local office bearers who have failed to attend for more than three consecutive meetings, without sending a written reasonable apology, may be removed.’ ‘A local office bearer may be removed if she/he is no longer a shopsteward, elected worker representative or a worker office bearer of an affiliate union.’**

**Banking on Ideological training to fight for Socialism**

Every COSATU Local must develop strategies and tactics to launch campaigns and fight back when they face onslaught from employers in a coordinated fashion to keep the confidence of the workers high. Such entails embarking of propaganda techniques for a cohort of shopstewards whose tasks will be a permanent ‘warroom’ of the Local to defend workers and their communities. Propaganda is a total control of all aspects of cultural and intellectual life which is vital for the retention of political control.

"Propaganda is information that is used primarily to influence an audience and further an agenda, which may not be objective and may be presenting facts selectively to encourage a particular synthesis or perception or using loaded language to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is presented..." Ideological training and orientation is a conscious action by progressive organizations and may be implemented on prioritised and strategic programmes which, amongst others, may dwell on areas such as:

- Agenda setting in the local
- Managing sector labour issues
- Milieu control of local union related issues
- Creating and sustaining solidarity actions

The functionality of COSATU Locals must have cross-cutting activities which are led by worker leaders to ensure that class struggle is taken forward. Marxist-Leninists argue that “Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the suppression of the old society by the new.” COSATU has produced prominent Locals which fought vigorously against mining bosses who wanted to bulldoze communities on their lands and defended their families against exploitation.

"A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.” And such activities may include reprioritisation of recruitment of young workers and resuscitation of the Progressive Youth Alliance to fight for free education for all and lead in the struggle for the promotion of quality public education for all. In various provinces, there are functional COSATU Provincial Organizational Building and Campaigns Committees and COSATU Locals must participate in such platforms as propaganda building machineries to lead workers and society at large.

**A New Shopsteward; Becoming a Social Justice Campaigner at the**
Workers’ Education is critical in every COSATU Local

Workers’ Education is critical in every COSATU Local to fight for social justice.

Exchange of experiences
Every trade union and every employers’ organization has the right-
(a) To determine its own administration, programmes and activities;
(b) To organize, and
(c) To form and join a federation
Interviewing various workers and shopstewards across all affiliates, they shared the following hints of a new cadre within the labour movement
A SACCAWU member said ‘The task of a shopsteward is to resolve problems of members before they explode into grievance. And shopstewards must empower workers to be aware of company policies or their contracts. When a good leader/shopsteward is in place in a company, it can be felt throughout the entire organization. With good leadership, corporate culture is not forced, and it is developed. And communicating openly with members daily is critical.’

A NUM worker has maintained that ‘workplace safety is a critical component of organizational duties which must be mastered by shopstewards, especially after many incidences of mineworkers brutally killed in their communities on their way to work and/or from work. Everybody must understand the vision and goals of the organization, and everyone has input into how they can be improved.’ A LIMUSA shopsteward declared that ‘one of the main role of a shopsteward is to carry any functions agreed upon between the union and the company and also acts as a mediator between the parties to maintain labour peace.’

By attending company meetings is another way to state the views of workers across to management according to set rules of procedures and proceedings.’ A POPCRU member said ‘If a leader does not understand the concept of service above self, they will not gain the trust and the confidence and loyalty of those they lead.’ ‘Any leader is only as good as his or her team’s desire to be led by them. Any over abundance of ego, pride and arrogance are not positive leadership traits. Real leaders take the blame and give credit-not the other way around’, declares workers on how shopstewards must lead.

A SASBIO member said ‘the recent campaign against retrenchments in the finance sector has revived the importance of a trade union to fight for jobs security. And the roles of shopstewards are forever crucial to galvanize the support into membership, to gain representation during bargaining periods for better wages.’ ‘Dishonest leaders/shopstewards will do more harm to trade union work in this sector and we must reclaim our labour power as we face automation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Way forward
COSATU Local must have Recruitment Teams to maximize unionization of workers
COSATU Central Executive Committee in 2019 identified key campaigns such as intensify advocacy work on the 40-Hour Week for our members, fighting against Jobs genocide, monitoring the implementation and the compliance by employers with the legislated National Minimum Wage, resuscitating the Living Wage to eradicate poverty wages and the growing number of precariat, revitalizing all the Occupational Health and Safety structures at all levels of the Federation, galvanizing all structures of the Federation should be seized with the work of recruitment of new members into the federation on a daily basis and enhancing all methods to render quality membership to all members, participating in the public hearings to support the full implementation of the national health insurance to enhance universal healthcare for the citizens, and campaigning against gender-based violence and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex [LGBTI] discrimination at the workplace and in communities.

COSATU Locals must participate in the Induction programmes unleashed by COSATU and affiliated trade unions to empower themselves to appreciate the importance of a functioning Local. COSATU National Organizing Secretary, Theo Steele emphasised that ‘We have identified key messengers of the implementation phase of the recruitment strategy as workers, organizers, shopstewards organized under all COSATU affiliated trade unions under the long standing which says ‘Every worker is an organizer/Every Shopsteward is an organizer’, coordinated under the union’s organizing and recruitment departments.’

Taking stock of all experiences and lessons must be utilized to strengthen the work of all COSATU Locals to function optimally to unite workers. COSATU Locals must be creative to lead other campaigns on the ground in partnership with the SACP through convening of Local SACP Socialist Forums to deepen class consciousness and ideological training. COSATU Local must never shy to answer these questions at all times!

“Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. The basic reason why all previous revolutionary struggles in China achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies. A revolutionary party is the guide of the masses, and no revolution ever succeeds when the revolutionary party leads them astray. To ensure that we will definitely achieve success in our revolution and will not lead the masses astray, we must pay attention to uniting with our real friends in order to attack our real enemies. To distinguish real friends from real enemies, we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in Chinese society and of their respective attitudes towards the revolution.”
How we answer such questions at the local will determine the nature of campaigns to undertake.

Steele said 'And union's organizers must be key messengers as the campaign adds value to their organizational operations/primary functions. Our target audiences are all workers unorganized across all sectors of the economy, in rural and urban centres, in formal and informal industries in general and with a special target to all young workers unorganized.

And focus to be exerted on working with young workers within the Department of Labour, CCMA, NEDLAC, etc to ensure visibility of the campaign is exposed to the public.' The Minister of Employment and Labour, Hon Thulas Nxesi, a former trade unionists addressing the 2019 The Third Annual CCMA Shop Stewards and Union Officials Conference at Midrand said 'that in the advancement of social justice and stability within the labour market, shop stewards and union officials have to be knowledgeable and well-versed in CCMA jurisdiction and processes for effective dispute resolution.'

He further said 'The CCMA has made the point that 'shop stewards and union officials are our eyes and ears on the ground. They are the first point of contact for any distressed employee seeking relief.' And that goes for all issues across the board:

- Not just around the National Minimum Wage, but also:
  - On issues of health and safety;
  - Accessing the Compensation Fund for work-related injuries and diseases;
  - Accessing the Unemployment Insurance Fund;
  - In relation to issues of equity and discrimination

All COSATU Locals must be upfront to make "...inputs and any recommendations to assist the National Minimum Wage Commission and the Department of Employment and Labour – as well as the CCMA - in further refining the National Minimum Wage policy, regulation and implementation strategies.'

COSATU Locals may be creative to create platforms for local economic needs to be addressed by involving all social partners and stakeholders – labour, business, training institutions etc.

COSATU Locals may be instrumental to making inputs on some of the following areas;

- The need for lifelong learning
- Supporting people through the transition
- Strengthening social protection
- Upholding safety standards, decent and sustainable work, and
- Shifting incentives towards a human-centred business and economic model.

COSATU Locals must be catalyst on the ground to advance local economic transformation.

On promotion of Labour standards

The recently convened CEC meetings resolved to reprioritise to tackle the problems experienced by vulnerable workers in general and women in particular on farms, retail, hospitality and domestic sectors.

Addressing the apartheid wage gap as part of our Living Wage Campaign, all COSATU Locals must resuscitate local living wage campaign work and fight against the scourge of the working poor. The Living Wage Campaign is the primary means for workers to fight against poverty, close the apartheid wage gap and address broader inequalities in our society. COSATU Locals must champion leading on the provision of social services.

On revival Sports, arts and cultural activism

Many affiliated have sustainable programs underway in which members are kept active through sports, arts and cultural activities. COSATU Gauteng has resuscitated such activities after the launch of Elijah Barayi Memorial Games and all COSATU Locals must replicate such games in their locality to keep members organized. Many workplaces have declared Wednesday as Workers' Sports Day and such days and also weekend may be utilized to organize workers and build the hegemonic influence in other functional areas of the federation.

COSATU Locals must organize revolutionary. Whomever sides with the revolutionary people in words only but acts otherwise is a revolutionary in speech. Whoever sides with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism is a counter-revolutionary. Whomever sides with the revolutionary people in deed as well as in word is a revolutionary.
seminars to fighting against communicable diseases and be upfront to tackle the scourge of HIV/AIDS, TB, Diabetes, Depression, et al. in communities. Such programmes may include issues around empowerment of shopstewards on having functional Wellness Programmes at the workplace. COSATU Locals must develop a database of all its members in every workplace to effectively coordinate such activities and a failure may dampen emotions and injury a sense of belonging. There must be no room for failure!

On Trade union education and holding of Political Schools Workers’ Education is critical in every COSATU Local

Workers’ education offered whether through formal, informal and non-formal methods remain a key instrument to propagate and build capacity for organized and progressive formations. “Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture” - Mao

The first point to be made in every workers’ education forum, is that the Labour Relations Act uses the word that shopstewards are ‘trade union representatives’ to refer to shopstewards, who are in many instances expected to have appreciation of their legal duties and such capacity building cannot be entrusted to reside in the hands of employers. Surely from this point of view above, it is clear shopstewards have more influence than any other person in a COSATU Local and also at the workplace. It is the primary duty of every COSATU Local to make sure all shopstewards in that locality understand Labour Laws such as the Labour Relations Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Employment Equity Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Compensation for Injuries and Diseases Act, Skills Development Act, Pension Fund Act, Collective Agreements/Contracts and may also be empowered to negotiate to ensure that collective bargaining is not undermined by bosses.

“Our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people. Every word, every act and every policy must conform to the people’s interests, and if mistakes occur, they must be corrected - that is what being responsible to the people means...”- Marx

For example, in a particular COSATU Local, some manager may threaten to victimize a union Shopsteward for representing workers and it is the responsibility of a functioning COSATU Local to fight back and organize if possible all communities in that locality to isolate such an employer. Such labour power must be claimed and be nurtured in all COSATU Locals to fight against exploitation of workers in that locality. All COSATU Locals must hold session to nurture Life-long learning, promote study circles amongst the rank and file and promote of skills revolution at the local level.

All COSATU Locals must hold public debates on issues related to the Future of Work, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Equal Pay to ensure that the vibrancy within the Local is kept alive. ILO observes: “In the absence of adequate opportunities to acquire new relevant skills, many of those who are at risk of job loss may be forced to take lower skilled and lower paying jobs.” COSATU Locals must be empowered to engage on all policy aspects affecting workers at the point of production. COSATU Locals must establish relations with adjacent workers across the borders to tackle issues affecting communities together such as the challenges faced by workers in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho.

On Climate change

Climate crisis is affecting all localities. Shopstewards must engage on this societal challenge as rain patterns have changed and we must save the little resources we have. If we fail to act now, history will remember that we had the means to fight back, but chose to do nothing. Shopstewards at the Local level must be able to ‘strengthen the capacity of youth to contribute to the national, regional and global response to climate change, and introduce new methodologies and tools to address climate change’ at the community level.

Shopstewards are the catalysts at every COSATU Local foster a spirit of the unity and cohesion of the working class. Shopstewards must be instrumental to ‘combat the divisions amongst the workers of South Africa and unite them into strong and confident working class formations. Shopstewards at every COSATU Local must encourage democratic worker organization and collective leadership in all spheres of our society, together with other progressive sectors in that locality to fight against job losses, unemployment, exploitation of workers, poverty, inequality, racism, gender discrimination and promote solidarity with all migrants fighting for survival. A Shopsteward in a functioning COSATU Local is a paragon of hope for workers in that locality to fight against the barbaric and exploitative traits by capitalists.

The working class remains the primary motive force of our revolution. The extent to which our revolution is derailed depends on the degree to which the working class asserts its leadership over other motive forces.

In is for this reason that the trade union movement must ensure consistently that the various capacities of COSATU Locals are sharpened, in line with the demands of class struggle.

Shopstewards at every COSATU Local must engage with all workers, listen to their views and enhance respect for collective bargaining at each sector of the locality and enhance the status of the COSATU Local to become champions of decent work agenda at the shop floor level. Organizational campaigns are the backbone of a vibrant, healthy and strong organization on the ground.

Taking lessons from each in every COSATU Local to strengthen the organization on the ground must be norm and with that collective spirit, COSATU in general will be in a better position to ‘deepen the Back to Basics Campaign, to consolidate the struggle for full implementation of all Congress Resolutions which will assist in attaining the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution and finally nourishing the bold steps towards advancing Socialism!

Let’s Organize, organize and organize!

The Minister of Employment and Labour, Hon Thulas Nxesi, a former trade unionists addressing the 2019 The Third Annual CCMA Shop Stewards and Union Officials Conference at Midrand said ‘that in the advancement of social justice and stability within the labour market, shop stewards and union officials have to be knowledgeable and well-versed in CCMA jurisdiction and processes for effective dispute resolution.’

He further said ‘The CCMA has made the point that ‘shop stewards and union officials are our eyes and ears on the ground. They are the first point of contact for any distressed employee seeking relief.’ And that goes for all issues across the board:

• Not just around the National Minimum Wage, but also;
• On issues of health and safety;
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• In relation to issues of equity and discrimination

All COSATU Locals must be upfront to make ‘inputs and any recommendations to assist the National Minimum Wage Commission and the Department of Employment and Labour – as well as the CCMA – in further refining the National Minimum Wage policy, regulation and implementation strategies.

COSATU Locals may be creative to create platforms for local economic needs to be addressed by involving all social partners and stakeholders – labour, business, training institutions etc.

COSATU Locals may be instrumental in making inputs on some of the following areas:

-o The need for lifelong learning
-o Supporting people through the transition
-o Strengthening social protection
-o Upholding safety standards, decent and sustainable work, and
-o Shifting incentives towards a human-centred business and economic model.

COSATU Locals must be catalyst on the ground to advance local economic transformation.
COSATU and NUM presents to the Parliament on Special Appropriation Bill

Ensuring the electrification of the economy is central to the survival of the nation. Eskom, the national electricity provider, generates more than 90% of the nation’s electricity. All of this energy is produced by Eskom, with no other provider being able to meet such a high demand. The company’s success is crucial for the country’s development, as it provides a steady flow of electricity to homes, businesses, and industries, ensuring that the economy remains functional.

The economy has already been severely impacted by the ongoing financial crisis at Eskom. The company is facing a major financial crisis that threatens to bring the nation’s electricity supply to a halt. This crisis is not just a matter of economic stability; it is a matter of national security. Eskom’s survival is critical for the country’s development, and without it, the nation will be plunged into economic depression, with millions of workers losing their jobs.

COSATU and NUM have made several demands to support Eskom’s stabilization and survival. They have called for the government to provide the necessary funding to ensure the company’s continued functioning. They have also called for the company to be given the support it needs to get back on its feet and to grow.

In conclusion, the crisis at Eskom is a critical issue that requires immediate attention. The nation must come together to support the company and ensure that its survival is protected. This will require a joint effort from all stakeholders, including the government, industry, and workers. Only through cooperation and support will we be able to ensure that Eskom remains a vital component of the nation’s economy.
Internal Finances:
- A comprehensive forensic audit of ALL Eskom expenditure and contracts.
- A clear diagnosis of where Eskom is losing money.
- A list of what has been looted from Eskom and by whom.
- A plan with the NPA, Hawks, SAPS and SSA to recover the stolen funds and to arrest and prosecute the guilty parties.
- The honouring of the President and the ANC’s commitment that Eskom will not be privatised.
- This includes rejecting Treasury’s proposals for a back door privatisation by auctioning Eskom’s coal plants.

Personnel:
- The urgent appointment of a competent and experienced CEO.
- A reduction in the bloated senior management structure.
- A freeze and reduction in the excessive packages paid to senior management.
- The appointment of worker representatives to the Eskom Board.
- The honouring of the President and the ANC’s commitment that no worker will be retrenched.
- And where there is a need to reskill and redeploy workers from one section of Eskom to another or even municipal electricity departments that that be engaged upon with unions through the established collective bargaining structures.

External Finances:
- Soweto non-payments be dealt with and brought to a halt.
- A clear plan to ensure that all municipal arrears be paid.
- A clear plan to ensure that all government arrears are paid.
- All Eskom and electricity payments by all consumers be paid into one national account.
- Municipal add on tariffs be reviewed to ensure it can once again be affordable for domestic and neighbouring state’s households and industries.
- If the tariffs can be affordable, demand for Eskom’s supplies to SADC nations can be increased. This can help drive the industrialisation of the continent and create other economic opportunities for South Africa.
- Special attention and a plan is needed for a very fragile mining industry that has been heavily hit by Eskom’s rampant increases.
- A plan be developed with the Departments of Trade and Industry and Transport and the auto-manufacturing industry to build a local electric vehicle capacity. This should be geared at both the existing local, African and European and North American as well as future export opportunities to South America, Asia and Australasia.
- This needs to include cars, motor bikes, buses and trains.
- The extending of life spans for power stations.
- Working with DTI to rebuild the local solar panel industry to supply both domestic and export markets. This should include measures to protect local producers from cheap and subsidised imports.

Just Transition:
- A clear plan is needed to ensure that the nation meets and in fact exceeds it climate change targets. This should include:
  - A plan to reskill and redeploy workers employed at aging power stations and mines reaching the end of their life span.
  - E.g. building solar panel factories in the same towns that these aging power stations and mines are so that those workers can be transitioned to new jobs.
  - Developing and implementing a water conservation, recycling and harvesting plan.
  - This can include programmes to referest land, combat desertification, rehabilitate agricultural land, rehabilitate urban land, building green cities and towns etc.
  - Using more scientific tools and methods to transition industries to become green and sustainable.
  - Key industries that should be prioritised include agriculture, transport, construction, education, energy, clothing, paper, plastics, glass etc.
  - Provide support to build consumer and industrial goods recycling sectors for all products.

3. Conclusion
COSATU believes that the challenges facing Eskom are extremely dangerous not only to its workers, but in fact to all workers and the nation at large. The federation does not believe that the current situation is sustainable and in fact we fear that we are rapidly running out of time.

COSATU is extremely worried at how long it is taking government to develop a clear turnaround plan to save Eskom and grow the economy. This turnaround plan must include workers. Not only must workers be engaged and consulted on what is to be done but also workers must not be punished with retrenchments because certain politicians, managers and business persons chose to loot and run Eskom into the ground. The guilty and not the innocent must be made to pay the price.

COSATU will be engaging with government within the next week at Eskom on its proposals on how to save, stabilise and grow Eskom. A South African solution is needed. Going to the IMF or World Bank will only result in Eskom’s privatisation, mass retrenchment of workers, loss of national sovereignty and the plunging of the economy into a depression. This is something that the nation cannot afford.

Government needs to equally learn the importance of communicating to the public at large at what it is doing to fix this crisis. The culture of silent communications only serves to exacerbate the situation and collapse public and workers’ morale. COSATU hopes that its submission and proposals will assist the Standing Committee with its critical task in ensuring the speedy passage of the Bill and equally in Parliament holding the leadership of Eskom, the Department and the Executive to account in saving Eskom.

NUM’s submission
“Sustainability of Eskom is central in ensuring the electrification Programme responds to the needs of all South Africans”, says NUM.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) supports the special appropriation bill to support the Public Enterprise to effectively ensure that Eskom operates in a manner that promotes economic growth, transforms the energy sector and enhance Labour intensive growth.

Competitiveness and sustainability of Eskom is central in ensuring the electrification Programme responds to the needs of all South Africans. The SOE has succeeded to provide lower cost electricity to many South Africans. However, the predominant challenges at Eskom cannot be left unresolved and they are as a results of poor governance, non-accountability, failing business models and lack of transparency. Similar challenges prevailed during the 1980’s and one of the solutions which the minister of the time considered was to change the structure of the institution to enable a more accountable SOE which contribute to an enormous economic growth.

2. Legislative Imperatives
The electricity act (42 of 1922) created the energy supply commission to provide for effective governance, to sustain electricity supply at low cost.
and to ensure sustainable growth of the state owned institution. Under the Act, the state owned institution was neither making a profit nor a loss and was exempted from corporate income tax. Even though the state owned successful achieved one of its mandate to supply low cost electricity, governance and policy has always been a challenge. The electricity Act (41 of 1987) introduced determination to the continued existence of the electricity control regulator, generation and supply of electricity in addition the Act allowed for a reconfigured Eskom with the existing two -tier governance structure.

The popular German model is amongst the challenges encountered by Eskom specifically where renewable energy and Independent Power producers’ transmission participation is concern. The introduction of Eskom Act (13 of 2001) amended the Act, 1987, so as to transfer full ownership of Eskom to a single shareholding (government) and to remove the exemption of Eskom from paying the income tax. The amendments enabled the introduction of a share compact signed between the Department of Public Enterprise and Eskom. The SOE operating as a business under the principles embedded in the company Act (71 of 2008) must promote good governance, sustainable development and ensure Labour intensive growth.

3. Eskom Growth and Development

The State owned enterprise mandate is to provide efficient and sustainable electrification through its electrification generation, transmission, distribution and retail systems including economic development and promotion of transformation through broad based black economic empowerment Programme. Eberhard (2004) asserts that the energy sector growth increased concentration to public ownership which was mostly driven by potential economies of scale in power plants and the requirement for large amount of capital which was backed up by government guarantees. Another important contribution to the paradigm shift was the significant contribution of the sector to the industrialization, job creation and development.

3.1 Job Creation

The National Union supports the special appropriation bill as a mechanism to accelerate growth, to sustain the State Owned Enterprise economic viability and to improve productivity. Eskom’s future solely depends on government’s projection, and a clear plan provided by government restructuring process which must consider the negative impact that it imposes to the workers. Eskom debt reliant liquidity situation can be averted and its detrimental effect cannot be placed at the shoulders of the workers. The funds must be monitored and distributed equally in all the areas that require funding such as job retention, reskilling programmes to meet the new policy trajectory.

3.2 Sustainable Development Growth

According to DPE (2004) Development cannot be measured only by financial criteria, and restructuring is not a means of improving government finances and enterprise efficiency at the expense of the poor. To ensure Eskom contributes to the economic development growth with improved financial revenues there is a need for an integrated approach to establishing and strengthening innovative energy road maps that is influenced by robust policies and governance which encompass all the elements of sustainable economic growth. Eskom remains the only state of the art government institution which provide electricity beyond the borders, the prevalent challenges will not only affect South Africa but will pose threats to the entire SADC region.

South Africa sells electricity to neighboring countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) representing about 3% of total net energy produced (Eberhard, 2004:11).

3.3 Skills Transfer

Government Energy must facilitate a continuous learning process and adaptive workforce to enhance productivity. Skills audit and transition remains effective in the restructuring process, thus it is crucial that the unbundling process must be informed by holistic cost plan. The NUM does not agree to ESKOM privatization however, we do not entirely oppose developmental interventions. The allocated amounts are intended to enable Eskom to service its debts and meet redemption requirements while making resources available for urgent operational improvements (National Treasury, 2019). We fully support the intention however, the new model must facilitate job retention and skills transfer. Any process intended to recapitalize Eskom must not trigger section 189 under any circumstances.

3.4 Special Appropriation Bill

Comments

South Africa is a Global player in terms of export and import, there is a need to align SOE’s procurement needs to the industrial and trade policy at outlined in the IPAP to contribute to a broader economic growth (National Treasury, 2019). Supporting Eskom sustainability remains a responsibility of government as a sole shareholder of the SOE.

The interest of the workers must take precedence over any other challenges which could have been prevented by government.

4.1 The NUM support the amount of R59 Billion as outlined on the Bill. It is important for the Standing Committee on Appropriation to understand the Department of Public Enterprises submission to the National Treasury in support of the request and the priorities outlined on the submission.

4.2 Section 2 (b) grants the Minister of Finance to impose certain conditions to promote transparency and effective management. Since this is a special appropriation bill therefore it is imperative that the Minister of Finance and Minister, Public Enterprise and Minister of Mineral and Energy Resources to enter into an agreement to clearly stipulate each department conditions of allocation in policy implementation and governance.

4.3 The condition referred to in section 2 (b) (i) (ii) and (iii) much be clearly defined prior the transfers and Eskom commitment to the conditions must be legally binding with punitive measures to diversion or for any mismanagement incurred.

4.4 Should section 2 (d) apply the Department of Enterprise and Eskom must submit a detailed report to the National Treasury.

4.5 This Funding must be audited by the Auditor General and not by the auditors appointed in terms of Eskom Act.

5. Conclusion

South African State Owned Enterprises have a critical role to play in development and to improve its capacity as a mechanism to contribute to the country’s economic growth. The escalated challenges at Eskom are a bearer to the expansion Programme to operate at a bigger scale and compete at a globally. The NUM does not support privatization of Eskom and unbundling as a mechanism to revitalize Eskom. However, we support a new model which will improved the current state and provide a clear forecast. It is time for a new business model to be introduces aligned to the industrialization strategy which fully support intensive job creation.
Unjust food system leaves many South Africans hungry

By Brittany Kesselman

In South Africa, about 28.3% of the population is at risk of hunger while 26% actually experiences hunger. At the same time, unhealthy diets are contributing to rising levels of obesity and associated non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and strokes. These are not only medical concerns—they affect people’s dignity, their ability to live full and productive lives, and represent a violation of their basic human rights.

The right to access sufficient food is enshrined in section 27 of the South African constitution. An additional provision of the constitution guarantees children’s right to access basic nutrition (section 28). Yet for a middle-income country, levels of childhood stunting in South Africa are disturbingly high, affecting 27% of children. Childhood obesity is also on the rise, and is linked to malnutrition.

Conditions such as childhood stunting and malnutrition affect the educational outcomes, health and long-term life chances of children, contributing to a vicious cycle of poverty, hunger and ill health.

Food injustice

The experience of hunger, malnutrition and other food-related illnesses is not evenly spread amongst the population. There are significant race, class and gender differences.

For example, while black South Africans are more than four times as likely as white South Africans to be unemployed, they are 22 times more likely to be food insecure.

Amongst children in low-income households, 36% are stunted, while only 13% in the wealthiest quintile are. Female-headed households are almost twice as likely to experience hunger as male-headed households.

The unequal distribution of food insecurity and its effects indicates a situation of severe food injustice in South Africa.

The concept of food injustice describes the inherent racism and social inequality of the food system, and seeks to address issues of equity, fairness and control.

Developed by researchers and activists in the United States, it is equally relevant in South Africa, where centuries of oppression under settler colonialism and apartheid have created one of the most unequal societies in the world.

Corporate dominance

The current food system both reflects and exacerbates inequality. In this system, a few large companies dominate each aspect of the food value chain, from agricultural inputs to food storage, processing, manufacturing and retail.

These companies reap high profits while workers suffer. Farmworkers are some of the most exploited workers in the country, earning low wages, facing the threat of eviction and being exposed to toxic chemicals while they work. Workers in food retail also face difficult conditions, working long hours with low pay, and many food jobs are outsourced through labour brokers.

In 2017, South Africa’s largest supermarket chain, Shoprite, had the highest salary differential between the CEO and its workers of any JSE-listed company.

The CEO earned R100 million (more with bonuses and incentives), 1332 times more than employees, who made R75,150. In 2018, Shoprite made profits of R6.9 billion.

Some of the major food companies have been found guilty of collusion. For example, in the bread price fixing scandal in 2007, a few bread companies secretly agreed on prices to increase their profits at the expense of low-income consumers. Companies were caught using the same anti-competitive practices to keep the price of cooking oil high in 2016-17.

Insufficient health and safety standards amongst corporate food manufacturers led to the 2017-18 listeriosis outbreak that claimed over 180 lives.

Hidden hunger

While food manufacturing and retail companies post profits in the billions of Rand, the majority of South Africans simply cannot afford a healthy diet.

The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Household Affordability Index suggests that the cost of a basic nutritious food basket for a family of four is R2,327.17 (or R581.79 per person).

Yet with South Africa’s high levels of unemployment, informal work and low wages, most South Africans barely manage to afford enough food, surviving on diets high in sugar and processed starch (such as white bread or mealie meal). These diets can contribute to people being overweight at the same time that they lack sufficient vitamins and minerals for a healthy life—a condition known as “hidden hunger.”

South African diets are not only lacking in nutrients—they also contain potentially dangerous chemicals. Many South African crops are sprayed with a weed-killer called glyphosate, which the World Health Organization declared to be a probable carcinogen (causing cancer).

This was found in all the major brands of bread on supermarket shelves. It is also sprayed on maize crops, which in South Africa, are almost all genetically modified for this purpose. South African consumers are not given a choice about these chemicals when purchasing their bread or maize meal.

In addition to food prices, other costs also influence levels of hunger and malnutrition. Many studies of the cost of food tend to exclude the associated costs of water and energy (e.g. electricity or paraffin) for cooking.

Even if a healthy ingredient, such as beans, is affordable, many South Africans cannot afford the water and energy needed to cook them.

In other cases, people may not be able to afford the energy for refrigeration, leading them to choose unhealthy fast food or processed foods that can be stored at room temperature, instead of fresh healthy ingredients requiring refrigeration.

Food is a political issue

At present, the corporate-dominated food system has been normalised to the extent that it is rarely challenged.

While South Africans regularly protest about access to water, electricity, housing and education, there are virtually no protests over access to food.

Most South Africans don’t know they have a right to food, and most

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*Most of the lower-paid jobs at the supermarket, such as cashiers and cleaners, are outsourced via labour brokers, so the real salary differential would be even greater—in 2016 such workers received R13 to R23 per hour, or R 29,744 to R 52,624 per year if they worked full time.*
people struggle to imagine an alternative to the current system, in which food is only accessible as a commodity to be purchased. Yet there are examples from other parts of the world of alternatives that we could learn from.

One noteworthy example from the global South where the government takes the right to food seriously is the city of Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

For the past 25 years, the city has been implementing innovative and integrated food and nutrition security policies designed to ensure that residents are able to enjoy the right to food.

These policies are a response to mobilisation by the residents, demanding access to healthy food. Some of the successful programmes in Belo Horizonte include:

• Municipal “popular restaurants” serving subsidised healthy meals;
• Shops selling subsidised fresh fruit and vegetables in underserved areas;
• A food bank reducing food waste by rescuing food otherwise discarded by retailers, checking it and providing it to social programmes (such as crèches, old age homes, etc.);
• Farm stalls and farmers markets, which enable small-scale farmers to sell directly to consumers, cutting out the middleman and thereby raising farmer incomes.

It requires holding government to account, particularly with regard to children’s access to sufficient, healthy food, in order to break the cycle of poverty and malnutrition. It also requires providing alternative access to healthy food for those who cannot afford to purchase it.

At the most basic level, it requires that South Africans know they have a right to food in the first place, so that they can demand actions from government in line with that right.

The article has been written by Brittany Kesselman, Society, Work & Politics Institute (SWOP), Wits University. She made a presentation at WITS during the World Food Week.

Why South Africans need National Health Insurance

by Lebogang Mulaisi and Khwezi Mabasa

The government recently published an updated National Health Insurance Bill for public scrutiny and commentary, inciting support and opposition, informed by three primary considerations: economic interests, ideological prisms and lived experiences within the nation’s health system. This article combines all these dimensions and demonstrates how NHI benefits transcend the current narrow focus on fiscal or revenue issues.

We present four compelling reasons, based on documented research and extensive health worker policy dialogues, which justify why South Africans need the NHI. The first relates to the unequal structure of the nation’s health system. It is characterised by stark inequalities based on race, class and gender. For example, data from the StatsSA General Household Survey (2018) reveals that only 16% of South Africans have access to medical aids. This membership is dominated by white citizens (72%) while only 10% of Africans have access to medical schemes.

Furthermore, South Africa’s health finance is very skewed when contrasted with other countries. An impressive 8.5% of GDP is spent on overall health services, but this is largely consumed by private health sector users and providers. How does a country justify a “two-tiered” health system in which half of the overall health expenditure is spent on 16% of its population?

These figures also debunk the myth of limited resources within the system. South Africa’s health expenditure exceeds the World Health Organisations (WHO) recommended health expenditure of 5%. The NHI seeks to address this structural inequality within the system by providing an alternative Universal Health Coverage (UHC) model. President Cyril Ramaphosa recently received an international award for his government’s choice on introducing UHC.

Second, South Africans need NHI for accessing primary healthcare. Various health studies prove that South Africa’s health system is overly curative. This has significant implications for health service costs and the nation’s disease profile. A clear example is the continued rise of noncommunicable or lifestyle diseases.

Third, a universal NHI system is transformative. It is characterised by stark inequalities based on race, class and gender. For example, data from the StatsSA General Household Survey (2018) reveals that only 16% of South Africans have access to medical aids. This membership is dominated by white citizens (72%) while only 10% of Africans have access to medical schemes.

Furthermore, South Africa’s health finance is very skewed when contrasted with other countries. An impressive 8.5% of GDP is spent on overall health services, but this is largely consumed by private health sector users and providers. How does a country justify a “two-tiered” health system in which half of the overall health expenditure is spent on 16% of its population?

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South Africa requires a preventative health paradigm and system, which is not over-dependent on curative health technologies and interventions.

The NHI provides the building blocks for such a system through prioritising and institutionalising a primary healthcare model. It focuses on health service decentralisation through community healthcare workers, school health teams, and district health structures. These institutional arrangements are more suitable for achieving primary healthcare within communities. This shift towards primary health supports a syndemic health model, which is advanced in the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (Mistra) publication entitled Epidemics and the Health of African Nations. This model connects
The current public discourse on NHI overlooks this crucial pillar because of the reductionist debate on fiscal implications and revenue generation.

Third, NHI is crucial for increasing employment and improving working conditions in the health sector.

Evidence shows that adequate numbers of well-distributed healthcare workers with the right skills mix results in improved coverage of essential health services and an overall improvement in key health outcomes.

Although human resources for health is the biggest single component of the health system, on which more than 50% of health funding is spent, it is often not well planned due to numerous complex and interwoven issues.

This reality informs the NHI’s emphasis on the primary healthcare model, which requires additional community health care workers and nurses.

These healthcare workers will be at the coalface in the proposed implementation of the NHI. The pooling of resources, through the NHI Fund, will also improve working conditions in the public health system by providing the equipment and other health supplies required for decent working conditions.

Fourth, the NHI is crucial for addressing challenges that persist in the private sector, as healthcare costs limit access and erode private healthcare users’ benefits. The Competition Commission’s Private Health Market Inquiry found that three hospital groups (Netcare, LifeHealthcare and Mediclinic) account for 90% of the private hospital market.

This concentration of power in the sector makes it vulnerable to collusion. Without much competition, the three major hospital groups dictate price increases for medical aids and benefit from the over-utilisation and over-treatment at private health facilities.

Section 39 of the NHI Bill curbs the private sector supplier-induced demand by setting requirements for service providers and facilities to comply with in order to fulfil NHI fund accreditation requirements.

These include treatment protocols and guidelines, which cover medicine prescriptions, health product procurement, and health referral pathways.

Lebogang Mulaisi (Cosatu’s National Social Development Policy Co-ordinator) and Khwezi Mahasa (Senior Researcher, Mistra) are contributors to the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection’s (Mistra) research on the socio-economic impact of BEE legislation and the experiences of black entrepreneurs in post-apartheid South Africa.

The article first appeared on Daily Maverick
The objective of the National Health Insurance (NHI) is to achieve universal access to quality healthcare services in the Republic, in accordance with Section 27 of the Constitution, through the establishment of the NHI Fund. It is based on the principle of social solidarity where we will look after each other in times of medical need. The comprehensive healthcare services the NHI will provide are bound by the philosophy of holistic approach to healthcare spanning from preventative strategies all the way to convalescent and palliative care.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has come out in support of the full implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) and has sanctioned provincial workers to empower workers and their families to participate in the public hearings led by the Parliament to hear what citizens are saying about improving public health for all. COSATU head office saw it as a need to educate provinces and share information on the NHI Bill discussions and parliamentary processes that have been taking place at the national level.

The COSATU Provinces countrywide education programme on National Health Insurance was held in line with the schedule of Parliamentary public hearings and empower workers and their families to make submissions as the members of the public, with all others organizations and members of the civil society who are expected to submit comments on the Bill by November 29.

The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) and the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr. Sibongiseni Dhlomo has welcomed the introduction of the National Health Insurance Bill. Workers in Limpopo demand more employment of professional health workers!

In Limpopo, workers under COSATU held a provincial workshop which lasted for two-days, with the purpose of empowering workers to participate in the Parliamentary Public Hearings on the implementation of the National Healthcare policies in South Africa. Limpopo was the first province to be capacitated and trained on the NHI Bill. Affiliates released their members and they came in numbers.

“We are happy that affiliates saw it as need for its members to participate in this national programme” said COSATU Limpopo’s Provincial Chairperson, Calvin Tshaamano. The chairperson acknowledged COSATU head office for bringing this initiative to Limpopo, “we’ve been waiting for it” said the chairperson.

He explained to the house ‘how important NHI must be implemented, and how we urgently need to get it implemented in order to end inequality and get rid of the two-tier health system in South Africa.’

COSATU Limpopo Provincial Secretary, Gerald Twala said ‘Participants discussed their expectations of the workshop including knowing how they can advocate or campaign for the NHI at the local and provincial level.'
The participants were very positive and participated actively and saw the need for immediate implementation of the NHI. They emphasised how ill-structured and ill-equipped their health institutions are, amongst other things, NHI is an answer to fixing the health system.’

‘The provincial meeting developed a program of action to mobilise support for the NHI at the regional and local level, which will be submitted to the upcoming PEC for endorsement.’

Eastern Cape public healthcare system needs revamping

“We demand a single purchaser, universal health coverage and an integrated health system”, declares workers. On 14 November 2019, quality healthcare for everyone.”

COSATU Provincial Secretary, Comrade Mkhawulele Maleki said ‘The workshop strengthened our preparations for the forthcoming Public Hearings on NHI scheduled for the province. We call upon workers to attend Public Hearings in big numbers. In so doing we will defending the NHI in the face of adversity from our class adversaries.’

Advancing the campaign of NHI, will amongst others, ensure the following:

• Health is recognised as a Human Right in line with Section 27 of the South African Constitution.
• Improved access to healthcare facilities.
• Restoration of dignity.

Minister of Health, Dr. Zweli Mkhize makes an input on NHI at SADTU PEC in Durban

COSATU Eastern Cape held a workshop on NHI. The workshop was one in a series of workshops facilitated by the COSATU Head Office in conjunction with Department of Health.

The purpose of the workshop was to deepen our understanding on NHI related aspects so that we are better equipped with understanding of NHI and ensure that there is more and better coordinated advocacy on the NHI. The workshop also afforded us an opportunity to get an update on the developments surrounding NHI.

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COSATU consolidating its final input before the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee

COSATU Social Development Policy Coordinator who also sits in the NHI National Task Teams, Comrade Lebogang Mulaisi declared that ‘supports the NHI because it is a milestone development that paves the way for unifying our health system and guarantees universal and comprehensive quality health coverage for all.’

The National Health Insurance is premised on reversing the socio-economic injustices, imbalances and inequities of the past, and accelerating the need to heal the divisions of the past and to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

NHI must create an enabling environment for the ‘creation of a single framework throughout the Republic for the public funding and public purchasing of health care services, medicines, health goods and health related products, and to eliminate the fragmentation of health care funding in the Republic.’

“NHI will buy quality health care services on behalf of the people of South Africa. These services will be provided by health care professionals and providers in the public and private health care facilities and will integrate them into one health care system that serves the needs of all South African.”

“We support the United Nations call of Sustainable Goal Number 3 i.e. Universal Health Coverage. Quality healthcare for all citizens is human capital investment. The evidence is consistent that NHI type systems drive economic growth because of a healthier population that is able to participate at full potential in the economy for a longer lifespan. The NHI Bill is based on the constitutional rights of all South African citizens and all children to quality healthcare.

It obliges the State to make all necessary plans within available resources to meet these rights. It also recognises the current situation of unequal access to healthcare due to the legacy of apartheid, and the unsustainable exclusive binary system that defines the medical industry today,’ said Mulaisi.

Some of the reasons advanced by civil society in support of NHI are the following:

• We will support NHI when it is implemented. We support the establishment of a fund whereby resources are pooled into a single fund that will strategically purchase healthcare services on behalf of healthcare user based on need. This is an effective risk mitigation strategy on behalf of the citizen through social solidarity where those who are young, healthy and working cross subsidise those who are elderly, sick and financially destitute.

• We support the initiative that access to healthcare shall be based on one’s medical needs and not whether one has the money to pay for it or not. Those who do work will no longer suffer the burdens of rising medical aid costs and out of pocket expenses for less and less coverage.

• We support the fact that NHI puts money back in the pocket of the consumers and even companies who will pay much less employer derived tax than the medical aid contributions they currently contribute. Companies will also benefit from the productivity of a healthier and longer living population. It is about economic prosperity through social justice.

• We support the provision of well-trained professionals and filling of all vacancies of doctors, specialists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and radiographers.

• We support the training of more frontline professionals. We support the ring fencing of the budget for medicines to avoid drug stock outs.

• We support the quality improvement plan that will ensure good quality of service and caring staff attitudes both in public and private hospitals and clinics.

• We support the rebuilding of all hospitals and clinics to be acceptable quality.

• We support the NHI Fund where all citizens have equal access to healthcare and making the medical aids available for situations that are not reimbursable by the NHI Fund."
Op-ed: Lead exposure can have dire consequences for children and adults

by Dr Nisha Naicker, Head of the Epidemiology and Surveillance Section of the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH)

Lead exposure continues to be a public health burden across the world because of its severe effects on people, and in particular, children. High levels of lead exposure affects the brain and central nervous system and can cause convulsions, coma and even death. Children who survive lead poisoning may be left with mental and behavioural disorders.

Lower levels of lead exposure are also harmful and can affect brain development and result in behavioural changes, anaemia, hypertension, renal impairment, immune-toxicity and toxicity to the reproductive organs.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the neurological and behavioural effects of lead are believed to be irreversible. Ecological and epidemiological studies in developed nations have further linked lead exposure to antisocial and criminal activities in adolescents and adults.

Based on 2016 data, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) has estimated that lead exposure accounted for 540,000 deaths and 13.9 million years lost to disability and death (disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)) worldwide due to the long term effects on health. IHME also found that lead exposure accounted for 63.8% of the global burden of idiopathic developmental intellectual disability, 3% of the global burden of ischaemic heart disease and 3.1% of the global burden of stroke.

Even blood lead concentrations as low as 5 μg/dL (micrograms per decilitre) is associated with decreased intelligence in children, behavioural difficulties and learning problems.

In South Africa, children could still be exposed to lead in their school, living and playing environment, and their parents’ work environments. There is no safe known blood lead concentration and when lead exposure increases, the severity of symptoms and effects also escalates.

Sources of lead exposure

Some of the primary sources of lead exposure and poisoning includes leaded fuel and leaded paint.

In the past decade, leaded fuel has been phased out in most countries and has resulted in a significant decline in population-level blood lead concentrations.

Several studies by the International Persistent Organic Pollutants Elimination Network (IEPN) over recent years show that high levels of lead in paint still exist in more than 55 countries. The group collected and analysed more than 3,300 paints in 58 countries, which were widely sold. It found that in nine out of 12 countries, lead levels were greater than 10,000 parts per million (ppm) in 7% to 20% of paints tested. Much more needs to be done to phase out leaded paint, which is recognized as a huge problem across the world.

In South Africa, epidemiological studies reveal that while blood lead distributions in children have started to decline following the introduction of unleaded petrol, certain vulnerable groups continue to be exposed to environmental lead from multiple sources. Lead is widely used in both the formal and informal sectors. This includes cottage industries (eg. jewellery making, spray painting, welding, hair dressing, mining, lead melting in fishing communities) as well as in Ayurvedic and Chinese traditional medicines, battery recycling and the manufacture of certain products.

There has been some headway in mitigating lead exposure in South Africa following the banning of lead in home paint in 2012 but given the various other sources of lead exposure, much more needs to be done to curb lead poisoning.

We believe that it starts with manufacturers, and our appeal to them is to rethink the use of lead and rather look for alternatives. Our call to action is to create awareness across the country so that citizens can stop purchasing leaded products for their homes and offices. As the NIOH, our ultimate aim is to ensure the wellbeing of South Africa’s citizens by contributing to the mitigation of lead poisoning.

Globally, WHO is currently developing guidelines on the prevention of lead poisoning, which will provide policy-makers, public health authorities and health professionals with evidence-based guidance on the measures they can take to protect the health of children and adults from lead exposure.

About the NIOH

The NIOH, a division of the National Health Laboratory Service, focuses on surveillance of occupational disease, specialised laboratories and hazardous waste and occupational hazard evaluations, applied laboratory and epidemiological research, the statutory autopsy services in terms of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, advisory services, as well as teaching and training in occupational health and safety.

The NIOH is a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre and has also been recognised as a Centre of Excellence.
South African Trade Unionists participated in the 13th World Congress of the Trade Union International of Public Services and Allied (TUI-PS&A) which took place at Larnaca, Cyprus, on the 16-17 November 2019 under the Theme ‘Working People of all Countries Unite’, and attended with other representatives from Kuwait, Palestine, Egypt, South Africa, Portugal and Italy.

The Congress elected the new General Secretary of the TUI PS, comrade Zola Saphetha from NEHAWU, South Africa. Assuming his role, Saphetha said ‘Kindly receive our profound revolutionary greetings on behalf of the newly elected collective of the TUI Public and Allied Workers and its general membership across the globe, a united family of militant, class-oriented trade union movement – uniting workers in the global-north and global-south. As a strong and strategic component of the class oriented World Federation of the Trade Unions (WFTU), we wish to affirm our understanding that societies’ progress, change and development is through class struggles; hence will continue to mobilise the working class, working people in particular to venture into a real revolution to overthrow capitalism and replace it with socialism by intensifying class consciousness amongst and in between the TUI and eventually the WFTU.

We will do this through ensuring the continuous common struggles which are of particular importance at this stage of overcoming capitalist crisis, where the bourgeoisie in every country of the world is attacking the working class – through drastic wage and pension cuts, intensification of exploitation, lack of social security and even using violence against the struggling workers and working class in general.’

He said ‘we must continue to keep the WFTU & TUI - PS&A within the principles and values of unity, proletarian internationalism and solidarity which inspires us to advance the ideological onslaught against imperialist wars. This must include intensifying our solidarity action in support of Cuba against the American blockade, as we mark the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the CTC and the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution this year.’

He outlined his priorities to improve the unity of working people across all countries by tabling the following areas of importance;

- We call for an urgent Secretariat in South Africa by March 2020 for the tabling of TUI PS&A Unity of Action Statement
- Enhancing of functional Regional Structures in all Continents
- Employing best mechanisms to improve communications
- Jerking of systematic internal vision for better coordination of TUI PS&A work
- Improving financial viability of TUI PS&A through implementing subscription fee decision
- Reprioritizing an increase on the presence of TUI PS&A
- Promoting a mobilisation Strategy to ensure more workers to the fold of PS&A and deal with a Comprehensive Program for 75th Anniversary Celebrations of WFTU

COSATU said ‘we are in jubilation over the election of Cde Zola Saphetha (General Secretary of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union), as the General Secretary of the class conscious and socialist orientated global federation of workers, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) Trade Union International of Public Services and Allied (TUI-PS&A).’

‘This election of Cde Saphetha lays a solid foundation for COSATU and its other affiliates to reaffirm its ties with the workers of the world, as led by our class conscious and Socialist orientated allies in the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), amidst the deepening crisis of Capitalism in Europe, Greece and the United States. The ongoing global crisis of Capitalism and outstaging of dictatorial regimes by the workers and the poor of Africa is living proof that a better and alternative world is indeed necessary.

It was through the unprecedented support of the WFTU, with the help of the South African Communist Party (SACP), that our struggle against apartheid was elevated at an international scale, and strong contacts were established for the African National Congress (ANC) to pursue the liberation struggle in exile.’

The Deputy President of POPCRU comrade Marurung Masemola was re-elected as the WFTU-TUI Vice President for English speaking Africa.

Meanwhile, the WFTU General Secretary, comrade George Mavrikos pointed out ‘the importance of the TUIs which are the heart of the WFTU and called for the strengthening of the action and coordination of the TUI PS&A.’

NEHAWU congratulates its General Secretary for being elected as the General Secretary of the WFTU TUI-PS&A

Working People of all Countries Unite!
International Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) is an international series of events that seek to raise awareness of Israel’s apartheid system over the Palestinian people and to build support for the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Many people remember apartheid as a dark chapter in the history of South Africa and the world. But for the Palestinian people, apartheid isn’t history; it is a brutal, daily reality. The campaign started on the week of 12th to the 18th of March 2018.

Apartheid is the Afrikaans word for ‘apartness’. It describes the system of racial discrimination that once existed in South Africa. Today, the United Nations defines apartheid as acts “inhumane acts...committed in the context of an institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime”.

South African apartheid was established in 1948, the same year as the Palestinian Nakba or ‘catastrophe’ that saw the first 750,000 Palestinians forced from their homes. In the 1980s, these two apartheid regimes shared deep economic and military ties. Israel trained and advised the South African military, both in domestic repression of the anti-apartheid movement and in military aggression in Namibia and Angola.

The theme for this year was Afro Palestinian solidarirty. The message behind the theme was to show support to approximately 40 000 African asylum seekers facing deportation or indefinite detention in Israel. The Jewish Apartheid state of Israel has not only institutionalized racism against indigenous Palestinians but also for Africans. The theme was also to highlight the shared history Palestine have with Africa’s liberation struggle against colonialism.

Oliver Tambo at the World conference for action against Apartheid in 1977 in Lagos Nigeria said “The imperialist countries provide the South African racists with the latest military equipment, planes, missiles, tanks, artillery, blueprints for armaments production and military skills. Part of this imperialist strategy is the consolidation of ties between Zionist Israel and fascist South Africa. In the Middle East, the conspiracy is to attempt to destroy the legitimate aspirations and struggle of the Arab peoples and the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.”

This year’s campaign was endorsed by over 110 organisations and had events all over the country that were over 300, the most successful we have had.

The Shadow of the Wall

The charge of apartheid has been made against Israel for many years by legal scholars and international institutions. An exhaustive legal study published in 2009 stated that Israel has implemented all the core characteristics of South African apartheid, by categorizing and segregating the population along racial lines and subjecting the Palestinian population to extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention.

Racial discrimination is a fact of daily life for Palestinians in the occupied territory. Under Israeli law, and in practice, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are treated differently in almost every aspect of life including freedom of movement, family, housing, education, employment and other basic human rights. Dozens of Israeli laws and policies institutionalize this prevailing system of racial discrimination and domination.

Segregation is carried out by implementing separate legal regimes for Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in the same area. For example, Jewish Israeli settlers living in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank are governed by Israeli civil law, while Palestinians also living in the occupied West Bank are governed by Israeli military law.

This ‘apartness’ is also institutionalised through separate legal systems governing Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in the same area, with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank governed by Israeli military law. In 2012 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination condemned Israel for precisely this, calling for an end to all policies of “racial segregation and apartheid.”

Many of these practices are prohibited by the UN Apartheid Convention, such as the forced transfer of communities to make way for illegal Israeli settlements and the denial of a host of fundamental human rights. Simply existing as a Palestinian in Palestine carries the risk of murder, torture and unlawful imprisonment.

The illegal Apartheid Wall, built by Israel in the West Bank, towers eight meters high, blocking access to schools, hospitals, loved ones and water supplies. Covered in watch towers, electric fences, cameras and military patrols, it is the ultimate symbol of ‘apartness’.

The Memory of a Movement

Last year, new ground was broken when the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) published a report which not only named Israel as an apartheid state but advocated BDS tactics to bring down the apartheid regime. It is in part because apartheid is synonymous with the call for BDS that calling the Israeli system by its name is so important.
In South Africa, it took two tidal waves to bring apartheid to its knees: first and foremost from within, was a radical mass movement of poor black South Africans; but boycott, divestment and sanctions advocated by the international community and solidarity movements also played a vital role by isolating South Africa’s apartheid regime. This began as a grassroots effort by people of conscience across the world, who inspired by the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, protested and lobbied governments to get on the right side of history.

Like us, black South Africans, Palestinians confront a brutal and profoundly racist colonial occupation; and now, like black South Africans once did, they are building a global BDS movement to free themselves. The BDS movement strives to win freedom, justice and equality for all Palestinians, calling for an end to occupation, full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel and the right of all refugees to return home.

Over recent years, despite growing efforts at repression and censorship in Palestine and internationally, this movement has grown from strength to strength. It has forced major corporations like G4S and Veolia to quit Israeli markets and won large-scale divestments from banks complicit in Israel’s human rights violations.

In 1997, Nelson Mandela famously said: “We know only too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” This was a sentiment shared with many of us South Africans as we threw off the yoke of ‘apartheid’. But there is also a sense in which it is true for all of us. As long as the powerful anywhere can detain, demolish and destroy life with impunity, all freedom is fragile.

The 14th #IsraeliApartheidWeek campaign (12-18 March 2019) was endorsed in South Africa by over 110 organizations, is an international series of self-organized rallies, protests, lectures, cultural performances, concerts, sports events, films and workshops held annually in over 250 cities, communities and campuses across the globe. With “Afro-Palestinian solidarity” as this year’s theme, #IsraeliApartheidWeek focused on both Israel’s apartheid policies against the Palestinians as well as the regime’s discriminatory policies against Africans.

The campaign highlighted the plight of the African community in Palestine and hosted events, such as the celebration of the historic support and solidarity that African liberation struggles and countries received from the FLO and the Palestinian people during the 1970s and 1980s. For more info go to our website www.iawsouthafrica.com/

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**SATAWU pickets in solidarity with the State Enterprise Workers’ Relations Confederation (SERC)**

International Transport Federation affiliates were mandated to picket on the 7th November 2019 across the globe to demand that the government and Prime Minister of Thailand must intervene in the SRUT case. Thailand as a member state of the International Labour Organization must demonstrate respect for the international labour standards.

Thailand has been for a while being under ‘the martial law and the military government’, and crackdown on trade union activities has been rife.

The picket was motivated to pledge solidarity with workers facing sorts of ‘threats to dismiss’ them for their participation in a safety-related campaigns.

Before that Thailand has featured prominently of ITUC Reports for undermining labour standards and high prevalence of forced labour.

The South African Transport and Allied Workers’ Union [SATAWU] in South Africa mobilized hundreds of workers to picket at the Royal Thailand Embassy in Pretoria in solidarity with the State Enterprise Workers’ Relations Confederation (SERC).

’SATAWU delivered a letter for the attention of Thailand Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, calling on him to drop charges against 13 leaders of the State Railway Union of Thailand (SRUT), who are due to appear at the Central Criminal Court on 11 November’, said SATAWU Rail Sector Coordinator, Lubabalo Tinzi.

The SRUT leaders are facing charges of corruption and misconduct brought against them by the State Railway of Thailand in 2009, following an occupational health and safety protest they staged in response to a train crash that killed seven people.

If found guilty, the SRUT leaders face a sentence of up to five years in jail, a fine of USD 660 (R9 800) each as well as termination of employment. This is in addition to a damage claim where seven of the leaders have been made to pay USD 726 (R10 890) via court order.

SATAWU said ‘The ITUC, the ITF and all our unions globally are taking action in support for our affiliate in Thailand, the State Enterprise Workers’ Relations Confederation (SERC), regarding the upcoming trial of 13 leaders of the State Railway Union of Thailand (SRUT) at the Central Criminal Court for Corruption and Misconduct Cases in Bangkok on 11 November.’

**Forward with International Solidarity!**
The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), with affiliated trade unions and the SACP organized a picket at the United States and Turkish Embassies against the economic blockade of Cuba and also condemned the killing of Kurdish people North Eastern Syria. COSATU International Secretary, Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni said ‘the Turkish Syrian rebels attacked the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), shortly after Donald Trump announced that the US would pull troops out of Syria. This horrific incursion by Turkey has resulted in the death of more than 70 civilians (including children) and 130,000 displaced people.’

‘COSATU speaks against all forms of human rights violations, and urges progressive forces together with activists all over the world to speak against this invasion, in adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (acronym) which Turkey is a signatory to.’

She said ‘we support the Kurdish people, and the commemoration of Kobane Day; and COSATU in collaboration with the Kurdish Human Rights Action Group (KHRAG) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) continues to pledge our solidarity.’

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union [NEHAWU] said ‘The picket at the US embassy is part of the international campaign against American imperialist aggression in the world, and the genocidal blockade against Cuba, while the picket at the Turkish embassy is for the withdrawal of Turkey and all foreign militaries from their invasion of both the North Eastern region and Syria in general as well as to demand an end to the ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish people.’

‘We must all unite our voices with all the people who resist and demand the immediate end of imperialist interventions to stop the imperialist wars so that all refugees can return to their homes’, said Mzwandile Makwayiba, NEHAWU President and WFTU President recently at the POPCRU 9th National Congress in Durban.

‘We are against the imperialist wars’, concluded Makwayiba. Meanwhile, on the 7th November, at the UN Assembly, for the 28th consecutive year, the international community were expected to participate in a vote in what Cuba ‘characterised as a ‘show to the United States how isolated it is on its criminal Cuba Policy.

The hashtag #UnblockCuba was a rallying point for international solidarity.

COSATU members leading a picket at the US Embassy in Pretoria
COSATU slams Turkey’s continued attack against Kurdish forces in Syria

The decision of the South African Government is free.’ COSATU has welcomed the BDS campaign and we hope for resolution in the very near future.

We continue to mobilise support for the BDS initiative.

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COSATU on downgrading the Israeli Embassy

Workers in Gauteng led a successful picket at the United States Consulate Service offices at the Sandton Drive in Sandhurst. The picket was an annual solidarity action geared towards supporting the working class in Palestine suffering the repressive Israeli government. ‘COSATU supports the Israeli Apartheid Week’, said COSATU National Treasurer, Freda Oosthuysen.

Oosthuysen said ‘We reaffirm our support for the people of Palestine in their bid for self determination, their peace and security. We continue to mobilise support for the BDS campaign and we hope for resolution on the matter in the very near future. South Africa is not free until Palestine is free.’ COSATU has welcomed the decision of the South African Government to implement the decision to downgrade the South African Embassy in Israel to the level of a liaison office.

Oosthuysen argued that ‘the decision was taken by the ruling party the ANC 16months ago and was long overdue for finalisation. We condemn and applaud the Minister in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation Lindiwe Sisulu for boldly carrying this through, thank you. The completion of the implementation of step one of the processes of downgrade couldn’t have been announced at a more perfect time than the Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).’

‘We believe the downgrade will send the message to the rest of the world that Apartheid was not good for South Africa and it is not good for Palestine, it is what it is. This action has a potential to galvanise support in advancing peace in the Middle East. South Africa is the most qualified country if not the only in the world who knows every aspect of what apartheid is, experienced it and feels its effects to date. South African government should not be shy or apologetic about implementing this decision. South Africa has done its best in the past in engaging all the parties involved and we see this as the first step forward in calling apartheid Israel out something the whole world knows but have no will to stop. We strongly believe that the world has no choice but to act in unity with South Africa in brokering meaningful way forward that will bring about sustainable solution between the two.’

Reactions from Alliance partners and civil society!

Bassam Ellussiny from the Palestine Embassy said ‘the picket was about a call to cancel American decisions related to Jerusalem and the golan and stop military assistance to Israel End of settlement occupation and expansion, remove the wall of apartheid and stop all forms of human rights violation, including the killing of civilians and the return of refugees, as the note called President Trump to stop his violation of international law as well as the invitation of the American people, especially the workers of them To carry out their responsibilities in accounting for their government and the importance of supporting the fair Palestinian struggle and embracing the provincial political of the BDS initiative’.

Meanwhile, COSATU Western Cape marched to the offices of the Jewish Board of Deputies to raise awareness about Israel’s apartheid regime over the Palestinian people and build support for the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.
Pro-active trade unions can shape and influence the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the digital economy, said a panel of unionists from Germany and South Africa at a Global Labour University (GLU) conference in Johannesburg on 31 October.

The topic was: the future of work and the role of trade unions, social dialogue, industrial relations and co-determination.

Commending the GLU programme, Thulas Nxesi, the South African minister of employment and labour, who was at the conference, stressed, “Skilling and reskilling of workers is important to match current trends in the world of work. Strong unions and social compacts on 4IR are critical.”

The panel said trade unions can be involved in lifelong learning and ensure that workers’ rights and participation is guaranteed. The co-determination approach of the German trade unions should also be protected and the campaign for living wages intensified.

Collective bargaining agreements and social protection should be preserved. Although the national social and economic context is key, trade unions should also develop global strategies and work with the International Labour Organization to respond to the digital economy and demand Just Transition plans as the world moves from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Bastian Schulz, director of the FES Trade Union Competence Centre, said: “New instability of work characterizes labour relations in the 21st century. Unions face challenges on the digital economy..."
especially the way it transforms jobs, and employment relationships as well as the social divide between workers with stable paying jobs and those with unstable, poorly paid or precarious jobs, or no jobs at all.”

Reiner Hoffman, president of the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB), said:

“In discussing the 4IR we must not forget that labour is also changing. The fear of technology displacing workers is not new; it was there in the 1970s and 1980s. In Germany we are focusing on opportunities from the 4IR and not only discussing risks. These opportunities arise from new types of work that will result from technological innovation and digitalization.”

He cautioned that trade unions must not sit back and allow big corporations to dominate the 4IR debates. Zingiswa Lusi, the president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions said:

“Unions must ask if the South African economy is ready for the 4IR. What are the consequences and impact on the workers? We should not support jobless economic growth. Currently unemployment is very high at 29.1 per cent and at the expanded rate of 38.5 per cent. Unions must engage to stop workers’ exploitation under the 4IR.”

Ruth Ntlokotse, second deputy president of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union, said:

“Data and artificial intelligence are central to the digital economy. Who owns this data and what are the impacts? We need studies to engage corporations to dominate the 4IR debates. Zingiswa Lusi, the president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions said:

“Unions must ask if the South African economy is ready for the 4IR. What are the consequences and impact on the workers? We should not support jobless economic growth. Currently unemployment is very high at 29.1 per cent and at the expanded rate of 38.5 per cent. Unions must engage to stop workers’ exploitation under the 4IR.”

Workers from IndustriALL affiliates, the Industrial Commercial Workers Union (Ghana) and the Commercial, Industrial and Allied Workers Union (Malawi) who are former students of the GLU programmes, were part of the 100 participants who attended the conference. The conference was held with support from FES, the University of the Witwatersrand and GLU.

Meanwhile, The Global Labour University has written a letter Professor Goldberg, Dr. Salilola and Dr. Rutkowski at the World Bank titled ‘Comments on the draft World Development Report 2019’, in which the Global Labour University argued that ‘we welcome the decision of the World Bank to focus its 2019 World Development Report on the changing nature of work. We commend the authors for discussing the changes that are taking place and trying to advise governments on how best to adapt to them. We share the authors’ concern with the growing risks associated with tax evasion by large corporations that control an ever-greater share of economic activity. We are however worried with the way in which the report portrays these changes in the nature of work as essentially benign, requiring “adaptation” by workers in the form of skills acquisition and by states through the provision of skills and “universal” social coverage, with the latter understood as a prelude to labour market deregulation.

Such a perspective ignores the growing body of research that points to very serious challenges to working conditions; in fact, on a number of issues that we discuss in this letter, we feel that the draft report has cherry-picked research that suited the authors’ beliefs. This is worrying as it constitutes a lowering of the usual World Bank standards; it could also orient the crucial debate on the future of work in a way that will be unhelpful to resolve the problems at hand.’

Technology and Inequality In the draft Report, the World Bank writes, “(t)echnology has brought higher labor productivity to many sectors by reducing the need for workers for routine tasks,” the ILO finds, “labour productivity growth outpaced the growth of real wages in all but a few years between 2006 and 2015 […] This means that although workers have become increasingly productive, the benefits of their work have increasingly accrued to capital income and to those at the top of the income distribution.” (op. cit., p. 6) The growing inequality brought about by neoliberal capitalism has even increased docility. “(w)ithin-country inequality, as measured by the Gini index, has also grown in most regions […] Additionally, with the exception of Latin America, all other regions have experienced an increase in income inequality along with a decline in labour income share.” (p. 7)

And while the draft Report observes, “(t)echnology has brought higher labor productivity to many sectors by reducing the need for workers for routine tasks,” the ILO finds, “labour productivity growth outpaced the growth of real wages in all but a few years between 2006 and 2015 […] This means that although workers have become increasingly productive, the benefits of their work have increasingly accrued to capital income and to those at the top of the income distribution.” (op. cit., p. 6) The growing inequality brought about by neoliberal capitalism has even increased docility. “(w)ithin-country inequality, as measured by the Gini index, has also grown in most regions […] Additionally, with the exception of Latin America, all other regions have experienced an increase in income inequality along with a decline in labour income share.” (p. 7)

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The majority of these tasks are simple and repetitive, and do not require any specific skills, thereby underutilising the capacity of these workers.” (p. 25) The same research highlights the worrying levels of precarity and vulnerability experienced by these workers. Hence, there are valid reasons to fear that recent trends, such as the declining share of wages in total income, will be exacerbated by the changing nature of work, unless current tendencies are counter-balanced by a mix of greater regulation and stronger voice by workers. This leads us to a further remark related to the kind of skills that will be needed by workers in the future. The draft Report takes for granted the (problematic, as we have shown) way in which the new ‘gig’ economy operates; it therefore emphasizes the need to develop the skills currently demanded by leading corporations. Socio-behavioural skills, for instance, are indeed crucial, but we wonder if they have not become shorthand for increased docility. If an Uber driver, or a babysitter
employed through a platform, complains about unpaid overtime, customers are encouraged to rate them badly, thus compromising the worker’s ability to find work in future. Yet, is being treated fairly an unreasonable expectation? It is easy to see that the answer may be yes in a not so distant future, if workers are not empowered to shape the development, adoption and adaptation of new technologies.

Technology and Labour Regulation

One of the more worrisome aspects of the World Bank’s draft Report is the call for greater labour market flexibility. The World Bank writes, “(t)he adoption of productivity-enhancing technology is negatively associated with the strictness of some labor regulations, specifically those with burdensome dismissal procedures [...].”

More stringent regulations are also associated with lower entry and exit of firms—especially small firms—in industries in which labor moves more frequently between jobs.” (pp. 107-08) The draft Report continues: “Firms could be given more flexibility in managing their human resources contingent on the law mandating proper notice, the presence of an adequate system of income protection, and efficient mechanisms to punish discrimination.” (p. 108)

There are two problems with this approach; firstly, most governments only hear the first part of this message, which is most often supported by employers: “Firms should be given more flexibility to hire and fire workers.” This they implement, without regard to the ‘contingency’.

Secondly, the proposed conditions hardly constitute a serious engagement with the need to adapt worker protection to economic and technological transformations. “Proper notice is far too vague a term to provide meaningful protection, while discrimination has no specific relation with technological change. As far as ‘adequate’ income protection is concerned, it amounts to shifting the responsibility and associated costs to protect workers against loss of income from companies to society (we return to this point in our last section on Technology and social protection). Rather than increasing flexibility without counterpart, labour regulation must be strengthened in light of a detailed understanding of the implications of technological change in order to level the playing field. We find it astonishing that the draft Report ignores the abundant evidence that links labour market regulation with a range of positive socio economic outcomes. Looking at the relationship between income inequalities and labour market regulation, Föller and Töll9 thus find very robust results across a range of studies focusing on OECD countries showing that declines in regulation increase inequality. On the other hand, Blanchard and Philippin10 have shown that the quality of labour relations, and the strength of trade unions in particular, were crucial factors in limiting the effects on unemployment of changes in the economic environment – or, to put it differently, countries with bad labour relations tend to have higher unemployment.

Technology and Trade Unions

In light of the above, it is of particular concern that the draft Report has little to say on trade unions and collective bargaining. Indeed, they are only mentioned in one paragraph (399; p. 1090). It is suggested that trade unions and collective bargaining are becoming a less important mechanism for addressing the conditions of labour. The authors write, “strengthening the enforcement of labor laws and mechanisms to expand workers’ voices is a worthy goal as well. Moving to a simpler core contract would require stronger collective bargaining structures as fewer protections are prespecified in the law. However, the significance of such structures is declining across high-income countries the share of workers covered by a collective agreement fell, on average, from 37 percent in 2000 to 32 percent in 2015. Also in 2015, 24 percent of employees were members of trade unions, down from 30 percent in 1985.” (p. 108) In other words, rather than see the decline in union density and collective bargaining coverage as a call for concern that needs to be addressed with better laws and stricter enforcement, the World Bank seems to be accepting union and collective bargaining decline as an unstoppable trend, making it necessary to look for other ways to regulate labour relations. This calls for a number of responses.

Firstly, the important role of collective bargaining in ensuring more adaptable and more inclusive economies has been demonstrated by a number of studies focused on emerging countries. This includes examples of alternative forms of collective bargaining that improve the protection of informal economy workers, as has been the case in India. What these studies suggest is that, while rethinking contributory social protection may be needed, it should be done with the active participation of workers themselves. There is abundant evidence that the changing forms of work are undermining workers’ voices; it is crucial to respond to this through a combination of effective regulation and efforts to promote representative workers’ organisations.

Collective bargaining constitutes an institutional mechanism through which such organisations can work with employers and states to ensure a broadening of the protection they have obtained for their members. There is perhaps no stronger argument in favour of putting workers at the centre of transformations than the very agency they are showing worldwide.

Indeed, whether they are driving an Uber or delivering meals on bikes, workers around the world seem to believe that trade unions can best serve their interests by articulating their voice collectively. This should not come as a surprise to the authors of the draft Report, who emphasize in several places the importance of empowering citizens to make demands on states for improved service delivery. Supporting workers to organise to shape the future of work is not only a question of democracy; it has direct relevance to the way in which technological change is adopted and how it influences the quality and social well-being. Canadian ergonomist Karen Messing thus shows how the ‘ invisibility’ of many low-paid workers in service sectors (mostly women) has led to ways of organising production that harm the workers’ health in a significant, yet unnecessary manner – think of retail employees who are required to stand all the time, with dramatic consequences for their spine. Messing further shows how this invisibility can lead to irrational designs; in France, modern high-speed train toilets were designed without any consultation with those who clean them. As a result, the toilets have proved to be a nightmare to clean, forcing workers to compromise their health on a daily basis. The need to include workers in shaping technology in order to improve their well-being as the same time as improving efficiency (and there is little doubt that the two are positively correlated) points to the central importance of giving workers a voice as a socio-economic priority. The question the WDR seeks to answer – how can the changes affecting work be influenced to have a positive impact – largely hinges on this. It is therefore extremely worrying that issues of concentration and authoritarian control over the direction of technological change are not addressed, except to warn of their consequence in a world where financial flows have been dangerously liberalised, namely massive tax evasion.

Technology and Social protection

The draft Report emphasizes the importance of moving towards universal social coverage in the face of changes in the nature of work. This is presented as a solution to the decreasing number of people covered by contributory social protection, as well as a way to include those in the informal sector. While we support the objective of extending social protection and agree on the need to assess the relevance of contributory social protection systems for the future, we feel that the draft Report’s analysis and recommendations are problematic in at least three key respects. Firstly, the legitimate affordability concerns raised in the report beg the question of what ‘universal coverage’ actually means. There is a big difference between providing a lifelong and affording a decent level of socio-economic security. Recent trends, notably the growing participation of private providers in healthcare provision have increased the unevenness of social welfare, since service provision to the poor is less profitable and, as a result, secondary. Going beyond a minimalist approach to social...
International

Don't look further
By Thobile Maso

Don't look further
Nothing is further than the truth.

Workers produce food but they live in abject poverty
They build houses, yet they live in slums

Workers build schools and universities, yet they can't afford an education
They make warm clothes, but they have no winter clothes
Workers make cars, but have no cars

Why?
Who owns the means of social production determines economic relations,
designs the circumferences and defines the social life, the socialism and
the function of those who have to sell their labour power in order to survive

What?
The modernisation and metropolitans are developed in the general lines
of capitalism not in a transformative anti imperialist lines, but in a skewed
development that creates, cryptocracy, oligarchy, corporatocracy, in a profit
captured of dog eat dog mentality.

Where?
In every capitalist society without exception has been imbued with these
features and properties, the social forms can appear different, but the
functions of their capital forms are substantial the same in essence.

How?
No one else and no class can free the working class, it is the act of the
working class in itself, for itself that can free itself from the chains of
oppression and exploitation, through conscious
Will, active and creative movement and that is how it can lead the society to
freedom.

When?
The fight, the battle, the struggle and the war has been there, it is on and
it will be always on until the working class win the political power and
violently, abolish the capitalist state and abolish exploitation of person by
person.
The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) has begun implementing the resolutions of its Central Executive Committee held around August 2019 to rebuilding the municipal union across all provinces.

The Month of October saw municipal workers assembling in various workplaces to hold Regional Shop Steward Councils (RSSCs) in line with the union’s resolutions of rebuilding and uniting the union.

‘The Eastern Cape is leading the charge, being the first province to hold their RSSCs with Nelson Mandela and Buffalo City holding their RSSCs from the 3rd October 2019,’ alluded Koena Ramotlou, SAMWU General Secretary.

He said ‘The commencement of this process follows the near completion of Shop Steward elections which were commissioned by the union’s May 2019 Central Executive Committee meeting which gave the go-ahead for the elections to begin in earnest. RSSCs are a gathering of Shop Stewards, new and old to not only elect Regional Office Bearers (ROBs) but to also produce resolutions and discussions which will feed into Provincial Congresses and ultimately the National Congress.’

‘We expect all of the union’s 37 regions to have completed their RSSCs by the end of October, while all 9 Provincial Congresses will be concluded by the end of November 2019. These processes will culminate in the union holding its 12th National Congress which is scheduled to be held in March 2020.’

Koena concluded ‘We wish all regions well as they embark on this important task of renewing and rebuilding the union. We trust that workers will emerge with discussions and resolutions which will assist in repositioning the union. We further wish all those who will be elected in these RSSCs well and trust that they will champion the interests of workers in their respective regions and that above all, they will put the interests of workers first.’

Meanwhile, SAMWU has successfully re-launched Young Workers’ structures across all provinces.

The union’s May 2019 Central Executive Committee meeting resolved that in moving towards the 12th National Congress, the union should launch young workers’ structure in line with resolutions of our federations, COSATU.

The elected leaders in Limpopo are as follows:

- Far North Region
  - Chairperson: Maharda Mashell
  - Deputy Chair: Philelo Mulelo
  - Secretary: Nightingale Magwira

- North Region
  - Chairperson: Hezekiel Sehlapelo
  - Deputy Chair: Tebogo Nthala
  - Secretary: Khodhani Magwira

- South Region
  - Chairperson: Bongani Nkonyana
  - Deputy Chair: Bonnie Mogale
  - Secretary: Masego Masedi.

We trust that these young workers will lead and champion the interests of young workers in the province with diligence and dedication leading up to the launch of SAMWU Young Workers provincial structure.’

‘We are aware of the changes in the workplace and the fact that unions have not been appealing to young workers across all sectors. This obviously requires change in the attitude that unions have in organizing and recruiting young workers into their fold.

As we prepare for the 12th National Congress, we have already put forward proposals for constitutional amendments which we believe Congress will unanimously endorse thus constitutionalizing the SAMWU Young Workers structure’, said Leholognolo Maphatsoe, SAMWU National Young Workers’ Convener.
The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union [POPCRU] fully utilized the Month of October to hold Provincial Shopsteward Councils to ‘initiate discussions on important policy matters within the Criminal Justice Cluster building up to the National Congress.’

The 9th National Congress will be hosted at the Chief Albert Luthuli International Conference Centre, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal under the theme "30 Years of Working Class Consciousness, Defending Workers' Rights and Building a Self-sustainable Union". The Congress will be followed by our 30th Anniversary rally which will be taking place on the 9th of November 2019 at the Curries Fountain Stadium, Durban.

Meanwhile, POPCRU NEC held to take stock of the final preparations took resolutions to challenge employers in the Criminal Justice Cluster such as the South African Police Services, the Department of Correctional Services and also Traffic Departments. POPCRU General Secretary, Nkosinathi Theledi said ‘we noted that there is intransigence by the SAPS management which is clearly leading towards the collapse of collective bargaining, wherein signed agreements are not implemented. This is mainly due to factional battles from the top management.’

‘To make matters worse, there is currently a clandestine restructuring process underway, which is not done in accordance to collective bargaining processes at the Safety and Security Sectoral Bargaining Council (SSSBC). The Special NEC has resolved to litigate this and all other forms of restructuring that are not in line with set prescripts and procedures.’ Theledi declared that ‘we are aware that Private prisons’ contracts are coming to an end soon, and should never be renewed. No longer can the money aimed at rehabilitations be grossly utilised to benefit foreign private companies. We need to have our own government facilities in this regard.’

‘The department must end the privatisation of corrections, and we want to strongly warn on the pronouncements made about securing further private prisons in our country. The non-payment of overtime and the improper payment for work performed on Sundays are some of the issues that lead to the already low morale of the staff complement. We call on all members to strictly comply with policies and procedures of the department of correctional services.

‘This includes not unlocking cells, not to escort offenders to courts or hospitals when there is insufficient manpower to do so.’ ‘The meeting called upon the urgent involvement of the Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula, in the finalisation of the work traffic Law Enforcement Review Committee. This, in the main, must result in the nationalisation of traffic as a step towards a single police service’, concluded Theledi.

The current wave of retrenchments is of great concern to the society at large and not only trade unions. Many have argued that the ‘consequence of trickle down economic policies in the labour market is that employers must be allowed to hire and fire any time and for any reason, including for increasing their profits. Such consequences have led to increasing levels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities.’

The banking sector union, SASBO mobilized its members against retrenchments led by employers in the sector. SASBO argued that ‘the maintenance of high levels of profits and bonuses to executives cannot be a fair reason for retrenchments. South Africa is facing a jobs bloodbath, with unemployment sitting above 37% in terms of the broad definition by 2017. Youth unemployment sits above 66% and it is unacceptable.’

‘Companies must not be allowed to retrench workers simply to make profits. Collective bargaining itself is constitutionally guaranteed and SASBO cannot sit back as jobs security is eroded through disguise of introduction of automation and digitisation’, elaborated SASBO General Secretary, Joe Kokela.

SASBO sought to fight back by utilizing the provisions of section 77 of Nedlac which provides for 'procedural requirements for workers to exercise protest action to address socio-economic issues affecting society at large'. On the 25th September 2019, SASBO/COSATU appeared before Labour Court H.Rabkin-Naicker, who ordered that ‘the intended protest action did not enjoy the protections afforded by section 67 of the LRA and therefore interdicted COSATU and SASBO and restraining its members from proceeding with, encouraging or
enticing employees to engage in the intended protest action...... On the 25th October, SASBO reverted back to the picket lines across various Bank Branches to add more pressure on employers to halt retrenchments and also re-tabled the matter at Nedlac Sanding Committee as part of promotion of social dialogue to address socio-economic matters. COSATU has over many years advocated in the Labour Market and Employment Policies for ‘preservation of the skills of the labour force and contributing to preserving the capacity growth during recessions’.

According to the paper released titled ‘Digitalization and the Future of Work: Macroeconomic Consequences, June 2019’, by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics alluded that ‘Computing power continues to grow at an enormous rate. Simultaneously, more and better data is increasingly available and Machine Learning methods have seen significant breakthroughs in the recent past.

All this pushes further the boundary of what machines can do. Nowadays increasingly complex tasks are automatable at a precision which seemed infeasible only few years ago. The examples range from voice and image recognition, playing Go, to self-driving vehicles. Machines are able to perform more and more manual and also cognitive tasks that previously only humans could do. As a result of these developments, some argue that large shares of jobs are “at risk of automation”, spurring public fears of massive job-losses and technological unemployment.’

Challenges associated with Artificial Intelligence [AI] ‘...when firms introduce new production technologies, the initial impact of those machines on employment depends on whether workers are able to adjust to the new demands. In particular, the new technologies typically substitute for certain tasks and complement others. Whether automation technologies and automatable tasks, the reduction of routine and automatable tasks in the economy mainly takes place by adjusting the set of tasks within occupations (e.g. Autor et al., 2003, Spitz-Oener, 2006). Workers seem to shift worktime from routine and automatable tasks to tasks that complement machines.

The computerization for example has been associated with a strong decline in routine tasks. Spitz-Oener (2006) finds that less than 1% of the decline in cognitive routine tasks between 1979 and 1999 in Germany occurred between occupations, i.e. due to declining shares of cognitive-routine intensive occupation. Instead, almost all of the decline took place within occupations – i.e. workers in cognitive-routine intense occupations switching from cognitiveroutine tasks to other tasks. More broadly, she finds the vast majority of task changes to take place within rather than between occupations...’ Kokela concluded that ‘We reiterate that Sasbo is principally and fundamentally opposed to job losses / retrenchments. We remain concerned about the high levels of unemployment (29%), the state of our economy, the current and future impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution, the direct and indirect societal implications, amongst others, we cannot afford for even one job to be lost.’

‘In the coming Ordinary CEC, we must engage on the posture of Nedlac to protect jobs. We have resumed the process to re-table the matter on the economic crisis affecting workers in South Africa’, argued COSATU Deputy General Secretary, Solly Pheto at the COSATU Extended National Organisers Forum and the Campaigns and Organizing Committee meeting held on the 18th October 2019. We demand rescheduling of Labour Forums in the City declares SAMWU

Members of the South African Municipal Workers’ Union came in large numbers to protest against union bashing by the Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba on the 17th October at Braamfontein. Workers listed numerous issues and demanding accountability on the over R29 million stolen by the City and its accomplices, immediate payment of subscriptions to the union, adherence to Labour Laws and Collective Bargaining, withdrawal of the Memorandum of Understanding signed without our consent and reversing of suspensions of workers’.

SAMWU General Secretary, Koena Ramotlou said ‘we have noticed that since this administration came into office in 2016, there have been attempts by the City and its management to cause divisions amongst workers, in particular using the divide and conquer strategy within SAMWU. To this effect, the City under the watchful eye of Mayor Herman Mashaba has sought to divide the union, collapse collective bargaining and further entered into illegal agreements without our consent.’

Meanwhile on the 21st October the Mayor of the City of Johannesburg delivered a bomb to the DA when he resigned from the Party. The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) welcomed the resignation of City of Johannesburg Mayor Herman Mashaba.

SAMWU came out clear that ‘his resignation brings an end to his reign of terror in which workers and unions have been victims.’ ‘The City has under the leadership of Mashaba used millions of Rands in litigation costs taking the union to court and lost every case right up to the Constitutional Court. Despite the ruling of the Constitutional Court, the City remains in contempt of court’, said Koena Ramotlou, General Secretary.

‘Under the leadership of Mashaba, the City has illegally withheld almost R300million of workers’ money in its attempt to cripple SAMWU in Johannesburg. We have also learned that individuals who had been captured by Mashaba have now stolen R19 million with the help of Mashaba and municipal management.’

Ramatlou argued that ‘Workers have felt the wrath of Mashaba for the past 3 years, with the Mayor prosecuting workers through the media without any shred of evidence. To this day, many workers have been placed on extended suspensions.’
SATAWU demand safety at workplaces

To mark Transport Month SATAWU members at Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) held nationwide lunchtime pickets, to raise concerns about safety at work. In Gauteng, pickets took place at Pickets at Umjantshi House in Park Station, Pretoria Main Station in Tshwane.

‘Workers are concerned about issues of safety as a condition of service. The threat of attacks and hijackings faced by train drivers daily is a matter of public record. However, other Prasa employees also complain about unsafe conditions at work. Protection Services members, for instance, are not provided with firearms even though they are fully trained and incidents they attend to are dangerous as culprits are often armed.

Nor are they provided with protective vests or batons with which to defend themselves’, said SATAWU General Secretary, Jack Mazibuko. Mazibuko said ‘In addition, Protection Services members who are charged with patrolling the yards where train sets are kept at night lament the lack of proper lighting; while those who fix trains rely on their cellphone torches to complete tasks because the workshop is poorly lit; and customer services personnel feel vulnerable as no protection is provided for them even though they work with cash.

Plus Prasa has stopped holding meetings with employees and unions to apprise them of safety hazards and how to mitigate them. This partly explains why the Rail Safety Regular (RSR) continues to renew Prasa’s operating license every six months instead of granting if for the full 36 months.’

‘The fact is Prasa’s monopoly has an unintended consequence in that if the regulator revokes its operating license, millions of South Africans who rely on it for their daily commute will be left stranded. This explains why the rail agency’s management has adapted a laissez-faire attitude opting to pay fines levied by the RSR rather than comply with regulations.

The same attitude has resulted in Prasa’s abysmal financial state. Worse still, on auditing Prasa financial statements, Auditor General Kimi Makwetu gave the rail agency a disclaimer of opinion saying assets, fare revenue and other financial information had not been properly accounted for.’

‘Prasa is mandated to provide affordable transport for the country’s poor but given the prevailing state of affairs at the agency, it is no wonder it is unable to meet this primary goal’, said Mazibuko. Other pickers were held at Gauteng South Rail Depot in Springs to raise their concern about issues of safety at work.

Meanwhile, Private security wage negotiations have reached a deadlock, with all parties involved in a ‘last-ditch effort to reach an agreement.’ SATAWU members demand a living wage in the security sector.

SATAWU said ‘Private security unions were set to meet employers at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) on the 7 November, for a last-ditch effort to reach a settlement.’

‘Parties last met at the CCMA on 23 October, when employers put a 7.18% increase offer on the table. The offer was, however, rejected as it did not come close to the salary adjustment workers are seeking. Workers are adamant they want a salary adjustment to R7 500 for Grade C officers, R8 000 for Grade B and R8 500 for Grade A officers. Currently security officers are paid R4 377, R4 981 and R5 558 respectively.’ SATAWU argued that ‘Employers’ latest offer translates to a R314 increase for each of the three years of the proposed agreement and would ultimately see Grade C officers paid R5 320 by the third year.’

The CCMA commissioner directed the parties to negotiate picketing rules in the interim. The nine unions with seats within the bargaining council have a collective membership of 150 000 out of the almost 500 000 total industry workforce. Negotiations started in August.
Evolving intelligence: Varsities must prepare graduates for the new revolution

By Professor Tshilidzi Marwala

A s we adapt to this changing landscape, part of our role as institutions of higher learning has to include teaching our students about the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is not enough for us to adapt; we have to ensure that they can adapt too.

A year before his death, Michelangelo, who was an accomplished sculptor, painter, architect, and poet of the High Renaissance, inscribed “Ancora imparo” (I am still learning) on a sketch. This is the premise of education in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) era. In the 4IR we have to learn, relearn and learn. Learning is Moses and the Prophet in the 4IR. Studies have shown that the 4IR, based on technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), which is when machines mimic human thinking – and in many instances surpass it – has the potential to disrupt every industry.

A 2017 McKinsey report predicted that by 2030, as a minimum, a third of the tasks of 60% of jobs could be automated. We cannot remain static in the face of this paradigm shift, and we certainly cannot be complacent. This month, on 16 October, the UAE announced that it would pilot a new institute, the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), a new graduate-level AI research institution in the UAE. This is part of the UAE’s AI strategy, which focuses on developing a workforce versed in rapidly-advancing technology, which will undoubtedly transform economies in rapidly-advancing technology, which will be the focus of the use of AI in speech and further automate the Ibhayi Brewery in the southern hemisphere. Graduates should be equipped with transferable skills through a broad range of job opportunities and assisted in adjusting their approach to solving business problems in dynamic industrial environments.

As a university, our role is to prepare graduates for the world of work, and some of these graduates pursue postgraduate work or further study. This is challenging the traditional ways we view curricula and teaching methods. As we adapt to this changing landscape, part of our role has to include teaching our students about the 4IR. It is not enough for us to adapt; we have to ensure that they can adapt too.

The 4IR is rapidly changing industries. For example, in the manufacturing sector, robots can adjust the behaviour of robots in real-time and increase the capacity to support human operation and safety standards. South African Breweries in 2018 invested R438-million to expand its Ibhayi Brewery in Port Elizabeth. At one time, the Ibhayi Brewery was the most automated brewery in the southern hemisphere. In accounting, there is a move towards machines that analyse balance sheets and detect fraud, which eliminates accounting errors and ultimately reduces the liability of accounting firms.

Entering a new revolution is not without its challenges. Some fear that the 4IR will result in talent shortages, mass unemployment, and growing inequality. A recent report by the consultancy firm Accenture concluded that approximately six million jobs in South Africa are at risk of automation in the next seven years. The study highlighted that both blue- and white-collar jobs are at risk. These occupations include clerks, cashiers, bank tellers, construction workers, mining, and maintenance staff. However, as Dr Martyn Davies, Deloitte’s managing director of emerging markets and Africa, puts it: “Are your jobs being taken? Maybe they have been displaced somewhere else. Jobs are not destroyed; they are just displaced. The challenge for us in our part of the world is – how do we capture the displacement?”

As South Africans, we should position ourselves in such a way that we are not playing catch-up but rather that we are leading the revolution. Here, universities play a fundamental role in developing skills for future generations. The changes to industries, as we are now seeing, require the reskilling and upskilling of our workforce to close the skills gap. The focus is to keep up with rapidly-changing industries. Graduates should be equipped with transferable skills through a broad range of job opportunities and assisted in adjusting their approach to solving business problems in dynamic industrial environments.

The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), a new graduate-level AI research institution in Abu Dhabi, will accept applications for its first masters and doctoral programmes this month, with classes scheduled to begin on September 2020. As the university’s interim president Professor Michael Brady puts it: “Following decades of research into machine learning and AI, we are now at a turning point in the widespread application of advanced intelligence. That evolution is – among other things – creating exciting new career opportunities in nearly every sector of society.” Is it perhaps time to follow suit in this regard? MBZUAI has partnered with the University of Johannesburg (UJ) launched the Intelligent Systems Institute (ISI). The output of the ISI is the children’s book, My First AI Book: Artificial Intelligence and Learning. This book is being translated into our local languages, including isiZulu and Venda. Furthermore, this book is being converted into other media platforms, such as short movies.

In 2005, the then president of SA, Thabo Mbeki, launched the African Advanced Institute for Information and Communication Technology, also called the Meraka Institute, which is based at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. When Mbeki mooted this institute, he wanted it to offer doctoral degrees. Some of the projects that it focused on were the use of AI in speech recognition. Unfortunately, much of its initial mission was never fulfilled, and it did not emerge as the AI hub it was intended to become. Now that President Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed the President Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed the Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is it feasible for South Africa to establish the National Artificial Intelligence Institute? One way of doing this is to repurpose what remains from the Meraka Institute to create such an institute.

What are universities doing in this regard?

Universities are getting ready for the 4IR. For example, the Johannesburg Centre for Software Engineering, based at the University of Witwatersrand, is one such initiative. The Abha Chair of Data Science at the University of Pretoria, which is headed by my former master’s student Dr Velkos Marivate, is another such initiative.

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UJ this month launched the AI in the 4IR short learning programme aimed at all first-time entering first-year undergraduate students to develop students’ awareness of AI, its applications, and its implications for society and the future of work. It also serves as a platform to teach students where they fit into the industrial changes that accompany the 4IR.

The 4IR is rapidly changing industries. For example, in the manufacturing sector, operators can adjust the behaviour of robots in real-time and increase the capacity to support human operation and safety standards. South African Breweries in 2018 invested R438-million to expand the Ibhayi Brewery in Port Elizabeth. At one time, the Ibhayi Brewery was the most automated brewery in the southern hemisphere. In accounting, there is a move towards machines that analyse balance sheets and detect fraud, which eliminates accounting errors and ultimately reduces the liability of accounting firms.

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As a university, our role is to prepare graduates for the world of work, and some of these graduates pursue postgraduate work or further study. This is challenging the traditional ways we view curricula and teaching methods. As we adapt to this changing landscape, part of our role has to include teaching our students about the 4IR. It is not enough for us to adapt; we have to ensure that they can adapt too. As Bruce Lee’s book Tao of Jeet Kune Do put it: “You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash. Become like water my friend.” We have to become more adaptable.

Marwala is a professor and the vice-chancellor of the University of Johannesburg. He deputises President Cyril Ramaphosa on the South African Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
During this October Transport Month 2019, it is important to acknowledge the role played by the minibus taxi industry in the everyday lives of people around the world and facilitates access to social mobility. Its role is mostly visible through the influence it has on the access of people to places of work, study, healthcare and overall economic growth. The industry forms an integral and complex part of the South African public transport sector.

The business operations and activities within this industry can be described as largely informal and unregulated, being a fabric of economic relations between taxi owners, taxi drivers, taxi users, government, vehicle manufacturers, and other transport-related businesses. Given this, it therefore makes sense to argue that the taxi industry as structurally situated in the informal economy is closely linked to the formal sector/economy. Such business operation involves the conveyance of people from different points of departure to destinations all over the country.

While the industry plays this role, it continues to face challenges related to the stiff competition over routes; increasing illegal operators; taxi violence; and precarious working conditions. Despite the seeming progressive contribution of the minibus taxi industry to the economy and to the lives of owners, employees, passengers and informal traders, the industry is fraught with problems with respect to competition between legal and illegal operators. These continues to be an un-roadworthy and unlicensed minibuses taxis, putting the lives of minibus taxi passengers and commuters at risk.

The un-roadworthy minibuses taxis are those whose owners failed to submit their vehicles for compulsory annual roadworthy tests or change of ownership. The unlicensed minibuses are those whose taxi owners failed to renew their vehicle licenses within the allowed timeframe. In December 2016, it was estimated that there were 35 718 un-roadworthy minibuses taxis. It remains unclear how many minibus taxis there are in South Africa.

The industry is recognized as the genuine example of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), the recent Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE). It is the only sector where black people control an entire sector through their ownership of the taxi mode of transportation. However, the taxi operators operate entirely in the informal sector.

Noting that SANTACO recently acquired a 25% shareholding from the SA Taxi – a major subsidiary of Transaction Capital – for R1.7 billion in a historic transformational ownership transaction. This is after several engagements between SA Taxi and South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) over the years, for the industry to be formalized and participate in revenue streams. Through supporting the entirely black-owned industry, the SA Taxi partnership with SANTACO is a case of BBBEE. While the SA Taxi provides financial support to the taxi operators, it also re-builds, re-sells, insures and refines pre-owned minibuses taxis. SA Taxi insures more than 80% of its financed taxi operators – the taxi operators.

The industry has 68.8% public transport market share, with 16 million of people in South Africa estimated to use minibuses taxis. Approximately R30 billion revenue is generated from fares collected per annum across the country. However, there are different estimates concerning revenue generation in the industry. Any revenue estimates seem to be the result of educated guesswork given that taxi fares are unregulated and that taxis operate on a cash basis. There are about 123 000 individual taxi operators in South Africa. The industry spends about R39 billion per annum on fuel. It also, spends about R2 billion on insurance.

The October Transport Month 2019 is the first of the 6th administration. It comes at a time when the Department of Transport introduced the Revised Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (RTRP), in April 2019, to among other things to change the so-called collaborative taxi industry ownership and operating models through structures such co-operatives and cooperation. While it remains unclear how this collaborative taxi industry ownership will be implemented, it is hoped that it will reduce instances of taxi violence.

In terms of the provision of subsidies to the public transport sector, government overlooks the minibus taxi industry. The industry, by the fact that it transports most people in the country, is a deserving recipient of public transport subsidies.

However, this remains a challenge given its unregulated and informal nature.

While the industry is currently not subsidised, what is required to implement subsidies within the industry is an accounting system, though this is not possible in the informal nature in which minibus taxis operates.

The 6th administration should, therefore, consider the challenges related to public transport, for example, having to do with the regulation of the minibus taxi industry.

It is critical to note that the industry remains a major role player in the economy of the country, and employs a number of people directly, including drivers, rank marshals, etc.

Given that South Africa continues to face high unemployment and poverty rates, the importance of the industry as situated in the informal sector should not be underestimated.

Moreover, the taxi industry has an opportunity of benefitting from the economic empowerment as a result of the participation in the full public transport sector.

Given the informal and unregulated context of the minibus taxi industry – this October Transport Month 2019, I would like to bring the following issues to the attention of the 6th administration:

- The need to reform statistics on the number of legal and illegal minibuses taxis
- The need to implement subsidies within the industry to ensure that all taxi operators have operating licenses and benefit from getting their old taxi vehicles scrapped.
- The need to ensure that all taxi operators operate within the allowed timeframe.
- In order to avoid unnecessary competition and conflict between taxi owners, perhaps, there should be clear guidelines on how the routes are allocated.
- The need to regulate the minibus taxi industry so that they form co-operatives – taxi operators should hold a Taxi Indaba and discuss the possibilities of forming taxi co-operatives, so that they can benefit from subsidies.
- The imporatant of the taxi operators forming co-operatives. In other words, how to implement the collaborative minibus taxi industry ownership and operating models, as announced by the former Minister of Transport.
- The need to ensure that the minibus taxi industry employees have contracts of employment. In this regard, the Department of Labour (DoL) and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) should be consulted. This relates to ensuring compliance with the Sectoral Determination for the Taxi Sector, as implemented by the DoL.
- The need to consider ways to integrate the industry in the Integrated Public Transport Plans.

Therefore, from this October Transport Month 2019 onwards, for the industry to participate fully in the public transport sector, there needs to be a focus on training and business development.

The integration of the industry into a larger public transport scale with the provision of subsidised public transport services may offer new opportunities.

Article written by Mr Siyabulela Fobosi, a PhD Candidate, University of Johannesburg
Why should the LRA prevail during its conflict with the Companies and the Banks Acts?

by Xolani Nyamezele

Background to the Article

It would be prudent for me to first indicate from the onset that as a general legal principle the conflict between the Labour Relations Act (herein referred to as “the LRA”) and other legislations is well established by jurisprudence where the LRA is held to supersede any other Act that is in conflict with it. This expression has unfortunately been elusive or avoided by the decision makers when it relates to the conflict between the Companies Act, Banks Act and the LRA. The article seeks to prove that the Companies Act and the Banks Act are in direct conflict with the LRA. There are conflicting judgments of the Labour Court in this regard and this makes the issue to remain unresolved. It is worth mentioning that the latest Labour Court judgment on the matter took a swipe to the other Court decision that is contradictory to it.

The analysis in this article will prove that the latest Court judgment is based on a misconstrued existence of the Supreme Court of Appeals decision resolving the issue. I find the decision relied on dealing with a totally different matter. My analysis will prove that the Supreme Court of Appeals decision had nothing to do with the conflict between these two legislations and the LRA.

It will prove that the Supreme Court of Appeals did not have an opportunity to deal with the issue of the conflict between these Acts. The aspect that the Supreme Court of Appeals dealt with is not in dispute as it is an established law that labour law proceedings are legal proceedings. It is true that the Supreme Court of Appeals dealt with the issue of business rescue but from a different legal perspective as it dealt with the Arbitrations Act 42, 1965. The mischief still exists as far as the conflict between the LRA and the other two Acts are concerned i.e. both the Banks Act and the Companies Act. My article will analyse the current Court decisions and the three pieces of legislations that are in conflict.

Literature Review

The LRA can be referred to as a Constitutional Act or Law. This being the fact that it was intended to effect section 23 of the Bill of Rights contained in the South African Constitution. I find it imperative to highlight the primary objectives of the LRA even before I can delve on its supremacy. This approach will help in analysing its supremacy thereof as the purposes and objects will provide a prism through which this article and arguments rely on.

The LRA captures its purpose as primary objects in section 1 as follows: “to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratization of the workplace by fulfilling the primary object of the LRA, which are-
(a) to give effect to and regulate the fundamental rights conferred by section 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
(b) to give effect to obligations incurred by the Republic as a member state of the International Labour Organization; and
(c) to provide a framework within which employees and their trade unions, employers and employer’s organizations can-
(i) collectively bargain to determine wages, terms and conditions of employment and other matters of mutual interest; and
(ii) formulate industrial policy; and
(d) to promote-
(i) orderly collective bargaining;
(ii) collective bargaining at sectoral level;
(iii) employee participation in decision-making in the workplace; and
(iv) the effective resolution of labour disputes.

Amongst the crucial aspects in the LRA are that its interpretation as per section 3 must be done to give effect to its objects, the compliance with the South African Constitution and the compliance of South Africa with its International obligations. South Africa has signed a number of International Labour Organization conventions, which I am not going to deal with in my analyses.

In order to implement the purposes and the primary objects of the LRA, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) was established and it was given powers to accredit Bargaining Councils in all the sectors that meet the criteria to form Bargaining Councils.

Section 185 of the LRA gives employee’s rights not to be subjected to unfair labour practices and not to be unfairly dismissed. It becomes a responsibility of every employee to safeguard and exercise his or her rights in order to enjoy them unconditionally.

Section 210 of the LRA is one of the cardinal points of the Act that is meant to guarantee its supremacy. It reads as follows: “if any conflict, relating to the matters dealt with in this Act, arises between this Act and the provisions of any other law save the Constitution or any other Act expressly amending this Act, the provisions of this Act will prevail.” It is against this background that the supremacy of the LRA is asserted.

Section 191 of the LRA as titled “Disputes about unfair dismissals and unfair labour practices” and reads as follows: “(1) (a) If there is a dispute about the fairness of a dismissal, or a dispute about an unfair labour practice, the dismissed employee or the employee alleging unfair labour practice may refer the dispute in writing to-
(i) a council, if the parties to the dispute fall under within the registered scope of that council; or
(ii) the Commission, if no council has jurisdiction.

(b) A referral in terms of paragraph (a) must be made within-
(i) 30 days of the date of dismissal or, if it is a later date, within 30 days of the employer making a final decision to dismiss or uphold the dismissal;
(ii) 90 days of the date of the act or omission which allegedly constitutes the unfair labour practice or, if it is a later date, within 90 days of the date on which the employee became aware of the act or occurrence.”

It is without any doubt that section 191 of the LRA seeks to give effect to section 185 of the LRA. My assertion here is informed by the fact that section 191 of the LRA deals with the consequences of alleged violations of section 185 of the Act which proffers rights to employees not to be unfairly treated or dismissed.

Section 191 of the LRA through the usage of the phrases “may refer the dispute” allows or rather gives a discretion to an employee to either choose to refer the dispute or abandon it. The discretion would be exercised by an employee without any constraints or hindrances. There are no conditions enacted in order for an employee to meet prior to a referral to the CCMA to exercise his discretion or rights save that the dispute must be referred within the prescribed time period of either 30 or 90 days depending on the cause of action.
The Companies Act 71 of 2008 in paragraph 133, titled “General moratorium on legal proceedings against company” reads as follows: “During rescue proceedings, no legal proceeding, including enforcement action, against a company, or in relation to any property belonging to the company or its lawful possession, may be commenced or proceeded with in any forum except—
(a) with the written consent of the practitioner;
(b) with the leave of the Court and in accordance with any terms the Court considers suitable;
(c) as a set off against any claim made by the company in legal proceedings, irrespective of whether those proceedings commenced before or after the business rescue proceedings began;
(d) criminal proceedings against the company or any of its directors or officers; or
(e) proceedings concerning any property of right over which the company exercises the power of a trustee;
(2) During business rescue proceedings, a guarantee or surety in favour of any other person may not be enforced by any person against the company except with leave of the Court and in accordance with any terms the Court considers just and equitable in the circumstances.
(3) If any right to commence proceedings or otherwise assert a claim against the company is subject to a time limit, it is suspended during the company business rescue proceedings.”

The Companies Act, works in tandem with the Banks Act, depending on the institution that seeks to exercise rights enshrined in one of these Acts. The Banks Act through section 69.6 reads as follows “”while such Bank is under curatorship—
(a) all actions, legal proceedings, the execution of all writs, summonses and other legal processes against that Bank shall be stayed or not be instituted or proceeded with without leave of the Court;”

It is without any doubts that arbitration proceedings under the auspices of the CCMA and the Bargaining Councils are legal proceedings. I need not deal in depth with this aspect as it is a legally established principle. Therefore, the CCMA processes will squarely fall under the category of processes that are restrained by the Companies Act and the Banks Act.

It is of course important to indicate that both Acts do not impose a blanket approach for prohibition of legal proceedings. This is against the background that I have observed in a number of decisions that I came across that tend to ignore this fact as they would just dismiss a matter on the basis that an institution lacks jurisdiction. Usually this presumed lack of jurisdiction is not clarified as it should be subject to all the aspects identified by the Companies Act and pending leave from a Court as per the Banks Act.

Irrespective of the above, section 191 of the LRA does not put any conditions for an Applicant prior to referring a dispute to the CCMA. Then it would not be a correct procedure for any other legislation to put hindrances to an employee in order to refer the dispute to the CCMA and exercise or enforce his rights.

I find the prescribed requirements on both the Companies Act and the Banks Act in direct conflict with the LRA hence the LRA should prevail under these circumstances. This does not underestimate the rationale behind the restrictions by these two pieces of legislation but eventually they are in opposite angle with the LRA. I have already alluded to the fact that section 185 of the LRA confers a right to an employee not to be unfairly dismissed or subjected to unfair labour practices. It is logical therefore, that there must be means or an instrument in place of testing whether that right has been violated or not.

Hence section 191 of the Act had to be enacted. It is crucial to take note that the rights provided by section 185 of the LRA are not subjected to any restrictions. It is further my contention that section 36 (1) (limitation clause) of the Constitution cannot be invoked in this regard due to the fact that, the LRA neither clashes with any of the values nor violate any other right that is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Section 1 of the LRA, captures part of its purposes to be Social Justice. Social justice can be contextualised in a laymen’s language to mean free accessibility to judicial institutions and the right to be heard expeditiously. It is an open secret that approaching a Court of law in our country needs a person to go deeper into his pockets in order to be guaranteed success.

There are of course institutions that help people freely but they are still subjected to certain conditions like assessment of affordability. The reality in South Africa is that a person may be presumed to be above the quantum set by an institution in order to qualify for help but only to find that the person cannot afford any legal costs.

The requirement for a Court order before litigating against a company that is under business rescue or a Bank, makes the task of an ordinary person who seeks to exercise his rights as granted by sections 185 and 191 of the LRA respectively very difficult. I want to argue that this makes the principle of social Justice a pie in the sky for numerous South Africans who might be affected by the restrictions of both the Companies and Banks Act.

It is also my submission that this aspect will work against the very foundation of having institutions like the CCMA. The CCMA was established as a tribunal that will ensure that the red tape connected to litigation is cut off. Amongst other things, the LRA was meant to deal with labour law disputes without financial burdens to its users hence there are restriction through rule 25 of the CCMA rules on legal representation in matters related to dismissal disputes.

The CCMA is entrusted a responsibility by the LRA to deal with disputes expeditiously. Both the Companies and Banks Act puts moratorium on legal proceedings against an entity (company or Bank) that is under business rescue until the business rescue process is finalised or either with the leave of the business rescue practitioner or a Court Order to proceed with the legal proceedings. They both suspend the time period provided by the LRA in which to refer and finalise a labour law dispute.

It does not matter whichever way an aggrieved employee choses to pursue as per the Companies and Banks Acts. The reality is that the process will have an impact on speedily resolution of the dispute in question. The companies and Banks acts will again be in conflict with the Act as far as expedition of labour disputes is concerned. Therefore, the LRA has to prevail.

Legal Position


In his judgment the Honourable Justice, A Chachalia, decided that arbitration proceedings are legal proceedings as per section 133 (1) of the companies Act. The issue in front of him was whether arbitration proceedings are legal proceedings as per section 133 (1) of the Companies Act. The issue was whether arbitration proceedings initiated without the knowledge and failure of the litigant to follow the restrictions imposed by the Companies Act are nullity. This was because it subsequently transpired that Chetty failed to comply with the moratorium imposed by the Companies Act or to get permission to proceed with legal proceedings from the business rescue practitioner.

The second aspect of the arguments in this judgment for the purposes of this analysis will be irrelevant. It is due to that reason that I propose not to pay any attention to it. The Honourable Court affirmed that arbitration proceedings were legal proceedings. This issue is not in dispute and has not been contested as far as the conflict with the LRAs concerned and so I will also not spend any energy on it.

The fact that arbitration proceedings are legal proceedings does not negate section 210 of the LRA. The most interesting question is whether this judgment can be used to argue or justify the moratorium on both the Companies and Banks Act not to be in conflict with the LRA.
I beg to differ with the protagonists of the argument, that the Supreme Court of Appeals resolved the conflict between the LRA and the two legislations.

My view here is informed by the fact that those who seek refuge under this judgment ignore the fact that, the arbitration proceedings in question were not under the auspices of the LRA. There was no employment relationship between the involved parties. The parties were instead bound by private contractual arrangements.

The arbitration in this process was under the Arbitration Act 42, 1965. This Act does not fall under the LRA, neither does it amend it and it is applied totally differently from the manner the arbitration proceedings under the LRA are applied. Its remedies are also subjected to different procedures when they are in dispute. Therefore, to equate this judgment with any arbitration process under the CCMA or Bargaining Council is legally flawed.

Another aspect of importance is to observe that the Honourable Court did not have an opportunity to compare the Companies Act to the LRA. This was because the dispute had nothing to do with the LRA. I find that it would be a misconception under the circumstances to compare this judgment to section 210 of the LRA. It is due to this reason that the comparison is irrevocable as this judgment does not set any precedent in this regard. I had not seen any section of the Arbitration Act that equates it to the LRA. I did not find any section of the Arbitration Act, 42, 1965 that has a superior clause as section 210 of the LRA. Then it is my contention that the judgment had nothing to do with the LRA. Therefore, the LRA prevails.

In Sondamase and another v Ellerines Holdings Limited and another (C 669/14), the Labour Court defined the purpose of section 133 (1) of the Companies Act. This issue is immaterial in my analysis and has no impact on the conflict between the Companies Act and the LRA. As a result of this view I will not deal with it.

The Court went further to decide that “it does not appear to that there is any conflict between section 133 (1)(a) of the Companies and the dispute resolution provisions set out in the LRA, it appears to have been settled by the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal in Chetty”. CCMA Case Law for Commissioners, 7th Edition, 2018. I respectfully submit that the Court erred on relying on the Chetty decision of the Supreme Court of Appeals. The Court also erroneously claimed the issue of conflict between the Companies Act and the LRA was settled by the Chetty matter. I have already alluded to the fact that the Supreme Court on the Chetty matter did not deal with arbitration proceedings under the LRA, but, rather arbitration proceedings under the Arbitration Act 42, 1965. I find that the Court failed to draw a distinction between arbitration proceedings under the Arbitration Act and those that are conducted under the LRA. I will not reiterate the distinction that I have already drew between these two legislations.

The Court went further in this judgment to conclude that “the moratorium does not result in the employees forfeiting their claims, but rather, that the claims are merely suspended pending the finalization of the business rescue processes”. CCMA Case Law for Commissioners, 7th Edition, 2018. Whilst I concur with this interpretation of section 133 (1) the Companies Act, the Court failed to appreciate that section 191 of the Act gives an employee an unfettered discretion to either refer a dispute to the CCMA (Bargaining where it exists) or to abandon it. Conversely the Companies Act puts constraints to that right or discretion of the employee.

The second thing that the Court failed to consider is the fact that during business rescue a company is still at a better stage than when at liquidation. Then employees would be adversely affected if the business rescue process fails as success is not guaranteed. Lastly, the process is prolonged to the detriment of an employee whose future is held at ransom and that becomes in direct conflict with the spirit and purport of the LRA which seeks to expedite labour disputes.

In NUMSA obo members v Motheo Steel Engineering (J 271/2014) 2014 ZALCJHB 315, Judge Lagrange decided that “In terms of s210 of the Labour Relations Act 66, 1995 a matter dealt with in that Act prevails over the provisions of any other law save the Constitution or any Act expressly amending it. I am satisfied that s133 (1) of the companies Act 71 of 2008 does not expressly amend the LRA, and in so far as it prevents legal proceedings without the leave of the Court or the business rescue practitioner, it does not prevent the applicant bringing this application”. This judgment has been viciously attacked in numerous fronts. I do not intend to respond to its critics, but, I align myself with it for the reasons I have already articulated above.

Conclusion

I am convinced that I was able to show that the Chetty matter dealt with a totally different issue that was not related to the conflict between section 133 (1) of the Companies Act, section 69.6 of the Banks Act and the LRA. The dispute in front of the Supreme Court of Appeals in this regard was in terms of the Arbitration Law and not the LRA.

The Court was required to decide whether the Arbitration proceedings under the Arbitration law were legal proceedings as anticipated by section 133 (1) of the Companies Act. Secondly, if the Court decides that the arbitration process under the arbitration law was a legal process, as per the Companies Act to nullify the arbitration award as it was rendered in a process that was contrary to the dictates of section 133 (1) of the Companies Act, due to the fact that it was not observed by Chetty prior to the arbitration proceedings.

I can confidently, conclude that with due respect to the Honourable Courts, as far as Sondamase and other decisions rely on Chetty to advance their argument of non-existence of a conflict between these two laws and the LRA, They are a miscarriage of justice or an error in law due to the fact that they are conceived on a wrong legal principle that Chetty put to rest the issue of conflict between the two laws and the LRA which is not an accurate legal position.

I have also shown that there is an unambiguous conflict between the two laws and the LRA, because the LRA seeks to expedite labour law disputes and both the Companies Act and the Banks Act are intended to delay the execution of the disputes.

Lastly, I have shown that section 133 (1) of the Companies Act read in collaboration with section 69.6 of the Banks Act are in direct conflict with section 191 of the LRA. This is informed by the fact that both put moratorium on legal proceedings by an employee who seeks to exercise his right not to be unfairly dismissed or subjected to unfair labour practices as per section 185 of the LRA, whilst section 191 of the LRA grants an unconditional discretion to an employee to decide whether to refer a dispute to the CCMA (a Bargaining Council if it exists) or rather abandon the dispute.

Literature List

4. Google
6. Sondamase and another v Ellerines Holdings Limited and another (C 669/14).
7. NUMSA obo members v Motheo Steel Engineering (J 271/2014) 2014 ZALCJHB 315.

The article was submitted by Xolani Nyamezele.

Disclaimer: kindly take note that the article is written on personal capacity and the views expressed in it are personal and not a reflection of any views held by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) on this matter of any legal aspect.
Conversations surrounding access to quality healthcare are currently dominated by high-level policy discussions in relation to the National Health Insurance [NHI]. These discussions are often far removed from community-driven commitments to creating more equitable realities, a richness of which exist on the ground.

Access to healthcare is a human right in South Africa. This encompasses individual health and the overall well-being of communities. Universal Health Coverage [UHC] forms part of an intergovernmental agreement by states to promote healthy lives and to ensure the well-being of all people.

The World Health Organization’s UHC2030 aims to ensure that everyone has access to quality healthcare, despite their socio-economic status, by 2030. The NHI is our response to this global call for universal health coverage.

In South Africa, the most unequal society in world, safe and quality healthcare shouldn’t be something monopolised by the rich, and lower-income families shouldn’t be pushed deeper into poverty, while trying to access their right to health services.

Fairness: NHI is response to global call
While some might argue that there are other pressing sectors, other than health, that our government could prioritise, like addressing problems in our education system, it is important to realise that health plays an essential role in socio-economic development.

In fact, healthcare can actually be seen as the bedrock for this development, with access to quality health services, being able to, for example, improve school attendance and concentration.

Even from the perspective of fiscal austerity, human productivity is improved when people are healthy enough to contribute to their families and the economy. It is vital role in socio-economic development.

Healthcare cannot be viewed in isolation, in one way or another, it forms the basis for the realisation of a wide variety of socio-economic rights, which is why the NHI is a much-needed step in the right direction.

Referring to the implementation of the NHI, former minister of health, Aaron Motsoaledi said ‘The first five years will be a process of building and preparation. Our first job is to uplift the public health sector so that it is in a proper state for the NHI.’

This uplifting, as well as the debate surrounding the NHI, should be informed by examples of real communities and people who have been working for years to make primary healthcare more accessible.

One example on the ground is that of the Chiawelo Community Health Centre in Soweto.

Taking a holistic, rather than simply symptomatic, approach to primary healthcare, this community practice boasts a wide range of services, such as a 24-hour emergency facility, a pharmacy, a mother-and-child area, HIV and TB counselling, community psychiatry, and dental health.

Invested community members, who trained to become community healthcare workers, have committed themselves to registering people for healthcare and then following up with them. With their help waiting times for primary healthcare are just 22 minutes.

Comprehensive healthcare has been made available to over 3 000 registered families-and 79% of cases before the CCP being successfully resolved.

Lelona Mxesibe is a Political and Budget Analyst at the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute in Johannesburg. The article first appeared in The Citizen.
In giving context to the challenges facing PRASA and its performance, it is important to briefly reflect on the performance of the Department of Transport in the 2018/19 financial year.

This performance reflects an organisation that had no permanent leadership at management level. For the last 2 years, the Department did not have a Director-General and had to rely on acting incumbents. Similarly, out of the 8 Deputy Directors-General, 5 of them were acting.

When we came into office in May this year, at the commencement of the sixth administration, we committed that we would move with speed in addressing the challenge of a high vacancy rate in the Department.

Indeed, we appointed a full-time Director-General, Mr Alec Moemi, within the first two months in office. He has similarly moved swiftly to advertise the vacant positions of Deputy Directors-General and the process is nearing completion.

High vacancy rates in the current economic climate, characterized by high levels of unemployment are not only unacceptable, but hinder the ability of the Department to deliver on its mandate.

This is equally true in respect of PRASA and all other entities of the Department. This is a challenge we have committed to tackle decisively and with the urgency it deserves.

The importance of this in the context of PRASA, is that the Department must provide leadership and operational oversight.

Adequate capacity at this level also means a Department able to provide a steady hand that guides and supports PRASA in the execution of its mandate.

This state of affairs of acting incumbents has replicated itself in PRASA, albeit for a different set of reasons. All CEO positions are occupied by acting incumbents in all PRASA divisions, subsidiaries and indeed at Group level.

Processes are now underway to finalise the appointment of a full-time Group CEO by the end of the current year.
financial year.

Progress has been made with the appointment of executives with the appointment of a Chief Financial Officer, a Chief Procurement Officer and a Group Executive for Human Capital Management on 1 September 2019.

These newly appointed executives are all women, an affirmation of our commitment to women empowerment and recognition of women excellence.

Similarly, we are at the tail end of the process to appoint a permanent Board whose first order of business is to take extraordinary measures to stabilize operations and ensure that PRASA is able to deliver on its mandate.

PRASA’s performance remains dismal, having achieved only 26% of its annual predetermined objectives in 2018/19. This is a slight improvement from 21% in the previous year. This is an unacceptable state of affairs, which requires drastic action. We will strengthen our oversight instruments to include early warning systems that will enable us to intervene timeously and ensure PRASA is able to deliver on its predetermined objectives.

PRASA’s financial performance over the years remains a challenge. Over the last 5 years, PRASA’s revenue has declined by 48%, resulting in an untenable situation where its operating deficit reached unacceptable levels of R1.8 billion.

PRASA remains constrained in its ability to spend its capital budget, resulting in the reduction of its capital budget baseline.

While this reduction has significantly affected PRASA’s capital projects, it has not, however, affected the rolling stock fleet renewal programme, signalling and the general overhaul of Metrorail and Mainline Passenger Service coaches.

In the year under review, the General Overhaul (GO) programme brought back 351 Metrorail coaches, one coach short of target.

A total of 47 ShoholazaMeyi coaches were overhauled during this period, which was the actual target of GO commitment.

Despite this, post-year-end PRASA has been unable to finalise the award of the new general overhaul contract, which is central to sustaining the current system and accelerate the return to service of coaches that undergo maintenance or refurbishment.

In similar vein, the deployment of the new trains is held back by slow progress in delivering requisite infrastructure in identified corridors. These challenges PRASA is facing must be understood against the context of rampant criminality and lawlessness in the environment in which PRASA operates.

In the year under review, 762 coaches or 17% of the entire fleet were affected by acts of vandalism, theft and arson. Incidents of torching were affected by acts of vandalism, theft and arson.

In the Western Cape in 2018/19, PRASA currently employs 16 350 employees at a cost of R5.6 billion which constitutes 49% of its overall budget.

We are deeply concerned that the audit outcomes for the year under review are a disclaimer, the worst audit opinion an entity can get from the AG.

The work to implement an audit intervention plan that will ensure that we do not return next years with the same audit outcomes is underway. This includes the Department playing an active role in monitoring the implementation of such a plan.

We are deeply concerned that the AG has flagged an irregular expenditure of R27.2 billion.

This is unacceptable as this suggests that either there are no systems in place to prevent and detect irregular expenditure, or the systems in place are simply ineffective or ignored.

Measures will be put in place to arrest this situation and strengthen prevention interventions. Such measures will include closely monitoring irregular expenditure through the quarterly reports and providing support to enable PRASA to investigate and take appropriate action in order to condone the irregular expenditure and arrest the escalation.

The AG further noted fruitless and wasteful expenditure of R383 million, the bulk of which relates to transactions where value for money could not be justified. We are equally concerned that the AG believes that the quantum of the fruitless and wasteful expenditure may be more than what is disclosed in the financial statements.

Since the inception of the War Room, Metrorail’s on-time performance has improved from 49% to 63%, bringing us closer to achieving our goal of 85%.

The new trains operating between Pianarspoort and Pretoria stations register on-time performance of 96% and passenger numbers are increasing. We want to see the improvement replicated across the country in all PRASA operations.

Our commitment to addressing the chronic challenges which limit PRASA’s ability to deliver an efficient, safe and reliable passenger rail service has never been greater.

We will also pay close attention to the implementation of measures that ensure PRASA achieves good financial health and employs public resources prudently.
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried employees</td>
<td>R55</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO’s and NGO’s</td>
<td>R80</td>
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<td>Institutions</td>
<td>R80</td>
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<td>Companies</td>
<td>R90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airmail</td>
<td>R290</td>
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<td>R290</td>
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