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ESKOM: On or Off?
The debate around the future of SOEs and the economy has become lively over the past couple of months and weeks, especially after the federation released its paper on how to fix the economy, titled Key Eskom and Economic Intervention Proposals. This is a necessary debate that will hopefully jolt the country into action and bring all social partners to work together for a better future. We already have R3 trillion worth of the overall public debt, some of which is denominated in US Dollars or other foreign currencies. This heavy debt burden can only balloon even more as long as nothing changes, especially the governance of most of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) that continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate.

Failure to deal with this will result in IMF or World Bank inspired austerity that will not just see cuts in public spending but will lead to a massive reduction in all aspects of social and economic benefits to the people, in wages, retirement benefits and pensions, health and education and social welfare transfers. Our proposal has been distorted and we will continue to pushback against the propaganda and we are also using this copy of the Shop steward to explain the proposal.

**What is COSATU proposing?**

COSATU is proposing that there must be an intervention package to save Eskom. It must be based upon a social compact of government, business, labour and community. Each social partner must contribute, compromise and sacrifice for the broader public good.

Workers can contribute a small portion, then government and big business will also contribute. Eskom already has borrowed the money from workers and government institutions, and we are proposing that the money should be converted into an investment. This will reduce the Eskom debt and help the power utility to have money to fix its collapsing and ailing infrastructure.

But before any of this happens, we are proposing that Eskom allows workers to sit on its board and also take serious action to deal with corruption, wasteful expenditure and mismanagement. If we do this, we will save the economy, jobs and protect the power utility from privatisation.

**Is this an investment or a bailout?**

It is an investment. It is not a bail out. Workers will own a stake in Eskom and will have a say in what happens. Government provides key essential services that benefit workers and their families. Workers and poor communities do not want Eskom to be privatised and they also want to own some strategic sectors of the economy. Eskom remains very important and strategic and this investment will benefit the workers and the poor long-term.

Retirement savings are being borrowed to buy companies by millionaires and billionaires and these investments often do not benefit workers but rather the owners of those companies. Investing a small portion at Eskom will mean that workers own a piece of Eskom and will benefit from their money and protect their jobs.

**FEDUSA proposes business rescue, is this bad?**

The proposal tabled by COSATU remains the only way to ensure that Eskom remains a state owned enterprise and job at Eskom and the entire economy are protected. Business rescue practitioners always make use of restructurings as a mechanism to curb costs. Business rescue will result in job losses at Eskom.

**Why is privatisation of Eskom bad?**

Privatisation will mean that electricity will be sold on the basis of profit alone. It will no longer be sought to be sold at levels that are affordable for consumers and businesses or that will support economic growth and job creation. One of the state’s key tasks is to uplift the poor, eradicate the legacies of apartheid, reduce inequality and poverty and provide key public services that are affordable. The private sector’s job is to make profits, not to worry about addressing poverty. If Eskom is privatised, then it will become unaffordable for the poor. Electricity will be unaffordable like we see with private hospitals, private schools, pay television, data costs and other things that are only enjoyed by the rich. We all need electricity but if it is privatised, we will not afford it. Many jobs will be lost and small businesses in townships and rural areas will collapse because electricity will be expensive. If electricity is expensive it will mean that the price of everything is also expensive because shops will charge more for their goods.

**How can you guarantee that this investment to Eskom is safe?**

This is a critical question. Firstly, it is critical to remember that the GEPF, UIF and COIDF are defined benefits. This means that their benefits are based upon workers’ years of service and contribution. Public service pensions are insured through the national Treasury, if something happens the national treasury covers and pays the money.

That is why workers were covered when their money that was invested in VBS and Steinhoff was stolen. If workers decide to invest in Eskom, we have made it very clear in our proposal that there can be no blank cheques. Our proposals to government will only happen if government can prove that it is ready to fight corruption, wasteful expenditure and mismanagement. We want to see action before workers can invest, those who stole must go to jail. Managers who broke Eskom must be fired immediately.

Whatever investments that might take place need to include very clear guarantees. This has been done in the past through government guaranteed bonds. It could also be done through the PIC being given shareholder equity in Eskom.

**How will COSATU and government ensure that Eskom does not waste the money?**

This is critical. Our intervention can only work if government, Eskom, community and business make sacrifices and play their role. COSATU’s proposals include 30 non-negotiable conditions that must be implemented in a comprehensive turnaround plan. These include not only dealing with corruption but also dealing with the bloated management and perks, that Eskom be restuctured to meet the needs of the economy, that workers be skilled and deployed as needed, that all contracts be subject to scrutiny and the over pricing by suppliers be dealt with.

Eskom and government must report regularly to Nedlac’s Presidential Working Committee on the implementation of the turn around plan. There is no blank cheque.

**Why does treasury not make this investment into Eskom?**

The economic paper tabled by treasury recommends that state owned enterprises such as Eskom should be auctioned off and privatised. Treasury under the leadership of Finance Minister Tito Mboweni have no interest in keeping Eskom under the ownership of the state.

**What will happen if Eskom collapses?**

There will be job losses. Every single company depends on electricity. The Johannesburg stock market will crash, all pensions invested in the JSE will be lost and it will take years to recover.

Government will be forced to go to the IMF for a bail out. The conditions that the IMF will impose will be brutal, especially to the public sector workers. Many public sector workers will be retrenched, their salaries and benefits will be reduced and many government programmes like free...
education and social grants will be stopped. They will do to South Africa what they did to the people of Greece. They will slash pensions and wages by 25%. It will send the economy into a depression.

Has the decision been taken?

No, nothing has been decided. COSATU has only raised the issue of cooperation between workers, government and big business at Nedlac but no decision has been taken. It is still a proposal and like all proposals this must be debated, and workers be consulted so that we can find the best solution that will benefit everyone.

What COSATU is adamant on is that if we do nothing, things will get worse and the economy will collapse.

Any intervention cannot be left to government or Eskom alone but all of us including government, business, labour and society must contribute to save the economy. We must place the needs of the nation above corruption.

Experience elsewhere demonstrates the economic value of particular types of state intervention. Japan, Korea and Taiwan intervened strongly and systematically in markets with industrial, trade and financial sector policies, to advance economic expansion, productivity, and growth and export performance. Even Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand previously used, and China today uses, active industrial policy measures by the state to influence the pattern and rate of economic activities.

The reconstruction of post-war Europe would not have been successful without an active state. As such, the experience is widespread and not confined to the developing world. Most states have at a given moment played an active role in shaping economic development.

Markets have been inadequate in responding to the social needs of human beings in setting decent wages and fair standards, in protecting the poor and the marginalised, in correcting imbalances of wealth and inequality. Unfettered free markets have led to the development of major inequalities and poverty in societies and defeated the purpose of economic policy.

COSATU has in its various interventions in economic and social policies, as well as debates around state restructuring, kept the vision of a developmental state foremost.

Workers taking control

The 13th National Congress of COSATU gave us a mandate to ensure that over the next five years, the federation ensures that the working class takes a lead as we put into practice the concept of a developmental state. COSATU’s paper on the economy and Eskom is just the beginning. COSATU pushes for the vision of an active developmental state. The Federation believes that the state can play a dynamic developmental role as a key economic agent. The state is the biggest employer, consumer and investor.

Through its fiscal and monetary policies, and the composition of its budget, it exerts a tremendous economic influence. Through its education, trade and industrial policies it shapes the country’s industrial development.

An active, interventionist state is necessary if we want to achieve our goal of economic development - in other words, to overcome poverty and redistributive power, wealth, income and economic opportunity from a small minority to the majority of the citizens.

A developmental state will marshal resources towards the building of an efficient, dynamic economy. South Africa needs a set of active, interventionist state policies, to advance economic development.

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This is the thread that has run through proposals for state bank, interventionist industrial policy, a comprehensive social security system, developmental fiscal and monetary policies and so on. These all recognise a role for the market, albeit in terms of a regulated framework, within the context of an active and driving role for the state. In order for any of these policies to be effective, requires the restructuring of state institutions.

This is also one of the reasons that we oppose the austerity strategy that is targeted at the public service. COSATU’s proposition called Key Eskom and Economic Intervention Proposals provides a desperately needed relief, especially on the fiscus. If adopted, it would help move Eskom towards stability to ensure uninterrupted economic activities, improve the country’s debt-GDP ratio, alleviate the debt-service costs and risk-premiums, and dissipate the cloud of the “junk-status”.

This is already a massive contribution from labour to help pull the country from the brink of economic meltdown. We, therefore insist that there is no need for Treasury to be flattered with the public service wage bill because it will cause a major and extended labour unrest and crisis of service delivery.
Organizational culture in all progressive trade unions across the globe has been and should be about nurturing and deepening a sustainable understanding of class consciousness in which workers are empowered consciously to understand each other better in relation to workers’ exploitation at the point of production.

And if they understand each other better in their souls, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand that their fellow worker is, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same struggles and to the extreme the same questions in life. Today, progressive trade unions are forced to change the way they have been managing and leading trade unions to match how the modern humans actually work and live. Re-crafting the organizational culture in the way it consciously matches and really deepen our organizational hegemony doesn’t come cheap!

Organizing, re-organizing how we do our basic work of recruitment, developing recruitment strategies, planning and mobilization of resources, implementation of work-plans, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms must, for example, be well thought to avoid complacency or triumphalism. This view is best captured in the Organizing materials that ‘The modern workplace has a serious facelift in the recent years in that we have more and more workers being able to work until retirement and some extending their retirement age[s] to the maximum. Majority of these workers have tasted the benefits of belonging to unions and appreciate the brutality of bosses and have observed one of their family members being retrenched or ill-treated at the workplace and acknowledges the importance of participating in the activities of a union. While some may also be concerned about lack of focus on workplace issues by some unions and still demanding unions to fight back against exploitation and mainly labelled ‘die-heart’ members.

On the other hand there are new workers, highly sophisticated and educated, who have little experience about the role of unions and still believe they can ‘represent’ themselves when engaging management in their individual capacities than in as a collective. Some argue that ‘they are bored to belong to unions…’ or some are deliberately dis-organized by bosses by being placed on short contracts, with no consistent workplace.

The Preamble of COSATU Constitution as amended by the 13th National Congress in 2018 declares, ‘we, the trade union representatives present firmly commit ourselves to a united, democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation. We believe this could be only be achieved under the leadership of a united working class. Our history has taught us that to achieve this goal, we will have to carry out tasks, such as to organize the unorganized workers and build effective trade unions based on the democratic organization of workers in the factories, mines, shops, farms and other workplaces.’

In this edition of a series of articles on ‘Going Back to Basics’, we will attempt to unlock our potentials to organize better and also on the other hand explore conscious theoretical basis why we progressive trade unions organize and venture of course in other new, but different ways to empower newly elected shopstewards to carry the hegemonic baton to the next generation of dialecticians at the coalface of organization building.

Changing World of Work!

In the recent work, debates have been raging across the world about the changing world of work and also the introduction of the concept of the 4th Industrial Revolution and all related challenges it poses in organizing at the workplace.

‘As long as classes exist, the class struggle is inevitable’ - Marx

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On the other hand there are new workers, highly sophisticated and educated, who have little experience about the role of unions and still believe they can ‘represent’ themselves when engaging management in their individual capacities than in as a collective. Some argue that ‘they are bored to belong to unions…’ or some are deliberately dis-organized by bosses by being placed on short contracts, with no consistent workplace.

To the extreme, many are employed under labour brokers-the modern enemy of workplace organization. In every progressive trade union, through provisions of conscious programmes on class consciousness, workers will be able to connect the dots between their individual roles in the organization and the goals of the organization.

They say ‘when people see that connection, they get a lot of energy out of their participation. They feel the importance, dignity and meaning of their belonging’.

Many scholars argue that ‘membership engagement is the art and science of engaging people in authentic and recognised connections to strategy, roles, performance, organization, development, relationships and transform such energy and efforts into sustainable results.’ Lack of organizational candour, if unchecked, ultimately leads to dysfunctional environments! An army without culture is a dull-witted army, and a dull-witted army cannot defeat the enemy’ - Mao

First things first!
But what is an organizer?

Trade unionism practiced at the Local level

‘If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself. If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience.’ - Mao

All COSATU affiliated trade unions from time to time do appoint union organizers, whose task is to ‘organize the unorganised workers, and to build effective trade unions based on democratic organization of workers in factories, mines, shops, farms and other workplaces.’ Organizers are regarded as officials in unions or in the federation who are regarded as ‘employees to perform a stipulated function or acting in a specified capacity.’

At all cost organizers are called upon to ‘unify national trade unions under COSATU leadership, to combat the divisions amongst the workers of South Africa and unite them into strong and confident working class formations, to reinforce and encourage progressive international worker contact and solidarity so as to assist one another in all struggles under the slogan an injury to one is an injury to all.’

Organizers in the majority of unions are called upon to lead on capacity building programmes at Locals, regions and provinces to ‘empower workers to better understand comradely
discipline and the necessity of uniting the workers’ forces for the purpose of protecting the interests of the working people.’

If insufficient work is done on ideological training and orientation, workers as part of the working class may be left to itself and also know only about trade union consciousness but miss the broad picture of heightening class consciousness. Thus we must encourage the curiosity for self-cultivation amongst workers and lead mass-based worker education to deepen appreciation of class struggle.

**Mastering of organizing task[s] is a skill!**

Although every workplace is different and the needs of workers vary, there are some basic steps involved in winning a union voice on the shop floor. Building the unions through aggressive recruitment campaigns is important. Organizers must appreciate that whether they know it or not, are engaged in class struggle and are a potential force for fundamental change.

Organizers must appreciate that solidarity with workers across all other sectors or globally underline the need for recognizing common class interests of a tactical and strategic nature across race, gender and national divisions. And this is all about advancing social justice for all! Organizers must be conscious that ‘unions are not political parties, but that they must not limit themselves to economic matters, no arena should be immune from unionism.’

Organizers must ask this question[s], how are going to deepen our relationships with other sections of the poor, and acting as a mobilising force with poor communities and the oppressed masses, vulnerable groupings? For example, DITSELA Provincial Programme Module on Leadership prioritizes enabling trade unionists to understand unions in a different and the needs of workers vary, precarious working conditions and dynamics on the round may differ. Organizers must be able to synthesise all these challenges to ensure our organizing strategies and all methodologies applied are mastered by all shopstewards, workers alike to build the organization.

Our strategies obviously will reflect of different realities we encounter, tackling the real risks we may face and dangers, as we work individually and collectively to master the own organizing models to improve working and living conditions of our members.

**Establish committees at all structures**

January month has been a busy season with trade unions facilitating meetings as the year starts but majority of our unions were interacting with members, distributing member’s diaries, calendars and paraphernalia as an organizing instrument to service workers. For example, SADTU KwaZulu-Natal held its Provincial Organising Committee Meeting at SADTU House in Durban.

SADTU said ‘This meeting is convened by the KZN Provincial Secretariat with a purpose of discussing the implementation of union programmes for 2020 and zoom into the functionality of the Regional Offices with a goal of ensuring that pillar no1 that is enshrined in the union 2030 vision is fulfilled. This POC meeting is attended by Regional Secretaries, Regional Deputy secretaries and Full time Shop Stewards extended to Regional Administrators and Provincial portfolio conveners.’

‘SADTU KZN is taking the issue of membership service very serious and it aims to continue and prioritise its members going forward by ensuring that all union offices are well resourced, staff fully capacitated and leadership is attending to all matters received from members with immediate effect.’

**Organizers must formulate the sitings of the organizing committee**

Organizers must convene Local Organizing or Provincial Organizing and Campaigns meetings according to their agreed upon schedules as part and parcel of organization building and development. Organizers must facilitate sittings of the organizing committee representing all major departments and all shifts and reflecting the racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the workforce.

Organizing committee training must begin immediately. Committee members must be prepared to work hard to educate themselves and their co-workers about the union and to warn and educate co-workers about the impending management anti-union campaign. The organizing committee must be educated about workers’ rights to organize and must understand the policies of the federation and principles of democracy and workers-control which others call it ‘rank-and-file control.’ Other committees to be established may be the Political Commission dealing with local political issues, and coordination of political schools, ideological training and organizational orientation. Such a committee may also deal with issues of local Alliance relations and cementing to working closely with broader civil society in tackling socio-economic issues.

Organizers must mobilize works into the establishment of Educator’s Forum to develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge about the role of unions, learning holistically about becoming a union representative, understanding of union values and principles, learning about how to draft meeting agenda and minutes of a meeting, formulation of local strategies and tactics, learning about issues of collective bargaining for example.

Organizers must formulate the existence of Socialist Forum which acts as ideological platforms to study about a system of exploitation of workers and debating what are alternatives. Women representation in unions has been in the majority yet few women are leading. The Gender Forum will enable, empower and promote gender equality in the execution of trade union business.

Organizers must appreciate that labour case management demand a lot of attention and knowledge on how to prepare for welfare cases of members in unfair labour practice. Young workers are participating in big number in many unions and the establishment of Workers’ Forum will ensure that they play a meaningful role in programmes and also initiate other sub-committees such as Sports, Arts and Culture to keep members busy.

Many workers from their families have brothers and sisters who are future workers. Interaction with youth structures and other progressive formations will assist to build synergy of activism with such locals. And organizers must put their organizing skills at the disposal of the Progressive Youth Alliance at Locals to enhance their functionality to tackle youth challenges such as precarious working conditions, child labour, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, school funding issues, crime, etc

**Adopt workplace campaigning issues**

The Organizing committee must develop a program of union demands (the improvements you are organizing to achieve) and a strategy for the union election campaign. A plan for highlighting the issues on a program in the workplace which is carried out through various organizing campaign activities.

Organize workplace meetings to recruit and speak to workers

Kindly engage your colleagues about collective power of workers at a shop floor level and motivate them to engage on issues which are still a challenge for them which affect their work and arrange with management to raise issues on their behalf.

The table reflect the recruitment
targets for every sector and make workers aware that each one of them has a role to play to achieve!

**Recruitment targets for affiliated trade unions in the period under review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affilie</th>
<th>National Target Per Month</th>
<th>Provincial Monthly Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEPPWAWU</td>
<td>17 400</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWU</td>
<td>4 158</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENOSA</td>
<td>26 192</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUM</td>
<td>87 508</td>
<td>1 080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWUSA</td>
<td>3 589</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUPCRU</td>
<td>6 731</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACCAWU</td>
<td>42 105</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACTWU</td>
<td>31 300</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADTU</td>
<td>78 764</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAEPU</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMWU</td>
<td>2 807</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASBO</td>
<td>44 010</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATAWU</td>
<td>24 588</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>459 371</td>
<td>5 675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once all issues are put on the agenda for negotiations or engagement, get feedback from them and table the reports. It shows good foundation of accountability and transparency. And trade unions are about that!

**Conduct constitutional guided elections**

Recruitment is on-going and once a sufficient number of workers are organized, arrange to have union officials to facilitate formal establishment of constitutional structures, elect worker representatives, distribute union Constitution, arrange induction of new members and arrange agenda for meetings. If the union wins, the employer must recognize and bargain with the union. Winning a union election not only requires a strong, diverse organizing committee and a solid issues program, but there must also be a plan to fight the employer’s anti-union campaign.

**Engage management and address workers’ issues**

The organizing campaign does not let up after an election victory. The real goal of the campaign, a union contract (the document the union and the employer negotiate and sign, covering everything from wages to how disputes will be handled), is still to be achieved. Workers must be mobilized to support the union’s contract demands (decided by you and your co-workers) and pressure the employer to meet them.

**Organize locally, act globally**

In every worker’s meeting ensure that mass education takes place about what capitalism does to workers and that must never take long time. The topics about class struggle must be concise to build class consciousness at the local. And worker struggle outside the workers must be indicated to plough seeds on consciousness on solidarity activities.

Always encourage our locals to make their own decisions on issues of local importance, the resources of the national union will always be there when you need them — along with a staff person to provide guidance and support.

**Where to begin to enhance ideological clarity?**

Workers must aspire to master the art and craft of utilizing Marxist-Leninist Theories of Analysis in resolving modern challenges imposed consciously by a system of capitalism.

For example, Lenin’s ‘What is to be done’, contains a wealth of knowledge on the importance of a socialist future, which deserves much greater study. We urge every organizer to study individually or collectively to ‘become dialecticians in deeds and not in words.’ Lenin said that ‘we need a professional revolutionary organization as a necessary vehicle to organize and lead the most conscious workers into a politically coherent movement...’

The movement of the working class is primarily built by winning battles bit by bit and advance to win greater events. Organizers should not be afraid to share their perspectives on how to carry out a socialist revolution and give examples to workers in a particular sector on how, concretely, capitalism could be overthrown.

He argued that progressive trade unions ‘should consciously and resolutely start persistent, practical activities calculated to extend over a long period of years and designed to give the workers and all the working people generally practical training in the art of managing the economy of the whole country.’

History shows that the revolutionary class must and should overcome the amateurish challenge of ‘workerism’, which purely an attempt by some, consciously or unconsciously, to power the political level as ‘short-cut’ to the masses. This must be totally rejected because it is not a ‘proletarian tendency.’ So, organizers are a critical human resource in which organization rebuilding resides in their shoulders, side by side with elected worker leadership!

‘...the strength of the working class lies in organisation. Unless the masses are organised, the proletariat is nothing. Organized-it is everything. Organization means unity of action, unity in practical operations. But every action is valuable, of course, only because and insofar as it serves to push things forward and not backward, insofar as it serves to unite the proletariat ideologically, to elevate, and not degrade, corrupt or weaken it. Organization not based on principle is meaningless, and in practice converts the workers into a miserable appendage of the bourgeoisie in power...’

Within COSATU structures from the Locals and Branches of affiliated trade unions, it is proper to establish Shopsteward Committees; sometimes or at various structures, these structures are constitutionally managed through what is called Shopstewards Councils.

Organizational development has taught over more than 30 years that ‘if a union or a federation has clear goals, but no policies or strategies for achieving them, it will be ineffective. If it has clear goals and policies and strategies, but lacks the capacity to implement them, it will be ineffective. If the union or the federation does not have the capacity to implement its policies and strategies, but the policies and strategies themselves are wrong, the organization will still be ineffective in achieving its goals. To be effective, the unions or federation must focus on its irreplaceable infrastructure which includes having structures that perform their roles. Policies and strategies have to be regularly developed, implemented, assessed and monitored to their logical conclusions.’

For organizers to fully appreciate the task at hand, they must understand the basic pillars in which their tasks are based, which includes, amongst others;

- Organizational Building and Development which includes Building Unity within the federation, within the unions and with other federations,
- Strengthening the Back to Basics campaign, building the fighting capacity of COSATU through local campaigning on the ground and strengthening workplace organization or workplace struggles
- Heightening the struggle against neo-liberalism, eradication of the exploitative and barbaric economic system of capitalism,
- Shaping the Battle of Ideas and re-asserting the hegemony of revolutionary working class ideas, making use of popular workers education, mass education, organizing and the use of media and other forms of social media available today, and
- Enhancing international solidarity work and participating in global labour struggles to attain social justice for all.

Lenin summarized these tasks...
to be delivered by saying, ‘the character of any organization is naturally and inevitably determined by the content of its activity.’ Organizers must be determined, charismatic, and persuasive individuals able to sway groups to action under trying circumstances when jobs are on the line. Organizers must be strong enough to stand up to constant confrontation and must be willing to take big risks. Since failure rates of organizing campaigns are high, “burn-out” among organizers is prevalent. Organizers frequently work under the constraints of limited resources (see sections on organizing as cause and controversies).

In bottom-up organizing, management and labour are pitted against each other and management often schedules retaliatory, aggressive tactics in an effort to break the chapter, called “union-busting.” The intention of such union-busting may be to “nip it in the bud” before getting locked into a costly collective bargaining agreement. Management may feel that the organizing campaign encourages and capitalizes upon worker disobedience and perceived disloyalty. For this reason, management may hire anti-union consultants or lawyers known as “union-busters” or “union avoidance consultants.

Key union activist who defies management may be at a great personal risk. Solidarity amongst all organizers must be synergised through working in committees to absorb the organizational pressures. Some of the organizer’s roles may vary from one union to the other, which may include the following:

**Responsibility to members**
- Represent members at workplaces
- Arrange general meetings regularly
- Be accountable and get mandates from workers
- Draft Report back for meetings or notices for meetings
- Initiate and lead worker education programmes
- Take grievances of workers to management and defending workers against unfair labour practices

**Responsibilities within unions**
- Build strong shopsteward committees and Shopsteward Councils
- Attend all meetings and participate on areas of work
- Attend meetings with broader stakeholders

- Carry out resolutions adopted in constitutional meetings
- Mobilize for campaigns and putting logistical items properly

**Responsibilities with the federation**
- Attend and build COSATU Locals and Shopsteward Councils
- Encourage members to participate in campaigns, marches, pickets and organized demonstrations
- Build working class unity

**Responsibilities towards the community**
- Know your communities to participate in stakeholder’s forums
- Encourage participation of workers in Local Alliance meetings
- Engage in the struggle for promotion of democracy, good governance and realization for social justice for all

Working collectively may ease the burden of workloads or pressures!

**State of COSATU Locals**
Many reports tabled at National Congresses, Central Executive Committees, Provincial Executive Committees and also at Local Executive Committees have never missed to emphasise the ever importance of functioning COSATU Locals. According to COSATU Constitution [as amended by the 13th National Congress in 2018, in terms of Local structures, all shopstewards from all affiliates encouraged to set up local offices to facilitate closer liaison between affiliates in a particular locality, to amongst others, ensure that the Locals are running smoothly, to deal with any other issue which may be referred to their attention by the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC), to raise the level of understanding of the federation policies amongst all members in the area where the Local operates, to implement fully the decisions of the federation, to coordinate better the activities of the federation within the Local, to nominate members to attend PEC meetings specifically to represent the interests of members in that Local, and nominate members to attend any particular meetings, if instructed by the PEC. And such powers also relates to how such members may be suspended or removed from office and/or how to handle issues related to resignations when serving a Local’

All participants in those Locals must be shopstewards in good standing and duly elected by workers at the shop floor level as worker representatives or worker office bearers of an affiliate union. In some unions, organizer’s role is to recruit within agreed upon strategies and plans, with targets outlined. And recruitment without sustainable programmes to sustain membership and service workers at any workplace is a futile exercise!

‘Contact with the masses, i.e., with the overwhelming majority of the workers (and eventually of all the working people), is the most important and most fundamental condition for the success of all trade union activity. In all the trade union organisations and their machinery, from bottom up, there should be instituted, and tested in practice over a period of many years, a system of responsible comrades—who must not all be Communists—who should live right among the workers, study their lives in every detail, and be able unerringly, on any question, and at any time, to judge the mood, the real needs, aspirations, and thoughts of the masses. They must be able without a shadow of false idealisation to define the degree of their class-consciousness and the extent to which they are influenced by various prejudices and survivals of the past; and they must be able to win the boundless confidence of the, masses by a comradely attitude and concern for their needs.’

In bottom-up organizing, management and labour are pitted as cause and controversies.

And also the Labour Relations Act [Act 66 of 1995] has recognition of the ‘Right to Organise’, with sections which ‘recognises and regulates the rights of workers to organize and join trade unions, and the right to strike. It guarantees trade union representatives access to the workplace and regulates the right of employers to lock workers out in certain situations.’ This clause is derived from the ILO Convention 98 on ‘The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining’ (1949) No 98 is an International Labour Organization Convention. It is one of eight ILO fundamental conventions.” Its counterpart on the general principle of freedom of association is the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (1949) No 87.

The Preamble of Convention 98 notes its adoption on July 1, 1949. After this the Convention covers, first, the rights of union members to organise independently, without interference by employers in article 1 to 3. Second, articles 4 to 6 require the positive creation of rights to collective bargaining, and that each member state’s law promotes it.

**Article 1** states that workers must be protected against discrimination for joining a union, particularly conditions of employers to not join a union, dismissal or any other prejudice for having union membership or engaging in union activities. Article 2 requires that both workers and employers’ organisations (i.e. trade unions and business confederations) should not be interfered in their own establishment, functioning or administration. Article 2(2) prohibits, in particular, unions being dominated.
by employers through "financial or other means" (such as a union being given funding by an employer, or the employer influencing who the officials are). Article 3 requires each ILO member give effect to articles 1 and 2 through appropriate machinery, such as a government watchdog.

Article 1
1. Workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination in respect of their employment.
2. Such protection shall apply more particularly in respect of acts calculated to--
   (a) ... the employment of a worker subject to the condition that he shall not join a union or shall relinquish trade union membership;
   (b) ... discrimination in respect of their employment.

What are the tasks at hand?
'Any revolutionary organization is a living organism, which evolves at each stage of its development. The transformation from a small circle to a larger grouping leads to different methods, as does the transformation of any mass party. This can give rise to frictions and splits at a certain stage. Splits can be viewed as unfortunate, but they are sometimes inevitable and even necessary,' argues one scholar.

Just as a human being sheds or 'purges' dead cells to allow new cells to grow in their place, a similar process takes place within revolutionary organizations. However, more effort must be executed to keep structures vibrant!

COSATU Local as an anchor for worker's Campaigns on the ground
Some bold views that 'workers had no need for revolutionary ideas and theory, only general activity. Lenin has argued that 'we need to train more Marxist cadres-with a thorough grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory. Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.'

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. It 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 working conditions.

To take this point further, Fredrick Engels 'recognises not simply two forms of the revolutionary struggle [political and economic] 'as is the fashion among us', but the three forms, placing theoretical struggle on the ground.

COSATU in general will be in a stronger organization on the ground.

It is by linking the daily struggles to a revolutionary programme and theory-that Marxists can raise the level of consciousness. It is necessary to take up all instances of injustice in different spheres of life in order to help develop political consciousness of workers.

A professional revolutionary is a person who is prepared to dedicate all their time and effort to such revolutionary work. He argued that 'the organization of the revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people who make revolutionary activity their profession.'

A Shopsteward becoming a progressive Organizer for a Union should be about raising the necessary political and theoretical level to organize better!
Reflections: 30 years since unbanning

For the unbanning we are indebted, not to de Klerk, but to our own liberation efforts, and to our people who joined the struggle against apartheid. Others are still unaccounted for, because the apartheid regime – of which de Klerk is the last president – is responsible for their disappearance.

In the struggle for liberation, the Communist Party went beyond attacking just the racist character of the apartheid regime. The Party was virtually the only political organisation that attacked the class basis of racist oppression. This exposure of, and attack on the capitalist roots of apartheid, did not sit well with the apartheid regime.

The regime subjected black women to all forms of oppression – merciless class exploitation and marginalisation, racial oppression and patriarchal domination. As expected, neither did the Communist Party’s ability to work with a wide range of organisations against oppression, and the ability of Communists to provide leadership within so many fronts of the liberation struggle – the trade union movement, the women’s movement, community mobilisation (for example, around food prices, removals, peace movements) endear it to the apartheid regime. The reaction was to ban Communism, not just aiming for the Communist Party as an organisation, but the ideology, its values and any person associated with it, rightly or wrongfully. The Suppression of Communism Act was so named accurately and deliberately – it was a key hammer in the apartheid battle of ideas. The response of the cadres of the Communist Party and Congress Alliance organisations, the African National Congress (ANC), South African Indian Congress, South African Coloured People’s Congress, Congress of Democrats and South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sacbu), was to intensify the struggle.

The 1950s saw mass action by the people, led by the Alliance, with the Communist Party underground but active through its cadres in the Alliance and broadly society. Resistance to oppression (pass laws, forced removals) intensified, as demands for the future (the Freedom Charter), gained increasing support. Just after the end of the decade of the 1950s, the MK was launched, in December 1961, to pursue the course of liberation...
also through armed struggle. By this time the SACP as Nelson Mandela states in his autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom, had already established organised armed struggle units and carried out a number of activities on that terrain. This made it easy to set up the MK, as he says in the book. As the MK manifesto proclaimed, as blasts exploded in apartheid offices and book. As the MK manifesto proclaimed, of activities on that terrain. This made it struggle units and carried out a number

The people’s patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom. The 1960s and 1970s saw significant developments in the struggle for liberation. The ANC Consultative Conference held in 1962 in Lobatse, Botswana, endorsed the armed struggle. It integrated the MK into the structure of the liberation movement. In 1969, the ANC Consultative Conference, held in Moregoro, Tanzania, adopted the concept of the national democratic revolution (NDR) in its first Strategy and Tactics document. The ANC opened its membership ranks to all South Africans, irrespective of race. In South Africa the concept of the NDR, along with the characterisation of the ruling regime as colonialism of a special type, was first articulated by the SACP in its programme adopted in 1962. The ‘Road to South African Freedom’.

The struggle continues in the 1970s. The year 1973 saw waves of strikes by workers frustrated by apartheid oppression and exploitation. The year 1976 saw the massive student uprising and the flood of young South Africans into exile as part of the June 16Detachment. In 1978 a senior delegation of our movement to Vietnam returned and drafted of ‘The 4 Pillars of our Revolution’. This mapped our strategic approach to armed struggle, underground organisation, popular mobilisation, and international solidarity and isolation of the apartheid regime. These pillars of struggle were not competing fronts but critical areas of revolutionary contestation and struggle. The decade that followed, the 1980s, was characterised by the intense implementation of the approach of ‘The 4 Pillars of our Revolution’ – not as four silos, but as four mutually reinforcing and related areas of struggle.

The crisis of apartheid
By the time the last president of the apartheid regime, FW de Klerk made his speech covering the unbanning of our movement, the apartheid regime was in deep and irreversible crisis. A process of dissolution within the ranks of the apartheid ruling bloc was unfolding and differences were becoming apparent. Their 1980s’ strategies of extreme brutal repression were not containing the uprisings of the revolutionary movement. In addition, there were indications that the apartheid regime no longer had cohesive support from within all African nationalist ranks. The apartheid capitalist ruling class also looked for a way out, while its regime unleashed:

- Intense repression of the people and their resistance - two states of emergency, 1985 and 1986, were declared, followed by waves of state of emergency detentions, an increase in political trials and Straccon, hit squads and Apartheid activities, as well as strikes on neighbouring states (the Gallor zone Raid, Matola Raid and Maseru Massacre).
- Intense initiatives to turn back the space that Southern African countries provided to the forward areas of the liberation movement (Nkomazi Accord; Swaziland clean up; etc.)
- More political education through pamphlets was increased.
- Mobilisation of the End Conspicuous Campaign.
- On the front of the armed struggle:
  - Persistent attacks on apartheid installations and offices took place throughout the 1980s.
  - There was a significant increase in MK armed struggle related trials.
  - A change from individual symbolic actions to people’s war took place.
  - Self-defence units within our communities were set up.
  - Political-military structures inside the country that led to Operation Vula were established.
- Underground organisation:
  - Although the least visible part of the liberation struggle, underground organisation improved political co-ordination and strategic direction and made it more evident.
  - Political education through underground literature and pamphlets was increased.
  - The Party flag was unfurled in Cuddock on 22 Feb 1985.
- International solidarity and isolation of the apartheid regime:
  - Sanctions impacted the economy, for example, the Chase Manhattan Bank refused to roll over the country’s loans.
  - Sports and cultural boycotts, as well as South Africa products boycotts widened.
  - Political mobilisation and support, namely, the Release Mandela and Political Prisoners Campaign not just at home, but also strong internationally, intensified.

The Neil Aggett inquest is currently taking place. Ahmed Timol's family received partial closure only recently when the inquest found that he had been murdered by the apartheid security police. Justice is yet to serve its course. Justice must still be pursued, to the end. Also, our people have not yet overcome the legacy of the socio-economic crisis whose roots lie in colonial and apartheid oppression based on racist and patriarchal capitalist exploitation. Our economy has not yet recovered, even in the narrow terms of growth, and structurally from the distortions of colonial and apartheid rule, and from de Klerk’s initiatives to privatise state-owned enterprises.

No change of heart
To this day de Klerk does not like our movement, not least the Communist Party. So the unbanning was not a good will or a change of heart by him.

Jenny Schreiner is SACP Central Committee and Politburo member
The South African Communist Party held its 4th Special National Congress during December 2019 under the Theme ‘Rebuild our Movement: Socialism is the Future, Build it Now’, which was graced by Alliance components and International Allies across the globe.

The Congress represented debates on behalf of 310 Party members from all Districts and Branches.

Many will recall that the Congress took place ‘against the background of a deep crisis, particularly affecting the working class and poor of our country. The crisis is typified by a stagnant economy that is continuing to shed jobs in the context of persisting high unemployment rate, entrenched poverty, widening inequality and unresolved legacy of uneven development.’ The SACP eloquently characterised the epoch as underpinned by at least four major historical factors:

- The structuring of the economy of South Africa was based on the capitalist regime of economic exploitation and systemic underdevelopment driven by an oppressive domestic ruling class and its external imperialist superiors. Internally, the social engineering of our country’s economy was forged in a colonial relationship between a white minority supremacist bloc and a brutally dispossessed and proletarianised black majority. The oppressed were marginalised into “native” reserves and later urban townships as a huge pool of the under-employed and unemployed forced to sell their labour power on a distant capitalist market.
- There was lack of structural transformation, after our 1994 democratic breakthrough, going deep to the root to rid our country’s economy of colonial features and embark on a path of its full development towards collective prosperity. This prevailed as a result of the rise of the neoliberal 1996 GEAR class project to dominance. Key state owned enterprises that should have been transformed to thrive were not recapitalised, ignoring the fact that they now had to serve all the people on a non-racial basis, rather than just a minority. This is the context in which there was no additional power generation capacity built for Eskom, a decision made in favour of an intended introducing private profiteering participation and competition in the electricity generation sector. As a result Eskom finds itself today with aging power stations that are increasingly unreliable and the country is frequently plunged into load shedding. The 1996 GEAR class project also carried out the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, which started in the last decades of the apartheid regime, and pushed neo-liberal shock therapy. This in various ways deprived our country of the resources it needed to build domestic productive capacity and thus support economic and broader social development.
- The global capitalist meltdown in 2008, especially its aftermath, remains persistent globally. This is the context in which growth, even in a number of major economies, is subdued or stagnantly low.
- The state was tenderised and within this context public resources were looted, more so under state capture. The widespread corruption was accompanied by governance decay and mismanagement.

Our country was incorporated into, but subordinated within the global imperialist accumulation regime essentially as an exporter of primary commodities, mainly minerals, produced on the basis of super-exploited oppressed black labour.
institutions, including Parliament, as the Constitutional Court did find in at least one case, failed to play their role. They were weakened and others were co-opted to either turn a blind eye to the rot or assist it.

The Special National Congress noted that neo-liberal economic policies and the structural stagnation of our economy exacerbate the crisis of social reproduction resulting from inequality, unemployment and poverty. The crisis is reflected in the increasing inability of households and communities to make ends meet. Its burden is mostly carried by women, who form a leading detachment of community-based organisational efforts directed towards sustainable livelihoods for social reproduction through unpaid labour and other social activities. The burden of the social reproduction crisis is also carried by the youth, the majority of the unemployed, in community protests, and hooked into drugs, substance and alcohol abuse, as well as facing the harsh realities of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, elaborated Nzimande.

Nzimande argued ‘The answer to the economic and social reproduction crises that South Africa finds itself in is neither a return to the neo-liberal economic policy regime nor laxity to allow any quarter for state capture networks to re-assert themselves. In no way does the answer lie in austerisation of transformation and development. By austerisation we do not mean that exorbitant perks for politicians, public officials and executives in the economy, and wasteful, fruitless and irregular expenditure should be tolerated or that there should be no measures to curb expenditure that is not going to productive purposes. We mean a conservative fiscal policy stance involving cuts in budgets or financial support affecting programmes that are important to social reproduction through unpaid labour and other social activities. The burden of the social reproduction crisis is also carried by the youth, the majority of the unemployed, in community protests, and hooked into drugs, substance and alcohol abuse, as well as facing the harsh realities of the HIV/AIDS pandemic’, elaborated Nzimande.

On Alliance reconfiguration and state and popular power

- The Special National Congress reaffirmed the resolution and declaration adopted by the SACP 14th National Congress resolution on the Party and State and Popular Power and accepted the progress made towards the reconfiguration of the Alliance. We endorsed the Alliance Political Council approved common paper on the reconfiguration, based on the framework presented in the Central Committee Political Report and State of the Organisation Report. We placed emphasis on implementation and further engagements at all levels.

On Eskom

- The Special National Congress strongly condemned the sabotage at Eskom, which has led to our people being without electricity. The SACP identifies with the painful situation that our people are experiencing as a result of load shedding. The Special National Congress mandated the Central Committee to closely follow the investigation and ensure that the saboteurs are identified and held to account.

- The SACP calls upon the state to regulate mining and trade of coal in the interest of national energy security. At the same time, the Special National Congress called upon government to move more decisively in pursuing a just transition to cleaner and renewable energy. Eskom, in a turned around form, must serve as the mainstay of reliable, cleaner, renewable and affordable energy production.

On South African Airways

- The Special National Congress called upon government to adopt a compressive aviation industrial policy, anchored in turning around SAA and repositioning it as a state-owned enterprise to serve as the mainstay of our domestic aviation sector and tourism with thriving domestic and international flight routes.

The strategy should include technical and professional airline capacity building through education and training programmes.

- As part of its rescue plan, which should have been a proactive state-led process, procurement contract and therefore every contract entered into and tender awarded by SAA must be thoroughly scrutinised through a forensic investigation process leaving no stone unturned. The investigation must focus on the contribution that outsourced functions and services played in plunging SAA into crisis, and on value for money, irregularities, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

- Key executive appointments, including but not limited to Chief Restructuring Officer appointed in 2017, interim Chief Financial Officer, SAA Technical Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Commercial Officer, must also be investigated. SAA was handed over into the hands of these “airline turnaround experts”, inclusive of several from abroad, who have evidently failed. The Special National Congress called for accountability on the work of these “airline turnaround experts” and value for the money that they were paid while SAA continued to fall deeper into crisis instead of achieving a turnaround. The investigation must also include possible conflict of interests.

- The Special National Congress calls upon all the trade unions and workers to unite and work towards saving the Airline, whilst at the same time saving jobs.

Unity of the Party remains sacrosanct!

- The Special National Congress mandated lower structures of the SACP to submit reports, with recommendations, to the Central Committee if in the course of preparations for the forthcoming 2021 local government elections the letter and spirit of the reconfiguration of the Alliance are being undermined. The Central Committee will evaluate the reports and adopt a way forward. The options available to the Central Committee include allowing electoral contestation in the affected areas within the framework of the 14th SACP National Congress resolution on state and popular power, and based on criteria to be finalised by the Central Committee in 2020.

- The Special National Congress emphasised the principles articulated in the Political Report and the common Alliance reconfiguration paper approved by the Alliance Political Council. These include consensus-seeking consultation on the manifesto, policy direction for our shared strategy of struggle and democratic transformation, and deployments and accountability, including recall, as well as Alliance inclusivity and representations in electoral lists. In this regard, the SACP will not support corrupt candidates or candidates emerging from processes that were not Alliance-inclusive, candidates imposed by factions or are not supported by the community.

- On our part, as the SACP, we will deepen our programme to build working class power and hegemony in all key sites of struggle and significant centres of power. The Special National Congress reaffirmed the SACP Political Programme, the South African Road to Socialism, including that what the Party seeks to achieve is democratic working class hegemony over the state and society. The immediate tasks of the SACP is to build working class unity and forge a popular Left front as mandated by the 14th SACP National Congress resolution on state and popular power.

On International solidarity

- The Special National Congress strongly condemns the United States driven imperialist destabilisation in parts of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The SACP reaffirms its support for the national sovereignty of the people of Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Palestine and Eritrea. We pledge our revolutionary solidarity with the national democratic struggles of the people of Swaziland, South Cameroon, Sudan and Western Sahara.

Forward with Socialism!
The Joe Slovo Annual Commemoration has over the recent years grown in leaps and bounds as the New Year first event where communists and the working class communities gather in Soweto to remember the former South African Communist Party General Secretary, Joe Slovo who passed on in 1995, on 6 January and buried at the Avalon Heroes Acre, in Chiawelo. Many comrades will recall Slovo as a ‘master theoretician’ in the Congress Movement who lead many debates on the future of South Africa then before liberation.

The keynote address was delivered by SACP General Secretary, Comrade Blade Nzimande who said ‘This year marks the 25th year since Joe Slovo passed away. At the time of his death, on 6 January 1995, Slovo was the SACP National Chairperson, having previously served as our General Secretary. He was a long-standing member of our Central Committee and its Politburo. He was a member of the national executive and working committees of the ANC, and was serving as the first Minister of Housing. ‘A great theoretician, strategist and tactician of our struggle for liberation and social emancipation, Slovo was also a man of practical action. His development of theory, strategy and tactics, was anchored in practice. He was a founding commander of our liberation army, uMkhonto weSizwe, the MK, along with Nelson Mandela. His last responsibility in the MK was as Chief of Staff. He was succeeded by Chris Hani in both this position and that of the General Secretary of our Party, the SACP.’

Nzimande alluded that ‘Slovo was involved in the drafting of all major documents that defined our vision, theory and practice of struggle against apartheid, beginning with the Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress of the People in 1955. The other historic documents include the popular SACP programme adopted underground in 1962, The Road to South African Freedom, and the widely embraced, first Strategy and Tactics document of the ANC, adopted in 1969 in Morogoro, Tanzania. Slovo’s major works became influential. These include the South African Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution, which he produced in 1988.

The significance of Slovo’s intervention in 1988 remains as relevant as ever, more so in this period where as the SAPC we are pursuing a programme to build popular Left and widest possible patriotic fronts, and to work together with our allies to deepen the strategic relevance of the ANC-headed Alliance in theory as well as in practice. Some of the negative tendencies that Slovo examined and cautioned against in his intervention still exist. Our task is to overcome them and forge wider working class and broader revolutionary unity. These include a tendency he described as workerist, which sought to divorce the working-class from our national liberation movement and espouse the essence of the national democratic revolution. Slovo had the following to say about the tendency, especially its disruption of unity in favour of separatism and therefore disunity: ‘A transitional stage of struggle, involving inter-class alliances, is alleged to lead to an abandonment of socialist perspectives and to a surrender of working class leadership. The economic struggles between workers and bosses at the point of production (which inevitably spill over into the broader political arena) is claimed to be the ‘class struggle’. This is sometimes coupled with a view that trade union movement is the main political representative of the working class.’

Our broad movement is also facing difficulties from within. It is precisely during this time that communists must deepen their role in the broad movement. Hence the focus of our Special National Congress held in December 2019 that we must rebuild our movement. Yes, rebuilding our movement means paying particular attention to the ANC, but most importantly to our revolutionary movement as a whole, not least attaching great importance to the working class – the main motive force of the national democratic revolution, the most direct route to socialism in our historical conditions.’

COSATU and SACP leadership at Avalon, Soweto
On International Solidarity
Nzimande said ‘The SACP strongly condemns imperialist United States aggression and attacks in the Middle East. We are remembering Slovo at a time when the United States government is once again embarking on dangerous acts of provocation and threatening war in the Middle East.’

‘The SACP strongly condemns the acts of aggression by the United States against both Iranian and Iraqi people. All peace loving people need to also strongly condemn the habit of all US Presidents to assert their authority through foreign aggression and particularly Trump’s attempt to divert attention from his impeachment process by spilling blood in the Middle East. The SACP calls for an intensification of internationalist work from the working class; and upon all peace loving people globally to wage a relentless struggle against imperialism.’

‘We pledge our revolutionary solidarity with the people of Swaziland in their... Programmatically, the SACP remains committed to the strategy of a radical national democratic struggle as the most direct approach to a socialist South Africa.’
struggle for democracy. We call on Morocco to unconditionally end its occupation of Western Sahara and pledge our revolutionary solidarity with the Saharawi people in their struggle for self-determination.'

On tackling societal challenges

Ntizama said ‘This year April will mark the 26th anniversary of our victory over the apartheid regime in April 1994. We stand tall today, in our commemoration of Siswo, in view of the massive social progress we have made, benefiting millions of our people, starting with our enshrinement of the Bill of Rights in our country’s Constitution. Since 1994, we have massively expanded access to housing, electricity, clean drinking water, health care and built clinics and roads in communities that were previously marginalised. We have massively expanded access to education all levels.

To alleviate poverty, we have placed millions of people on social grants.

It is a historical fact that life in South Africa is better now than before our victory over the apartheid regime in 1994. This is not just a national reality. It is also an international reality. South Africa is an attractive destination to people from other countries where conditions are comparatively far more difficult.

However, unresolved contradictions and increasing challenges are undermining our achievements. In particular we are severely affected by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, coupled with factors such as bad governance, poor oversight, state capture and other forms of corruption, in a world dominated by the imperialist agenda of neoliberalism and global capitalist crisis.’

SACP has called society to participate in the campaigns on the Party such as:

• The SACP is calling for maximum unity of South Africans to overcome the vicious impact of the crisis of social reproduction, patriarchy and gender-based violence, and to confront state capture and other forms of corruption. To this end the working class as the main motive force of our revolution has a crucial role to play.

• Our aim is to advance and defend the democratic transition and deepen the advance to socialism. We call upon the progressive trade union movement, starting with our ally, COSATU, to convene an all-embracing national summit this year.

• The joint progressive trade union movement campaign should include a dedicated focus on achieving a turnaround of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and other public entities. The SACP will support the programme of action by deepening its efforts to forge popular Left and patriotic fronts, and through direct participation and working with our allies to achieve reconfiguration. United worker actions, trade union and broader unity are important also to defeat both state capture and neoliberal networks.

• To support the campaign and the necessity for South Africa to establish a people’s economy and a democratic developmental state. What our country needs is a comprehensive approach – radical structural transformation. This must build, expand, diversify and raise the levels of national production, benefit the majority of the people and reverse the catastrophic tide of climate change.

• We commit in intensifying educational and ideological work against climate change denialism. Yes, we will defend freedom of the press.

• We must improve the conditions of the workers. In this regard the pursuit of the decent work agenda is important in the present period.

• We must push policies that will create productive work for the unemployed to make a living and lead a decent life.

• We therefore must push policies with a focus dedicated to lifting people out of poverty through work, systematically reducing inequality and tackling economic exploitation.

• We need a comprehensive socio-economic policy approach, and therefore a development-oriented poverty eradication strategy with emphasis on support for productive activities and sustainable livelihoods.

• We need revitalisation of the publicly-owned sector of our economy, in particular but not exclusively a turnaround of our SOEs and adequate support for the whole sector to grow and thrive.

• We call upon Parliament to complete the process of amending section 25 of the Constitution to make land expropriation without compensation categorical in the interest of advancing productive land use and ending land hunger in our country.

Meanwhile, COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntshalintshali addressed comrades and urged all to participate in the debate for a reconfigured Alliance and also ensuring that all who are implicated in corrupt activities are send to jail.

COSATU has welcomed the enactment from Wednesday, 1 January 2020, of paid parental leave for parents of new born children. Matthew Parks, COSATU Parliamentary Coordinator emphasized that ‘This is an historic and long fought for victory for workers, parents, children and families across South Africa.

This is now an Act of Parliament, asserted by the President and promulgated. It is not a matter of negotiations or concessions by employers. It is law. Employers who defy it will be violating Unemployment Insurance and Basic Conditions of Employment Acts (as amended in 2017 and 2018).’

From 1 January 2020 all parents will now be entitled to 10 days paid parental leave when their children are born.

This does not apply to mothers who have given birth as they are entitled to paid maternity leave. In essence this covers fathers of new born children and mothers of children born through surrogacy. Parents are entitled to take paid parental leave once a calendar year. They will be required to apply for leave from their employer.

Workers are entitled to claim Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) payments in the event that their employer will not pay them their full salary. The UIF will pay those workers 60% of their salary up to the BCEA earnings cap of R205 433.30 per annum. Workers applying for UIF payments must fill in the required form at the UIF (www.labour.gov.za), provide their ID, bank details and their child’s unabridged birth certificate which provides the details of the child’s parents.

COSATU is pleased that its efforts and workers’ hard fought struggles have born fruit with this achievement. We encourage all eligible parents to exercise this progressive right. Equally it is important that parents use this leave for what it is intended for, namely to help the mother recuperate from birth and to take care of their new born child.

Unions are called upon to ensure that all workers are aware of their rights and able to exercise them freely. Unions must negotiate with their bargaining councils and employers to ensure that this new law is implemented immediately and for employers to cover the shortfall in salary earnings for the 10 days (e.g. the 34% of salary below R205 433.30 that is not covered by the UIF and to ensure that employers provide paid parental leave to workers earning above the R205 433.30 income threshold).

Employers are asked to embrace the progressive spirit of the law. Those who seek to believe like rogue Neanderthals will be treated accordingly, named and shamed, taken to the CCMA and Labour Courts and forced to abandon their backwardness.
GEMS extends option change for Emerald Value Option

Each year the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) encourages its members to review their healthcare needs and make the decision on whether they wish to remain on their current benefit option or choose to move to a different option.

“We are pleased to announce that we have extended our option selection change period to 15 March 2020 for all member wishing to switch to the Emerald Value Option. The extension period will further give members enough time to evaluate their healthcare needs and make the right choice before the closing date.” says Phumelela Dhiomo, Chief Marketing Officer.

Members switching to Emerald Value Option and prospective members will enjoy the same rich benefits as the existing Emerald option, but at a more affordable rate such as:

- Comprehensive in-and-out-of hospital cover;
- Members nominate a network General Practitioner, as their first-line when seeking medical care and who they will consult for all their doctor visits;
- Specialist referral must be obtained from member’s nominated GP for all specialist consultations; and
- Members must use a hospital from GEMS Hospital Network for all in-hospital needs, amongst others.

The other good news for public service employees is that GEMS has changed the name of the Sapphire option which is now called Tanzanite One with bigger, better and richer benefits. Tanzanite One symbolise an evolution of the Basic Benefit Package and transformation which forms part of GEMS business strategy that seeks to ensure more value for members. Tanzanite One members will enjoy:

- Comprehensive cover for both in-hospital and out-of-hospital cover;
- Public service employees on salary level 1 – 5 may enjoy up to 100% subsidy from their employer. This means they could be getting so much more without paying a single cent!
- Members will now have access to a network of healthcare providers by nominating GP of their choice to coordinate their healthcare needs;
- Access to the GEMS Hospital Network
- Using hospitals means members will not experience out of pocket payments – allowing them to really do more for their families;
- Unlimited GP and specialist consultations; and
- Access to Over-The-Counter (OTC) medicine.

Dial *134*20018# or 0860 00 4567 to make the switch today. For more information on the benefit enhancements for 2020, contact GEMS using one of the followings channels:
In the build up to the upcoming budget speech, one of the sharpest and most public areas of contestation in this country is the issue of the public debt and the public service wage bill. Last year, the National Treasury published a discussion document called the Economic Transformation, Inclusive Growth, and Competitiveness: Towards an Economic Strategy for South Africa that is likely to inform the budget speech.

The Treasury’s document is nothing but an austerity strategy because it is neither geared towards achieving structural economic transformation nor inclusive growth as purported by its title. It can be best described as a strategy for containing public-debt and reducing budget-deficit through a fiscal austerity – mainly fixated on the so-called public service wage bill.

According to the National Treasury in 2018/19, spending on compensation of state employees accounted for 35.4% of consolidated national expenditure. In terms of government’s own definition, consolidated government spending comprises total expenditure by national and provincial government, social security funds and selected public entities, including transfers to municipalities or other entities. This, therefore, means that consolidated government spending on remuneration is all encompassing well beyond the wage dispensation determined at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC).

The Treasury’s approach is, thus, deeply problematic because its drive to improve the composition of spending is narrowly and almost exclusively focussed on the wage bill pertaining to the PSCBC.

They don’t seem to be bothered about the messy pay and benefits structures within the vast plethora of agencies and public entities that contribute to the current size of the consolidated government spending on remuneration.

Workers reject the fact that Treasury seeks to pursue its own very conservative fiscal target of “a main budget primary balance by 2022/23” at the expense of the public service...
workers under the PSCBC, whilst protecting the muddled pay and benefit structures in agencies and public entities, with no concern about productivity or performance.

In fact, many of these entities that are dependent on the fiscus are actually redundant and duplicate each other. Some entities like SASSA, Sanral and others have to be absorbed back to policy departments. Some have no clearly defined roles, not to mention the fact that some of them are simply ineffective in implementing their mandates. The question is why there is no concern or even analysis by the Treasury on the rate of growth of the personnel headcount and the wage bill pertaining to these institutions.

This is because these institutions are part of the Neoliberal statecraft-with its fragmented form and incoherent role as emerged under GEAR. This fragmented and incoherent state-form encourages the outsourcing of certain functions in the operations of departments, agencies and public entities.

These outsourced operations are some of the services and infrastructure roll-out channels through which the state is haemorrhaging scarce resources through the parasitic Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs), as exposed in the Zondo Commission of Inquiry.

The outsourcing of functions and PPPs were sold to the public as the means to save costs but in reality, they are the source of corruptive inflation of costs. COSATU insists that even before any consideration of the public service wage bill, the Treasury must provide an analysis of the Service Level Agreements or contracts pertaining to outsourcing or PPPs with a view to revoke those that haemorrhage resources and to implement insourcing.

Equally, despite Treasury claiming that “spending pressures continue to mount, led by the public service wage bill and state-owned companies in crisis” there is nothing in a form of a concrete plan tabled on how it seeks to rationalise and align the generally huge pay and benefits structures within the SOEs. Even the bailouts given to these SOEs that are now taking place on a regular basis tend to incorporate these huge executive remuneration structures and exorbitant board fees.

Once again, the question of performance or productivity is never raised in this regard, despite the fact that these SOEs have been failing at a huge cost to the fiscus. The fact that there seems to be no analysis and proposals on the part of the Treasury to address this reflects its dogmatic and narrow ideological fixation with the public service wage bill.

Another argument from the Treasury is that the “average remuneration in the public sector is higher than average remuneration in the rest of the economy.” Indeed, by its nature the public sector is composed of significant amounts of professional categories, which begs the question as to what is the point of comparing completely different types of jobs in terms of pay between the public and private sector – rather than between specific categories of professions such as nurses and teachers.

The Treasury acknowledges that “much of this increase [wage bill] was concentrated in 2009/10 and 2010/11, where the fastest rise in wages was recorded in high-skill professions, including medical doctors, teachers and lawyers, where Occupation-Specific Dispensations were introduced”.

The OSD came from government itself rather than from labour, and it was introduced in a manner that targeted specific scarce skills in order to avoid generalised wage increase and as a way of retaining these cohorts of personnel (with scarce skills) in the public service. Clearly this was a once-off justifiable jump in the overall wage bill, but it has since slowed down.

Even in the heady years of GEAR, there was a policy intent to address the Apartheid debt in a gradual approach – from 5% in 1996/97, to 4% in 1997/98 and then 3% in 1998/99. The severe and needless ravages that GEAR brought upon the public service notwithstanding (enduringly weakening its capacity to deliver services), its gradualist approach managed to keep economic growth positive.

Our rising unemployment rate is already at a catastrophic scale. This calls for a paradigm shift away from the Neoliberal macroeconomic straitjacket.

It would be tragic for the sixth democratic dispensation to focus on implementing a framework of monetary and fiscal policies that do not place employment creation as a priority. Government started to cut-back on spending ceilings in 2014, amidst depressed private capital investment and this caused the economy to plunge into what is becoming a serial stagnation, characterised by episodes of technical recessions and rising unemployment rate. An austerity budget will reproduce this vicious cycle, especially considering that Statistics South Africa has also recently revealed that the “retail trade sales decreased by 0,4% year-on-year in December 2019”.

The proposed draconian R150 billion cut in the public service wage bill is likely to plunge the economy into a recession, with even worse consequences in terms of the township economy and poverty in rural areas.

After 1996 government abandoned the RDP and imposed GEAR in which the public service workers were primarily targeted as a sacrificial lamb to resolve the Apartheid debt crisis. This has left an enduring consequence of work-overload, low morale and weakened public sector’s capacity to deliver services. Once again, the Treasury is imposing its own extreme austerity strategy that seeks to make the public service workers a sacrificial lamb in attaining its ambitious fiscal target.

Workers reject the Treasury’s austerity strategy and call for the review of the macroeconomic framework to address the basic needs of our people, transform the economy, strengthen the public service, renew efforts to build a capable developmental state and address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequalities in our society.

Treasury has provisionally set aside R230 billion to support ESKOM’s balance sheet and restructuring. COSATU’s proposition called Key ESKOM and Economic Intervention Proposals provides a desperately needed relief, especially on the fiscus. If adopted, it would help move ESKOM towards stability to ensure uninterrupted economic activities, improve the country’s debt-GDP ratio, alleviate the debt-service costs and risk-premium, and dissipate the cloud of the “junk-status”.

This is already a massive contribution from labour to help pull the country from the brink of economic meltdown. We therefore insist that there is no need for Treasury to use the upcoming Budget Speech to cause a major and extended labour unrest, crisis of service delivery by insisting on an austerity budget fixed on the public service wage bill.

Bheki Ntshalintshali - COSATU General Secretary
COSATU's Key Eskom and Economic Intervention Proposals

1. Executive Summary

COSATU’s Key Eskom and Economic Intervention Proposals were presented by COSATU to the November and December 2019 Alliance Political Council as well as the January 2020 ANC NEC Lekgotla where they received broad support. Further engagement between COSATU, the ANC, Alliance and Government at a senior level will take place shortly to seek to find agreements on saving Eskom and growing the economy. It is hopes that these can be in place before the February 2020 budget speech.

Below is a summary of COSATU’s key proposals:

1.1 Way Forward
• Agreement on areas needing intervention.
• Agreement on smaller working groups to process interventions through the Alliance Political Council and Nedlac Presidential Working Committee

1.2 Economic Interventions
• Rapid Jobs and Investment Summits implementation plans for government
• and private sector.
• Additional funding for Industrial Strategy, • Localisation and public procurement plans.
• Macro-economic reform.
• Stimulus package.

1.3 Eskom and SOEs
• Urgent social compact and turnaround plan for Eskom.
• Similar social compacts and turnaround plans for Transnet, TNPA, RAF, PRASA and Metro Rail, SAA and SA Express, SABC and DENEL.
• Social compact to be based upon Edcon social compact and no retrenchments or privatisation.

1.4 Expenditure
• Re prioritisation of funds to economic and infrastructure investments.
• Crackdown on wasteful expenditure and holding managers to account.
• Crackdown on corruption and arresting guilty parties.
• Debt management plan.

1.5 Taxation
• Increased taxes on the wealthy.
• Tax relief measures for the poor.
• Reinforcement of SARS.
• Massive investment in SARS Customs capacity and crack down on illicit goods.

1.6 Wage Bill
• Correct diagnosis of public service and sector head count and wage bill.
• Engagement with labour at PSCBC.
• Placement of SOEs and entities under PSCBC.
• Reduction in bloated executive and management structures and packages.

2. Introduction
The economy is facing its worse crises since 2008. Unemployment is 40% and rising. GDP growth barely reaches 1%. There are 600 000 new job seekers annually. The state is fast running out of options. Eskom with a debt of R450 billion and rising is the ticking time bomb threatening to implode the state and economy. Other SOEs in varying stages of collapse include PRASA, RAF, SAA, SA Express, SABC, DENEL and Transnet.

Whilst some progress has been made to tackle corruption, very few have actually been arrested. 10% of the budget is still lost on average to corruption and wasteful expenditure. Tax revenues are declining. The MTBPS presented no plans to deal with these crises. Moodys will downgrade South Africa in February if no plans to deal with Eskom and grow the economy are presented.

In short we have 1 month to find a plan. Workers are and will bear the brunt of the consequences of a collapse of Eskom, the SOEs, the state and economy. Workers need decisive intervention by the Alliance and government to save their jobs and public services. Workers cannot depend upon individual departments, SOEs or business to act in their interest.

Not only must the Alliance and government defend the right of both the private and public sector workers to a living wage and labour protections but equally it is critical for the Alliance and government to defend the role of the state to deliver critical public services and goods, to participate in and to ensure competition in the economy. If not we face the real risk of the state being forced to retreat on all these fronts given the extent of the state and economic crises. This would leave workers exposed and unprotected.

Given the potential collapse of Eskom, SOEs and the state as well as the weakness of the economy, COSATU is willing to support key interventions to ensure the survival of their SOEs and the state. COSATU in particular is willing to help reduce Eskom’s dangerously high debt to a sustainable level.

These interventions and support from COSATU are conditional upon government and the SOEs not retrench workers or privatise, that a stimulus plan be implemented, funds be shifted towards industrialisation and that those who stole be arrested and mismanaged be fired etc.

Labour’s key tool are workers’ funds,
namely the PIC and UIF. If used strategically, they can play a decisive role in workers' favour.

**COSATU seeks two objectives:**
- First, an agreement on areas needing interventions. Second a process to find agreements on those interventions. These should yield a social compact involving government, business and labour in time for the February Budget speech.
- The process should include a mixture of small working groups under the Alliance Political Council and under Nedlac's Presidential Working and Joint Technical Committees' processes.

### 3 Eskom and the SOCs
#### 3.1 Eskom

The most pressing problem that needs to be address is Eskom. It threatens not only to implode the state but also the economy. Not only are the jobs of workers at Eskom at risk but in fact all workers in the event of Eskom collapsing. Failure to have a credible plan to save Eskom by the budget speech will result in South Africa being downgraded. Failure to implement COSATU’s key demands are in place for an Eskom turnaround risks exposing Eskom workers to retrenchment and Eskom’s possible hollowing out in future in favour of the private sector. A social compact between government, labour and industry is needed to stabilise and save Eskom.

It must be premised upon the following fundamental principles:
- A commitment by government that it will not be privatised.
- That no worker will be retrenched.
- A pro-worker Eskom turnaround plan must include:
  - A debt package to reduce Eskom’s debt from R450 billion to R200 billion through a special purpose finance vehicle involving a social compact between government, the PIC and DFIs.
  - It is critical to understand that this is not a blank cheque or a donation. It is tied to the following conditions:
    - A comprehensive public audit of all Eskom contracts and expenditure, this must include coal supply contracts.
    - Those who have looted must be arrested and their assets seized.
    - Coal suppliers and IPP generation contractors must be forced to reduce their prices or their contracts cancelled and assets expropriated.
    - Eskom’s generation mandate must be expanded by the Minister to allow it to expand its own renewable energy generation capacity.
    - The relevant investment in battery storage for renewable energy must begin.
    - A comprehensive debt recovery plan be implemented to recover the billions owed by departments, SOEs, municipalities, communities (including Soweto) and consumers at large.
    - There must be no exceptions. Treasury must simply deduct monies owed to Eskom by Departments, SOEs and Municipalities from their budget allocations and directly transfer it to Eskom.
    - A single payment account be established for all consumers to pay Eskom directly.
    - This will require reviewing the funding model for municipalities who use Eskom collections as a revenue generating opportunity, irrespective of whether the municipality added value to the electricity distribution or even paid Eskom itself.
    - Electricity tariffs must be affordable for consumers, industry and for exports to neighbouring states.
    - Eskom must be reined in. The 400% increase in tariffs in the past decade is not only strangling any economic growth but in fact threatening to collapse entire sections of the mining industry and a risk to hundreds of thousands of mining, manufacturing, service and agricultural jobs.
    - Government and Nersa must play a far more active role in ensuring that Eskom’s tariff increases are affordable and supportive of economic growth. They cannot serve as means to bail out mismanagement and corruption.
    - The free electricity allocation to indigent households should be increased as per the ANC Elections Manifesto as part of cushioning the poor in a difficult economic climate.
    - Electricity payments for all consumers must move to a pre-paid basis, in particular for large consumers e.g. government, SOCs, municipalities, industry etc.
    - A discussion must begin between government, the PIC, labour, the retirement industry on a sustainable, correct and progressive balance to be agreed to on prescribed assets in support of key public goods and infrastructure.
    - A proper staff audit must be conducted to determine if and where Eskom is bloated.
    - Reskilling and redeployment programmes must then be engaged upon with labour at Eskom and the PSCBC where excess staff can be redeployed from units of surplus to units of shortage within Eskom as well as to Municipal Electricity departments and the broader public service and sector. But no worker must be retrenched.
    - Bloating management and management perks must be slashed.
    - There must be worker representation on the Eskom Board. Workers need to know that if they invest their hard earned monies in Eskom that it is safe. They need to have a voice in how Eskom and their money is being spent. Worker representation will help to build trust and enable workers to highlight problems at the highest level for intervention.
    - Worker and community owned generation capacity must be increased, in particular targeting coal workers and communities.
    - A Just Transition plan be developed and implemented for workers at power stations and coal mines reaching the end of their life spans and their host communities, in particular Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape.
    - The extension of the life span of existing coal power stations reaching their end should be extended by converting them to gas where possible.
    - Targeted public and private investments must be made to produce renewable energy technology locally and in particular in those 4 provinces and targeting workers whose jobs are at risk.
    - As part of reducing pressure on Eskom, carbon footprints, consumer and industry electricity bills and boosting locally produced solar panels, all buildings should be required to install locally produced solar panels over a 5 year period.
    - Indigent households and SMMEs should qualify for subsidies or rebates for the installation of solar panels.
- Development and implementation of electric vehicle production to protect the auto-manufacturing sector, create new jobs, exceed climate change targets but also to provide a mass sustainable demand base for Eskom.

#### 3.2 Other SOEs

Similar turn around plans, jobs and no privatisation commitments are needed for:
- RAF;
- Transnet and TNPA;
- PRASA and Metro Rail;
- SAA and SA Express;
- SABC; and
- DENEL

### 4. Economic Interventions

The heart of the crises is the stagnant economy and high unemployment. Urgent interventions are needed to unlock major blockages and inject new stimulus. These should include the following key interventions.

#### 4.1 Jobs and Investments Summits

- A stimulus plan to inject new capital into the economy and stimulate demand.
- All departments, entities and SOEs be instructed to produce 6 month implementation plans for the Jobs Summit Agreements.
- Business be forced to produce 6 month implementation plans for their Jobs and Investment Summits Agreements.
- o It may be necessary for the PWC to meet fortnightly and for
the entire Monday to cover a wider scope of interventions for the next 6 months.

4.2 Industrial Strategy
- Reprioritisation of funding for DITs 14 sectoral master plans and other
- Additional resourcing to ensure they can deliver rapid interventions.
- UEI SETAs and PIC investment funding to be massively shifted to directly support industrial strategy.
- Tight coordination of investment strategies by DFIs, including DBSA.
- Development with the PIC and private sector an agreed approach to prescribed
- Assets to support industrial strategy and key public goods.
- Fast tracking of the Scrap Metal Export Tax.
- Fast tracking the Public Procurement Bill.
- It must include the SOEs and municipalities and not be limited to departments.
- A detailed action plan to up localisation by industry and key sectors.
- Review of measures to fast track and make SEZs more effective.

4.3 Treasury Economic Strategy
- The anti-worker attacks e.g. to exempt SMMEs from the National Minimum
- Wage, collective bargaining and labour legislation must be deleted from Treasury’s Economic Strategy;
- The strategy must be based upon government’s industrial strategy; and
- It must be properly processed through Cabinet, the Alliance and Nedlac and not imposed by Treasury.

4.4 South African Reserve Bank
- Expansion of SARB mandate to include:
  - Job protection and creation;
  - Economic growth;
  - Tackle illicit outflows;
  - Ease inflation targeting to 6% and not the current de facto 4.5%;
  - Ease interest rates to stimulate credit and investments; and
  - Fill two vacancies on SARB Monetary Policy Committee with progressive economists from labour.

4.5 Additional Measures
- Fast tracking of Post Bank as a state bank for the poor.
- Lowering of capital entry requirements for establishment of small banks.
- Review of accountability measures for job creation by private sector for the Employment Tax Incentive and other state incentives, subsidies and rebates.
- Assessment of the Youth Empowerment Scheme.
- Fast track roll out of spectrum, digital migration and lowering of data costs.

5. Expenditure
Debt levels are not sustainable. However drastic austerity will exacerbate the economic and service delivery crises. What is needed is to tackle corruption and wasteful expenditure, to shift expenditure to productive economic investment, to increase tax revenues from the wealthy and to unlock additional economic funding from the UEI, PIC, SETAs and prescribed asset investments.

Detailed plans are needed for: 5.1 Reprioritisation
- Unlock funding for economic and infrastructure expenditure from the UEI;
- SETAs, PIC, DFIs, DBSA and prescribed assets.
- The R50 billion infrastructure under-expenditure must be tackled.
- Expenditure needs to be reprioritised to economic and infrastructure stimulus.

5.2 Corruption and Wasteful Expenditure
- Clear plans are needed to tackle the 10% in budgets lost to corruption and wasteful expenditure.
- High profile cases of those who looted be arrested and their assets seized.
- High profile cases of SOE and DPSA managers who mismanaged Eskom;
- SOEs and Departments must be dismissed and held personally liable for state funds as per the AG Amendment Act’s new powers.
- Particular attention must be given to SOEs, provinces, entities and municipalities.
- There must be drastic reductions in wasteful expenditure e.g. the R13 billion spent on 4 departmental, SANRAL and Tshwane Municipality Head Offices and the New York Consulate. Similar drastic cuts must be made to the executive nationally, provincially and locally. E.g. ministerial staff complements, ministerial cars and perks etc.

6. Taxation
The tax regime must be made more progressive and additional sources of revenue generated. This must include ensuring the rich pay their fair share, the burden be shifted away from the increasing levels of taxation upon workers and the redistribution of wealth through the following tax reforms:

6.1 Wealth Taxes
- Clamping down on high profile tax evasion cases;
- Reducing tax loopholes;
- Increasing taxes on the wealthy through increases in the following taxes:
  - Inheritance;
  - Estate;
  - Land,
  - Personal income;
  - Company;
  - Customs duties;
  - Dividends; and
  - VAT on luxury goods.
- Provide tax relief for the poor by increasing the allocation of free electricity and water for indigent households.
- Introducing progressive sliding water and electricity tariffs based upon property value and excessive consumption.

6.2 SARS Capacitation
- Additional interventions needed in SARS include:
  - Massive investment in additional resources and personnel for SARS Customs enforcement to raise the current 5% inspection rate to 100% for all imports entering ports and borders.
- Recapacitating specialised units and filling critical vacancies;
- Specialised units and plans to tackle illicit goods, especially tobacco and clothing.

7. Public Service and Sector Wage Bill
- The unwarranted attacks upon public servants and their right to earn a living
- Wage must cease.
- Any engagements on the wage bill must be done through organised labour at the PSCBC.
- An audit of the public service, sector and SOEs must be conducted to determine where actual personnel surpluses and shortages exist. These can then be addressed through reskilling and redeploying.
- Excess SANDF personnel can be redeployed to SARS and Customs, SAPS,
- Home Affairs, Correctional Services etc.
- An investigation of alleged ghost posts in provinces, SOEs and municipalities must be conducted.
- Critical service delivery vacancies in health, education, SAPS, Home Affairs,
- SARS and Correctional Services must be filled.
- Wage gap in the public service, entities and SOEs reduced.
- Bloated executive and management posts and packages must be drastically reduced, including the Ministerial Hand Book.
- All public sector entities and SOEs must be placed under the PSCBC.
- Wage caps for management in public sector entities and SOEs introduced with drastic reductions for them so that they are in line with DPSA provisions.
The Congress of South African Trade Unions notes the State of the Nation Address delivered by the President Cyril Ramaphosa. The Speech succeeded in identifying the bottlenecks that have led to economic stagnation and has managed to focus on some of the solutions that have been proposed by the ANC Manifesto. We expect more details from the relevant departments during their budget votes and National Treasury to speak to what the SONA has committed to.

COSATU appreciates the fact that 2020 SONA has acknowledged the fact that the public debt has exploded and is starting to haunt the South African population. The purchasing power of the working class has been shrinking because the working-class incomes are falling, and jobs continue to be lost. The current slowdown in the South African economy is indeed partly to corruption but also to a large extent, as a result of mismanagement of the economy by the policymakers and decision-makers who have only focused on the failed neoliberal policies.

We are happy to hear that the international investment drive has managed to attract investment commitments to the tune R 664 billion in many sectors of the economy. We still insist though that while FDI is welcomed it not the solution to everything.

The over-reliance on the private sector investment has left the economy vulnerable to the irrationalities of investor confidence. A situation where the state plays an increasing role in the investment process is warranted, especially given the massive socio-economic challenges and household vulnerabilities that we face.

We welcome the progress that has been made to ensuring that registering a company can take place in one day in the country. We still believe that the government needs to do more to pay the service providers on time, especially small businesses that are struggling because the government fails to pay them for their services on time.

We note the announcement on the Sovereign Wealth Fund, we welcome the announcement of the refurbishment of the Port of Durban and the introduction of the Procurement Bill. We also note the decision to launch the Tourism Fund because tourism holds a lot of potential for the economy of South Africa. We support the idea that government departments will be forced to spend one percent of their budgets on employment creation targeting young people. This is long overdue and it represents the business unusual that we have been talking about.

**State Bank**

We are happy to hear that the government remains committed to implementing the resolution of the establishment of a State Bank. The government cannot outsource its developmental agenda to the private sector and a state bank will form the foundation of a developmental state.

A state bank will offer competition to the existing banking system and could be a way to help expose customer abuses and the gouging that is prevalent in these big private banks. It will offer a transparent alternative to private banks like ABSA and Standard Bank who have been involved in currency manipulation and other reprehensible activities.

The bank will also not only protect consumers but will also implement a sound monetary policy. It will offer lower debt costs to municipalities and provinces, fund public infrastructure projects, and encourage entrepreneurship by providing loans to small businesses at lower interest rates and with lower fees. These provinces and municipalities money can use the money to build more public housing and support the development of greener energy infrastructure that the country desperately needs.

**State Owned Entities**

We welcome the president’s commitment to ensuring that government plays a crucial role on working with social partners to achieve a social compact that will develop solid strategies and a coherent plan to fix the power utility Eskom.

We welcome the investment of R1,4 billion in modernising the Prasa rail network. This is crucial and we hope that the government can expand this investment and not just focus on rebuilding the old infrastructure but also roll out new rail network that will connect many new locations that are currently disconnected to the rail network.

We are worried though by the scant details from the SONA on how government plans to restructure and rationalise the SOEs, especially because this in an urgent matter that cannot be postponed. We hope that the President and his Presidential SOE Council will release the details soon so that stakeholders can engage and submit their inputs. The restructuring of the entire public sector needs to happen and happen fast because the weak capacity of the state is making it difficult for it to drive its developmental agenda and deliver much needed services to the people.

**Corruption and Crime**

We welcome the government’s commitment to wage an unremitting war against the scourge of gender-based violence and corruption. The fight against criminal gangs is a fight that the government cannot lose. The opening of the Crime Detection School will go a long way toward building the capacity of law enforcement agencies.

The Federation is happy that the government has committed itself to work with the with the Auditor General to reduce irregular expenditure in government and stop the hemorrhaging of resources that are compromising service delivery and bleeding the fiscus. We welcome the announcement by the President that the PIC Commission of Inquiry Report will be released to the public and action will be taken to implement its recommendations.

**Education**

South Africa still does not have a sufficient number of highly skilled people in most professions and this demands that solid action be taken to improve access to quality education.

We are happy that more TVET Colleges are being built all across the country and that the government is spending over R64 billion in student accommodation. We welcome the planned Science University at Ekurhuleni. Infrastructure spending in schools needs to speak to the enormity of the challenges facing the education system.

We are worried though that the SONA did not give a detailed plan on addressing the pervasive lack of safety in South African schools. The violence in schools has reached crisis levels. Lastly, we are disappointed that the President has failed to mention the etolls. We need to put this matter to bed because it continues to be a contentious policy issue.
The Economy

Working towards establishing a STATE-OWNED PHARMACEUTICAL

by Sandra Khoza

The pharmaceutical industry is an important component of health care systems throughout the world; it is comprised of many public and private organizations that discover, develop, manufacture and market medicines for human and animal health (Gennaro, 1990). The pharmaceutical industry is based primarily upon the scientific research and development of medicines that prevent or treat diseases and disorders.

In 2014, total pharmaceutical revenues worldwide had exceeded one trillion U.S. dollars for the first time.

The pharmaceutical market in SA was valued at approximately R45 billion in 2015. The private sector accounted to 84% in the market.

The public sector accounted to 16% in the market. Approximately 276 companies are licensed by the Department of Health and the Medicines Control Council to import, manufacture, distribute or export pharmaceuticals. Domestic manufacturing pharmaceutical companies almost exclusively produce generic products. SA pharmaceutical manufacturing companies are import dependents.

In 2013, generics accounted for 63% of the private pharmaceutical market and 80% market share in government’s pharmaceutical use. The value of locally manufactured pharmaceuticals exported in 2015 was R4.9 billion.

South Africa’s response: Ketlaphela and value of tenders for drugs

The pharmaceutical company is mandated to supply South African manufactured Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and final formulated medical products mainly for communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria and later non-communicable diseases. The government initially planned to make active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) for ARVs but had to put these plans on ice when its Swiss partner Lonza pulled out. It then opted for a new economic model in which it would source and supply Ketlaphela-branded antiretrovirals to the department while it built manufacturing capacity.

Importance of the sector for jobs, health, security, supply, and sovereignty

According to the Competition Commission South Africa “the local manufacture of drugs is declining, with 37 plants closing and 6500 job losses”. COSATU views the establishment of a competitive state-owned pharmaceutical company as a way of creating jobs. The import in generics and originator drugs makes the pharmaceutical industry the largest contributor to South Africa’s import deficit. The reliance on imports is very problematic, especially in the market for ARVs and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), where South Africa is the world’s largest consumer of ARVs yet imports all of its ARVs and 95% of its APIs.

The expenditure on drugs costs the South African government billions of rands. According to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade South Africa imports of pharmaceutical products was R3.5 billion during 2018. The country has great science capacity but lacks commercialism on technology. Therefore, countries such as Cuba, India and China can assist in commercialising South Africa’s scientific capacity.

Cuba has a great example of such an entity. According to O’Farrell (2018) Cuba’s entirely state-owned biopharmaceutical industry has been remarkably successful, and can serve as a model for other nations. South Africa and its Ketlaphela can also learn from China and the establishment of its own state owned pharmaceutical company. China is a country of almost 1.4 billion people, meaning that its public health requirements are on a scale vastly different than to nearly all other countries. It developed its domestic pharmaceutical production sector in order to meet the needs of its population through central government policy controls. China National Pharmaceutical Group Co., Ltd. (Sinopharm) is a large healthcare group directly under the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) of the State Council, with 128,000 employees and a full chain in the industry covering R&D, manufacturing, logistics and distribution, retail chains, healthcare, engineering services, exhibitions and conferences, international business and financial services.

If South Africa can establish a successful pharmaceutical company, the unemployment rate can be reduced in the scarce skills area (i.e. researchers, pharmacists) and that can improve the economy; also meeting the state’s obligation to provide access to health care as stated in Section 27 of the Constitution.

1See section 27(1)(b) and (3) which state that Everyone has the right to have access to- (a) health care services, including reproductive health care; (3) No one may be refused emergency medical treatment.
South Africa needs FDI to resolve the triple challenge

by Boitshepo Matata

In a globalised world almost all countries need Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) either in forms of money (US Dollars), machinery, technology and skills. Foreign Direct Investment is an important enabler of economic growth. According to the OECD, FDI is a form of cross border investment made by a resident of one country with the objective of establishing a business in another country with the objective of influencing the management of that business.

Within the category of FDI there are Greenfield investments that are used to establish new businesses or to expand an existing foreign-based company and portfolio investments where an investor is merely buying equity of foreign-based companies in the form of stocks and bonds.

Portfolio investors differ from FDI as they do not generally participate in the management of companies and only invest against a certain target.

South Africa is in need of more FDI rather than portfolio investment as the country has a high unemployment rate and having foreign investors will assist in resolving the unemployment crisis and it is for this reason that COSATUS supports president Ramaphosa’s commitment to attract $100 billion (R1.2 trillion) by 2023. The challenges is that SA received more portfolio investments than FDI.

Globally, the value of FDI in 2018 was US$1.2 trillion. It is assumed that the investments would go to developing countries that need the money, machinery and technology. However, the figures show that FDI is still biased towards developed countries. Africa received $46 billion (R638 billion) which is around 26% of global FDI inflows. Egypt was the largest recipient of FDI in Africa receiving $6.8 billion. Southern Africa saw the biggest turnaround, with flows recovering to $4.2 billion after net divestment of $925 million in 2017. FDI in South Africa more than doubled to $5.3 billion (around R72 billion).

The money went into the mining sector, petroleum refinery, food processing, information communication and technology, and renewable energy. Most of the FDI goes into the skills intensive sectors which are not likely to create jobs in the thousands. South Africa had FDI inflows of R17 billion ($1.16 billion) in the third quarter of 2019 compared with R26.3 billion in the second quarter, according to the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) in its Quarterly Bulletin. President Cyril Ramaphosa secured about R200 billion ($13.5 billion) of investment pledges, mainly from domestic companies, as part of his drive to boost economic growth.

The pledged have not yet materialised into investments. The objective for FDI is to develop the basic infrastructure in the host economy with the help of multinational funding and expertise. It also helps to bridge the technological gap and diversify the skills base. Although host countries need to worry of some of the issue that come with FDI such as, the investors might not have the same moral attachments, and may act unethically in the domestic market pushing out domestic firms, exploitation of natural resources.

Foreign ownership is high in South Africa. The largest source of foreign ownership of South African companies is through foreign direct investment (FDI) amounting to R13.5 billion in value at the end of 2015, equivalent to 49% of GDP. South Africa relies on foreign money to cover her large budget and current account deficits.

FDI trends spotted in BRICS economies in 2019 include China receiving $136.7 billion in FDI inflows. Capital investment into India grew by 16% to $49 billion and Brazil had a resurgent year for FDI, receiving $60 billion.

One of China’s biggest successes in becoming the second largest economy in the world is that they have been able to use foreign investment to solve their country’s developmental problems. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has required investors to operate in joint ventures and transfer technology. The strength of China lies in her big population (1.4 billion people) and an industrialised economy.

Whilst there’s a need for foreign investment, South Africa as one of the leading economies on the continent needs to pursue an Africa wide investment policy or at least a SACU level in order to increase her bargaining power in negotiating with foreign investors. Without a stronger negotiating power South Africa would not be able to use foreign investors to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.
The triple-headed Spectre haunting Davos

By Jeremy Cronin

The Annual World Economic Forum meeting held at Davos-Klosters in Switzerland has not gone past without controversy. Many across the globe still argue that world economic risks such as illicit trade, unemployment, infrastructure failures, asset bubble, fiscal crises, deflation and unimaginable inflation have not been thoughtfully dealt with by world leaders and key captains of capitalism. Whilst many argue that the ‘identified’ top risks in the world are genuine, some still believe is becoming another talkshow for economic tourists. Jeremy Cronin writes to unpack some of the key issues left untackled.

He said ‘The Word Economic Forum’s (WEF)’ annual Davos jamboree has just ended. The gathering brings together global corporate CEOs, the mega-rich, along with government representatives, supplicants, well-heeled Third World sycophants, hangers-on and an assortment of neo-liberal soothsayers. This year’s mood was more sombre than usual. A triple-headed spectre was haunting Davos.

Amongst the overlords of the universe (but not all, not Trump) there is now a belated awareness that trouble is looming. The deepening global social, environmental and economic crises out here in the real world, beyond the Davos bubble, are a threat to profits and to the sustainability of capitalism itself.

Inequality, founder and executive chair of WEF, Klaus Schwab worries “has profound and far-reaching consequences”, it is eroding the “social contract” – by which he means the social hegemony of neo-liberalism. Indeed, the facts are grotesque. As the global elite gathered in Davos, Osanb released its annual report on global inequality. The world’s 2,153 billionaires now have more wealth than 4.6 billion people – 60 per cent of the world’s population. The 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa.

Women and girls put in 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care-work each and every day – a contribution to the global economy of at least $10.8 trillion a year, more than three times the size of the global tech economy. Meanwhile the ravages of profit-driven capitalism on the environment are becoming ever more drastic and apparent. The bush fires raging in Australia are among the most dramatic and most noted (they are occurring in a rich country, unlike the crippling drought in Zimbabwe, or floods in Indonesia).

Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, at $7 trillion the world’s largest assets manager, has begun to notice with alarm that climate-change is eroding not just coral reefs, but the very foundations of the capitalist financial system. “What will happen”, he wonders, “to the 30-year mortgage – a key building block of finance – if lenders can’t estimate the impact of climate risk over such a long timeline, and if there is no viable market for flood or fire insurance in impacted areas?” The global capitalist economy in the narrow sense, too, is ailing. While speculative, casino world of the stock-market is pumping like an athlete on steroids, the IMF has just reduced once more its global growth forecasts. Secular stagnation is entrenched in most of the developed world, just as in South Africa.

These triple global crises of inequality, environmental destruction and economic stagnation are intertwined as even the IMF now recognises. In the words of IMF managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, there are dangers of an impending “financial disaster” akin to the Great Depression of the 1930s, due to “rising inequality and increased uncertainty caused by the climate emergency and trade wars”.

So, what has last week’s Davos WEF gathering prescribed in the face of these challenges? The buzzword is “stakeholder capitalism”.

Schwab tells us that: “Generally speaking, we have three models to choose from. The first is ‘shareholder capitalism’, embraced by most Western corporations, which holds that a corporation’s primary goal should be to maximise profits. The second model is ‘state capitalism’, which enshrines the government with setting the direction of the economy, and has risen to prominence in many emerging markets, not least China.”

“Bar”, adds Schwab, “compared to these two options, the third has the most to recommend it. ‘Stakeholder capitalism’...positions private corporations as trustees of society and it is clearly the best response to today’s social and environmental challenges.”

(Note, in passing, that, as you might expect, the only options we are given are supposed variants within capitalism – nothing beyond it.) But what is “stakeholder capitalism”?

Schwab’s Davos Manifesto calls on corporations “to treat customers with dignity and respect, to respect human rights throughout their supply chain, to act as a steward to the environment for future generations and, most significantly, to measure performance, not only on the return to shareholders but also how it achieves its environmental, social and good governance objectives.

That all sounds hunky-dory - but can the leopard really change its spots? Can unreflected capitalist corporations at the service of the 0.1 percenters, the global rentier class, really become dependable “trustees of society”, “stewards of the environment”? Our experience of state capitalism is unsustainable. Without any illusions or naiveté, as the left we should note that some of the most enlightened factions of capital recognise that the current trajectory of global capitalism is unsustainable. We should welcome the fact that the likes of BlackRock, entirely for reasons of ensuring medium- to long-term sustainable profitability, are advocating a green transition.

But that transition will not happen, still less will it be a socially just transition, unless we effectively use popular state power and social mobilisation to ensure that the future is not left in the hands of Klaus Schwab’s Davos Man.

The Davos version of “stakeholder capitalism” is an entirely voluntary process left in the hands of corporations. It does not challenge the over-riding profit-making purpose of corporations.

We can be sure that the Davos championing of “stakeholder capitalism” will now spawn a local fan-club here in South Africa. But is there nothing to recommend the idea of “stakeholder capitalism”? How should the left position itself on this terrain? Are there entry-points for a more radical intervention? In the first place, we should note that, in its Davos version, it owes some of its appeal to the fact that at least it is diverging from the short-termist, climate-denialist, imperialist chauvinism of Trump. (Although in its Davos version it represents a different kind of imperialist aspiration – not Trump’s America first imperialism, but the imperialism of cosmopolitan corporate CEOs, trustees of the universe.)

The socialist left in South Africa and internationally is not about to abolish capitalism as much as we might legitimately wish to do so. Radical environmental collapse will destroy capitalism, but it will also destroy the prospects for any kind of human civilisation, socialist or otherwise. Without any illusions or naiveté, as the left we should note that some of the enlightened factions of capital recognise that the current trajectory of global capitalism is unsustainable.

As Nick Buxton writes of the “stakeholder capitalism” version propounded in the Davos Manifesto: “The catch is that nowhere...is there a mention of enforcement mechanisms, legislation or regulation to ensure companies abide by their commitments.” (“Has the era of the ethical corporation arrived?”, www.opendemocracy.net). And that’s because Schwab has conveniently consigned any leading strategic role for the state, as in China, to “state capitalism”, which is posited as an entirely different version of capitalism antithetical to his preferred “stakeholder capitalism”.

Jeremy Cronin is SAPC Central Committee and Politburo member. The article first in SAPC Umsebenzi.
Insurance as a vehicle for Radical Socio-economic Transformation

By Bandile Masuku

In the ANC January 8th Statement President Cyril Ramaphosa declared that the year 2020 is the year of unity, socio-economic renewal and nation building. Embedded in this declaration is the commitment to the values enshrined in the Freedom Charter and the rehashing of the Charter as a lodestar for the development of South Africa – a democratic country, underpinned by equality for all without discrimination of anyone based on their race, gender or class positioning.

The African National Congress and the Mass Democratic Movement have over the years maintained the commitment to democracy, equality and an unequivocal bias towards the working class, women, youth and those in rural areas. It is in this context therefore that the call for Universal Health Coverage in South Africa is made.

In Echoing the commitment towards multilateralism and building a united Africa for all, it is our responsibility as leaders to advocate for the reign of freedom in the continent – consolidating efforts towards the strengthening of the public health sector in one of the ways we can build a secure foundation for a united and prosperous Africa that we want and are dedicated to.

The time for deepening the agenda of access to quality healthcare is now, in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals on health, it is imperative that the status quo in the provision of health services is not maintained. A business as usual approach on the political economy of health will not radically transform the socio-economic positions of most of the people in South Africa.

While discourse on the National Health Insurance was more advanced in the past few years, it is worthwhile to note that, the changes that are being presented through the NHI Bill are not new, and the process towards achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030 has been ongoing. In December 2012, the international community through the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the resolution on Global Health and Foreign Policy which encouraged countries to commit to accelerating progress towards achieving Universal Health Coverage.

This endorsement being informed by a recognition that national health systems need to be both elaborate and specific in their targets and approaches to improving healthcare. In this regard, the required approach must be grounded in a shift towards broadening Primary Health Care and nurturing a culture that fosters social protection as a vehicle for making inroads in the health sector, and transforming the lives of many, specifically the poor and most vulnerable.

It is from this perspective that we ought to better understand the relationship between radical socio-economic transformation and the NHI. The key theme that is captured in the Freedom Charter is that of equality and an equal chance at success at life irrespective of one’s socio-economic background.

It is important to recognise that achieving the kind of society that we envisage through the Charter requires that government, all its stakeholders and citizens of South Africa accept that the level of transformation needed must be radical. In its radicalism, it is expected that it will unnerve and challenge the comfort and privilege that few in this country enjoy. This being so, it remains a necessary radicalism.

At this conjuncture, the Freedom Charter offers a vantage point that which we can use to further develop a case for Universal Health Coverage in South Africa. An approach that prioritises using a public health lens to understand the Freedom Charter and the call to radical socio-economic transformation is crucial because it acknowledges that a good quality of life, that is anchored on the principles of equality and justice for all relies on access to quality healthcare services.

The Freedom Charter through one of its clause’s advocates that ‘There Shall Be Houses, Security and Comfort for All’, it is under this clause that the notion of access to quality health services arises. The inaccessibility of quality healthcare has a direct impact on the quality of life, and the security and comfort that is envisaged in the Charter.

The relationship between the Freedom Charter, the call to radical socio-economic transformation and achieving Universal Health Coverage through the NHI is therefore worth exploring. The point of departure being that the National Health Insurance should be seen as a vehicle for radical socio-economic transformation.

The NHI firstly offers the opportunity to close the economic disparity that exists in access to healthcare services in the country. It is in part, an appeal to the moral duty and conscience of South Africans genuinely committed to equality and justice. It is also an opportunity to step up the rainbow nation rhetoric through actionable commitments towards health justice.

Secondly, the NHI echoes the view that radical transformation cannot take place in a business as usual context, it is the business of radicalism to challenge the way in which the market operates. In the health sector, there is evidence that the private sector works in an unequal, and unsustainable way that not only excludes the majority, but that also exploits even those that are included.

The reality that the private sector remains an oligopoly itself is a case for transformation of the sector. Lastly, the NHI as presented prioritises an approach that empowers the health user to take full responsibility of their health.

The idea of strengthening Primary Health Care is in itself a way of entrenching a culture of preventative care and approaches to treatment that empower communities. The NHI is a radical shift in health policy, it is the backstop upon which a more equitable healthcare system can be ushered in. It is also the revolutionary responsibility of all South Africans to commit to this call till the end.

Bandile Masuku, Gauteng MEC for Health.

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Persons with Disabilities - A Valuable Asset

South Africa, like most countries, needs every skilled worker to contribute towards the prosperity of the country. Persons with disabilities can make a positive contribution in the workplace. It is generally found that a person with a disability develops into a well-adjusted, productive worker in an atmosphere of acceptance, co-operation and goodwill. It is found that workers with disabilities are more productive than their co-workers and that they are less absent from work and shows great loyalty towards their company. Employers are encouraged to give far more persons with disabilities the opportunity to enter the workforce.

Disability is a human rights and development issue, meaning that persons with disabilities should enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. Technological advances have removed many obstacles for persons with disabilities in their aspirations to pursue the careers of their choice. The Labour Centres can assist employers to obtain persons with disabilities that meet their job requirements and employment equity targets.

Careers in which Persons with Disabilities Excel

Many visually, hearing and physically impaired persons excel in the field of computer technology. Blind and partially sighted lawyers are now a reality due to computer developments. Various blind physiotherapists have their own, very successful practices in this country. There are blind lecturers, music teachers and marketing consultants, to name but a few careers. Visually impaired persons can also do manual jobs such as making bricks and tiles. Deaf and hard of hearing persons are often successful in noisy jobs, such as panel-beating, which may have a negative effect on hearing persons. Hearing impaired persons also successfully pursue a variety of careers such as forestry, graphic art, medical technology, banking and sales. Persons with physical disabilities are successful in many careers including teaching, social work, business management and many others. Stephen Hawking is one of the greatest scientists the world has ever known, yet he is quadriplegic and can only speak with the aid of a computer. He freely admits that he has reached the top in his field because of and not in spite of his disability. In fact, most careers are accessible for persons with disabilities, due to advances in assistive devices.

Removing the Barriers

Many barriers such as widespread ignorance and stereotypes have caused persons with disabilities to be unfairly discriminated against in society and in employment. For these reasons, persons with disabilities are a designated group in terms of the Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998, as amended by Act 47 of 2013. The purpose of this Act is to remove unfair discrimination and to promote equity in the workplace. This Act protects persons with disabilities and others against unfair discrimination and, as a previously disadvantaged group, disabled persons are eligible to benefit from affirmative action programmes.

The Minister of Employment and Labour approved a Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Persons with disabilities in terms of the Employment Equity Act. The Code is a guide for employers and workers to encourage equal opportunities and fair treatment of persons with disabilities. It also helps to create awareness of the contributions that persons with disabilities can make in the workplace.

Definition of “Persons with Disabilities”

In terms of the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Persons with disabilities, the focus is on the effect of a disability on the person in relation to the working environment, and not on the impairment. The Code defines persons with disabilities as “persons who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits their prospects of entry into, or advancement in employment.”

Confidentiality and Disclosure

All persons have the right of privacy and, therefore, no person is obliged to inform their employer of a disability or impairment. However, should the impact of the disability be such that reasonable accommodation is needed, it will be to the advantage of the applicant or employee to disclose their disability.

Reasonable Accommodation

All designated employers should “reasonably accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.” This is both a non-discrimination and an affirmative action requirement. The aim of this accommodation is to enable the person to perform the essential functions of the job. An employer may be obligated to make reasonable accommodation available, when an applicant or employee voluntarily discloses a disability related accommodation need, or when such a need is self-evident to the employer.

The employer should consult the person with a disability since they know their specific reasonable accommodation needs best. Employers can also consult technical experts for advice on reasonable accommodation.

The Career Counsellors at the Department of Employment and Labour can refer you to not-for profit organisations which can provide advice. Reasonable accommodation refers to modifications or changes to the way a job is
normally performed, that makes it possible for a suitably qualified person with a disability to perform on par with everyone else.

The type of reasonable accommodation required, would depend on the job and its essential functions, the work environment and the person’s specific disability.

Very often, only minor adjustments are necessary to make a disabled person’s workplace accessible. Employers are also encouraged to look towards universal access for persons with disabilities, which means that one adjustment can meet the special needs of different disabilities. Reasonable accommodation measures may include:

- Removing physical barriers, for example building a ramp to ensure wheelchair accessibility.
- Braille or speaking lifts for blind persons.
- Access to information and technology is very important. This includes adapting existing or acquiring new equipment, e.g. computer hardware and software.
- Visually impaired persons may require voice input/output software or magnifying software.
- Hearing aids: Excellent hearing aids are available on the market today that will increase a hearing impaired person’s ability to communicate.
- Re-organising work stations to ensure that persons with disabilities can work effectively and efficiently for example adjusting work schedules, if necessary.
- Changing training and assessment materials and processes. e.g. providing training materials on request in electronic format, Braille or on tape for persons with visual disabilities.

Converting existing sound signals to sight signals. If the job requires action to be taken in response to a signal or sign and the relevant sense is impaired, for example vision, the signal may be converted for another sense and a bell sound may be used instead. Likewise, a bell sound may be used instead. In the case of hearing impaired persons, a signal may be converted for another sense and in response to a signal or sign and the relevant sense is impaired, for example vision, the signal may be converted for another sense and a bell sound may be used instead. Likewise, a bell sound may be used instead.

Worker’s Compensation
An employee may sustain a partial, temporary or permanent disability in the course of employment and may require assistance from the employer to access compensation. Such an employee may be entitled to compensation in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, Act 130 of 1993 as amended by Act No.51 of 1997. The main objective of the Compensation Fund is to provide for compensation for disability caused by occupational injuries or diseases, sustained or contracted by workers during the course of their work. Employers must report all workplace accidents to the Compensation Fund in terms of the law.

The nearest office of the Department of Employment and Labour should be contacted for assistance. Employers also have a responsibility to inform employers about accidents. Only employers contribute financially to the Compensation Fund.

If an employee has a temporary total disability (an injury that gets better), an employee will get 75% of his/her salary for the time that he/she is unfit for duty, provided he does not receive a salary from his employer. If an employee has a permanent total disability (a disability for the rest of the employee’s life), an assessment of the disability will be done in accordance with the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act. The assessment of the disability will be done in accordance with the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act. The assessment of the disability will be done in accordance with the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act.

- If the disability is assessed to be 30% or less, a once-off lump sum payment will be made for the injury.
- If the disability is assessed to be more than 30%, the employee will receive a monthly pension for life. The amount of this pension is calculated on the employee’s salary at the time of the accident, the percentage of disability and the benefits applicable at the time of the accident.

Retention
The employer is required to ensure the retention of existing staff with disabilities through rehabilitation, training or any other appropriate measure. Where an existing employee becomes disabled, the employer must ensure that the employee return to the same position, before considering alternatives, for example re-deployment. Based on operational requirements, the employer must give sufficient consideration to requests from employees with disabilities for reduced, part-time or alternative duties.

Tips for Work-Seekers with Disabilities
If you have a disability, you know it may affect a potential employer’s attitude towards you and the employer may have some concerns. It is up to you to show prospective employers that, despite your disability, you are a suitable candidate for the job.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when searching for work:

- Have you organised and planned your job search? Use a variety of job-hunting techniques instead of just looking at newspaper advertisements.
- Many jobs are advertised on the internet: ask the Career Counsellor at the Labour Centre for advice.
- Do research to identify potential work opportunities in your area.
- Identify persons who might be aware of prospective employers that can help you to find a job.
- Compile a comprehensive CV. You can find information about writing your CV in bookstores, libraries and on the internet and also from a Career Counsellor in the Department of Employment and Labour.
- Remember that the more potential employers you meet, the better your chances will be of getting the job you want.
- If you have applied for a job, follow up with a phone call to confirm that the employer received your application form and CV.
- Know your own capabilities and limitations.
- You must know what the job entails for which you apply and what you can contribute towards achieving the goal of the company.
- Prepare well for a job interview.
- Find out where the company is situated well in advance.
- Dress appropriately.
- Arrive 15 minutes earlier.
- If you are required to undergo psychometric testing, enquire about the different purposes for which you will be tested and request the necessary reasonable accommodation to enable you to be tested.

- Present yourself in the most positive manner. Your aim must be to "market" yourself as a suitable candidate for the job.
- Make the interview easy for the employer and be confident.
- Be honest.
- Be able to explain in your own words the type of reasonable accommodation that you require relating to the specific nature, degree and severity of your disability.
- Take responsibility to ask for reasonable accommodation if you should require any.
- Know that you have the right to ask for reasonable accommodation at any stage of the employment process.
- Be responsible enough to know that the reasonable accommodation must be a viable option for both yourself and the employer.
- Know what technologies can help you work effectively, how much they cost and where they can be obtained.
- Know your rights and familiarise yourself with current legislation.
- Do not let past failures affect you negatively.

Education and Awareness on Persons with Disabilities and the Workplace
The only way to overcome fears, myths and negative attitudes about the abilities of employers and employees with disabilities is through vigorous education and awareness-raising within the private and public sectors. Furthermore, experience has shown that persons with disabilities are the best qualified persons to be the drivers of such education and awareness programmes. As a person with a disability, you can become a change agent in the community, by:

- Playing a leading role in creating awareness on disability issues in the workplace.
- Contributing to the development of all awareness programmes in the workplace.
- Considering becoming a member of trade unions and any representative structures within the workplace in order to ensure hands-on disability awareness training.

Needling Assistance With Employment Services?
The Department of Employment and Labour established labour centres across the country to provide employment services. Please contact your nearest labour centre.
The Congress of South African Trade Unions, the Alliance partners and Coalition of International Solidarity organizations from Civil Society participated in a massive picket at the US Embassy precinct in Pretoria in January 2020.

The South African Communist Party 1st General Secretary, comrade Solly Mapaila who led the picket alongside COSATU 1st Deputy President, Michael Shingange said ‘the United States government is once again embarking on dangerous acts of provocation and threatening war in the Middle East.’

He said ‘The SACP strongly condemns the acts of aggression by the United States against both Iranian and Iraqi people. These attacks amount to a violation of the two countries’ rights to national sovereignty and self-determination. The flagrant violation of Iraq’s sovereign airspace is one of the many examples which prove that the imperialist regime of the US has never cared about the freedom of the people in any region or country and is prepared to violate international law whenever it wants to.

It is a well-documented fact that the US’ involvement in the Middle East has nothing to do with peace for the people in that region. Neither does it have anything to do with the promotion of international peace and security. Like in Venezuela, the US’ intention in the Middle East is to achieve control of natural resources, particularly oil, as well as its global market, and the promotion of the US dollar.’

‘In the Middle East, in the year 2000 for instance Iraq decided to use the Euro for its oil exports, but since the illegal military invasion of Iraq by the US in 2003 and the occupation that followed, Iraq was coerced back to the US dollar. It is also no mystery why Iran, with 10 per cent of the world’s oil production, would attract the imperialist US’ violence. The surrounding of the region with US military bases has all the imperialist trappings against which the working class must unite. This is our call. As part of its strategy of geo-political hegemony, the US also acts to change the balance of forces in the Middle East in favour of its ally, the apartheid, Zionist state of Israel. All peace loving people need to also strongly condemn the habit of all US Presidents to assert their authority through foreign aggression and particularly Trump’s attempt to divert attention from his impeachment process by spilling blood in the Middle East’, said Mapaila.

The SACP calls for an intensification of internationalist work from the working class, and upon all peace loving people globally to wage a relentless struggle against imperialism. The world’s working class movement must unite in defence of the peace loving and democratic people of Iraq, Iran and the broader Middle East. The SACP is calling for an end to military escalation, militarisation of the Middle East and imperialist occupation in the region and elsewhere.’

The SACP further calls upon the Iranian authorities, too, to uphold the human and democratic rights of the people of Iran. These include political rights, including the right to free democratic political expression.

‘US must respect International Law on peacemaking declares workers’

COSATU 1st Deputy President, Michael Shingange declared that ‘the federation demands withdrawal of US troops in the Middle East and that the US must end unjustifiable and cruel wars across the world.’

The ANC also gave a message of support.

Meanwhile the South African has issued a statement noting ‘notes the announcement of a peace plan by the United States aimed at resolving the longstanding Israeli – Palestinian conflict.’

COSATU strongly condemns imperialist United States aggression and attacks in the Middle East

COSATU National Office Bearers declaring their international solidarity with Iranians
The Minister in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Her Excellency Hon Naledi Pandor said ‘South Africa believes that it is only initiatives developed with the full participation of the people of Palestine that can achieve lasting peace and remains consistent in its view that genuine inclusive, open dialogue can resolve the current impasse. In addition, South Africa is of the view that processes begin through genuinely committed dialogue aimed at determining lasting solutions.

South Africa continues to support international efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, existing side by side in peace with Israel within internationally recognized borders, based on those existing on 4 June 1967, prior to the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with all relevant UN resolutions, international law and internationally agreed parameters.

South Africa maintains its principled position that any peace plan should not allow Palestinian statehood to devolve into an entity devoid of sovereignty, territorial contiguity and economic viability. Doing so would severely compound the failure of previous peace-making efforts, accelerate the demise of the two-state option and fatally damage the cause of durable peace for Palestinians and Israelis alike.’

And NEHAWU became crystal clear that ‘Palestine is not for Trump to offer, nor for Netanyahu to steal.’

The Trump plan titled ‘Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People’ recognizes and legitimises the Jewish settlements built on occupied Palestinian territory, which are regarded as illegal under international law. As NEHAWU, we hold a strong view that the plan is aimed at further giving Apartheid Israel more leeway to occupy Palestinian land and make no effort in resolving the longstanding Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The fact that the plan was drawn by Trump’s son in law with no input from the Palestinians further buttress the fact that Trump is hell-bent on aiding and abetting Israel to continue with the illegal occupation of Palestine and its colonial project. Any negotiations that does not include the affected people are a sham and an underhand attempt at continuing the status quo. It is important to note that the plan is nothing but a glorified copy and paste version of Apartheid South Africa’s Bantustans, this farce of a plan places Palestinians in homelands, with no sovereignty whilst at the control and pleasure of Apartheid Israel.

‘The Trump plan is a clear case of American apartheid designed to placate the Israeli occupation regime. It is a clear attempt to legitimize the occupation and to undermine the rights of the Palestinian people. The plan is a continuation of the Israeli occupation of the West bank including the 2017 formal recognition of the city of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem and the cutting off aid to Palestinian refugees. This plan further allows apartheid Israel to occupy more fertile Palestinian land while Palestinians will be compensated with a piece of the desert linked to Gaza near the Egyptian border.’

Saphetha said ‘NEHAWU reaffirms its solidarity with the people of Palestine and we call for an end to the US enabled colonization and land theft of Palestine. In this regard, we will intensify our solidarity with the Palestinian struggle to end the Israeli occupation and towards the goal of an independent sovereign Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. We are fully behind the call for all political prisoners and detainees to be released immediately. The Israelis must affirm the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland.’
CEPPWAWU supports COSATU & NUM
that Gordhan and the Eskom Board Must Go

The Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers’ Union (CEPPWAWU), has reiterated its position that the ‘union is fully behind the call and the sentiments expressed by the giant federation COSATU of ‘accountability and consistency’ for Minister Gordhan, not to find another scapegoat, but to take full responsibility and accountability.’

CEPPWAWU General Secretary, Cde Welile Nolingko, said CEPPWAWU is a union organizing in the manufacturing sector where the load shedding has hit the sector very hard. In December 2019 the load shedding reached unprecedented stage 6, and damaged the struggling sector as already in January 2020 the country experienced stage 2, this happened over and above President Ramaphosa having assured a nation of no load shedding.

‘The World Bank has already fired the first salvo to South Africa by revising its 2020 growth forecast to less than 1%, all because of earlier load shedding than anticipated. Therefore as a Union we welcome the departure and resignation of Jabu Mabuza; the former Eskom board chairman, the CEO and service provider. We echo the call for the entire Eskom board members to follow suit and the Minister Gordhan to go. It has been as clear as daylight that whatever he touches implodes.’

He said ‘All the State Owned Enterprises are on their knees under his watch and he has placed himself as a good guy for ‘javelin throwing’ in order for himself and his friends to catch it (the javelin) on the other side as he is advocating for privatization and unbundling. South Africa has capable men and women who can turn the SOEs around without Pravin Gordhan’s dirty privatization and unbundling hands.’

‘The sooner Pravin Gordhan goes, the better and safer for all South Africans.

SAEPU kick-starts 2020 with a Central Executive Committee

COSATU 1st Deputy President, Michael Shingange Addressing the SAEPU CEC

The South African Emergency Personnel Union [SAEPU] held its Central Executive Committee (CEC) at Braamfontein early in January 2020. The CEC was held amongst others, to take stock of developments since the union was established around 2008 to unite all emergency personnel across all provinces.

Addressing the SAEPU CEC, COSATU 1st Deputy President, Michael Shingange acknowledged the organizational efforts displayed by SAEPU in all the campaigns of the federation.’

He said ‘Emergency Personnel must regarded as one of the vulnerable workers in the country because many are suffering from occupational burn-out due to unpaid overtime work, insufficient security during their call time and general lack of job security.’

‘We urge all emergency personnel to join progressive unions to fight against retrenchments looming in various sectors of our economy, COSATU Central Executive Committee to a resolution to lead a recruitment drive in all sectors and we appreciate that SAEPU has been instrumental in all workshops to present its case on how they will sustain the organization beyond its registration at the federation. We must campaign for a health insurance for health workers as majority suffer from occupational injuries and diseases because the danger allowance currently is a fluke. As we campaign for the National Health Insurance, all health professionals must play a meaningful role to ensure that it is implemented in all health centres’, said Shingange

‘This year, COSATU will be holding its National Collective Bargaining Conference and each union is expected to present a holistic approach on how to strengthen organized labour in South Africa’, and we wish SAEPU CEC robust engagements and resolutions to fight for unification of workers’, concluded Shingange.
The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) has been reprioritizing its focus campaigning for adherence to good governance in all municipalities to ensure all its member’s working conditions are protected. Over the last decade, members have brutal experiences of having their pension funds not paid to third parties, non-payment of salaries on time has been the order of the day and also withholding of union’s subscriptions.

SAMWU declared in its year-end statement that in 2020 the union ‘We will also be engaging Expended Public Works Programme (EPWP) employees across the country with the intention of ensuring that we take an item to the SALGBC that would see their absorption as permanent employees, directly employed by municipalities.’

SAMWU in the City of Cape Town has come out guns blazing against the misuse of ratepayers’ money for the benefit of cronies by the employer. Mikel Kumalo, the Regional Secretary of SAMWU Cape Metro alluded that ‘The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) has learnt that the City of Cape Town (City) is misusing ratepayers’ monies yet again by creating a heavy top management structure at Water & Sanitation Department. Ratepayers of Cape Town were up in arms not so long ago with the very same Department for building a multimillion rand building known as the Water City in Bellville, Cape Town purely for luxury.

The very same building was not yet approved to have staff in it as one of the problems was the running tap water that had a strong diesel smell which led some of our members putting in a grievance against the City Capetonians had to fund this building through paying hefty water rates whereas they still face lack thereof or nonexistence of service delivery.’

As recent as this week the City of Cape Town’s Water and Sanitation Department has advertised four (4) new Director positions; Director: Bulk Services, Commercial Services, Retail Services and Technical Services.

These vacancies close on the 14 February 2020 and these Directors will earn high inflated salaries of nothing less than R1.5 Million per annum. The rhetorical question now is why the creation of these posts because currently the City has existing Heads and Managers managing these four (4) sections within Water City.

It is a known secret that these positions are reserved for their cronies and political scores settlements whilst exploiting the real people who provide service delivery to the communities of Cape Town disguised under the Expended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The City’s vacancy rate is growing by the day and is very alarming. There is over 10 000 permanent job opportunities in the CCT that have not been filled.

Yet the City failed to honor the strike agreement that was signed in 2015 where it was agreed upon to fill vacancies of lower level positions by EPWP workers. Instead what has been happening in the City jobs at that level have been filled by families and friends of managers in the City and leaving out those that know the job and have been doing the work.

We also have constantly raising issues of management lacking to motivate and develop their own permanent staff where lack of advancements and promotions for operational staff has been nonexistent. Operational employees spending 40 years of service still being a “worker”. The case of our member in Wildevoeveli Water Treatment Plant that fell into a tank and passed on, had long years of service but was still a worker. He passed on performing operators’ functions and his management was aware and giving tasks linked with operations and not those of worker.

SAMWU demands that the City retracts these Director positions advertised at Water and Sanitation Department now! and for the City to channel that funding towards employment of those 10 000 permanent jobs at lower level and provide Capetonians the efficient service delivery they deserve and pay for.

Meanwhile, SAMWU in the North West has welcomed the election of new Council at Mamusa Local Municipality.

Vincent Diphoko, the Provincial Secretary, said ‘The South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) notes that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has concluded voting at the Mamusa Local Municipality.

The IEC has today announced the election outcomes for the new council. The conduction of these elections are as a result of the municipality being dissolved in terms of Section 139 of the constitution, following its failure to deliver on its constitutional mandate.’

He said ‘We firstly congratulate all councilors elected and trust that in all they do, they will put the interests of the residents of Mamusa before anything else. We also congratulate the residents of Mamusa for having having exercised their democratic right and participated in this process. The newly constituted council has a mammoth task ahead of them in ensuring that the municipality does not return to being the failure which it was, the failure which had led to the collapse in governance, management and service delivery.

As SAMWU, we look forward to working with the new council in ensuring that service delivery is returned to normality. We are open to assisting the council and administration to avoid being a failure that it previously was. We trust that the new council will ensure that sound labour relations are always maintained in the institution, this in the interest of service delivery.’
Emanating from the successful 9th National Congress held under a declaration to ‘building working class consciousness, enhancing to strengthen the union to become a sustainable union and also defending workers’ rights, POPCRU has been re-prioritizing to push workers’ grievances by demanding payment of pay progression for workers employed under the SAPS Act and also rejecting the imposition of the shift system and promotion policies without following the correct processes.

‘We have written notices to employers after been inundated with complaints regarding the payment of pay progression to all deserving members employed under the SAPS Act. Upon receiving these complaints the office promptly wrote a letter of demand to the National Office to renew the latter’s fleet. Reports say the driver lost control of the vehicle but knowing the poor state of GNT buses, SATAWU in Limpopo is once again calling for the renewal of the fleet. SATAWU has been making consistent calls to GNT and the provincial government as far back as March 2016, for instance, 10 people including a baby were killed and at least 60 others were injured when a GNT bus overturned on the R528 in Magoebaskloof. At the time the provincial transport department suspended the fleet after an inspection revealed some buses were not roadworthy,’ said SATAWU General Secretary, Jack Mazibuko.

‘SATAWU is concerned more lives will be lost if the company’s fleet which we estimate is 20 years old is not renewed as a matter of urgency. According to industry insiders a bus should be retired after five or so years conditional on how rigorously it was maintained during its life span.

SATAWU will make this call once again when it meets with the management of GNT at the end of this month.’

OSATU in Limpopo was shocked by reports of a bus accident which caused lives of ANC supporters attending the 108th ANC Anniversary in Letaba area in Mopani.

South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) has reiterated its call to bus company, Great North Transport (GNT), as well as the Limpopo provincial government to renew the latter’s fleet to curb passenger fatalities. They were travelling in bus which rolled over at Sekgopo Hill along the R81. Reports say the driver lost control of the vehicle but knowing the poor state of GNT buses, SATAWU in Limpopo is once again calling for the renewal of the fleet. SATAWU has been making consistent calls to GNT and the provincial government as far back as 2015. Since then several accidents have claimed the lives of passengers and left many others injured. In March 2016, for instance, 10 people including a baby were killed and at least 60 others were injured when a GNT bus overturned on the R528 in Magoebaskloof. At the time the provincial transport department suspended the fleet after an inspection revealed some buses were not roadworthy,’ said SATAWU General Secretary, Jack Mazibuko.

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Communication Workers Union (CWU) has called for government’s intervention on Telkom’s retrenchments plan. Communication Workers Union (CWU) is angered by Telkom’s plan to dismiss over 3000 workers in the next few months. CWU has released on the 15th January 2020 from the company declaring their intentions to retrench workers. ‘We have received a notice of set down from CCMA for the 22nd and 23rd January 2020, in line with Section 189A of the LRA’, said Aubrey Tshabalala, Communication Workers’ Union.

These letters in the main talks about Telkom SOC Ltd which includes divisions such as OpenServe, Consumer Business, Small Medium Business (which includes Trondo) and Telkom Corporate Centre. The company blames the market conditions that present challenging backdrop for the business not to thrive, they mention these aspects in particular namely (1) macro-economic conditions (2) the persisting uncertainty in regulations and (3) competitive environment.

As CWU we find the presentation by the company ridiculous and undermining not only workers but the country at large’, said Tshabalala.

Tshabalala alluded that ‘In 2016 the company presented almost the same reasons to cut over 2000 jobs and further outsourced thousands more jobs. The executive of Telkom rewarded themselves in 2018 with a total sum of R153.9 million for dismissing workers and then claim that the company made profit. The company’s financial year (2018/19) presented a growth which was mainly based on mobile service revenue increase at 58.3%, supported by an 85.9% growth in active subscribers to 32.8 million. This was at the time when the company refused to reward workers with a decent salary increase; instead workers pocketed only 4% on average in a 3-year circle. In this period, the Maseko’s led executive earned over R104 millions with Maseko pocketing R23.2 million pay cheque, made up of a guaranteed salary of R8.3 million, a bonus of R7 million and a vested share pay-out of R53 million as part of his long-term incentive. Dividends paid on unvested shares totalled to R2.56 million. In 2016 Telkom indicated that they’ll have a new project called ‘future makers’ that will be a soft landing for workers whom were retrench; to establish small businesses that will do Telkom’s faults repair. This was a short-lived project as many of these companies failed because Telkom fail to pay on time, and or not been given work (jobs) to perform. Hence the turnaround time to repair faults for its customers is now taking much longer. In our view, this was just a scheme to retrench workers and for Telkom management appease the society.’

He said ‘Telkom was supposed to have led in the optic fibre rollout in the townships and the outskirts of our country that could have created more jobs, build the infrastructure capacity and created a new customer base. To date many of our poor communities’ schools, primary healthcare clinics and community centres have no access to internet because our SOEs are made milking cows by few elites at the expense of the country’s economy growth. The state is quickly to accept Telkom dividends whilst thousands of jobs are at stake yet the treasury awards private sector like Vodacom R50 Billion worth of tenders.

We all know that Vodacom has been in a forefront of retrenching workers in the past years, does it mean that we have a government that supports retrenchments? CWU is calling for an urgent meeting with the ruling party and the minister in order to resolve this matter. We are further warning Telkom not to continue with their plan to retrench workers but engage on a meaningful dialogue in an attempt to avoid any jobs bloodbath or face mass action.’

Organised Labour in Neflax namely COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU released a joint statement in which they rejected the National Minimum Wage Commission’s recommendation to the Minister for Employment and Labour, Thulas Nxesi, for a 5% increase in the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

COSATU, Bhekiz Nthlamintshali, FEDUSA, Riefedd Ajam and NACTU, Narius Moloto said ‘Considering that the NMW has not been increased for 3 years, the proposed increase is totally unjustifiable and totally insulting to the noble ideals of the legislation that was expected to eject millions of workers out of the poverty trap. The NMW amount of R20 for workers in general, R18 for farm workers, R15 for domestic workers and R11 for EPWP was agreed to in March 2017. It is now 2020.’ ‘Organised Labour wrote to the NMW Commission in 2019 motivating for an increase that would at the very least take into account inflation since 2017. Labour had thus requested that the NMW be increased by at least 12.5% to protect it from 3 years’ worth of inflation. Labour had also requested that farm, domestic and public works workers receive higher increases in order to ensure that the gap between them and the NMW is narrowed and not widened. It is thus shocking and callous that the NMW Commission has in a moment of lethargy and a failure to do due diligence, simply recommended an increase of 5% across the board to the Minister. This will mean that the value of the NMW is being massively eroded by inflation and that the gap between farm, domestic and public works workers and the NMW is widening.’ They said ‘This is a blow to the 6.4 million workers who depend upon the NMW to survive. It will have a dampering effect on an economy starved of stimulus.’

The NMW Act was deliberately crafted. It requires the NMW Commission to review the NMW annually and to ensure that it is protected from inflation, the cost of living increase, that it can remain a tool to fight poverty and inequality and for the gap between farm and domestic workers and the NMW to be phased out in 2 years. The NMW Commission has dijastically failed on all 3 accounts. The National Minimum Wage Act required an increase on 1 January 2020. The Commission failed to meet its statutory obligations.’

Organised labour declared ‘Whilst the Minister cannot afford to delay giving impoverished workers an increase, he needs to intervene with the National Minimum Wage Commission immediately to ensure that an additional increase comes into effect in 2020 to take into account the impact of 2017 and 2018’s inflation upon the value of the National Minimum Wage.’ ‘Equally the Minister needs to deal with the failure of the Department of Labour to ensure that all employers abide by all requirements of the National Minimum Wage Act.’

The Act requires employers to consult workers when applying for exemptions from the NMW. It further requires those companies receiving such exemptions to be published and for companies failing to pay the NMW to be publicly named and shamed. The Department has failed to do so. The leadership of business which signed the NMW Agreement at Neflax needs to come to the party and explain to workers what it is doing to make sure employers abide by the NMW Act.’
SACTWU pledges solidarity with the family of Neil Aggett

The month of February has been associated with the campaign to remember Comrade Neil Aggett, a South African Trade Unionist and a Medical Doctor who was working at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, and was brutally ‘murdered’ by the apartheid regime in 1982.

This year, 2020 January coincided with the inquest hearing taking place at the South Gauteng High Court about alleged ‘suicide’ by the then law enforcements which the family has rejected for many years. The family argues he was killed.

SACTWU threw its weight behind the family to seek justice for the former Food and Canning Workers in which he served as a general secretary.

Aggett was one of many anti-apartheid activists arrested and detained without charge in a security branch operation at the end of 1981. He was campaigning for black workers’ rights through the trade union movement.

According to the police station’s occurrence book from February 4 and 5 1982, police did not perform any patrols between 10.30pm and 1.30am, when Aggett was found dead. It was alleged he had hanged himself. It was reported in the media that ‘Aggett spent 70 days in detention before his death, during which he underwent periods of intense interrogation and alleged torture.’ Many detainees suffered after being assaulted and electrocuted in the notorious 10th floor of the John Vorster Square police station. Reverend Frank Chikane and Barbara Hogan were scheduled to testify at the inquest. Chikane was detained at John Vorster Square in the same period as Aggett. In an affidavit in 1982, shortly after Aggett’s death, Chikane said that when he first saw Aggett he did not seem like a man in distress. “At the beginning of the week during which Dr Aggett died, I was transferred to cell 220. Despite my transfer, I continued to see Dr Neil Aggett during the last week of his life. However, shortly before my transfer and during the last week, I noticed a marked change in his appearance. He walked at a pace which I considered abnormally slow and his posture was that of a man who had been broken,” Chikane said. Hogan is expected to be a key witness at the inquest. She apparently listed Aggett as a “close comrade”, or person who was sympathetic to the struggle, on a list which fell into the hands of the security branch. Hogan subsequently faced charges of treason, terrorism and furthering the aims of the ANC.

NEHAWU has called for the Minister of Finance, Hon Tito Mboweni to resign on the basis, ‘The national union has been extremely worried about the conduct of Cde Tito Mbweni for a very long time. We hold a strong view that Cde Mbweni has totally no regard for both the ANC and the alliance. Cde Mbweni has been running amok undermining the centrality and existence of the alliance and this was highlighted by the unilateral publication of the neoliberal economic discussion document by Treasury which is totally different from the outcomes of the ANC 54th National Conference and the 2019 National General Elections Manifesto commitments. Under his leadership workers have been living in fear as he and his department have been threatening the livelihoods of workers by constantly making threats of wage cuts, wage freezing and a job bloodbath in the public service. He has proven beyond reasonable doubt that he is anti-workers and cares less about the prosperity of the country.’

The national union has been worried about the conduct of Cde Tito Mbweni for a very long time. We hold a strong view that Cde Mbweni has totally no regard for both the ANC and the alliance. Cde Mbweni has been running amok undermining the centrality and existence of the alliance and this was highlighted by the unilateral publication of the neoliberal economic discussion document by Treasury which is totally different from the outcomes of the ANC 54th National Conference and the 2019 National General Elections Manifesto commitments.

NEHAWU on the deterioration of ESKOM

Load shedding in South Africa has affected many small business enterprises and many health centres as many patients live of life support machines. The electricity supply cuts has also led to panic in many households who have patients on home based care.

SACP 1st Deputy General Secretary Comrade Solly Mapaila said ‘Dr. Neil Aggett was the South African anti-apartheid struggle stalwart, Dr Neil Aggett. Dr Aggett was murdered by the apartheid regime’s security branch in February 1982, after 70 days of detention without trial, at the notorious John Vorster Square police station (now known as Johannesburg Central police station), the same police station where Ahmed Timol was murdered by the regime. Dr Aggett was 28 years old. The apartheid regime lied that he committed suicide – the same lie it had peddled on the deaths of many other anti-apartheid activists, including Timol.’ He also attended the inquest court session.
We shall overcome!

By Thobile Maso

If we struggle together
If we educate, organise together mobilise people in action
Surely the day will come

We shall win this war
We don't need no fortune tellers
To teller us about our future

We gonna overcome
We shall win this war
We don't need any leaders
If they are not for the people

All power to the people
Power to the people
We don't need any government

If its not for the people
All power to the working class
Power to the working class

Arise you all toilers
Arise you all cadres
Arise you all revolutionaries

Mobilise the masses all over
We shall win!
We shall overcome!
Global citizens celebrated the World Education Day on January 24, calling for a free, quality, inclusive public education for all education adults denied to millions of children, youth and adults by violent conflict, forced displacement, the climate crisis, and natural disasters, mostly to focus on children in war zones.

The South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) General Secretary articulated the plans for ensuring such noble goals are attained on children in war zones.

DENOSA appreciates visit by Human Rights Commission

DENOSA Members participating in union activities

DENOSA has welcomed 2020 as the Year of Nurses and Midwives as declared by the World Health Organization [WHO]. South Africa in the recent years has been grappling with the issue of shortage of staff in health facilities at the time when many nurses who completed their studies are not employed and/or are sitting at home whereas overcrowding in facilities leads to bigger problems and outbreak of viruses.

Many media cases were reported about death, attacks, muggings and killings in many health centres. The shocking case was the death of ten babies at Tembisa Hospital in Gauteng.

The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) said: “We appreciate the visit paid by the Human Rights Commission at Tembisa Hospital yesterday following the death of 10 babies, and especially that it also found that shortage of staff, in addition to overcrowding, was a contributory factor to the death of the babies.”

Meanwhile, SADTU held a successful two days workshop on Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) and Quality Management System (QMS) at Holiday Inn, Boksburg. The purpose of the workshop was to, among others, appraise the National Training Team (NTT) on the progress made regarding the preparations for the training of all Educators on QMS in 2020.

DENOSA has long cited shortage of staff and overcrowding in the country’s health facilities as a serious problem that needs urgent attention.

“While each year each province funds student nurses for their nursing studies, many provincial departments of health do not employ those who have completed their course or those who have finished their year of community service, which leaves the gap of shortage very wide. Unfortunately, this poor planning leads to deaths of poor patients who rely on these understaffed facilities,” said DENOSA President, Simon Mlongani Hlungwani.

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“As signatories to the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), we expect teachers and our members in particular to be in class, on time, prepared and professional at all times. At the same time, we expect the Department of Basic Education to provide proper basic infrastructure, learning and teaching materials so that effective learning can take place,” argued Maluleke. Maluleke said: “No class should be without a teacher. We call on the Department to avoid delays in the payment of salaries of AET lecturers, ECD and temporary teachers. We call on our sites to monitor this and report all delays in the delivery of learning and teaching materials, delays in the appointment and paying of salaries of teachers at the end of the month. It is just uncalled for, inhumane and unprofessional to delay the payment of temporary teachers at the end of each January. This must come to an end forthwith.”

As we start the 2020 academic year, SADTU calls on all South Africans to support education by protecting and supporting schools through the Union’s “IamASchoolFan” campaign. The campaign seeks to mobilise all stakeholders in communities to defend and protect schools so that they become safe for teachers as well as the learners. As the 2020 academic year coincides with the 30th anniversary of SADTU, the union commits to do more to ensure the realisation of the theme adopted at the Union’s 9th National Congress in September last year, “Claiming our right to have our human dignity and safety protected and respected in pursuit of a decolonised quality public education.”

DENOSA welcomes the 2020 Academic Year

The South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) General Secretary articulated the plans for ensuring such noble goals are attained on all Grades starting from Early Childhood Development (ECD).”

Mugwena Maluleke said: “We welcomes all teachers, lecturers, education support personnel and learners back to school in the start of the 2020 academic year. SADTU expects to see effective learning and teaching taking place on the first day of school. However, we are aware of instances of late registrations and admissions in provinces such as the Western Cape and Gauteng which may delay effective learning and teaching on the first day. We appeal to parent to register their children on time.”

“As signatories to the Quality Management System (QMS) in 2020, SADTU expects to see effective learning and teaching taking place on the first day of school. However, we are aware of instances of late registrations and admissions in provinces such as the Western Cape and Gauteng which may delay effective learning and teaching on the first day. We appeal to parent to register their children on time.”

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Dec/Jan 2020 • The Shopsteward

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NUM calls for the immediate expulsion Eskom Board Members

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) were perturbed by continued load-shedding while the Eskom Board went on record to say power cuts will be a thing of the past. NUM came gun blazing after they held a view that the Eskom Board acted in bad faith by misleading the President of the Republic.

‘The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) demand an immediate expulsion of all Eskom board members for having misinformed the state President Cyril Ramaphosa on the so-called “sabotage conspiracy” at Tutuka power station. Unfortunately, the President of the country has to be ill-informed in that manner by the so-called board members’, declared Paris Mashego, NUM Eskom Energy Sector Coordinator.

‘President Ramaphosa addressed the public about the “sabotage” at Tutuka power station, wherein 2000mw were eliminated from the electricity network. Actually, the President was misled by Eskom board and Management who have ulterior motives of removing a power station Manager.

This derogatory behaviour is uncalled for. The FIVE units of Tutuka power station has been producing electricity during the period of load shedding. The sixth plant was on a planned maintenance programme. The weakness of Tutuka power station is poor coal quality as such the plant cannot be operated at full load. The investigation and the increasing of security called by the President are frivolous tactics which will not change the real challenges of the Tutuka power station.

Secondly, even though large energy users will be offline during the festive season the promise made by the President that there will be no load-shedding will not be fulfilled. In fact, load shedding will be a daily occurrence until 2025 if we fail to apply proper maintenance plan and invest in a reliable, constant base-load energy resource.

It is for such reasons that we demand the resignation of this clueless Board and its Chairman/CEO who never applied for his job. Thirdly, the government must abandon its project of unbundling Eskom, which does not address the Eskom declining sales volumes, the escalating debt of R480 billion, the ageing infrastructure.

The NUM and Numsa coalition has decided to fight against this neoliberal agenda that seeks to dislodge Government from ownership of SOE’s.’ Mashego said ‘The programme of mass rolling action will be launched as a welcoming party for the arrival of Mr De Ruyter, followed by a programme of withdrawing labour and marches throughout the country.

Finally, we call upon our members and workers at large to remain vigilant and loyal to their professions, regardless of strategies aimed at demotivation, victimization and frivolous disciplinary actions that workers are exposed to on daily basis.’ NUM members are ready to fight tooth and nail on the ill-informed Eskom plans. Mayihlome ihlasele!
Commentary

Reconfiguring the struggle within the Progressive Youth Alliance

By Dloze Matoane

The year 2020 marks the centenary of one of the greatest South African revolutionaries; the lion of the Midlands as he is popularly referred to: Harry Gwala. It is without a doubt that Mphaphethwa occupies a special place in the hearts of the South African working for his service to the struggle for social justice and passionate theoretical contribution to a future without class. The Young Communist League of South Africa has many planned events to commemorate the life and times of the Lion of the Midlands. This year Young Communist League of South Africa will convene the 5th National Council since its re-establishment in 2003. The Purpose of the National Council is to assess the mandate of the National Congress which was convened in Alice, Eastern Cape, in 2018.

Since the National Congress in Alice, there has been many developments within the Progressive Youth Alliance and the Mass Democratic movement which has placed a responsibility on the YCLSA to assess its mandate and formulate a progressive approach to these developments. COSAS is divided into two; SASCO was unable to convene a successful National Congress and the ANCYL National Executive Committee has been disbanded by the ANC NEC. The Question then becomes: can the PYA be reconfigured to afford the YCLSA a leading role?

It is a known fact that the Young Communist League of South Africa does not exist for itself; it is a young wing of the working class vanguard party which operates as a preparatory school and equally a youth movement for social justice by its nature. This means it is the school of class consciousness in conducting the class struggle and equally a youth moment that should at all material times fight for the oppressed, the poor citizens and the working population of our country.

Unfortunately, the YCLSA has to play this role amidst a clear onslaught on the working class by the system. A majority of the YCLSA membership forms part of the South African surplus labour (uneducated youth, unemployed graduates and the underdeveloped youth). Capitalism has placed the South African youth at the centre of the systemic onslaught on the working class. The youth has no choice but to also organize and fight!

The South African youth has consciously and unconsciously become very impatient with the system of capitalism and all that is associated with it. It is without a doubt that capitalism can no longer serve the aspirations of the South African youth or the youth anywhere in the world. Young people aspire for a world where their qualifications can guarantee them opportunities; a world where education serves the good of society and not a system of education which presents education as a commodity; unfortunately, for capitalism, this is an anti-thesis of the system.

As a generation, we are grinded by a painful reality; the history of apartheid which has disadvantaged the majority of young people born before and a neoliberal epoch post-apartheid. These are all South African experiences of capitalism. The difficulty of our modern day struggle is that we have to fight capitalism under different conditions than that of the past generation. However, Lenin simplifies our modern day reality, our aspirations and modern day struggles: “things are harder for our generation than they were for our fathers. But in one respect we are luckier than our fathers. We have begun to learn and are rapidly learning to fight—and to fight not as individuals, as the best of our fathers fought, not for the slogans of bourgeois specifiers that are alien to us in spirit, but for our slogans, the slogans of our class. We are fighting better than our fathers did. Our children will fight better than we do, and they will be victorious.” (Lenin June 16, 1913).

Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign (JSRCL)

Since the re-establishment of the YCLSA in 2003, the vanguard youth wing has been at the forefront of the struggle for access to quality de-commodified education. Education is an important tool for liberation and for the struggle for socialism. Moreover, education should serve the purpose of building a diversified people’s economy and a cohesive society based on a collective effort to best serve the purpose of humanity. The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign has taken a totally different shape this year with serious opportunities for the youth struggle and a parallel onslaught at the same time. Upon the return of Minister Blade Nzimande at the head of the Department of Education, a proper allocation to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme has been realized and the education sector has started a progressive dialogue to bring the TVET sector on board. The threat to this progress is a weak economy which might not be able to sustain all these gains.

It is for this reason that we have to condemn the new tendency in the movement which has emerged to use young people as agents in defending corruption, simultaneously betraying their own struggle.

Reshaping the Progressive Youth Alliance

The open secret regarding the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) is that the idea to form this alliance is attributed to the Young Communist League of South Africa. However, the manner in which the PYA has been presented post the unbanning of political parties in 1990 has now started to present challenges. The two quasi-independent student formations within the PYA are extremely divided and their battles are deeply rooted in factional division and factional activities of the African National Congress. Because the YCLSA is expected to recruit from these organizations, it’s now a challenge to practice the expected role it present a threat of recruiting these tendencies into the YCLSA. Therefore, the youth communist movement should rather invest in the ideological and political training within the students organs.

Subsequent to the challenges in the students’ organs within the PVA, the ANCYL has been hijacked by extreme unguided lumpen-left populism with tender board tendencies. The money politics within the ANCYL are partly the reason for the collapse of the league, and yet surprisingly, the league has been liquidated by a court of law. A quasi-subcommittee has since been appointed by the ANC as a shadow ANCYL to play a skeleton role of reviving the organization. The cabal is more occupied by ANC politics and have not been able to manage any crisis since their establishment as a shadow league.

This therefore presents the question as to whether the YCLSA should continue playing its expected role in the PVA or should the YCLSA be affirmed the leader of the PVA. By circumstances, the YCLSA is already the leader of the PYA simply because it is now expected to fill the vacuum left by other PYA components, and the introduction of both the SANC Youth and COSATU young workers, the YCLSA therefore affirmed as the youth working class vanguard movement.

Dloze Matoane is the National Spokesperson of the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA).

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The Minister of Transport, Honourable Fikile Mbalula contributed an article in the previous COSATU Newspaper, The Shopsteward about ‘Getting Rail Back on Track’ but a contrary view is held by many workers across all provinces who see on a daily basis workers in particular get depressed by chronic challenges such as cancelations of trains in areas such as Strand and Muldersvlei, late trains around Bellville and Kapteinsklip, signal failure in Khayelitsha, no trains in Fishhoek and Siminstown due to mud slide, faulty electronics, overcrowding in every station caused by train delays, lack of proper security which result in cable theft, Eskom threatening to cut electricity supply due to non-payment, lack of consumer communication by management and just lack of appetite by Prasa management and the Department to come with a permanent solution. Paul Bester, argues that ‘the chronic challenges are deepening which need heads together to arrive at a permanent solution. Government has a responsibility to provide public transport for all’.

2020 kicked off in Cape Town with trains burning. We see daily how infrastructure is damaged and cables stolen. And we have to stop the rot occurring as majority of our people are highly frustrated with no immediate solutions. The working class in the Western Cape communities are suffering due to an extremely poor service to the train transport grid. COSATU has held many meetings, participated in various dialogues as part of the transport stakeholders and led massive pickets to make METRORAIL aware of the dire situation, but with no avail.

As a drastic measure, we have engaged with NEDLAC where social partners engage on issues of socio-economic nature and we have registered a Sectio 77 dispute in which the citizens may participate in a national picket or demonstration to address an issue at hand. This also had no meaningful resolution, and a protected strike in the meantime is looming. Metrorail in Western Cape confirmed that they have only 32 trainsets out of 88 operational currently, but no tangible, sustainable real plan how to address this issue.

The Democratic Alliance in the City says ‘a third force is busy with destabilising the train service.’ If one looks to unpack this, the following comes to mind. The DA as part of its election manifesto was to make Metrorail a Provincial service, so they have a lot to gain by destabilising this service. Currently in Western Cape communities, the taxi services are under a huge strain, and will not benefit from an unstable train system. Golden Arrows, the provincial bus service cannot do more, as their infrastructure is fully used, and so they cry about huge losses. This is clearly a poor service by Metrorail in Western Cape. As long as it is managed as poorly as it is now, it will not deliver a quality public service for citizens in general and for workers in particular. We will again be at the beating end of the stick. And this must be stopped!

This needs to change and COSATU must and should be at the coalface of this national crisis affecting almost thousands of commuters. Our demand for a reliable, affordable and efficient is relevant and the African National Congress mobilized all citizens during the National Elections to ensure government deliver to its citizens. And the Western Cape government is no different to that commitment as we are not in a federal state.

Paul Bester is COSATU Western Cape Provincial Organizer/Educator.
Commentary

Achieving SOCIAL JUSTICE, what will it take?

Lessons learnt from the 14th ARM in Abidjan

by Prof Mthunzi Mdwaba

I

started writing this article at very high altitude on the way to the ILO African Regional Meeting(ARM) in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire and completed it on the way back home. I had made a mental note of the items I wanted the article to revolve around when I departed from home, the SAA strike, Eskom’s ongoing woes, etc.

When we stopped for a while in Accra, Ghana, I decided to take advantage of the South African colleagues on the flight by sharing some of my thoughts related to our economic challenges (but without sharing that they were either confirming or disproving some of the ideas) - it was an inspired decision, even if I should say so myself, although the majority of the content will now be for future articles.

My editor and I felt it was more apposite that I give my impressions on the rationale, meeting dynamics and outcomes of the ARM, as well as lessons learnt from same. I must also mention that at the time of penning this, I had just been re-appointed by the honourable Minister of Employment and Labour, Thulas Nxesi, as the Chairman of Productivity SA, to work with a newly constituted board and accepted the responsibility because I have unfinished business at this beautiful entity. This was also apposite for the ARM given our secretarial responsibility for PAPA(Pan African Productivity Association), and had the CEO of Productivity SA, Moditha Mohlanya who is also the Secretary of PAPA accompanying us to Abidjan.

So, where do I start?

We start with what the significance is, of a name change from the Department of Labour(DoL) to the Department of Employment and Labour(DEL) and how it aligns with the direction the ILO (International Labour Organisation) is(should be) taking as per the Centenary Declaration. The former in my view gave the impression that the department was all about rights, regulations, laws, administrative functions and general technical compliance, devoid of a “human” element. The latter injects, and hope you agree,a much needed human and creative element( the creation of employment …and keeping people employed) in line with the Employment Services Act in terms of which Productivity SA is an entity, while continuing with ensuring rights in the world of work are entrenched and adhered to at all times.

In my last article, I shared how the Declaration emanating from the Centenary celebration was different to any other official instrument of the ILO in 100 years. It contains references to “productivity” in one form or the other, a record 11 times.

It also mentions full and productive employment, as well as skills which is absolutely fundamental to ensure stability, dignity to all and a management of whatever transition you may be interested in, 4th Industrial Revolution(4IR) or any other in ensuring that we leave no one behind beyond rhetoric as we try to change the world for the better.

Now, getting back to the ARM.

There was an overall feeling by all the people I chatted to across the board amongst the tripartite parties that we could have approached our discussions in a much more ambitious fashion for the beneficarion of our beloved Continent.

There was no clear response to what had been achieved between the last ARM four years ago in Addis and now, in Abidjan.

What was clear was that unemployment was at an all time high, informality was still a challenge we are struggling with, women were still not getting the recognition they deserve and certainly, gender parity was still an illusion. Additionally, as the Director General’s report pointed out, the Continent is struggling with low productivity levels that are below the world average.

The panel conversations, some of which had great content, failed to translate into the content of the Abidjan Declaration, and this is rather unfortunate. Some people are clinging to their views, ideologies, even if it means taking the weight of the denial to the bottom of the sea and drowning!

A different format for the collation of ideas that are subjected to social dialogue and tripartition may need to be invented or agreed upon for future regional meetings.

The urgency of having productivity at the centre of everything we do, was pervasive throughout the four days - statements that there should be no solutions attempted to address informality without the people who are part of same, that the youth also had to be part of the conversations, not the subject of same.

Participating in what was referred to as the Presidents’ panel, I made the point that it was tiring to keep having all these conversations that never translate to action and that we were ignoring the elephant in the room, namely, governments that were failing in proactive policy enactment, implementation and monitoring.

I also mentioned that attitudinal challenges were holding us back from making any progress when there was nothing stopping us from having Africa being a “Wakanda”(from the Black Panther) where technology would bring the community together and ensure that we thrive rather than threaten us. When asked by the moderator, what in my view would bring about a brighter future in Africa, my response was that it would happen “when technological progress is married with human advancement.”

This, sadly, is what we are missing.

The discussion tends to focus too much on the 4IR and Artificial Intelligence(AI), and our fascination with being a country that has technological prowess when we should be focussing on having a just transition and managing the different transition’s, from rural struggles to rural thriving, from informality that precludes others from having social protection and security, from informal fraud that is unfair and uncompetitive (as there is evidence that there are some companies that deliberately choose informality to stay below the radar, taking advantage of the disorganisation of a lack of proper systems), having a transition from remuneration in one sector to full and productive employment in the same sector or a different one for which “skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling” shall be required and provided, or having alternative employment and/or entrepreneurial opportunities provided for those who are adversely affected by the privatisation of certain entities/the potential privatisation of some parts of Eskom springs to mind). I am certain that you get my drift. There is absolutely nothing wrong with ensuring that as a country we are technologically advanced. The weight we place on same though when not balancing it with people advancement and sustainable full and productive employment is a huge mistake.

Informality, unemployment, dignity and social justice that can only be brought about by a combination of factors as envisaged in SDGs, 1, 2 and 17 amongst others in their inter-connectedness requires an extremely urgent focus with a very different mind set.

I reiterated my favourite saying attributed to Einstein, albeit paraphrased, that “doing the same thing over and over again (with disastrous outcomes every time), in the hope of a different result (that is positive), is a sign of insanity. In this regard, I loved what a young trade unionist in the youthful panel constituted of really young people(not old folk like us masquerading as young people) by the name of Peter Motasa, who stressed that “we all need to re-boot, including trade unions, and go back to factory settings ...and amongst many other things, bring young people on-board, via affirmative action and other means.” On the face of it, this statement may seem like a funny and easily dismissible saying, but it is absolutely fundamental...he and others also talked about structural transformation, which, thankfully, made it into the Abidjan Declaration under the heading, “Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa followed by Sub-headings:-

“Realising the potential for a future of work with social justice “, which recalls the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, and recognizes that transformative processes need to be accelerated and acknowledges some progress and a list
of failures and “Shaping an African Decent Work Agenda”, making decent work a reality for Africa’s youth and strengthening the capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work though, inter alia, investing in human capital by strengthening education, skilling, reskilling, up-skilling and lifelong learning to leverage technology and the new rules of jobs it helps create, tackling gender inequality and discrimination, progressively extending sustainable social protection coverage, supporting the role of the private sector as a principal source of economic growth and job creation ..., and other complementary points, and “Time for Action” which has a to do list between now and the next ARM, the 15th African Regional Meeting, in paragraphs 11 to 15 and provides reporting dates as well as review dates in 2020 and 2021.

I already mentioned that the primary failure was not finding a way to transport the rich content of the panel discussions on the Abtidian Declaration. The second failure of course in all this is the absence of how we are to convert the great beautiful conversations to reality, commitments and accountability by Member States.

I gave an example of how Professor Pareno who used to be at BUSA (Business Unity South Africa) used to say that if rhetoric was a way of calculating the GDP of a country, South Africa would be one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Thirdly, there was also no time given to how we would go about elevating the Ministries of Employment and Labour on the peling order of ministries (given their responsibility for people and the human centrerness we all talk about) so they are given the same prominence, importance, budgets and prioritisation as those of Finance, Economy, Trade, Foreign Affairs and others.

Likewise, how companies would have Human Resources Directors on company boards similar to CIOs (Chief Information Officers), CTOs (Chief Technology Officers), CFOs (Chief Financial Officers) and others is of equal significance. How do we translate people matters, human centrerness, human resources and human capital development beyond “sloganeering” and “gallery shows” with no pragmatic application? Put differently, how do we get the ILO and Skills/Employment related platforms to have the same status as the glamorous “Davos show” that our Ministers of Finance, Trade, Economy and business people want to be seen at, which in my humble view is devoid of real substance? It is an amazing platform for marketing, PR and Communications purposes and certainly has its place, but, BUT can never translate to the change and impact we need to change people’s lives.

There was also no dedicated time given to why we only have 12 countries out of 54 being members of PAPA in spite of the acknowledgement that we have low productivity that is below the world average. The current members are as follows:–

1) Burkina Faso;
2) Botswana;
3) Ghana;
4) Kenya;
5) Mauritius;
6) Namibia;
7) Nigeria;
8) South Africa;
9) Zambia;
10) Zimbabwe;
11) Malawi; and
12) Tanzania.

I connected the PAPA Secretary and President to the Ministers of Employment in Ethiopia and Rwanda and conversations were had on how to become members. I also assisted them in engaging with some of their members to rewire their activism. This is definitely one of the low hanging fruits to getting Africa working together for enhanced productivity and a brighter future.

Madiba is quoted as saying (paraphrased) that “One of the things I learned when I was negotiating, was that until I changed myself, I could not change others.” We certainly have a long way to go. The Abtidian Declaration ultimately after gruelling drafting sessions that ended at 3 am on the last day, was not a bad outcome, but could have been a lot more ambitious and solution oriented with real deliverables and accountability.

Four Global mega-trends have been identified as what we need to grasp for us to be on top of the game as we continue to try finding ways of being on top of the game for our people to have dignity and to realise the objectives of the 2063 AU (African Union) agenda and the 2030 UN agenda that is only 10 years away. The four global mega-trends are:-
1) Technological advances;
2) Climate change;
3) Changing demographics; and
4) Globalisation.

It is significant to note that these are not new, but now are happening simultaneously at an overwhelming pace, hence the urgency to act without delay.

Today’s world of work is more complex than at any other time in the history of humanity because of the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the interactions among the mega-trends.

The IOE (International Organisation of Employers), with 50 million companies via a network of 158 organisations in 150 countries and ACTEMP (The Employers bureaux within the ILO) conducted a joint survey that identified skills shortage as a fifth mega-trend. This has a deep and wide impact on global labour markets, primarily due to its negative effect on innovation, productivity and competitiveness.

Paradoxically, despite significant advances in literacy rates, as well as a huge investment in secondary and tertiary education, skills shortage is increasingly felt in our Continent, revealing the existence of an alarming skills mismatch challenge.

We clearly need an agile, skilled, productive and future ready workforce which we cannot do without Peter Motaas’s re-booting assertion, and having an attitudinal change in how we do things — hence the call for structural transformation. Here at home, the changed name of our Department of Employment and Labour is a good start to changing things, BUT it is nothing more than a start. It now requires that we be conscious at all times that productivity, the creation of employment, the retention of employment in its different forms, the management of all transitions in the workplace and competitiveness in the economy as envisaged by the Employment Services Act.

It requires a wholesale change in the way we strategize, plan, implement as the public sector, the private sector, civil society, all of us by placing productivity partnered with the appropriate skills, reskilling and up-skilling programmes. It behoves of us to work as a team, Team SA inspired by what a friend and colleague of mine, Ashraf Garda, calls a Champion South Africa spirit and attitude.

Tweaking our policies from time to time will of course be essential having conducted the necessary IAAs (Regulatory Impact Assessments) to ensure that we are constraining building blocks, rather than inadvertently eroding gains made as we have done in the past.

Finally, there are two areas related to social dialogue and true qualitative tripartism that we need to be vigilant about:-

1) The first relates to the strengthening of our conversations based on the diversity of the constituencies. The figures I have been given by my credentials team for the percentage of women in all the groups is less than satisfactory. The Government Group had 23.1%, the Workers Group, 20.2% and the Employers Group, 26%. We must make a collective extra effort to bring on more women. I have also asked my team to also have a similar assessment for the youth in future given that the future of social dialogue depends on how we integrate same early.

2) The second one is more of a silent “creeping” threat to tripartism that we must be vigilant about. I am advised that the pre-ARM AU Meeting was rather shocking in wanting to proceed with a meeting that did not have all the constituencies properly represented and the Chair was happy and eager to simply proceed on the basis of a quantum based on numbers, not the tripartite.

If true, this must be nipped in the bud urgently with the AU Secretariat being reminded that it is there to serve the constituencies, not the other way round. My credentials team also provided me with information reflecting that 22 Member States did not have a full tripartite delegation, which represents a huge 40% of the total participants. This is completely unacceptable! My Group will be highlighting this in all our reports and urge everyone to do the same.

In conclusion, we CAN and MUST ensure a brighter future for AFRICA, to do so through, we must be resolute and determined to ACT and to do so DECISIVELY and URGENTLY in a TRULY INCLUSIVE manner. We must also not lose sight of who we are and our roots which is best captured by the Vice-President of CÔted’ivoire’s Daniel Kaban Duncan’s words on our shared Presidential panel when he said, “Our feet are steeped in tradition and our heads in modernity.”

The article has been written by Prof Mthunzi Mdwaba, T’Zero IBC CEO, International Organization of Employers Vice-President to the ILO and I.O. Vice-Chairman and Productivity SA Chairman
Disciplinary Procedures

The purpose of a disciplinary code and procedure is to regulate standards of conduct of employees within a company or organization. The disciplinary code serves as a guideline to provide for a fair and consistent handling of workplace discipline. The aim of discipline is to correct unacceptable behaviour and adopt a progressive approach in the workplace. This also creates certainty and consistency in the application of discipline.

**Parties Obligations**

The employer needs to ascertain that all employees are aware of company rules and reasonable standards of behaviour that are expected of them in the workplace. The employee needs to comply with the disciplinary code and procedures at the workplace. The employee needs to ensure that he/she is familiar with the requirements in terms of the disciplinary standards in the workplace.

**Counselling versus Disciplinary Action**

There is a difference between disciplinary action and counseling. Counseling will be appropriate where the employee is not performing to an expected standard or is not aware of a rule regulating conduct and/or where the breach of the rule is relatively minor and can be condoned. Disciplinary action will be appropriate where a breach of the rule cannot be condoned, or where counseling has failed to achieve the desired effect. Before deciding on the form of discipline, management must meet the employee in order to explain the nature of the rule s/he is alleged to have breached. The employee should also be given the opportunity to respond and explain his/her conduct. If possible, an agreed remedy on how to address the conduct should be arrived at.

**Forms of Discipline**

Disciplinary action can take a number of forms, depending on the seriousness of the offence and whether the employee has breached the particular rule before. The following forms of discipline can be used (in order of severity):

- Verbal warning;
- Written warning;
- Final written warning;
- Suspension without pay (for a limited period);
- Demotion, as an alternative to dismissal;
- or Dismissal.

The employer should establish how serious an offence is, with reference to the disciplinary rules. If the offence is not very serious, informal disciplinary action can be taken by giving an employee a verbal warning. The law does not specify that employees should receive any specific number of warnings, for example, three verbal warnings or written warnings, and in the case of serious misconduct, a dismissal sanction can be meted out. Formal disciplinary steps would include written warnings and other forms of discipline listed above.

A final written warning could be given in cases where the contravention of the rule is serious or where the employee has received warnings for the same offence before. It should be noted that the law does not specify that employees should receive any specific number of warnings. An employee can appeal against a final written warning and the employer can hold an enquiry if the employer believes that it is only through hearing evidence that the outcome can be determined. Written warnings will
remain valid for 3 to 6 months. Final written warnings will remain valid for 12 months. A warning for one type of contravention is not applicable to another type of offence. In other words, a first written warning for late-coming could not lead to a second written warning for insubordination. Employees will be requested to sign warning letter and will be given an opportunity to state their objections, should there be any. Should an employee refuse to sign a warning letter, this does not make the warning invalid. A witness will be requested to sign the warning, stating that the employee refused acceptance of the warning.

Dismissal is reserved for the most serious offences and will be preceded by a fair disciplinary enquiry, unless an exceptional circumstance results in a disciplinary enquiry becoming either an impossibility (e.g. the employee absconded and never returned) or undesirable (e.g. holding an enquiry will endanger life or property).

**When can employer hold a formal enquiry?**

An employee may be suspended on full pay pending an investigation especially in instances where the employee’s presence may jeopardize any representations. The employer should give the employee 48 hours or more notice of the enquiry, and the letter should include: the date, time and venue of the hearing; Details of the charges against the employee; and the employee’s rights to representation at the hearing by either a fellow employee or shop steward.

Note: If the employer intends disciplining a shop steward, the employer must consult with the union before serving notice to attend the enquiry on the intention to discipline the shop steward including the reasons, date and time.

**Who should be present at the enquiry?**

A chairperson; a management representative; the employee; the employee representative; any witnesses for either parties and an interpreter if required by the employee.

**How should a hearing be conducted?**

The employer should lead evidence. The employee is then given an opportunity to respond. The chairperson may ask any witnesses questions for clarification. At the end, the chairperson decides whether the employee is guilty or not guilty. If guilty, the chairperson must ask both parties to make submissions on the appropriate disciplinary sanction. The chairperson must then decide what disciplinary sanction to impose and inform the employee accordingly.

The employee should be informed that s/he has the right to appeal. If the company does not provide for an appeal procedure, the employee must be reminded that he/she could take the case further to the CCMA or bargaining council. Failure to attend the hearing cannot stop the hearing form continuing except if good cause can be shown for not attending.

**Note:** This procedure should not substitute disciplinary procedures subject to collective agreements.

Parties can also request, by mutual consent, the CCMA or a bargaining council to appoint an arbitrator to conduct a final and binding disciplinary enquiry. The employer would be required to pay a prescribed fee.

(Labour legislation is not specific in terms of the steps to follow when conducting a disciplinary enquiry. These procedures should therefore merely serve as guidelines for parties).

**Relevant legislation**

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