

3rd Draft

COSATU 13th National Congress Declarations held from the 17th -20th September 2018

We the 2500 proud delegates of COSATU unions coming from across the length and breadth of our country, covering all sectors of the economy , including delegates from our alliance partners ANC , SACP and SANCO and international organisations and friends of COSATU have met for four days at Gallagher Estate, Midrand in the 13th National Congress of our glorious federation COSATU under the theme “*“Deepen the Back to Basic Campaign, Consolidate the Struggle for the National Democratic Revolution and Advance the Struggle for Socialism”*”.

We met during the centenary of Comrades Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu who taught us that freedom is not free and that only a relentless struggle can free the oppressed.

This congress has clearly affirmed that only a strong, united and campaigning organisation that is visible on the ground can inspire and rescue the working class from the chains of exploitation.

This 13th National Congress also took place in the year which marks the second centenary since the birth of a great scientist of all times comrade Karl Marx whose science continues to inspire the working class struggles throughout the world. Through interfacing with the writing of this giant we continue to assert without any equivocation that one day we shall construct a society in which “in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all”.

This 13th National Congress also took place in the year which marks thirty years since the end of the battle of Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, where the Cubans occupied the front ranks against the Apartheid system. .This battle remains a shining example of what international solidarity should be about i.e. readiness to provide resources and readiness to sacrifice one’s own life for the freedom of others.

At this 13th National Congress we can say with confidence, the federation of workers is becoming more stable and that the remaining challenges shall be confronted head on and defeated through our unity and our organisational power.

We remain true to our own principles, we don’t preach non sexism we live by it. This congress has for the first time in the history of COSATU and the alliance, unanimously elected two females in the presidency and for the position of national treasury. They were not elected because they are women but because they have the acquired capacity. History will record COSATU as having led in the realisation of the 50/50 policy on the national office bearers and the election of the first female president.

We have been inspired by the victories we have secured which include a legislated National Minimum Wage of R20 per hour. This translates into R3500 per month for workers working 40 hours per week and in which more than 6.4 million workers or 47% of workers who’s wages will rise. We will now be intensifying our struggle of a Living Wage.

Congress took stock of the on-going job losses occurring across the economy, and the horrendous problems of growing unemployment, poverty and inequality. Jobs are at the heart of who we are, and Congress expressed concern about the lack of clear job saving and

job creating measures in the run up to the Jobs Summit. We instructed our Federation to demand clear commitments on significant, implementable and urgent solutions to this crisis.

From this congress we will be convening marches and protests actions around the country in defence of jobs, demanding health and safety in the workplace and calling for a Living Wage!

Part of this will include calling for changes in the labour laws to remove obstacles and bureaucratic red tape on the section 77 notice to have unions call for protest action without having to follow a long administrative process.

The struggle for a living wage will focus on influencing the policy direction of the state and tightening the enforcement of the progressive laws that are about defending the workers and improving their working conditions. The State President must now sign the National Minimum Wage Bills so that it can come into effect as a matter of highest urgency.

Attempts by business to undermine our right to strike using devious means will be fought with every instrument we have at our disposal. This will include pushing to amend the Labour Relations Act to ban the use of scab labour during strikes.

Our struggles have produced results and forced government and Parliament to sign the following pro-worker bills into law:

- a) The UIF Amendment Act which will increase UIF unemployment payments from 8 to 12 months and expand maternity leave benefits.
- b) The Labour Laws Amendment Act which guarantees workers 10 days paid parental and paternity leave and 10 weeks paid adoption leave.
- c) The National Credit Amendment Bill (Debt Relief Bill) which will provide badly needed debt relief for persons earning less than R7500 per month. The NCOP must now urgently pass this progressive bill.

Our struggles have forced government and Parliament to:

- a) Release the long awaited the NHI Bills. These must be passed into law urgently so that the NHI can come into effect before 2026.
- b) Draft the Public Investment Corporation Amendment Bill to ensure union representation on the PIC Board; require parliamentary and public accountability for all PIC investments, provide a clear pro-worker developmental investment mandate for PIC investments and help protect workers' hard earned pension and insurance investments.
- c) We support the completion of the competition amendment bill which will go a long way to dismantle concentration in the economy and do away with monopoly capital

We call on government to fast-track the process towards the establishment of a comprehensive social security. We welcome the agreement by social partners to establish a national social security fund to finance comprehensive social security.

Whilst applauding the court judgement for stricter regulation of labour brokers by limiting contracts of placed workers to 3 months, we will intensify the fight for a total ban of labour brokers and insourcing of all jobs. The death of our people at Life Esidemeni remains a shameful reminder of our country's failing health system and how outsourcing can compromise service delivery with deadly.

As COSATU we are watching closer the proceedings of the Zondo Commission on Corruption and state Capture. We call for more tough action against corruption and the arrest of those who are implicated on corruption. We want to see people arrested and sentenced to long imprisonment and that is the only way we can defeat crime and corruption in our country.

This 13th National Congress took place on the 10th anniversary of the 2008 global economic crisis. During this period the wealth of the world's multi-millionaires and billionaires has increased to more than one-fifth of the world gross domestic product of 135 trillion dollars. It is more than the GDP of the United States, China, Japan and Germany combined.

In the same period this man-made crisis of capitalism has worsened the conditions of the working class and exacerbated poverty, hunger, migration, homelessness and disease. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that more than 61 million jobs have been lost since the start of the global economic crisis. This means, an estimated 200 million people are currently unemployed, globally and 9 million in South Africa.

Capitalism continues to impose modern slavery in which more than 40 million people in the world remain in effect enslaved, forced to work for nothing in a host of industries including harvesting shrimp, sewing garments and cleaning buildings. The ILO estimates that 25 million of the enslaved worldwide are forced labour.

Despite the glaring failures of capitalism, progressive and profound socialist alternatives have not found expression in governments' policies all over the world; instead neoliberal policies are being rammed through with devastating consequences for the working class. Through its neo liberal ideological framework capitalism has been able to shift the burden of its failures to the working class.

According to the World Inequality Report 2018, income inequality has increased worldwide in recent decades. This report states that South Africa stands out as one of the most unequal countries in the world, where the top 10% receive 66% of national income, whilst the top 1% receives 20% of national income.

Added to this there have been high levels of unemployment of 36% in which women and youth suffer disproportionately. For the youth between the ages of 15-24 years, unemployment stands at 52.4%.

This has been worsened by continued retrenchments in all sectors of the economy and state austerity measures which are being covertly implemented. Currently there are over 148 775 vacancies which translates to about 10% of the public service.

We are pleased that government has heeded COSATU's long standing call for a Presidential Jobs Summit. The Summit must address the jobs blood bath, the 36% unemployment crisis and the recession decimating the economy. COSATU has tabled concrete job creation and economic stimulus proposals to NEDLAC in preparation for the Summit. Government and Business must put a stop on retrenchments and engage meaningfully on a mass decent job creation programme which must be linked to reviving the country's economy.

If business and government fail to do so it will reduce the Summit to another talk shop. In such a scenario COSATU will be forced to reconsider its participation in the Summit.

Linked to this is the reality of the changing world of work where the fourth industrial revolution threatens millions of jobs. It calls for business and government to plan for a just transition to the fourth industrial revolution.

Capitalism recognizes no limits to its expansion and there is no amount of profit, wealth and consumption that is enough or too much. Its inherent destructive, mercilessness and violent character has become more open, more brazen, overt and unapologetic in its intensity.

In the process countries with strong mineral and oil endowment have become victims of massive capitalist expansion and accumulation of capital in which finance capital is the main driver.

Countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Syria and many others have been destroyed and millions have been killed or turned into refugees. We condemn the continued attacks of innocent Palestinian people by the USA backed apartheid Israel. As COSATU we will never rest until Israel Apartheid is defeated and Palestinian people are free.

The USA led imperialism continues to impose misery and regime change programmes in countries with socialist or progressive governments. CUBA and many of the Latin American countries such as Venezuela and Brazil have become its primary targets. Donald Trump represents the face of this imperialist, right wing arrogance and war mongering.

The uncontrollable desire of expansion and boundless production dominates the world. In the process climate change has advanced, the seas and rivers have been poisoned, the atmosphere saturated with gases, altering climatic conditions with catastrophic effects. The earth is rapidly approaching a point of no return.

In our country the grip of neo liberal policies continues to undermine progress made since the 1994 democratic breakthrough.

Our economy remains dominated by monopoly capital and foreign ownership. This pattern continues to reproduce high levels of racialised poverty, unemployment and inequality which remain unbelievably high.

The current neo liberal policy paradigm allows South African businesses to use tax havens to hide money which should be paid as taxes. Illicit financial flows and transfer pricing is moving badly needed state revenue out of the country. This does not only withhold taxes which could have been paid to the fiscus but also locally needed investment and spending. We call upon government to act and work with other governments in the world to eliminate illicit financial outflows and penalize those responsible for this criminal activity.

This neo liberal paradigm allows South African mining companies to fail to benefit locally mined raw materials. Government is not acting despite section 26 of the MPRDA which says that the minister may initiate or prescribe incentives to promote the beneficiation of minerals in the republic.

Government has failed to act against mining companies who do not comply with the MPRDA. Sections 47, 90 and 93 of the MPRDA empowers the minister to cancel or suspend exploration and technical cooperation permits and mining licences if it is found that the mining company has not complied with the act.

Revenue generated through beneficiation can be used to save jobs in the mining sector and in many sectors of the economy. Why is government not acting against mining companies which flout the law?

It is in this context that we the 2500 delegates gathered in this 13th National Congress have resolved to fight neo liberal policies on all fronts.

It is only the decisive action of the working class that can put a stop to this capitalist onslaught.

What is to be Done?

1. Build COSATU and its affiliates

From the 13th National Congress the main task of COSATU at all its structures and all its affiliates in the period between this Congress and the next COSATU Ordinary Congress will be to implement concrete steps to unite the working class, in particular the trade union movement and progressive movements. The federation should implement concrete steps within time frame from the date of this Congress to commence the implementation of this task.

We will decisively continue to advance our work which includes intensifying our recruitment programme which will target unorganised workers and organise all workers under the leadership of COSATU. This work will include supporting industrial unions and working with unions which are confronted with internal organisational challenges. This work will be linked to an aggressive recruitment programme that will cover all sectors.

This Congress has decisively agreed to strengthen the federation's constitution to allow for the federation to provide the required leadership and support over the unions.

We will continue to build strong unions that are focused on servicing workers and leading work place struggles.

We will work to strengthen and resource COSATU local structures into organs of activism and organisational innovation. Concurrent with this work will be taking up organisational renewal in which all COSATU organs including its affiliates will be subjected to thorough diagnosis and rebuilding to adapt to the challenges of our time.

This work will be directly linked to COSATU's medium term vision and the 2015 Plan.

Congress is clear that our major tasks in the period ahead is to unite the working class. We shall work endlessly to achieve this objective.

2. Working with Civil Society

The 13th National Congress has instructed that if our battles are to be effective and for them to be anchored on the daily struggles of our people, we should seek to work with organisations beyond the alliance and the MDM formations and revive our working relationship with civil society formations guided by the 8th Congress Resolutions which set the criteria for the type of social movements COSATU should work with. In this regard the CEC will, through the NOBs coordinate consultative meetings with social movements and civil society formation in various sectors including those focusing on the rights of disabled people in South Africa, in education and those focusing on various socio economic struggles in defence of our people in deepening the gains of the democratic breakthrough.

3. Ideological development and capacity building

The political commission of COSATU and SACP Politburo will work to strengthen the Chris Hani Institute to build deeper ideological grounding.

We will put aside funding to ensure the sustained political education of leaders and members.

This will ensure that the Young Workers Forum and National Gender Coordinating Committee is properly resourced to take forward the work of recruiting young and women workers into the ranks of COSATU and to have a leadership that is properly grounded in Marxist-Leninist theory and the politics of the congress movement.

4. Radical reconfiguration of the Alliance

It is clear that the radical reconfiguration of the alliance is the only way out of the neoliberal stranglehold inside the movement and the state where left proposals are marginalised. We want an alliance of equals, where the alliance jointly decides on the direction of and collectively drives the NDR both inside and outside the state, including policy formulation, deployments, accountability and recalls. The decisions of the Alliance must form its collective mandate for the exercise of state power and must be respected by all alliance partners. A radically reconfigured alliance that we are calling for is based on the principles of consensus seeking consultation process and collective leadership of the NDR.

One thing is certain, and it is that the radical reconfiguration of the alliance must happen. This requires not only engagements but equally importantly also concrete struggles on the streets and above all the hegemony of working class both inside our movement and society at large.

5. COSATU approach on the SACP's Resolution on state and popular Power

COSATU will intensify its programme towards strengthening the SACP in leading the working class to develop its class leadership of the National Democratic Revolution and to intensify the struggle to lay the indispensable basis for the advance to Socialism.

We resolved to mobilise for the victory of the ANC-headed, reconfigured National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance in the 2019 general election. We will be working together with the SACP to ensure the reconfiguration of the alliance.

If this attempt fails, because of refusal by other alliance partners in particular the ANC, as COSATU we work to prepare the ground for the SACP to stand in the post 2019 elections and mobilise towards the Party's decisive victory at that time.

As this 13th National Congress we call on the SACP to deepen the implementation of its the road map for a working class contest of future elections if the alliance is not radically reconfigured as resolved by the Party's 14th National Congress as well as by this 13th National Congress of our workers' federation.

6. Towards the 2019 Elections

In the 2019 general elections COSATU will go out to mobilise our members to vote for a decisive ANC victory. In this regard all unions will make resources available for this campaign.

Through working class struggles we will work to ensure that the progressive policies adopted at Nasrec, Mangaung and Polokwane are turned into government programmes that will bring material benefits to the working class and the poor.

As we move towards the 2019 election we call on the ANC leaders to demonstrate unity in action and provide leadership. We call on those who are allegedly involved in plots to

undermine and remove the president of the ANC to desist from these counter revolutionary covert plans. We will defend the revolution from any threat!

7. Fighting against the neo-liberal offensive and asserting the hegemony of left policy alternatives.

7.1. Fighting for a Living wage

Now that we have won a National Minimum Wage, we will ensure that government and in particular the Department of Labour have the capacity to enforce the implementation of this law and the law regulating labour brokers.

Going forward we will heighten the living wage campaign which will include fighting for the achievement of 40 hour week ; the implementation of the National Health Insurance , total abolishment of labour brokers, Comprehensive Social Security, funding for the implementation of Free Education for poor and working class students; fighting for an accessible, reliable, affordable and integrated public transport system. In this context we will also be more aggressive on our call for the scrapping of e-tolls.

As part of heightening our Living wage campaign, we will convene the collective Bargaining conference in 2020 where we will seek practical and creative intervention strategies to respond to the changing global balance of forces which include the changing nature of work, the 4th Industrial revolution and reflect on progress made since the 2013 national collective bargaining conference and review the victories and set backs of our struggles for a living wage.

One of the critical pillars of our living wage campaign will be to heighten our fight against privatisation. In this regard we call on government to stop the privatisation of ESKOM now! All privatisation plans which were underway should be halted with immediate effect.

7.2. Defending jobs in the context of the changing world of work

We accept that the changes imposed by the 4th Industrial Revolution cannot be wished away and that the changing nature of work is inevitable. But this requires creative interventions which will be based upon ensuring job security through re-skilling the workforce and exploring other opportunities created by these new developments. This will include working with reputable left leaning research institutions include NALEDI to conduct research and generate new and innovative ideas working with various stakeholders and drawing lessons from those who are already going through these experiences.

7.3. Forcing employers to ensure the health and safety of workers

Employers who care more about their profits than the health and safety of workers must be forced to invest in the health and safety of workers.

We will put pressure on government to use the laws to punish employers who do not observe health and safety requirements. The recent loss of mine workers and fire fighters, the attacks on nurses in state hospitals, the killing of a teacher by a learner point to the need for government, industry and community to intervene decisively and the negligent to be sent to prison.

We demand a commission of inquiry into the enforcement of health and safety laws including the shocking delays in workers receiving their compensation for injuries on duty.

7.4. Funding transformation

It is clear that the neo liberal exponents are questioning our policies not based on their scientific validity but based upon the availability of financial resources for funding. In this context we will heighten our campaigns for government to focus on the following

- a) Reversing the liberalisation of capital flows and tightening exchange controls.
- b) The Reserve Bank must work closely with DFIs to create capacity aimed at supporting the developmental agenda of the state. In practice this must mean practical support which includes funding for SMMEs and cooperatives. This will including fighting against the funding of bogus cooperatives.
- c) South African commercial banks must support country's developmental objectives. This includes ensuring that their lending policies are directed towards ensuring productive developmental economic activities. Dismantle the monopoly character of the South African banks by creating policy space for the creation of state and cooperative banks.

8. Racism and gender violence

We will intensify our campaign against the increasing brazen attacks directed at the most vulnerable sections of our society, in particular women, children, people born with albinism and the LGBT community.

9. International Solidarity

We will undertake international solidarity campaigns

- a) On Swaziland, which focuses on the release of political prisoners and fight against the recognition of Swaziland's undemocratic elections.
- b) On Palestine we will intensify our struggle against Apartheid Israel and strengthen our work with Palestinian trade unions.
- c) On the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba we condemn the US imposed economic blockades and isolation. We call upon the US government to desist from interfering in the economies of Venezuela and Cuba. We condemn the recent assassination attempts on the President of Venezuela, comrade Nicolas Madura. We condemn the economic blockade and isolation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and CUBA and the induced economic crisis by the US and opposition. We will to strengthen our working relationship with both the progressive trade union federations in CUBA and in the Bolaverean republic of Venezuela.
- d) On Western Sahara we will initiate through a detailed program, a campaign of boycott and sanctions against Morocco's colonial occupation and we will strengthen relations with POLISARIO and UGTSARIO. Part of our work will include having an international solidarity delegation to the refugee camps and liberated zones.
- e) A conflict between Ethiopia and Eretria which has claimed more than 80 00 lives has come to an end. Ethiopia gave up its claim to the disputed border territories that triggered the fighting. Every time the war ends it is the working class that stands to benefit more when families are united and the economy of the country stabilises. We call on Ethiopia to stop making attempts to reverse this progress by making a formal request to the United Nations to lift the United States led, United Nations sanctions on Eritrea.

Conclusion

All unions here present commit to put their political and organizational weight to work with COSATU NOBs towards the successful implementation of these congress resolutions.