



The Shopsteward

The official publication of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

Volume 30.1 • COSATU News Bulletin • February/March 2022



2022 COSATU GENDER CONFERENCES & CONGRESSES



Worker Issues 8

- COSATU KwaZulu-Natal declares war against job losses
- COSATU declares 2022 year of worker's parliament
- COSATU EASTERN Cape vows to strengthen the federation at the Locals and at the workplaces across all sectors of the economy
- Workers in Limpopo elect leadership

Economy 14

- COSATU held its Central Committee to set the tone for the National Congress
- NEDLAC social partners contribution to fight the Covid19 pandemic recognised
- Organised Labour on CCMA ruling on the dismissal of a worker for refusing to vaccinate
- Striving for decent employment for vulnerable workers

Education 20

- Shopstewards graduated at DITSELA after completing Trade Union Practice Qualification [TUPQ]

- DITSELA launches Workers Education programmes for 2022 to empower all workers

Gender Agenda 24

- COSATU holds Provincial Gender Conferences in 2022
- Amplifying the Voices of Young Women in Leadership

Affiliates 26

- NEHAWU intensifies workplace visits to defend the base in 2022
- Back to School Campaign - SADTU demands strict adherence to the safety protocols at schools
- NEHAWU 12th National Congress registers a resounding success

Commentary 28

- COSATU: 'The ANC is in a mess' – leaders rubbish the Constitution, unpaid staff, factions running amok
- POPCRU leading with the vaccination campaign in the security cluster



Bheki Ntshalintshali
Editor in Chief

editorial note

We welcome all our members and loyal readers to another issue of the Shopsteward magazine. We welcome all workers back and hope they had a relaxed festive period. The year 2022 has started with the same way that we started the year 2021, with many workers facing a precarious position at their workplaces.

The big challenge is the failure by government to manage the ever-increasing petrol price and the crippling electricity load shedding. These twin challenges are worsening an already dire situation and are devastating poor families and communities. The recovery of the economy depends upon there being reliable and affordable electricity and fuel.

The attack on collective bargaining continues and the retrenchments show no sign of abating. COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for our health system and our economy, but we have so far managed to avoid another lockdown. It is disappointing to note that vaccination has stagnated.

We reiterate our support for our frontline workers who continue to do their best to save lives and deliver services under difficult circumstances. We continue to encourage workers to vaccinate in order to save both lives and livelihoods.

Our members in the public service have been dealt a heavy blow with the Constitutional Court ruling that government was right not to implement the third leg of Resolution 1 of 2018 because of poor internal coordination by government departments.

This is a betrayal of the workers by the government, especially because the government has decided to target public servants on the lower levels in the public service hierarchy rather than the bloated managerial or executive levels.

The court's ruling is sending a dangerous message that contracts are meaningless and courts can be used to escape accountability by a floundering government. The message to workers from this court ruling is that this administration has long ago walked out on workers and unions. The social compact that is being proposed is demanding that workers stop demanding wage increases and that the current labour law regime be weakened.

It is now obvious that this government will not save workers, it has sold them out to the billionaire class, and workers will only save themselves. The only way left to change the balance of power and force concessions from the ruling capitalist class is for workers to exert their power by mobilizing and fighting. This is a class war. This means that workers need to unite and break down political divides to fight a common oligarchic class that is hell-bent on crushing the working class.

We have also noted with hopelessness that government still refuses to abandon the devastating impact of the budget cuts despite a World Bank report that shows that South Africa is the most unequal country in the world.

This report is not surprising because already about 15 million people, currently, live below the food poverty line and the unemployment rate is sitting at an all-time high of 46,9%.

What was even more disappointing was the failure of the budget to present a coherent plan to fix our ailing SOE's. This is deeply worrying because urgent interventions are needed to save Transnet and Prasa who are in a fight for survival against criminal syndicates. Plans are needed to stabilize and rebuild other key SOEs, DENEL, the Post Office and the SABC.

Nothing has changed from government, the country still struggles with tax loopholes for the rich, who continue to illegally take away about R147 billion annually out of the country.

The long-awaited Public Procurement Bill is yet to be expedited. We need a single online transparent public procurement system for the entire state.

We need to unite as workers to push government to address the issue of economic stagnation, by increasing investment in the economy, increasing funding to the "training of layoff schemes" and by increasing wages to motivate workers to create domestic demand for goods and services.

The government should also provide funding to worker cooperatives to take over closed factories or those in liquidation/ insolvency and nationalize companies in key sectors of the economy to retain skills and jobs.

A new macroeconomic policy framework is needed because government cannot afford to rely on the dangerous and unsustainable levels of borrowing to meet its obligations. To avoid a possible massive societal breakdown, government needs to reimagine a different type of economic framework, which brings more people into the mainstream economy. The nation cannot afford to remain locked in an austerity framework because of the threats of ratings agencies.

Workers also need to push for

government to expedite the processing of the pension withdrawal scheme for highly indebted and struggling workers by introducing the necessary amendments. According to the Debt Counselling Association, about 10 million people in South Africa have bad debt, meaning they have missed three or more monthly repayments.

These people have an average of eight loans each. The South African Reserve Bank has depressingly pointed out that almost 73,7% of households' income is spent on debt; while at the same time consumer spending contributes 60% to the economy.

The workers need to actively push for action in the fight against corruption. The rot that has been exposed by the Judge Zondo Commission of Enquiry into State Capture and Corruption is scandalous.

It remains deeply worrying that government seems to lack the appetite and political will to investigate and prosecute private sector corruption. The private sector is responsible for the economic mess that the country finds itself in. The February CEC declared a campaign to champion the whistle blowing campaign across all sectors of the economy and demand more action against the killing of those who oppose corruption and maladministration.

Lastly, we send our deep condolences to the workers and people of Ukraine who are the victims of a war of aggression by Russia. The federation is unequivocally against any form of conflict on the globe, which always affects the poor and working class. With this, we urge Russia to engage in peace talks with Ukraine.

This is going to be a difficult year and the message to workers is simple; let us support each other on the picket line or we will meet each other on the unemployment line. ■



Norman Mampane - Editor

word from the editor

Compliments of the New Year! Happy Valentine's! Happy International Women's Day!

this marks the first edition of COSATU, The Shopsteward in what is termed a 'dramatic year' of Congresses and Conferences for all Alliance partners! It's a year to exercise internal democracy, strengthen the organizations and touch base with the owners of these organizations and re-chart a new dispensation for the betterment of our masses. On March 8, global citizens celebrated the International Women's Day, with a fresh vigor to collectively push forward the boundaries of gender transformation in all sectors of society.

This year's International Women's Day, anchored by the United Nations Women was celebrated under the theme "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow". Women workers in particular and women in communities in general are the backbone of our economy, whether in the formal or informal economy, yet remain invisible, marginalized and undermined to lead in many companies or government institutions.

The ILO has called advocacy work for an investment in transformative care leave and services after releasing a report on plugging existing, significant gaps in care services which could generate almost 300 million jobs by 2035 and help alleviate poverty,

encourage gender equality and create support for children and the elderly.

The report found out that 'the pandemic is adding to the burden of unpaid domestic and care work and squeezing women out of the labour force'. Another pandemic digressing on advancement of respect for gender campaigns has been gender-based violence. We have witnessed many women brutally killed by close partners!

Communities have stood together to condemn such heinous acts, however, more advantage should consciously be taken through the workplace measures which must be put in place such as having sexual harassment policies, regulating access to workplaces by any person carrying dangerous weapons as many workers are killed in their workplaces and the recent ratification of ILO Convention 190 on Elimination of Violence and Harassment at work, must be implemented.

Enforcement of legislation through strict standards in society must be promoted, with institutions such as the Commission for Gender Equality, the South African Human Rights Commission and other civil society organisations.

There must be a crackdown on violence against women despite women workers reporting high levels of abuse. Women workers around the world are leading struggles to safeguard democracy and improve wages and

working conditions, often facing arrest or violence. The foundation to eradicate bias, discrimination, is to create opportunities for education, employment, healthcare, well-being and leadership as prerequisite to building more resilient economies and societies. Women declared to forge ahead with gender struggles and break the Bias!

The impact of climate change and environmental degradation fall most heavily on women.

In this edition, we cover the Back-to-School Campaign unleashed when the year started in the education and training sector, responses by affiliated trade unions on vaccination programme and how workers are adamant that 'mandatory vaccinations' must be rejected. The CCMA recent ruling was condemned in many sectors of the economy. We cover worker's education programmes launched by DITSELA to empower workers in South Africa and we urge workers to take advantage of such opportunities for self cultivation.

COSATU would be launching the Just Transition Blue Print in which social protection would become central to eradicate poverty, inequalities, hunger which has been escalated as a result of climate change.

COSATU has launched a massive campaign in the North West as a build-up programme towards hosting the National May Day Rally in Rustenburg on May 1. We congratulate all the newly elected Provincial Gender

Committee members and Provincial Office Bearers after successful Conferences and Congresses. We have witnessed affiliated trade unions such as POPCRU, NUM, DENOSA for example, holding their Congresses/Conferences at the provincial and national levels.

This must be commended as necessary constitutional instruments to promote the organizational principles of internal democracy and worker's control within the federation, practiced by progressive trade unions. Back-to-Basics is about closing ranks with the base and advancing empowerment of the organized detachment of the working class through programmes to deepen class consciousness and political consciousness.

'Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena

of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs — the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. At first, knowledge is perceptual'-Mao, May 1963

On International front, we have witnessed a shake up on the balance of forces across the globe, with Russia 'demilitarizing' Ukraine, a military move which was denounced by the international community. The United Nations said 'Russia's invasion has triggered the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. More than 1.7 million people have fled the conflict since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine'. The question bothering many is what does the Russia-Ukraine conflict mean for Europe's wider future and should NATO have taken Russia's security concerns more seriously before?

Cold War rekindled!

The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin has argued that 'for eight years, no one noticed the crimes of Ukrainian nationalists in Donbas nor offered words of sympathy for the people there'.

Major cities such as Kyiv, Mariupol, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv had remained under heavy assault by Russian forces and over one million people have already fled across the country's borders.

Those that remain in Ukraine according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensiy 'are suffering heavy bombardments and shelling, with thousands of casualties reported' – and that number still growing.

Role of UN Security Council in question!

US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield argued that 'Russia's attack put Europe's largest nuclear power plant at grave risk. It was incredibly reckless and dangerous and threatened the safety of civilians across Russia, Ukraine, and Europe,' she said. "Nuclear facilities cannot become part of this conflict". UK Ambassador Barbara Woodward observed that 'it was the first time that a State has attacked a fueled and functioning nuclear power plant'.

The United Nations Security Council tabled an urgent motion which was duly voted for by one hundred and forty-one [141] majority of member states such as France, United Kingdom, Germany, Brazil, with South Africa, Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, India, Iraq, Bolivia, Iran and other twenty-six [26] countries such as China, to make the total of thirty-five [35], abstaining. Five [5] countries voted against the motion which are Belarus,

Russia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Korea, Syrian Arab Republic.

Implications of Sanctions!

It is on record that 'the Russian financial system is highly integrated into the global system. Russia is one of the largest raw materials suppliers to the world market. At the same time, the Russian economy is a significant importer of consumer goods, technology and investment equipment. That is why international payments are critical. Disconnecting the largest banks from making customer payments will disrupt the flow of goods, accumulate a consumer market deficit and accelerate inflation. Some companies whose business is in importing goods to Russia or selling imported goods in Russia may go bankrupt. The average Russian citizen will pay the price for this, as real household incomes shrink. As usual, inflation will hit harder the poor'.

The global food market, supply of oil and other commodities would be hugely affected, and a new dispensation is needed urgently as countries consider what move to take.

Many companies such as KFC, Shell, Tiktok, Exxon, Boeing and Airbus, Apple, Disney, TikTok, McDonald's, PayPal, VISA, Mastercard and Starbucks have pronounced on withdrawing from Russia. Car companies, such as Ford, Volvo, Jaguar, Hyundai, BMW and Toyota, have announced they will stop production or stop supplying cars to Russia. Shipping companies have stopped shipping containers to and from Russia.

On the other hand, Russia has responded by collaborating with China's UnionPay system to enable all its citizens to access funds. Many argues that Western leaders know that they will not immediately stop the war, but hope that they would inflict enough damage on the Russian economy to help de-escalate the conflict. There has been an outcry from many quarters that country's reactions to recent global crisis have been 'bias' to a large extent.

Many hold a view that when the United States of America unleashed an attack on Iraq in 2003 until the US invaded the country, no such sanctions were loudly pronounced. This started around 1992 after the first Gulf War in which a US-led coalition enforced a no-fly zone over the Southern and Northern Iraq in the fight against the then President Saddam Hussein. The President of the US Joe Biden said 'a decision to ban Russian oil and gas imports taken in 'close consultation' with allies'. Many argues

that 'sanctions against Russia are a double-edged sword that will ultimately seriously hurt economies in the West, particularly those that depend on the country's cheap natural gas and wheat supplies. Russia's diversion to new markets will increase consumer prices in Europe that will also lead to growth in the cost of living'.

Genocide charges threatened!

Ukrainian President has 'urged' the [NATO] to impose a no-fly zone but US President has warned against such as move as it may escalate in a full-scale nuclear war. In simply terms, a 'no-fly zone is a "designated geographical space where certain types of flights" are prohibited'. Something which may be avoided for now! But the big question is, has all parties exploited diplomatic interventions and negotiations? NATO Foreign Ministers have held several meetings to come up with a 'solution'.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] is a defensive alliance of 30 countries from Europe and North America. NATO exists to defend its member countries and their one billion citizens. It does this by bringing together the governments and the armed forces of the 30 Allies, and by providing a security guarantee that an attack on one of them is an attack on all of them. Ukraine is not a NATO member. Ukraine is a NATO partner country, which means that it cooperates closely with NATO but it is not covered by the security guarantee in the Alliance's founding treaty.

NATO has released a statement in which it states categorically that 'NATO condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine – which is an independent, peaceful and democratic country, and a close NATO partner. The Alliance calls on Russia to immediately cease its military assault, to withdraw all its forces from Ukraine and to turn back from the path of aggression it has chosen'.

The Russia-Ukraine matter has been referred to the International Criminal Court at the Hague and investigations are underway. But there are still hindrances for the process to unfold and the big question is whether President Putin would be summoned to appear before the court to be answerable to the charges.

The Court is responsible for four core crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. The members of the court include 123 countries. Russia and Ukraine are omitted as they signed the

statute but did not ratify it.

Karim Khan, the chief prosecutor of the ICC, has been assigned to investigate the matter and many calls for investigation of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine since 2014. Many calls for the inquiry to include "all-new suspected crimes" committed in Ukraine. Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged joint support for the peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, and stressed the need to encourage them to keep the talks going and bring about peaceful outcomes.

South Africa clarifying its stance!

South African President, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa who is part of the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] block in a weekly publication said 'We all call upon Russia and the Ukraine to subject this conflict to mediation and do everything in their power to reach an agreement that will lead to the cessation of hostilities'. He said 'Building a better Africa and a better world is the cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy. For Africa to play a full and equal role in global affairs, we must first attend to the developmental challenges of the people of Africa'. Deconstruction of our real world is underway, thou the question is; Is it in our favour or not?

COSATU recent Central Executive Committee has 'condemned the US sanctions targeted against Russia', as Ukraine tensions rise. 'We stand with our BRICS ally during this time. However, the federation is unequivocally against any form of conflict on the globe, which always affects the poor and working class. With this, we urge Russia to engage in peace talks with Ukraine, as the possibility of imminent war in Ukraine has raised fears not only of massive casualties but of widespread energy shortages and global economic chaos'.

COSATU has vowed to pledge solidarity with the people of Palestine, Western Sahara and Swaziland facing repressive regimes. And solidarity support should be accelerated with the people of Cuba facing economic blockade from the US regime! Let's continue to fight for vaccine equity to ensure every global citizen is free from dying from Covid-19 pandemic which has derailed human development in the recent years, and devastated world economies and forced many workers out of their jobs and livelihoods! Workers of the world unite!

It is not yet Uhuru!



2022



GENDER CO



& CON





COSATU

CONFERENCES



CONGRESSES



Worker Issues



COSATU KwaZulu-Natal declares war against job losses

COSATU KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Congress elected leadership at the Olive Convention Centre, in Durban

the Congress of South African Trade Unions from the onset declared the 'Year 2022 – The Year of Congresses/Conferences' which simply put is the 'Year of the Workers' Parliament'. COSATU Year-ending Central Executive Committee was explicit about what the task at hand were in the new year.

COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntshalintshali alluded to the fact that 'COSATU Central Executive Committee noted that next year will be one of the busiest and most politically consequential year for all Alliance partners with all of them convening their important Constitutional meetings, including electing new leaders.

This means a lot of political work must be done to deal particularly with

the unfortunate aspect of the current political landscape, which is the obsessive focus on divisive leadership contests, especially within the African National Congress.

This problematically endemic politics around personalities or slates within the African National Congress, in part makes possible what we have disgracefully witnessed in July where members of the ANC encouraged deadly and destructive riots in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

But also, it would be a mistake to believe that the other components of the Alliance or Mass Democratic Movement [MDM] are immune from the influence of these corrosive tendencies that are typically endemic in mass organisations. We all need

to collectively work to dislodge the networks of patronage that thrive in an environment where there are declining levels of class consciousness and discipline. These are major challenges facing the entire movement and they are deeply connected to the extreme inequalities, rampant capitalist exploitation and culture of personal accumulation that defines our society, including the trade union movement in terms of business unionism.'

Addressing COSATU KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Congress, the African National Congress Provincial Chairperson, Comrade Sihle Zikalala said 'Please allow me to express my profound gratitude for the invitation to take part in this Provincial Conference of COSATU. I bring you the greetings of the Provincial Executive Council

of KwaZulu-Natal as well as the government of our Province. We rise in salute of the workers of our country. We rise in salute to COSATU as the leading force in unifying the workers movement in our country.'

Zikalala emphasized that 'In defending the rights of workers, COSATU lives up to its founding motto: "An injury to one is an injury to all." That unity is unassailable.

As I begin a brief reflection on the work of government, let me draw on the wisdom of Madiba when he addressed the 5th National Congress of COSATU on 7 September 1994 where he said: "It will always be crucial for the trade union movement to play the role of a critical extra-parliamentary force. But today you also have to

Worker Issues



COSATU delegates at the Provincial Gender Conference in Cape Town

take active part in determining and implementing Government policy. It is fundamental that the trade union movement should jealously guard its independence. But today you also have to use, to maximum effect, the elements of political power that we have together achieved in struggle."

Our African National Congress-led government is a product of struggle.

Historically that struggle was waged as an alliance of the progressive forces in our country. We share this platform today as an unequivocal expression of the value of the tripartite alliance in advancing the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and Radical Socio-Economic Transformation.

The productive capacity and the political power of workers must continue to be harnessed in such a way that we are able to collectively make an impact in changing the lives of our people. COVID-19 is the most daunting challenge of our time. Every facet of society, economy and government was shaken to the

core. Neither the pandemic nor its devastating impact was predictable.

Every family has felt the loss of loved ones. More than 90 000 lives have been lost. We remember them in our hearts. Hundreds of thousands of our people are out of work.

Economic growth projections are down. The best of our economic development and job creation plans were set back.'

Newly elected COSATU KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Office Bearers

- Provincial Chairperson: Cde Phumlani Duma
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson: Cde Zanele Gumede
- Provincial Treasurer: Cde Londiwe Nsele
- Provincial Secretary: Cde Edwin Mkhize

Earlier in the same week, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Gender Conference elected the following comrades as gender structure leaders;

Newly Elected COSATU KwaZulu-Natal Gender Office Bearers:

- Provincial Chairperson- Cde Nobuhle Lekoma
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson- Cde Nontokozi Shongwe
- Provincial Secretary- Cde Gretta Govender
- Provincial Deputy Secretary- Cde Mbali Blose

In the Western Cape, workers assembled at the Southern Sun hotel in Cape Town on the weekend of the 5th and 6th February 2022 to assess the programmes of the federation in the period under review and also elected leaders to lead campaigns in the province. COSATU Western Cape Provincial Congress was held under the Theme; 'Deepen the Back to Basic Campaign, Consolidate the Struggle for the NDR and Advance the Struggle for Socialism'

Newly Elected COSATU Western Cape Provincial

Office Bearers:

- Provincial Chairperson- Cde Motlatsi Tsubane
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson- Cde Andile Nqganeka
- Provincial Treasurer- Cde Ingred Leukes
- Provincial Secretary- Cde Malveryn De Bruyn

Earlier in the same week, the Western Cape Provincial Gender Conference elected the following comrades as gender structure leadership;

Newly Elected COSATU Western Cape Gender Office Bearers:

- Provincial Chairperson- Cde Nandi Andries
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson- Cde John Abrahams
- Provincial Secretary- Cde Sheryl Hendricks
- Provincial Deputy Secretary- Cde Thandiswa Ragasi

COSATU declares 2022

'YEAR OF WORKER'S PARLIAMENT'



COSATU Mpumalanga Provincial Congress was held at the Ermelo Civic Centre in the Gert Sibande District municipality, attended by over 500 delegates including guests

The Constitution of the federation which was adopted in 1985 at the Curries Fountain Stadium, an iconic venue associated to the vibrant Stadium in the struggle days, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s which influenced the interaction of Black people within a socio-political and cultural environment in Durban and South Africa, and later amended at the 9th National Congress in 2006 stipulates that the 'organization firmly commit to a unified, democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation'.

It further state that the 'organization would carry its revolutionary task of unifying national trade unions under COSATU's leadership and combat the divisions amongst workers in this country and unite them into strong and confident working class formations'.

2022 has begun smoothly with all provinces organizing Gender Conferences and Provincial Congresses to reaffirm the organizational principle of being a worker-controlled organization and also encouraging democratic leadership in all spheres of society together with other progressive sectors of the community'.

Mpumalanga was the first province to hold successful Gender Conference and Provincial Congress under the Theme; "Deepen the Back-to-Basics Campaign, Consolidate the Struggle for the National Democratic Revolution [NDR] and Advance the Struggle for Socialism".

According to COSATU's Constitution, a Provincial Congress is a 'subordinate body to the Central Executive Committee [CEC] which

must implement decisions of the federation's upper structures such as the National Congress, Central Committee and also the CEC, to facilitate carrying out the aims and objectives of the federation in a province, encouraging cooperation between affiliates in a particular province, examine provincial problems and coordinate activities and campaigns, and elect provincial leaders, in a quorate Provincial Congress, with at least two-thirds of the affiliates in good standing, after a notice to convene such Congress was sent out thirty days before convening such a meeting.

The Provincial Congress should convene to consider all reports tabled on the activities of the province and election of Provincial Office Bearers composing of Provincial Chairperson,

Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary would take place, to coordinate the affairs of the province through a functional Provincial Executive Committee [PEC] and carry out instructions on behalf of the Provincial Congress.'

COSATU Mpumalanga Provincial Congress Outcomes

Newly Elected COSATU Mpumalanga Provincial Office Bearers:

1. Provincial Chairperson - **Cde Life Monini**
2. Provincial Deputy Chairperson- **Cde Siyabonga Hlongwane**
3. Provincial Treasurer - **Cde Happiness Mnisi**
4. Provincial Secretary - **Cde Thabo Mokoena**

COSATU EASTERN CAPE vows to STRENGTHEN THE FEDERATION at the Locals and at the workplaces across all sectors of the economy



President Zingiswa Losi, and our allies from the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party and the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) in plenary

COSATU Eastern Cape Provincial Congress was held at the Orient Theatre in East London for two-days to assess the progress registered by the federation in the province in class struggle and to come up with solutions to strengthen the organization at the Locals and also on the shopfloor at the workplaces across all sectors of the economy.

After robust and comrade deliberations, the Congress declared that 'We, the 623 delegates drawn from the strong sixteen affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the Eastern Cape, Central Executive Committee, Alliance partners and former leaders gathered in the COSATU Eastern Cape 14th Provincial Congress from 30 – 31 January 2022 at the Orient Theatre in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.'

COSATU Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary, Mkhawuleli "Gurah" Maleki further said 'The 14th Provincial Congress honoured the late Comrade Mzwamadoda Patrick "Pinky" Ntsangani, former COSATU Provincial Secretary to mark 20 years since his passing. Comrade Pinky Ntsangani grew in the ranks of the federation and the congress movement at large. The federation

salutes his outstanding contribution in building the workers' unions, and selflessly leading the workers' struggles.

The 14th Provincial Congress in appreciation and honouring the life and contribution of our late leader Comrade Pinky Ntsangani mandated the newly elected Provincial Office Bearers to coordinate a commemorative event.'

Building a vibrant and campaigning COSATU

'The COSATU 14th Provincial Congress considered the state of the federation and its affiliates within the province and national for the workers to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their federation. The plenary noted the impact of the novel coronavirus in the workplace and its subsequent impact on the trade unions. This reality means that the trade union movement ought to be adaptive in its organising for it to remain relevant.'

The congress recommitted the leadership of COSATU and its affiliates to building of the strong, vibrant and campaigning COSATU rooted within the workers. The continuous building of the strong COSATU will be anchored on the key pillars of the Back-to-Basics Campaign, focusing on reviving our locals, spending time in our

workplaces servicing members and listening to them.'

Lastly, 'The congress noted that sex work is still stigmatised with sex workers suffering from victimisation by the state and the private persons. The Congress, therefore, resolved to campaign for the recognition and legalization of sex work. The congress mandated the leadership of the federation to spare no efforts in organising and protecting the rights of sex workers as any other workers', concluded Maleki.

Newly Elected COSATU Eastern Cape Provincial Office Bearers:

1. Provincial Chairperson - **Cde Tabile Kunene**
2. Provincial Deputy Chairperson - **Cde Zodwa Gqirana**
3. Provincial Treasurer - **Cde Sithembele Mhlana**
4. Provincial Secretary - **Cde Mkhawuleli "Gurah" Maleki**

Newly Elected COSATU Eastern Cape Gender Office Bearers:

1. Provincial Chairperson - **Cde Nomxolisi Makayi**
2. Provincial Deputy Chairperson - **Cde Baba Sonjeke**
3. Provincial Secretary -

Cde Siphokazi Majiza

4. Provincial Deputy Secretary - **Cde Lunga Ndulo**

In Free State, the Provincial Congress held at the Kroonstad Civic Centre affirmed the following worker leaders duly elected to serve as provincial office bearers for the three years term of office;

1. Provincial Chairperson - **Cde Motsamai Masukela**
2. Provincial Deputy Chairperson - **Cde Thibogang Thole**
3. Provincial Treasurer - **Cde Poloko Shopane**
4. Provincial Secretary - **Cde Monyatso Mahlatsi**

COSATU Free State Provincial Gender Conference elects leaders at the Kroonstad Civic Centre in the Moqhaka Local Municipality, Fezile Dabi District Municipality

Newly Elected COSATU Free State Gender Office Bearers:

1. Provincial Chairperson - **Cde Mantsopa Lekhaona**
2. Provincial Deputy Chairperson - **Cde Caroline Gongo**
3. Provincial Secretary - **Cde Mahlomola Mashoeng**
4. Provincial Deputy Secretary - **Cde Duncan Swarts**

Workers in Limpopo elect leadership



COSATU Limpopo concluding its Provincial Congress at Bolivia lodge

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in Limpopo held their Provincial Congress, with more than 500 delegates in attendance on the 10th until the 11th of February at the Bolivia Lodge in the Capricorn district outside Polokwane under the Theme 'Deepen the Back to Basics Campaign, Consolidate the Struggle for the National Democratic Revolution and Advance the Struggle for Socialism'.

COSATU Congresses are coming in the era within the Congress Movement when there is a unanimous call by workers in rejecting neo-liberal agenda imposed in the post-apartheid democratic dispensation within the state which has shed many jobs and left many poor working class communities destitute.

The Workers' Parliament robustly interacted with a comprehensive assessment of the programmes of the federation in the province impacting on the working class, by reflecting on various organizational work such as Organization building, Socio-Economic, Political, and also on the International front.

COSATU Limpopo utilized the occasion to celebrate posthumously the life and times of the late comrade Mark Shope, the former General Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), established in 1955 in the Trades Hall, Johannesburg.

SACTU was the leading non-racial

trade union co-coordinating body, and ally of the African National Congress (ANC) led Congress Alliance, which was a forerunner before the formation of COSATU in 1985 at the Curries fountain in Durban.

One of South Africa's outstanding working class intellectuals; he embraced the revolutionary philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. He headed the education departments of SACTU for many years.

He was the founder member of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity and also of the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council. He was a commissar in the people's army, Umkhonto weSizwe, and as an MK soldier, among the first to go for training in the Soviet Union. He was a leading member of the South African Communist Party alongside distinguished freedom fighters such as JB Marks, Moses Kotane, Moses Mabhinda and Joe Slovo.

The Congress also paid a tribute to Timson Musetsho, Ronald Mani, Valtyn Kekana and Ralph Kanyane, all of whom were killed for their stance against corruption around the Waterberg and Vhembe districts.

The Congress was duly addressed by Alliance partners such as the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party in the province and received various guests from fraternal structures and international allies such as the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions, Palestinian

Ambassador and Central Executive Committee members.

The following Provincial Office Bearers were duly elected by the Provincial Congress;

- Provincial Chairperson: Cde Esther Mokoale
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson: Cde Hangwani Mashao
- Provincial Treasurer: Cde Manganyi
- Provincial Secretary: Cde Gerald Twala

Newly Elected COSATU Limpopo Gender Committee Office Bearers:

- Provincial Chairperson-Cde Thando Ndaba Makitla
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson-Cde Beauty Nchabeleng
- Provincial Secretary-Cde Mosley Molepo
- Provincial Deputy Secretary- Cde Sarah Langa

In Northern Cape, COSATU held its Provincial Congress at the Colesberg City Hall in the Umsobomvu Local municipality, Pixley ka Seme District.

The following Provincial Office Bearers were duly elected by the Provincial Congress;

- Provincial Chairperson: Cde Jacques Cupido
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson: Cde Senzo Mpalala
- Provincial Treasurer: Cde Phumla Gwebityala
- Provincial Secretary: Cde Orapeleng Moraladi

Newly Elected COSATU Northern Cape Gender Committee Office Bearers:

- Provincial Chairperson-Cde Regina Manhe
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson-Cde Bernadine Bostander
- Provincial Secretary-Cde Phumzile Jack
- Provincial Deputy Secretary- Cde Rifqa Manuel

In North West, COSATU held its Provincial Congress at the Madiba Banquet Hall in Potchefstroom at the J.B. Marks Municipality.

The following Provincial Office Bearers were duly elected by the Provincial Congress;

- Provincial Chairperson: Cde Solly Lekhu
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson: Cde Oaheng Mochwaedi
- Provincial Treasurer: Cde Nancy Thihe
- Provincial Secretary: Cde Kopano Konopi

Newly Elected COSATU North West Gender Committee Office Bearers:

- Provincial Chairperson-Cde Kutlang Letena
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson-Cde Setsepiseng Skhosana
- Provincial Secretary-Cde Khanya Babedi
- Provincial Deputy Secretary-Cde Kenalemang Moseneng

Poem

Who am I?

I am, what they say I am,
I am, the Congress of South African Trade Union,
The umbrella body of Industrial Trade Unions,
The federation of revolutionary trade unions.
I am, the defender of workers' control,
A massive wheel of working class movement,
I am, the school of communism.

I am, still standing!
Celebrating my existence!
I am, for the workers' power,
I am, for the rights and workers' democracy,
I am, for solidarity and unity in action,
For one industry, for one union,
For one country, for one federation.

I am, for revolution not for reformism.
I am, still standing!
Celebrating my existence!

Born I was, in horrors of horrible masters,
Born I was, in bad and worse times of evils and barbarism,
The days of darkness without dawn.
Born in times of deaths and detentions,
Born in times of parcel bombs and brutality.

I am, still standing!
Celebrating my existence!
They are me and I am them
No me without them, no them without me,

There is no COSATU without affiliates, no Affiliates without COSATU,
I carried the burdens of the banned political organisations
I am, still standing!
Celebrating my existence!

I am, the power to be reckoned with,
I'm for the country without exploitation,
For a caring society, without disease, hunger and pain,
For a society with freedom and bread for all.
For a society in which no one lives off labour of another,
For a society without capitalism,
For a society built on socialist ethics.

I am, still standing!
Celebrating my existence!
Amandla! Power!

An injury to one is An injury to all
Solidarity forever!!
Organise! Or Starve!
Amandla!!

By Thobile Maso

COSATU held its Central Committee to set the tone for the National Congress

The Congress of South African Trade Unions convened its Central Committee during the Month of September as a necessary platform to, amongst others, 'assess the implementation of the 13th National Congress resolutions and campaigns, with a bias to building the organization on the ground through the Back-to-Basics Campaign, defending the gains of the workers and also better representing the dreams and aspirations of the workers and the working class with confidence.'

The Central Committee was held on a virtual platform under the Theme "Deepen the Back to Basic Campaign, Consolidate the struggle for NDR and Advance the struggle for Socialism".

The Central Committee came before the holding of the National Congress in September 2022. COSATU President, Zingiswa Losi addressing the session said 'This Central Committee, the Mid-Term Evaluation Conference of the federation, COSATU, offers a very unique and critical opportunity for the working class and its organs to do an honest, robust and frank reflection into the state of the revolution in South Africa, on the African continent and throughout the world. As a Constitutionally determined organ of our federation, it is an important and decisive moment for us to do what we are assigned by history and the class with the required seriousness and dedication.'

We herein start by assessing the obtaining international and domestic balance of forces and their implications for the working class and our struggle for socialism.

The essence of COSATU policy remains guided by the principle and affirmation of workers rights to effective and full participation in matters affecting their lives at the workplace, national, international and community level. Our full presence in all public affairs, policy influencing structures and decision-making bodies remain fundamental.

It is for that reason, that we emphasise that COSATU is proud and remains committed to the role it played in the struggle against apartheid and still plays in building working class power

to transform the economy and society, as we simultaneously fight for the improvement of the conditions of life for the majority of our people, particularly in our communities.

Our rights, including the right to workers to have a voice in all policy and decision making spaces, we won't waiver or outsource to anyone, because we have seen how in other countries such rights can be a life and death matter for workers who are excluded. Its only that, in exercising this right we must be cautious, but clear about how we exercise this right in a way that advances and defend the rights, gains and interests of workers. This is with particular reference to very contested public policy spaces. But the workplace is our core focus and primary terrain of struggle and organisation, therefore, a base of our organised and strategic power.'

COSATU paid a tribute to all worker leaders, workers and their families who passed on in the period under review. And remembered leaders such as the General Secretaries of NUM and SAMWU, David Siphunzi and Koena Ramatlou. Mayor of Joburg, Jolidee Matongo, Minister Jackson Mthembu, a former MAWU Organiser in Mpumalanga and Deputy Minister, Hlengiwe Mkhize were celebrated for their revolutionary contributions. Addressing the Central Committee, COSATU President Zingiswa Losi said 'I have the honour on behalf of the leadership of COSATU of welcoming you to this historic Central Committee of your Federation, COSATU. We are meeting today virtually for the first time as the Central Committee. This is necessitated due to the pandemic that has claimed the lives of more than 85 000 South Africans and millions more across the world. 2.2 million South African workers lost their jobs at the height of the lockdown in 2020. Millions more lost wages, pensions and benefits.'

'Families went hungry. The economy is in its deepest recession in a century. Workers more than ever need COSATU and its Affiliates to defend their rights, protect their salaries, secure their pensions and save their jobs. They need

a COSATU that is united and fighting fit.'

'Our battles will not be won easily. There will be no victories handed to the working class on a silver platter. It requires us to work hand in hand with our sister Federations. A working class that is divided cannot be victorious. It requires us to defend the gains of the democratic breakthrough of 1994. And to hold our Alliance Partners accountable to delivering upon the 2019 electoral mandate. It compels us to intensify the fight against corruption, to rebuild the state and grow the economy.'

We must emerge with clear objectives, practical solutions and a concrete programme of action. We cannot afford to walk away with slogans and to outsource our tasks to government or business.

As the leadership of COSATU, the Federation of Elijah Barayi, we are confident that we will emerge more united and determined than ever to wage the battles to improve the lives of workers across South Africa.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the NDR is under siege and facing some of its greatest challenges since 1994. The ANC's 2017 Nasrec Conference was a critical and progressive game changer in the history of the movement. It provided a chance to cleanse and heal the ANC that has been battered by the decade of state capture, corruption and factionalism. The election of the founding General Secretary of the National Union of Mine Workers, cde. Matamela Ramaphosa as President, has given hope for change for the better. On many fronts the President has begun the hard work of cleaning the movement and rebuilding government and growing the economy. The challenges are steep. The economy is bleeding.

Many organs of state have collapsed or are falling apart. These range from State Owned Enterprises e.g. SA Express, SAA, DENEL, the Post Office, Metro Rail to dozens of municipalities who fail to pay their workers on time. Billions are lost in the fiscus due to corruption, wasteful expenditure and tax evasion. The credibility of government and the ANC is battered. Yet public surveys

show that workers continue to support the President and hope for the ANC to return to its roots.

We welcome the efforts to clean the state and the ANC. The implementation of the step aside resolution is critical. The crack down on tax evasion is welcome. The recovering of stolen funds from Eskom is positive. This cleansing must be intensified. We cannot afford to lose the war against corruption. If we are serious about winning the war against corruption, then there must be speedy not never ending prosecutions. The NPA, Hawks and SAPS must get their houses in order and deliver. Equally we must protect whistle blowers. It cannot be acceptable that we allow whistle blowers to be assassinated like some lawless republic.

Working to Improve the Lives of Workers and Their Families

The period since our Congress in 2018 has been one of the most difficult for workers. The economy is battling a devastating recession. Many SOEs have collapsed or are collapsing. Local government is in deep distress. Many companies have closed. This period saw an open attempt to collapse collective bargaining in the public service and local government. The former Minister for Finance, Tito Mboweni went to Parliament to announce a 4 year wage freeze. Treasury went to SALGA and instructed them to impose a wage freeze on municipal workers. In the face of this unprecedented undermining of collective bargaining our Affiliates have done well.

SAMWU has concluded a 3 year wage agreement with increases protecting workers' wages from being eroded from inflation. SATAWU has concluded similar progressive agreements in Transnet.

Our Affiliates in the PSCBC have been at the forefront of this attack.

Against all odds they have managed to overturn the 2021 wage freeze and secure an increase for public servants. The 2020 wage agreement renegotiating is before the Constitutional Court. The 2022 wage negotiations must commence now.

Comrades if we are to emerge victorious in these battles, then we must be united as Affiliates. Our members

may provide different mandates but we must as Affiliates find ways to bridge those gaps and walk together. What is clear is that workers cannot afford a COSATU that is divided. If we are to remain true to the legacy of Elijah Barayi, then we must at all times jealously guard the unity of COSATU. Yes, this will require for all to compromise. It will require for us to hear, listen and work to address each others' concerns. Slogans will not do that. Many SOEs are dying. We need clear plans on what must be done to save them. Otherwise workers will pay the price in retrenchments and lost wages. This is what drove COSATU to draft the Eskom Social Compact that has now been agreed to be government and social partners at Nedlac and is now in varying stages of implementation. We need Affiliates to develop proposals on what must be done to fix Transnet, Metro Rail, SABC, the Post Office, Denel and local government?

We cannot afford to wait for others to develop solutions and hope that it will save workers' jobs. A Presidential SOE Council has been established. COSATU led by cde. Deputy President Mike Shingange is representing workers there. We look forward to it tabling clear plans on how to turn our SOEs around. COSATU agrees that partnerships may be necessary in instances but we will remain opposed to privatisation. COSATU worked tirelessly with SACTWU and SACCAWU to save Edcon, both before and during the lockdown. It was a hard won victory where with the support of the UIF and government, we were able to save 40 000 direct and 100 000 indirect clothing and retail workers jobs. We must commend the efforts of SASBO who took on the banking sector and captured the nation's attention in the fight against job losses in the era of the 4th industrial revolution.

The leadership of business showed its true colours when they won a court interdict against SASBO and COSATU's Section 77 strike certificate. We are pleased that we have now won this case at the Labour Appeal Court. The past 18 months have seen the Federation with the support of Affiliates meeting and working at Nedlac 7 days a week. These collective efforts have seen over R53 billion paid from the UIF to ensure more than 5.5 million workers had money to buy food for their families. This has been the largest source of stimuli into

the economy. It has seen a package of relief measures to help protect workers, the unemployed, businesses and the economy put in place. This includes the R350 grant helping millions, tax relief for companies to keep them open, loan deferrals to assist consumers etc.

We must commend the excellent work done by SACTWU to ensure the delivery of the UIF TERS and vaccines to thousands of clothing and textile workers. We must salute the heroic sacrifices of our health workers and members of NEHAWU, DENOSA, SAMATU and SAEPU. They have carried the nation on their shoulders. They have born the brunt of Covid-19 infections and many paying the ultimate sacrifice. When history is written, it will mark our nurses, doctors, paramedics and other health workers as the heroes of Covid-19. This pandemic has devastated South Africa like none other in our lifetimes. It will remain with us for some time. We must learn to live with this new normal. We are fortunate to have the weapons to defeat it in our hands.

These are for all of us to wear our masks, social distance and sanitise. Equally it is for all of us to go and vaccinate. The vaccine will not change your DNA. It is not a conspiracy. It is safe and will protect you, your family and your job. Government has done well to secure sufficient vaccines and to pay for them. We are working with government to ensure that mobile vaccine units are deployed to every township, informal area, village, farm, taxi rank and bus station and shopping centre. There has been a positive turn around in vaccination numbers. We have now passed 16 million vaccines doses dispensed. We are averaging 1 million a week. But we need to double our rate. We need to engage every member, worker and their family on why this is critical not only to save their lives and jobs, but also their families. This is the only way for the economy to emerge safely.

We owe it to our health workers. Let us emerge from this CC with a clear call to go and out mobilise every worker and their family and ensure that all have received their vaccines by Christmas. We cannot afford to fail. COSATU supports the call for every single person to vaccinate. This must be done through education, engagement and persuasion. We are a constitutional democracy that respects the rights of

all. Mandatory vaccinations will not work and may in fact only serve to distract us from the work of convincing every person on the need to vaccinate. We cannot afford scandals of people selling vaccine certificates.

July marked a moment of shame for South Africa. Due to the factional infighting in the ANC we saw KZN and Gauteng devastated by criminal violence, arson and looting. The announcement of a panel to investigate it is welcome. But we need to see the ring leaders and culprits arrested, tried and convicted if we are serious about being a rule based society. COSATU tabled a 12 point disaster relief package at Nedlac in the wake of the violence. It was immediately agreed to by government and is in varying stages of being implemented. This includes the reinstatement of the R350 grant. We now need to ensure this SRD Grant is made permanent and increased to the food poverty line. It is a stepping stone for the long championed BIG.

We must express our deep anger at the failures of the UIF to begin paying the TERS relief for workers affected by the violence. There is a sense of paralysis in the UIF by officials scared of being found wanting by the Auditor-General. However, this is at the cost of thousands of workers waiting 3 months for relief. We need to engage the Minister for Employment and Labour to resolve this and ensure the UIF capacity challenges are addressed. COSATU helped develop the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan at Nedlac. Its key pillars are the Eskom Social Compact, tackling corruption, rebuilding Transnet and Metro Rail and other SOEs, ramping up local procurement, unblocking obstacles to economic growth and mobilising financial stimuli for the economy. We need Affiliates to be the champions of local procurement in their workplaces, bargaining councils and sectors. We should not simply delegate this to government.

Organised labour has made a commitment to drive local procurement. This is one of the most effective ways to sustain and create manufacturing jobs. This means we must buy locally produced cars, clothes and furniture as unions. Our pension and investment funds must support local procurement.

We must engage the employers at each workplace to increase local

procurement. Affiliates need to report on these monthly to COSATU to ensure we are making progress. We are deeply worried about the level of participation of some Affiliates in the 15 industrial sectoral master plans. Some Affiliates are very active in them. SACTWU is leading the master plans in its sectors.

But others Affiliates need to be active too. As a result some of the master plans like health, construction, mining have not even begun to be formulated. If we are serious about creating jobs, then we need to grab these opportunities.

The ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa and the SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande addressed the delegates.

Meanwhile, COSATU acknowledged the hosting of successful campaign activities on the occasion of the Global Day of Decent Work on October 7. All provinces led socio-economic national strike by marching, picketing and engaged in motorcade to raise issues affecting workers at workplaces and in their communities.

The strike was a legally protected action and was focused on pushing both government and the private sector to act to fix the economic mess that the country finds itself in, and take seriously the issues that are affecting workers and South Africans in general. Workers demanded urgent action from policymakers in government and decision-makers in the private sector to stop the attacks that are directed at workers. Both the public and the private sector have been blatantly undermining collective bargaining. We wanted the reversal of budget cuts that have led to an unacceptable wage freeze in the public service, the disintegration of the CCMA, and retrenchments in State-Owned Companies.

COSATU called on the private sector to abandon its investment strike that has seen many companies either hoarding or exporting cash out of the country, despite receiving generous incentives to invest back into the economy. This year billions were given away in tax cuts when that money could have been used to increase government spending. Workers need to unite and take the lead in the fight against this looming collapse and push back against private sector greed and the mismanagement of the country by government', reiterated COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntshali.



Minister of Employment and Labour, Thulas Nxesi, and the Executive Director of the National Development and Labour Council, Lisa Seftel.

NEDLAC social partners contribution to fight the Covid-19 pandemic recognised

At Nedlac's 26th Annual National Summit in Johannesburg in December 2021, Minister of Employment and Labour, Thembelani Thulas Nxesi congratulated the social partners for their collective effort to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Ms. Boitumelo Moloi, the Deputy Minister in the Department of Employment and Labour, was present at the summit.

Speakers included Nedlac Executive Director Lisa Seftel, Valli Moosa, deputy chair of the Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission, economist Mzwanele Ntshwanti, economist, and Professor Koleka Mlisana, Chairperson of the Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) of Covid-19, and Executive Manager Research and Quality Assurance at the National Health Laboratory Service.

Overall community convenor Thulani Tshefuta, and labour convenor Bheki Ntshahintshali, and CEO for Business Unity South Africa Cas Coovadia also provided their reflections on behalf of their constituencies. The summit is held annually to inform the public of achievements, reflect on the past year and identify issues for the year ahead. This year it was held online with a focus on the key issues facing South Africa including the economic crisis, high levels of unemployment, the imperative to address climate change and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Minister Nxesi said that in such periods of economic social and political crisis "the need for social dialogue and strong institutions such as Nedlac become very apparent".

He said Nedlac facilitated an all-of-society response from the social partners in a number of areas including enhancing occupations health and

safety to safeguard the workplace from Covid-19. There is a consensus on the need to promote vaccinations to prevent further lockdown, loss of lives and livelihoods. There is further consensus that vaccinations is an effective way to do this and in the face of Omicron variant, social partners have put proposals to government on mandatory vaccination in workplace and only vaccinated allowed entry. The Minister quoted the position of the Nedlac Rapid Response Task which states that health and safety direction of his department should be strengthened so that vaccination can become mandatory where a risk assessment at the workplace requires this. While, the social partners believed that vaccine mandates will pass constitutional scrutiny, they supported the work of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) to get a declarator from the Constitutional Court to seek an order for compulsory Covid-19 vaccination in the workplace, the minister said.

Seftel in her presentation on Nedlac's performance said: "The devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic would have been even more severe if it had not been for the collective efforts of the social partners on issues of relief, vaccinations and collaborating on regulations to safely open up the economy. "The most important measures that all social partners agree on is that ramping up vaccinations, including through positive and negative incentives, is critical, as well as the ongoing promotions of pharmaceutical interventions," said Seftel.

The Unemployment Fund distributed over R63 billion in terms of the Covid-19 TERS benefits – supporting distressed employers and reaching millions of laid-off workers, their families, and injecting cash into local economies across the

country. Seftel said the social partners had responded speedily to the "Eight days in July" crisis in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in which various businesses were destroyed. The partners met to stabilize the country, securing essential supplies, provide relief and support the re-establishment of businesses.

After President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), Nedlac set up processes to track the implementation of commitments and collaborate in identified areas. Various structures were set up and areas of focus were identified, including the unlocking of blockages in freight and improving public transport. Minister Nxesi told the summit how Nedlac should look ahead tackling various priorities including plugging the holes in the social protection safety net for the informal sector, gig workers and the vulnerable workers in general. He said people should be trained for technological change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution which was hugely disruptive of existing labour processes and employment patterns.

Minister Nxesi said Nedlac will be called upon to address issues of energy and sustainability. The country needed a plan for coal – and to negotiate a "just transition". Valli Moosa, deputy chairperson of the Presidential Climate Commission invited to share his reflections on the impact of climate change, said that South Africa had significant opportunities in the climate transition as it had some of the best renewable energy resources in the world. "The good news is that a future green economy will create more jobs in new low-carbon sectors than are lost in declining fossil fuel sectors," he said.

Also presenting at the summit,

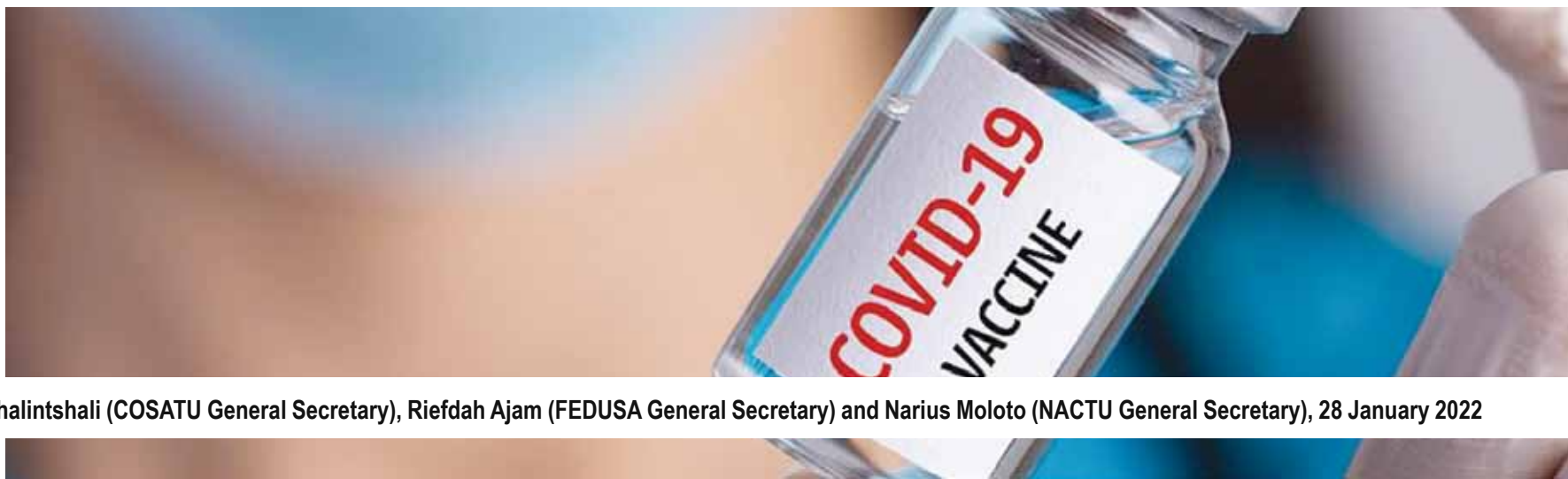
Professor Koleka Mlisana, Executive Manager of the National Health Laboratory Services and Chairperson of the Ministerial Advisory Committee, said that there were several lessons that had been learned from Covid-19 and previous pandemics. She said the pandemic had biological and social drivers. While science was addressing the biological, behavioural modification is key for the social drivers. She added the antisocial drivers included the impact of alcohol on health systems and family structure; corruption and accountability related to COVID-19 resources. There should be an "urgent plan to translate from containment to mitigation - learning to live with SARS-CoV-2", she said.

In the responses of the social partners, Cas Coovadia, speaking for organised business said that while 2020-2021 was a challenging year due to Covid, the July unrest, the dwindling economy and the political climate, Nedlac had done well and should draw lessons from its interventions. Thulani Tshefuta, overall community convenor, following the summit, said: "We must follow the economic patterns that inform the changing nature of work and adapt accordingly. We are also keen to see improved collective implementation of the commitments of ERRP by social partners."

Labour convenor Bheki Ntshahintshali said it was important for the public to reflect on Nedlac's performance report and give their feedback. He added it was a lost opportunity that government did not report on the performance or lack of progress of the ERRP (aimed at stimulating equitable and inclusive growth) which was implemented one year old.

ORGANISED LABOUR ON CCMA RULING

on the dismissal of a worker for refusing to vaccinate



Bheki Ntshalintshali (COSATU General Secretary), Riefdah Ajam (FEDUSA General Secretary) and Narius Moloto (NACTU General Secretary), 28 January 2022

Organised Labour at NEDLAC, represented by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) and the National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU), is extremely disappointed by the CCMA's upholding the dismissal of a worker who had refused to vaccinate.

Organised Labour believes that dismissals of any worker must be avoided at all costs.

Workers have families that they are responsible for. We have an unemployment rate of 46% that is rising daily. Sending any worker into the unemployment queue is to condemn their families to poverty.

Organised Labour supports the vaccine rollout programme. Unions in all three Federations have worked across their sectors to educate and

persuade their members, workers, and their families on why vaccinating is safe and the most effective way to save lives and livelihoods.

Organised Labour believes that education and addressing the fears of workers and society is the best way to persuade people to vaccinate.

Threatening workers with dismissal will only serve to poison what has already become a very charged and divided debate across the world.

Vaccinations cannot be the sole responsibility of workers. Only 14 million out of South Africa's 60 million people are employed.

If we are to achieve the 70% vaccination levels, then this must be a society-wide approach and not one that is simply dumped upon workers.

This has the unnecessary effect of raising workplace tensions and thus undermining labour market stability.

The Federations hope the worker in the case ruled upon by the CCMA

will exercise her right to take the ruling on review. The Federations and their Affiliates will be engaging their structures, members, and employers at their workplaces on why it is important for as many people as possible to vaccinate.

We will seek to address the concerns of those who are hesitant to vaccinate and to resolve tensions and disputes with employers and affected workers.

Unions will assist any worker threatened with disciplinary action, including dismissal.

The most effective way to address these matters is for all workplaces to abide by the Ministerial Directive on workplace vaccinations. It requires employers to undertake a needs-based assessment of their workplaces and to engage with workers and unions on their vaccination policies. This includes providing reasonable accommodation for those who have

not been vaccinated and may include exemptions for medical, religious, or constitutional reasons.

It also includes allowing affected workers to work remotely or from alternative sites in their workplaces.

South Africa is a constitutional democracy. This requires dialogue to resolve complex and sensitive matters.

Dismissing workers who have fears will only serve to polarise a very toxic debate and in fact, feed into the hands of the anti-vaxxers.

This is a distraction that we simply cannot afford when we should all be working together to encourage people to vaccinate, to save lives and livelihoods.

Issued by COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU



Striving for **DECENT EMPLOYMENT** for **VULNERABLE WORKERS**

Vulnerable workers are employees in industries and organisations whose involvement in the labour market puts them in uttermost suffering, injustices, and uncertainty which result from power imbalance in the relationship between the employers and the employees. There are numerous hazards that vulnerable workers face in their workplaces, these risks are frequently linked to some sectors in the industries such as domestic work/contract cleaning, taxi, arts & entertainment, healthcare, hospitality, and wholesale and retail sectors.

Vulnerable workers are more exposed to many physical work factors such as noise, vibrations, heat, cold, and exposure to the handling of dangerous substances. They comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and some of them such as domestic workers work for private households, often

without clear terms of employment, unregistered in any book and excluded from the scope of labour legislation.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in partnership with the International Labour Organization held a National Vulnerable Workers Workshop that took place in Boksburg. The National Vulnerable Workers Workshop kicked off with presentations scrutinizing the various issues faced by vulnerable workers.

Minimum wages/overtime and working conditions

With regards to earnings, it means receiving wages that are close to or sometimes below the statutory minimum and subject to reductions along being asked to work 'off the clock', without being paid overtime as required by the law or, in extreme cases, simply not being paid for work performed. Low-wage work is usually measured either in terms of earned income relative to what is required by a family to purchase basic needs or

by ranking jobs in the labour market based on the overall wage distribution. Vulnerable workers are often paid late, or not at all, and amounts that are paid often do not reflect hours worked and it results to a significant underpayment of minimum wage rates, overtime rates, casual loadings, and penalty rates for weekend and public holiday work.

For instance, migrant workers are one of the vulnerable workers that are at the greatest risk of poverty wages and unfair working conditions. Thousands of migrant workers work outside the range of more normal hours. Usually, payment is calculated according to hours worked, people are forced to work longer hours due to low pay and in return, this activity causes inequality and breaks the rules for working hours set by the government.

Lack of contract is the major implication of informal employment because it is the mechanism that regulates responsibilities, human

rights, hours worked, etc. Not having a contract allows any party to impose different rules on employees which then questions the compliance with human rights and leads to the exploitation of workers.

Social Security

Because they are often paid in cash off the books, vulnerable workers are not eligible to receive a critical set of workplace-based benefits such as pensions and insurance plans. They also miss out on unemployment, disability, and Social Security benefits from the government. Breaks, overtime, sick pay, and minimum wage laws may not be followed because there is no recourse for the worker. Over 60% of vulnerable workers informally employed are not covered in social security, which means their employers do not contribute to social security.

Occupational Safety and health

Migrant workers are often employed

under atypical forms of contract, especially temporary contracts, and are exposed to the risks linked to these forms of employment, such as less access to training. They also encounter worse working conditions than native workers in the same job, for instance, working night shifts. Undocumented migrants are particularly at risk, although, because of their situation, and cannot risk losing their jobs they are enforced to do as they are told.

The situation of domestic workers is particularly difficult, as many of them are exposed to physical and psychosocial problems such as isolation. Isolation can be considered an important health risk. Stay-in domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to extreme restrictions on their freedom of movement sometimes. Most domestic workers are women and suffer discrimination on the grounds of their sex and associated gender roles. One of the extreme challenges faced by domestic workers is lack of rest, more than half of all domestic workers in the world do not get weekly rest and annual leave, and this results in physical and mental fatigue and affects the employee's ability to perform duties.

Vulnerable workers are found mainly in the manufacturing, whole, and retail sector where they often have high-risk occupations, which translates into a higher rate of injuries and health-related problems in general. In numerous areas of

wholesale and retail stores, there are employees executing jobs that need repetitive bending and twisting of the hands, wrists, and upper body.

These tasks often place excessive stress on muscles and studies have shown that repetitive motions frequently result in conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome. One of the factors that contribute to a worker's occupational safety and health is lifting, carrying, and standing for long hours.

Lifting is an important part of all retail store work. Cashiers lift groceries during the whole work shift; stock clerks put products on shelves throughout the day, and department store staff stock and retrieve products from stockroom shelves frequently. These tasks contribute directly to the high rates of back injuries, lower back pain, heart, and circulatory problems among retail store workers.

The City of Tshwane once conducted research amongst taxi drivers, and taxi drivers were identified by the research to be the mass vulnerable group that does not utilise health facilities, yet they were faced with health challenges related to their lifestyle. The taxi industry mostly employs men as drivers and they are found to be experiencing the harsh realities of the burden of diseases, especially injuries caused by road accidents, which are directly related to their working environment. Taxi drivers are vulnerable workers because they are exposed to

stressful environments that have a high rate of crime, and their safety risks are related to the sedentary nature of their work result in specific and contextualised safety problems.

Violence and harassment

Over 61% of the world's workers work in the informal economy, yet they have the least protection against violence and harassment at work. Around the world, workers who work in isolation, where nobody is watching, are particularly vulnerable to violence and harassment at work.

Domestic workers are one of the most vulnerable communities. We often consider homes to be the safest place in the world, yet sexual harassment is a common phenomenon for domestic workers at their jobs. Unlike some work set-ups, there is no HR department for them where they can report harassment to. Fear of retaliation and loss of livelihood and stigma associated with the issue exacerbates their vulnerability and deter them from reporting incidents.

Domestic Workers do not just encounter physical forms of sexual harassment at the workplace, but also verbal, non-verbal, and visual forms of such harassment. Physical forms can range from touching without consent, groping, fondling, and rape. Verbal harassment includes lewd remarks, sexist jokes, repeated and unwelcome requests for sexual favours, and unwelcome compliments of sexual nature.

One sector that may not have received as much media attention regarding sexual harassment is the retail sector. News reports in recent years have focused on sexual harassment in the fields of media and politics because they are in the public eye. However, abuse seems to be even more prevalent for service-sector workers, including wholesale and retail workers. Fast-food companies rank high on the sexual harassment scale, two-thirds of female workers and over half of male workers are sexually harassed by management workers. Close to 80% of females and 70 percent of males are sexually harassed by co-workers.

Strengthening the protection of vulnerable workers

Labour unions will develop collaboration agreements with migrant representatives that give vulnerable workers the opportunity for support to increase the participation of vulnerable workers in unions and associations to ensure that their voices are included in the processes of social dialogue. It is pivotal for vulnerable workers to be unionized, when workers are unionized, they have a better understanding of their rights. Vulnerable workers that join a trade union are more likely to be better informed about better working terms and conditions than those who do not. Trade unions will continue to negotiate for their members through collective bargaining agreements and protect them from bad management practices.



Shopstewards graduate

at **DITSELA** after completing

Trade Union Practice Qualification [TUPQ]

'Congratulations to our TUPQ- CHIETA graduates', said DITSELA at a celebration function in Cape Town

The DITSELA Workers' Education Institute which celebrated its 25th Anniversary since its inception has completed the Trade Union Practice Qualification in partnership with the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority [CHIETA] programme after shopstewards were enrolled for the extended 2020/2021 academic year due to disruptions imposed by the outbreak of Corona virus.

The event was attended by the officials from the Department of Employment and Labour, SETA representatives, federations such as COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU and other Labour Service Organizations at Woodmead and Cape Town.

DITSELA acknowledged that since the outbreak of Covid-19, the programmes were highly affected as the institute had to adapt to the lockdown regulations and offer the qualification online.

DITSELA Executive Director, Ntsilo Molumaele acknowledged the prevailing conditions and has been thankful that workers became comfortable to complete the course on virtual platforms.

Molumaele said 'this National Qualification Framework Level 5 Trade Union Practice programme by DITSELA was funded by CHIETA to empower Shopstewards across all sectors of the economy to represent workers on the shopfloor.'

'The Module focused on two major outcomes, which are a study on understanding of Trade Union Movement and the Working Class theories. The programme enabled all Shopstewards to understand the political

economy, using the law as an organizing tool on how to organize better and mobilize organizationally, empowered gender activists in gender structures on how to take forward gender struggles, and also enlightened shopstewards on how to cement collective bargaining as one of the pillars of trade unionism and using media and communications to popularise Trade Union work', said Molumaele.

'Shopstewards were expected to conclude some form of practical work on trade union practice to sharpen their theory on building vibrant Trade Unions. Trade Union Practice Qualification has been designed to meet the education and training needs of both members, particularly site stewards, as well as employees in the trade union movement, and those aspiring to become involved in trade union activities. This qualification is particularly useful for employees in the trade union movement who specialise in executing organizational functions such as Communication and media liaison; Administration; Leadership training, management and supervision and Education and gender liaison.

This Qualification contributed to education and training in the trade union movement by exposing shopstewards to challenging industrial relations in the current conjuncture, empowering them with tools to analyse the current world-wide trends and standards. It will also enabled learners to promote and protect the rights of workers, and advance economic and social justice. Ultimately, the FETC: Trade Union Practice was aimed at increasing levels

of efficiency, effectiveness, coordination and professionalism within the trade union movement'.

'The Qualification equipped learners to organise strategies to advance trade unionism, Understand and advance the rights of workers, Understand the relationship between the economy and political power and the formation of social classes and Understand the history and impact of the trade union movement in South Africa.'

Ditsela Executive Director said 'The journey that started three [3] years ago has finally come to a joyful end and I thank all programme managers, tutors and all stakeholders who contributed on the success of the programme.' He thanked all learners for their hard work and perseverance throughout the course! 'We wish you [learners] all well in your future endeavors!

Congratulations to all our graduates! You are proof that hard work and perseverance really does pay off!

Wishing you all well in your future endeavors! Congratulations to our TUPQ- CHIETA graduates'.

Meanwhile, DITSELA utilized the graduation which was held on the 1st of December 2021 to remind workers about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

World AIDS Day is commemorated every year on the 1st of December to enable every community to unite in the fight against HIV and also show support for people living with HIV and also remember all those who have died. According to the World Health Organization [WHO] acknowledged that 'Despite the many advances across

the globe to eradicate infections, many communities still struggle to eliminate the stigma associated with HIV infection and the resultant discrimination. There are still people with limited knowledge of the facts about how to protect themselves and others.

DITSELA had a highly informative talk and candle lighting lead by Ms. Wonda Monoa; a former health worker and now community champion to commemorate the day.

She said 'South Africa has come a long way in the fight against HIV and AIDS. In 2012 government implemented the National Strategic Plan on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis 2012 – 2016.' Monoa alluded that the World Health Organization has urged all nations to commemorate the day under the Theme 'End inequalities. End AIDS. End pandemics, which gives us an opportunity 'to reflect back where we come from about the struggle against HIV.'

She argued that 'every sexually active South African is still at risk of contracting HIV. We call on all South Africans to recognise that HIV and AIDS are chronic diseases, and that people living with HIV can have full and happy lives. We each have a responsibility to treat those who are struggling with an HIV-positive diagnosis with compassion, those struggling with AIDS with care, and ourselves and our sexual partners with respect. Addressing stigma and discrimination is important in mitigating the impact of HIV.' Heartfelt condolences to all workers and their families who suffered the loss of their loved ones! ■

DITSELA launches Workers Education programmes for 2022 to empower all WORKERS IN THE LABOUR MARKETS

the DITSELA Workers' Education Institute is a Section 21 not-for-profit educational organisation established in 1996 by COSATU and FEDUSA and supported by the Department of Labour's Strengthening Civil Society Fund

Education and training are important long-term responses to the challenges of globalization and trade unions capacity building. DITSELA which was established 26 years ago has unleashed the 2022 Programmes, responding to the training needs of workers' organizations in the era of the toiling classes experiencing the harsh realities of the pain inflicted after the outbreak of Covid-19.

Through these interventions, premised on 'Transition from the Pandemic and Worker's Education in 2022', the delivery of the programmes is customized to reach to all workers in the labour markets. Addressing Skills Development Officers, Trade Union Educators, Tutors and Shopstewards from various trade union's federations at the new offices of Ditsela in Johannesburg CBD, the Programme Manager, Ms Khanyisile Khanyi said 'DITSELA is ready for 2022. We are aiming to broadly build capacity within the trade union movement and to other working class organizations.

Our DANLEP Programme as a continuation from 2021 would continue and we would be offering Advanced Certificate in Research and Information Management, Knowledge Economy and Workplace Technologies, Health and Safety, Climate Change and Trustee Development'. Khanyi said 'We have planned to commence with the Advanced Certificate in Research and Information

Management as a pilot programme around April-June 2022, focusing on Research on Socio-Economic Issues and Research on Unions and Information Management'.

'These programmes, amongst others, would ensure workers are able to understand the world of work in the 4th Industrial Revolution and impacts on labour and develop necessary policy positions to mitigate against the negative effects of technological developments also in response to the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. DITSELA has devoted quality time and offered unique national programmes which have made major impact in the lives of ordinary workers and ensured trained shopstewards are able to plough back on the shopfloor, with candidates having acquired experience, skills, expertise and knowledge drawn from labour activists, labour experts, educators, lectures from various universities, labour service organizations, organized labour and other civil society formations'.

Khanyi argued that 'During this difficult era of labour markets responding to recovery plans formulation, the launched programmes must provide necessary and practical ways to cement social dialogue amongst social partners, enrich public debates to defend jobs and provide applicable policy formulation process to change the dire situation faced by working class communities'.

Other programs for full implementation are;

- Advance Certificate in Knowledge Economy and Workplace Technologies scheduled to explore more on the field of globalization and penciled to commence from March until May 2022
- Advanced Certificate in Health and Safety scheduled to tackle the legal framework for Occupational Health and Safety and explore how trade unions have campaigned for enforcement of the legislation to improve working conditions and utilization of OHS as a trade union campaigning tool at the workplace and planned for April until June 2022
- Advanced Certificate in Climate Change drafted to tackle challenges of climate, championing of a Just Transition and also implementation of COP26 Outcomes such as the collective effort to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees and become Climate Change Activists towards COP27 to be hosted in Africa. The certificate would be done from April until June 2022
- Advanced Certificate in Trustee Development scheduled to explore the legislative framework on how trust are constituted, managed and how to participate in governance structures on behalf of workers and ensure all checks, balances and control measures are in place to safeguard the interests of workers

and finally be equipped to to interpret all financial data presented in the governance structures such as Boards, Finance and Compliance Committees. And the certificate would be done from March until May 2022

- The Labour Law Short Course would be offered from August until September 2022, dealing amongst others, with dismissals, disputes resolution, arbitration, cross-examination, disclosure of information
- Siyakhuluma Seminar Series would be held from March, tackling current topics which are in the public discourse to shape, sharpen and enrich working class perspectives. Book launch and reviews would be held up until in October 2022. DITSELA is extending the Siyakhuluma Seminars for the first time to the Western Cape province to deal with contemporary issues affecting the labour movement and also marketing the programs of the Institute
- DITSELA Provincial Education Programmes would be held in Limpopo from April, followed by Eastern Cape and Western Cape
- DITSELA Provincial Schools would be held from February in North West, Western Cape in June, Eastern Cape in July and later Limpopo in July 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on all types of work!

Evidence on the links between poverty and worker contracts and labour force status has also shown that temporary employees are among those most vulnerable to poverty (ILO 2015).

Segmented labour markets with a high proportion of temporary workers are not always beneficial for firms. A high turnover of temporary workers means that a firm will forfeit the benefits of investing in employee skills and training and of organizational knowledge and experience.

DITSELA Executive Director, Mr. Ntsilo Molumaele elaborated that 'the devastating effects of the pandemic on people and the widening inequalities among and within countries. And the actions and investments needed to support a fully inclusive, human-centred recovery from the crisis in all countries, through the expansion of decent jobs and inclusive economic growth, universal social protection, workers' protections, enterprise sustainability, and a just transition towards a carbon-neutral global economy'.

'We need to engage with all workers by providing external and internal support to our constituencies, ensuring that we are together able to measure the delivery of these programmes, provide quality assurance, monitor their impact within our constituencies and provide an objective assessment on where to intervene from a workers' perspective', concluded Molumaele.

Tackling new challenges related to online learning and teaching within Labour Service Organizations in South Africa

According to Huang et al. (2020), 'a novel corona virus, known as Covid-19, was discovered in the last month of the year 2019, in a seafood market in Wuhan. Clinical analysis results of the virus showed person-to-person transmission (Li et al., 2020; Paules et al., 2020; Wang, Cheng, et al., 2020). The Director General of WHO in March 2020 (WHO, 2020) declared Covid-19 as a pandemic after assessment of the rapid spread and severity of the deadly virus across the globe with additional announcement of social distancing as a means of curbing the spread of the pandemic.' Covid-19 pandemic and online learning: the challenges and opportunities, September 2020.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has led to the need for Labour Service Organizations such as DITSELA to explore online platforms in delivering the Trade Union Practice Qualification classes to all learners drawn from organized labour in South Africa since 2019.

Covid-19 as a pandemic that has posed a contemporary threat to humanity

The South African government through the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Employment and Labour, the Higher Education and Training, the Basic Education were leading Departments to reschedule work arrangements, education and training provision and facilitation of educational courses in general. This came because of the recommendations by the World Health Organization [WHO] after tabling comprehensive Health Emergency Preparedness guidelines and other non-pharmaceutical practices for any person offering educational services.

While Institutions of Higher Education and Training were preoccupied with a response mechanism to reopen these institutions closed after the implementation of the National Disaster Act in Response to Covid-19, various countries across the globe were busy lobbying business and other financial institutions to partner to overcome all the bottlenecks accompanying responses to the pandemic through equitable provision of public access to testing, treatments, and vaccines. And in the process DITSELA also suffered closure!

COVID-19 is here to stay for the foreseeable future. It is not seasonal!

Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande Statement on 'Progress in the Post School Education and Training Sector in Response to Covid-19 Epidemic - Lockdown Level One', November 2020 said 'COVID-19 left no sector in our country and the world unaffected, and its consequences will be felt for years to come. This pandemic, which created a "new normal" for the entire country, had a huge impact on the PSET sector, affected the 2020 academic year and demanded that we adopt new ways of offering learning and teaching, and all the other mandates of the PSET system. The COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown caused serious disruption to all facets of university operations, including their teaching and learning, and research and engagement programmes. Universities and their staff and students responded positively, although at different paces, depending on each institutional circumstance. Despite the crisis that COVID-19 caused, valuable lessons have been learnt. We have again been starkly reminded of the high levels of inequality that prevail in South Africa generally, as well as in higher education. Better to relatively better developed universities have generally been able to navigate the severe operating challenges with less difficulty than underdeveloped,

often historically-black universities. We have sought to structure the COVID-19 support interventions in the sector to provide aggressive support for especially the historically disadvantaged institutions. Although more careful assessment across all teaching and learning parameters must still be done, especially after the completion of the 2020 Academic year, initial research indicates positive impact in many cases in respect of (i) the multimodal, blended approach to teaching and learning, (ii) opportunities provided to students to learn in different ways, more flexibly and at their own pace, and (iii) multiple assessment methods.'

According to the Education International, all institutions of learning were expected to redraw new rules to fit in the 'new normal'. 'Education International published its Guidance on Reopening Schools and Education Institutions. Informed by insights from educators in a variety of contexts all across the world, we identified five essential areas governments needed to focus on to ensure a safe transition back to onsite education and to mitigate the impact of the prolonged closures on students and educators.'

David Edwards Education International General Secretary said in a document titled 'Forward to School: Guidance, Considerations and Resources for and from Education Unions to Inform Decision-Making in Times of Covid-19', July 2020, 'As institutions of learning gradually reopen across the world, we are all painfully aware this will not be a return to normal. The challenge ahead is daunting. We must strike a balance between the need to minimise health and safety risks and the imperative to return to the only proven way to achieve quality education for all: teaching and learning in schools and education institutions centred around human relationships, providing students with knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and vital support services that democratic communities and societies rely upon to breathe and thrive.'

Public authorities engage in continuous social and policy dialogue with educators and their representative unions and organisations to assess needs and agree on health and safety measures for students and staff as well as the framework and resources for transitioning back to onsite teaching and learning. Consideration is given to the additional workload arising from the parallel requirement of face-to-face and online teaching during the gradual reopening of schools. The labour rights of teachers and education support personnel are respected and decent working conditions are maintained.

Education International member organisations are committed to protect their members' jobs and employment rights through social and policy dialogue. In countries where social and policy dialogue is well-established, education unions worked together as soon as the implications of the government response to the health emergency for the education sector became clear. In other countries, Education International member organisations report they are engaging in social dialogue and lobbying to minimise the impact of the closures on educators. As governments have taken action to ensure educational continuity during the Covid-19 emergency, education unions have been quick off the mark to act in the interests of their members and of education workers more generally, and for the common good.'

'South Africa has opted for a phased reopening of schools. Most schools reopened on 8 June but some schools were to reopen later due to not being in compliance with safety regulations. Measures implemented to enable the schools to reopen safely included: the delivery of emergency water and sanitation including mobile toilets, the provision of personal protective equipment, and extra classes.'

Tackling Migration to Online Platforms in the current conjuncture!

DITSELA was originally established to ensure that the working class can respond effectively and timeously to the realities of the labour markets and the needs of workers, including changes of tasks and jobs, innovation, mobility and transitions into and between jobs.

Today, those challenges are mounting because of the adverse effect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many jobs have been lost; many companies have closed such as St Georges Conference Centre in Irene.

Many workers are forced to change careers and in the process many families have lost incomes as bread winners are forced to queue for the R350 Relief Grant offered by government in some instances. The announcement of social distancing as a means of curbing the spread of the pandemic by the WHO and later the Department of Health in South Africa forced a new approach to be followed and by the look of things, online learning and teaching within the Labour Service Organizations, is here to stay!

According to Olasile Babatunde Adedoyin Department of Computer Education & Instructional Technology, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus and Emrah Soykan Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Near East University,

Nicosia, Cyprus, 'Social distancing is conscious increment in the physical gap between people in order to curb dissemination of disease (Red Cross, 2020). This pandemic has forced global physical closure of businesses, sport activities and schools by pushing all institutions to migrate to online platforms. Online learning is the use

institutions the opportunities to positively apply digital technologies optimally (Kopp et al., 2019). This process also consists of adequate strategic preparation, trust establishment, thinking in processes, amalgamation and reinforcement of all parties involved, separate, collaborative and organizational knowledge (Cameron & Green, 2019).



Train the trainer course, in Gauteng at The Lakes Hotel & Conference Centre, 2019

of internet and some other important technologies to develop materials for educational purposes, instructional delivery and management of program (Fry, 2001). Hrastinski (2008) stated that the two types of online learning, namely asynchronous and synchronous online learning, are majorly compared but for online learning to be effective and efficient, instructors, organizations and institutions must have comprehensive understanding of the benefits and limitations. Digital transformation is not a novel phenomenon, and it has been accompanying higher education institutions for some years now (Kopp et al., 2019; Leszczyński et al., 2018).

Digital transformation of Higher Education institutions is a topical issue that several stakeholders of education must feel concerned about, abilities to apply ICT in every spheres of life are on incremental level, thus universities must be up to the task of preparing potential professional to be able to face challenges and provide solutions (Bond et al., 2018; Sandkuhl & Lehmann, 2017), and this transformation has suggested the integration of sustainable management to be able to adjust to the modifications enforced as a result of novel technologies (Abad-Segura et al., 2020) and pandemic recently. Digital transformation in the context of higher education institutions can be regarded as the summation of all digital processes required to accomplish transformation process that gives higher education

Hiltz and Turoff (2005) argued that the contemporary transformation will be seen as revolutionary modifications in the specifications of higher education as a process and as an institution in the next 50 years because the transformation has moved face-to-face instructional programs using objectivist, teacher-centered teaching method, for thousands of home-grown, provincial and domestic universities to online and hybrid programs applying digital technologies in enhancing constructivist, learner-centered, cooperative pedagogy for some hundred "mega-universities" that function worldwide.

These researchers added that online learning is a novel social process that has been gathering momentum as the surrogate for customary face-to-face classroom, but viewed from the perspective of replacement processes that has been branded as disruptive processes. Covid-19 pandemic initiated digital transformation of higher education, and as a result of the crisis brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, novelties in higher education that would typically take many years because of differing managerial regulations were presented quickly within limited number of days (Strielkowski, 2020) and this has also turned the branding of online learning as disruptive process to a "messiah" status. While assessing the assumptions surrounding the digital transformation of higher education institutions, Kopp et al. (2019) gave five common

assumptions that are considered more of hindrances to digital transformation of higher education institutions as against contributions to its realization and these assumptions are related to (i) change, (ii) pace, (iii) technology, (iv) competences and (v) financing. Digitalization in higher education institutions should not be referred to as e-learning since online learning is only one of the several features of digital transformation of higher education institutions. Online learning is the educational usage of technological devices, tools and the internet (Means et al., 2009), Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006) added that the persistent increase in technological innovation and internet accessibility has increased the motivation for online learning since the beginning of the millennium, but Joshi et al. (2020) concluded that the instructional achievement of online learning is debatable because it causes absence of face-to-face relationship among learners, learners and instructors. Hodges et al. (2020) differentiated adequately planned online learning experiences from courses presented online as response to crisis.

These researchers went further to refer to online education during this pandemic as "emergency remote teaching" because the latter is in contrast with quality or effective online learning. During recent years, we all had to learn how to work using mainly digital tools. We probably all became familiar with "webinars" – a label used for a variety of events – and we've gradually tried to transform them also into a training tool. Online learning in its entirety is dependent on technological devices and internet, instructors and students with bad internet connections are liable to be denied access to online learning.

The dependency of online learning on technological equipment and the provision of the equipment was a big challenge for institutions, faculty and learners. D. Yates (personal communication, March 17, 2020) while answering a question posted on Research Gate, by John R. Yamamoto-Wilson a retired professor from Sophia University, on the effects of Covid-19 and online learning on instructors and teaching stated that students with outdated technological devices might find it hard to meet up with some technical requirements of online learning, citing an example of a student who wanted to take mid-semester e-quizz by using Respodus. This particular student could not download the browser after several attempts and it was later discovered that she was using an outdated device that is not compatible with the browser. This researcher also cited students with accessibility problems that may find it difficult to follow instructions posted on

the course announcement section of programs and a typical example of that is when the instructor posted on the course announcement page that there won't be class on a particular date, one of the students still sent mail asking if class will hold on that date.'

Wayforward

Some shopstewards have become accustomed to participating in Zoom meetings or conferences within the trade union movement or might have participate on Zoom media interviews. It's a platform to be mastered as guests are no longer expected to pitch in studios. There must a conscious decision to empower workers to take advantage of such medium of communication to assert the voice of the working class in society.

And the starting point must be about dedicated intervention programmes, designed to empower workers in digitization and online pedagogy.

To ensure there is a firm and smooth adaptation phase within the organized labour in the country, firstly, DITSELA must develop new modules as a breakthrough, a stepping stone to empower all shopstewards to venture onto online learning pedagogy to facilitate confidence-building for all workers from all sectors of the economy into these programmes.

- Drafting an introductory Module of Approaching Online Pedagogy for workers/shopstewards
- Presenting a comprehensive legislative framework regulating online pedagogy, effectively enlisting the Do's and the Don'ts to all learners to ensure learning becomes efficient and restate all the pitfalls of misusing the platform and what are the consequences thereof as a registered learner
- Empowering learners to take advantage of online pedagogy in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to amongst others, to upskill themselves and participate actively in the labour markets,
- Organized labour at the workplace must bargain for establishment of Information and Technology hubs to enable workers to participate in online learning within the premises to take advantage of better connectivity as network hiccups has become a major hindrance for many shopstewards, lastly
- Engage on policy shifts to accommodate unemployed youth and/or all workers who lost their jobs as a result of Covid-19 and other related closures to be accommodated in upskilling programmes to get new jobs.

COSATU holds Provincial Gender Conferences in 2022

Delegates in various Commissions debating issues affecting gender relations at the Ermelo Civic Centre

COSATU since its inception has paid a high premium to promoting gender equality in its class struggle in South Africa. This was because of the appreciation that apartheid discriminated African citizens on the basis of colour, gender and ethnicity. And organizing women at the shopfloor became a conscious decision in all its congresses. This year, 2022, COSATU has penciled Gender Conferences to ensure empowering of women is not a charitable act but a conscious decision to build society.

According to the International Labour Organization [ILO] Policy Brief titled 'Building Forward Fairer: Women's rights to work and at work at the core of the COVID-19 recovery', "globally, women have been disproportionately hit in terms of job-losses: 4.2 per cent of women's employment was destroyed as a result of the pandemic compared to 3 per cent of men's employment. Women's employment has been negatively impacted in terms of both quantity and quality. gender equality in the world of work has worsened. Women have suffered disproportionate job and income losses, including because of their over representation in the hardest-hit sectors, and many continue to work on the front line, sustaining care systems, economies and societies, while often also doing the majority of unpaid care work. All these factors underscore the need for a gender-responsive recovery to respond to the commitment of "building forward fairer".

"Globally, between 2019 and 2020, women's employment declined by 4.2 percent, representing a drop of

54 million jobs, while men's employment declined by 3 per cent, or 60 million jobs."

There is unanimous call globally for a gender-responsive, inclusive, and job-rich recovery plan, with a clear and conscious needs framework to explicitly counterbalance the gender-specific effects of the COVID-19 crisis and create conditions that support the creation of decent work for women. Every country ensuring that unprecedented macroeconomic policies, both fiscal and monetary, have been put in place to cushion the impacts of the pandemic and ensure a speedy recovery, particularly in 2022.

South Africa was not spurred from all the hardships faced by women in general. The dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 saw the country's integration into the community of nations characterised by the ratification of numerous global and continental (i.e. African) instruments promoting gender equality, and advancing the rights of women.

These instruments had provisions not only for ways to promote gender equality and advance the rights of women in signatory countries (including South Africa), but also specific periodic progress-reporting obligations. And such progress reporting was intended to provide clear details of measures taken by signatory countries, including South Africa, to achieve the attainment or enjoyment of the rights contained in the various instruments.

According to the Commission for Gender Equality 'The advent of a post-apartheid democracy in South Africa was followed by ratifications of numerous global and continental/

regional instruments on gender equality, signaling the country's national political commitment to promoting human rights issues, including the need for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The various instruments ratified were the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Article 2 – Equality, Article 16 – Equality in Marriage and Family Life, Optional Protocol to CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, Protocol on the Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons Especially in Women and Children, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and other regional instruments such as Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.'

In the recent months, workers have campaigned for the ratification of the ILO Convention 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment at Work.

COSATU Gender structures have been engaged in various campaigns to assess progress in terms of the implementation of these instruments and genuinely measuring the impact on gender relations, participation of women in decision making bodies and advancements of gender equality in general.

A critical question is how these instruments have changed the quality of lives of women specifically and gender issues in general?

COSATU Mpumalanga became the first province which commenced its Gender Conference on the 25th January 2022 at the Ermelo Civic Centre in the Gert Sibande District Municipality under the Theme; "Deepen the Back to Basics Campaign, Consolidate the Struggle for the National Democratic Revolution and Advance the Struggle for Socialism".

COSATU Mpumalanga Gender Conference elected the following Provincial Gender Office Bearers;

- Provincial Gender Chairperson: **Comrade Doctor Zwane**
- Provincial Gender Deputy Chairperson: **Comrade Thembi Thandi Masango**
- Provincial Gender Secretary: **Comrade Millicent Nombuso Shabangu**
- Provincial Gender Deputy Secretary: **Comrade Sibusiso Mahlangu**

Delegates participated in various Commissions debating issues affecting gender such as Organisational Building, Decent Work and Collective Bargaining, Combating Gender Based Violence in the World of Work, Gender and International Relations and Building Gender and Working-Class Consciousness and Political Development.

The Gender Conference was attended by COSATU National Gender Coordinator, Getrude Mtshweni, Commissioner for Gender Equality, Hon Lindiwe Ntuli-Tloubatla, various gender structures in the province and addressed by the ILO ILO Health, HIV/AIDS & TB Specialist Mr Simphiwe Mabhele.

Congratulations to elected leaders!

Amplifying the Voices of Young Women in Leadership

Across every sector, women's leadership continues to be underrepresented. Young women experience discrimination based both on gender and on age and that impacts their ability to realise their full potential as leaders. Educated, qualified young women still find it an uphill battle to break into higher management because males make better leaders.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) held a COSATU Young Women in Leadership workshop that strengthens young women's leadership through scrutinizing possible master plans that will further increase young women's representations in the leadership structure of the federation; encouraging COSATU and its affiliates to elect young women as leaders and ensure inclusion of young women and promote their involvement in compositions as well as abolish gender imbalances including all forms of gender discrimination.

Investing in young women's leadership will not only change the trajectory of their future but that of their devotees as well. Developing young women as leaders promotes an increase in their collaboration, performance, and innovation in the organisation. Empowering young women to be leaders will help the total efficiency, not just of the organisation, but also in their respective communities.

The Congress of South African

Trade Unions has always supported the empowerment of Young Women in Leadership, which has increased the capacity of young women to engage in policymaking, organising, and other political processes. Strengthening Young Women's Leadership is a priority because no organisation can achieve the development objectives that it has set for itself without the active participation and leadership of its young people, including young women. The exclusion of young women from the adoption of laws, negotiation of budgets, and mechanisms to hold governments to account undermines the valuable contributions they make for the good of future generations.

Their involvement in formal politics is essential, as young women are leading change on issues like climate change, racial justice, and gender equality. They are powerful advocates for intergenerational collaboration and accountability towards a more just, sustainable, and equal world. It will benefit us all to have more young women, in all their diversity, representing us when political decisions for the future are made.

Young women shouldn't have any room for discouragement or ignore their abilities. They should display visible and valued competencies, which are regarded as stepping stones to the top. On the other hand, young women should know what they want by becoming willing to balance, prioritize, and make sacrifices to excel to the top. ■

NEHAWU intensifies workplace visits

TO DEFEND THE BASE IN 2022

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] commenced the year 2022 by unleashing a workplace visit campaign in its regions to 'close ranks with members and defend the base'.

The first region to be visited was Sedibeng Region in Gauteng, followed by Ekurhuleni, Vuyani Mabaxa and lastly in the new phase Tshwane Region.

NEHAWU General Secretary, Zola Zaphetha said 'As NEHAWU fights for the gains of workers in the workplace, the ideological consciousness of every individual worker is of serious importance to the union, which

is why rooting internationalism in the workplace is a primary task of our international strategy. Being armed with class and ideological consciousness, the union will narrow the base from which neoliberal capitalism can ground itself in our ranks. It is within this context that the special central executive committee adopted programme of action for 2022 directing the union go back to its old principle – close ranks and defend the base.

This practically means that the union through its leadership at levels will spend quality time at the workplace where members are underpinned by the fact that everything and anything

we do, will be about members at the workplace. Concretely, this old and traditional principle of the union will receive primary prioritisation and focus henceforth, thus deepening efficiency to improve service delivery and accountability at all union levels. This program will kick start as from the 9th January up to the first week of April 2022 uninterrupted.'

'The SCEC further agreed that the workplace programme should be led by the national office bearers from the front and supported by provincial and regional office bearers accompanied by union officials with a coherent recruitment and organising strategy which will be central in improving and

maintaining a positive membership growth trajectory focusing among others, on organising young workers, improving service to members and membership benefits.'

'The SCEC has noted with serious concern and shock the reversal of collective bargaining and the rights of workers by employers particularly by the ANC-led government, the national union has taken a decision to convene a national collective bargaining conference in the first quarter of 2022 in order to prepare for the Public Sector Summit (Birchwood III) and to develop its posture grounded from its campaign to defend collective bargaining', concluded Saphetha. ■

**Back to
School
Campaign-
SADTU
demands strict
adherence
to the safety
protocols at
schools**

The Matric Class of 2021 achieved a National Senior Certificate pass rate of 76,4%, with 256 000 learners eligible for university entrance. Mugwena Maluleke, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) General Secretary welcomed the beginning of the 2022 academic year.

'We are thrilled by the matric results announced both Nationally and Provincially.' Maluleke said 'This we did [Matric passes] despite the Covid-19 challenges which confronted schools in 2021, that included testing/screening facilities (personnel), PPEs, water supply/ablution facilities, infrastructure as informed by social distancing prescription, et cetera. We have every reason to celebrate these results for the impoverished Province as demonstrated by the learners who mostly come from the previously disadvantaged schools and communities. As illustration, it is where most quintile 1- 3 schools are found and with little that is done to adequately address the imbalances of the past through the legal and accepted route (Redress) without fear or favour.'

'The upward trajectory of 4.9% is

indeed worth celebrating with all the 12 District of Education in the Province with only three achieving 60% - 69.9%, while the other 9 achieved between 70% and 79% and above (DBE, 2022). Cherry on top being the stake of 3.7% Bachelors the province is enjoying as this is indication of quality output.

In celebrating and accepting these results we wish to salute the parents for taking a very brave step of sending the children to school though engulfed by fear of the terrifying school situation as imposed by the pandemic.

This has been a huge sacrifice ever which we believe it has been based on faith. We salute learners for braving the situation taking an accurately calculated risk to secure a brighter future for themselves', said Maluleke.

'The year begins with the COVID-19 pandemic still prevalent in our midst. For the past two years, learners have lost considerable learning time due to lockdowns and rotational schooling put in place to ensure social distancing in order to keep the pandemic at bay.

As schools open, we would like to see learners returning to classes all at once. However, we cannot allow them to put their lives at risk as we are fully aware of

the fact that we are still on Alert Level 1 which requires that we observe, among others, one metre social distancing. It is sad to note that fewer classrooms have been built to ensure that there is adequate space for learners to learn under safe conditions.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) acknowledges that there are still significant challenges in terms of the delivery of education infrastructure in response to the current circumstances. This is related directly to the limited funding made by the government for this critical purpose. It remains our firm view that education is an apex priority for the country and should be treated as such in theory and in practice.

The Treasury should therefore provide a stimulus package for education to deal with backlogs that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. It is common cause that the economy experienced a sharp downturn that saw even parents lose their ability to supplement their respective school budgets through school fees in the fee-paying public and private schools. In other instances, schools diverted their norms and standards budgets towards COVID compliance materials. It is our

strong view that this will have immediate adverse results.

Maluleke said 'As 2021 drew to a close, we noted an increasing number of children infected with COVID-19 as compared to 2020. We commend the fact that children from the ages of 12 upwards are now eligible for vaccination. We urge them to take the opportunity and get themselves vaccinated. The vaccines are not a cure but have had a positive impact as we saw a reduction in the number of educators who have died due to COVID 19 after many were vaccinated in June last year.

Moreover, we would like to see the Department of Health being more proactive and roll-out a vaccination strategy to children from the ages of 5 to 11 to increase their safety in schools and mitigate against the spread of the pandemic. We are concerned with reports that over 500 000 learners could have been lost from the system due to COVID-19 informed circumstance; we are calling for a greater investment on a digital strategy so that interventions such as blended

learning can be possible and so that the inequality gap can be significantly reduced. We insist as a union that we should not as a country go back to the education crisis before the COVID crisis.' 'It is a gross anomaly that on the first day of schooling there are learners were sitting at home because they have not found placement, or their schools were damaged by weather conditions or vandalised. Some are yet to receive the learning and teaching support materials (LTSM).

With schools having lost a lot of teaching time in the past two years, we would like to see the Department of Basic Education doing its best to ensure administration issues are dealt with speedily so that teaching and learning can take place. We urge schools, learners and education personnel to ensure they adhere strictly to the safety protocols. Although the Omicron variant is said to be mild, it is deadly as people continue to die.' Meanwhile, SADTU was perturbed with the publicizing of the National Senior Certificate (Matric) results in the media

as a result of the High Court judgment in favour of the AfriForum.

Maluleke argued that 'It is our strong view that this ruling and those that brought the matter to court are about protecting the business interests of media houses above those of the learners and their parents.

Our education system is still heavily laced with glaring inequalities - from education infrastructure, a chronic shortage of personnel to socio-economic challenges that often bring enormous challenges to those on the receiving end. The current cohort of matriculants also had to deal with two years of disrupted learning due to the pandemic.

It is thus unreasonable in the extreme to expect them to also face the pressure of the negative social implications that come with the mass publication of results.

In our view, the publishing of matric results does not bring any educational benefit to those directly concerned, being our learners. The publishing of the results only brings extra monetary value to the media houses that see it as some kind of

a money-making bonanza.

We cannot celebrate the provincial log tables because the position in these logs ignores the hard material conditions the last province is faced with. The unnecessary euphoria on matric announcement is nothing else but boosting the bottom lines of the media publishing houses. The noise is unnecessary because education is a system and not the publication of the matric results.

The DBE should, in essence, implement policies that will bring benefits to the sector and those involved, particularly the learners in this case. The learners cannot be put under pressure by profit making organisations. The Minister, as an Executive Authority, has a duty to run the department and take decisions authorised by the legislation applicable. After consultation in terms of national Education Policy Act, the minister must pronounce on the discontinuation of publishing the matric results for the coming years and the courts' responsibilities must be to interpret the laws and not to co-govern with those who are elected to govern.' ■

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] convened one of the united Workers' Parliament at the Birchwood Hotel in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, at Boksburg. The Workers' Parliament attracted more international guests as the national union was launching its history book and also celebrating the Centenary since the establishment of the vanguard of workers in South Africa, the South African Communist Party [SACP].

More than 594 delegates descended in Boksburg to: "Strengthen workplace organisation to defend collective bargaining, deepen class consciousness and advance internationalism", as the Theme outlined. NEHAWU General Secretary, Zola Saphetha said that 'the 12th national congress was convened to assess progress made in the implementation of its resolutions since the last congress that was held in 2017.'

Saphetha alluded that 'The congress received valuable addresses from our Alliance formations, including a welcoming address by the Gauteng Premier, Comrade David Makhura. It received messages of support from our allied unions here at home and also abroad. The congress further received inspirational addresses from the World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU] General Secretary, Comrade George Mavrikos and Trade Union International Public Service and Allied [TUI-PS&A] President, Comrade Artur Sequeira. The 12th congress represented a historic moment for the union, in that, we officially launched NEHAWU history book titled: "In the Belly of the Beast" which

records in detail the history of our union in the last 30 years as a class-oriented trade union with an internationalist character, a transformative union, and a fighting and militant trade union.

The congress also adopted the reviewed Strategic Policy Framework [SPF]. The SPF is our main strategic perspective that explains our medium-term strategy and goals as they relate to our broad transformative objectives. At the same time, it serves as our principal guideline for our strategies to resolve the immediate workplace challenges that face our members and also the broader working class. We proudly declare that we had fruitful and robust discussions leading to progressive resolutions being taken. Indeed, we emerged from this congress more resolute and purposeful in our pursuit of our strategic objectives anchored by the clarion call of strengthen workplace organisation to defend collective bargaining, deepen class consciousness and advance internationalism. Our congress took place whilst the entire world is still confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic. This global public-health crisis has exposed the inability of capitalism to respond to the pandemic, instead the ruling capitalist class has been preoccupied with profit maximisation during a catastrophic moment in the history of mankind.

The working class has had to endure the devastation brought about by this crisis of COVID-19 and also the failures of the inhumane system of capitalism. And this is evident with over 800 million people in the world facing hunger, 220 million unemployed and countless

frontline workers, especially public servants, having perished in active duty. The pandemic has indeed exposed the failures of capitalism as a system that prioritises the ruling class [capitalist] at the expense of the working class and the poor.

The congress agreed that the world is currently confronted by complex and difficult challenges that affirm the inability of capitalism both structural and systemic, to respond to the same crisis it perpetually creates. Capitalism as a system has ran its course and this further solidifies the case for the advancement of a socialist cause. The congress noted the developments globally as well as on our continent and expressed the imperatives of the international working class solidarity and to strengthen relations with our sister unions as part of advancing internationalism.'

The following National Office Bearers were duly elected by the 14th National Congress;

- President – Cde Michael Shingange
- 1st Deputy President – Cde Nyameka Macanda
- 2nd Deputy President – Cde Patrick Makhafane
- National Treasurer – Cde Kgomoiso Makhupola
- General Secretary – Cde Zola Saphetha
- Deputy General Secretary – Cde December Mavuso

**NEHAWU 12th
National
Congress
registers a
resounding
success
at the
Birchwood
Hotel
in Benoni**

COSATU: 'The ANC is in a mess' –

leaders rubbishing the Constitution, unpaid staff, factions running amok

by COSATU President Zingiswa Losi



COSATU President Zingiswa Losi addressing the ANC 110th Anniversary celebration in Limpopo

the ANC NEC lekgotla was the opportunity to address and correct the existential crises facing the nation, the state and the movement. The question is whether or not we will. Former and current leadership of the ANC, the SACP and Cosatu, members of the movement, On behalf of the Congress of South African Trade Unions please accept our best wishes for the ANC, the Alliance and our entire membership for 2022. This will be a very busy year. For the first time all Alliance partners will be holding their various congresses. While this is important, we must not fail to deal with the many burning issues facing the nation. We need to reconnect with ordinary South Africans.

Unemployment has passed 46%, 2.2 million workers lost their jobs since 2020, millions more lost wages,

93,000 South Africans passed away to Covid-19, the economy is in its deepest recession in a century. Many SOEs have collapsed or are in ICU. The Auditor General's reports into local government and many departments are a horror story. A week cannot pass without us seeing comrades, including those serving in Cabinet and the NEC, gracing the front pages of newspapers for one scandal after another. We have paid the price for our failures in our worst election results in 2021. This lekgotla has the opportunity to address and correct these existential crises facing the nation, the state and the movement. The question is whether or not we will.

We held robust makgotla in 2021. Progressive decisions were reached. Yet many of these decisions have not been implemented. We are here at this lekgotla without a systematic audit of the decisions taken by the

2021 makgotla: which have been implemented, which have not, why not, what interventions are being undertaken to address these, what new proposals are being tabled?

Equally these progressive decisions of our makgotla will be meaningless if they are not backed up with sufficient financial resources from the government.

Are we here for the sake of tradition?

We talk, raise issues, feel good and then depart. If we are serious about saving the movement, rebuilding the government and growing the economy, then we must be serious about the decisions we reach in these makgotla. The Alliance Secretariat must be strengthened and develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of our decisions. Otherwise these makgotla will become talk shops.

The movement is dying, only bold action can save it

It is deeply worrying that this lekgotla does not have a commission focusing on organisational renewal, nor the local elections. Yet the movement is in a mess. For the first time since 1994, we received less than 50% of the vote and lost the majority of metros. Denialism will not make our problems disappear. As COSATU, we must raise our anger and condemn the failure of our Alliance partner to pay its employees since October. It is unacceptable.

It is unbelievable that we allow this to continue. ANC staff are treated little better than cheap labour. They have been forced to embark on a stayaway, yet our comrades in government receive their comfortable salaries. The ANC staff are correct to put down their tools. And they must not be threatened with disciplinary action.

Pay them what they are owed and do it now. COSATU is disappointed and angered that the attacks on collective bargaining that started in local government, then went to SOEs, spread to the public service resulting in it abandoning a signed wage agreement in 2020, have now spread to the ANC itself as an employer.

We must condemn how the ANC treats its own workers. It's disappointing to hear Luthuli House blaming the Political Party Funding Act for its failure to pay staff. The act came into effect in April 2021, yet ANC staff have been subjected to repeated delays in salaries and no increases for more than three years. In our desperation to raise funds, we must not gut the Political Party Funding Act. This is a progressive act, the ANC was correct to pass it, we must now defend it. We may say, increase the limits on donations, but we must not touch the requirements to disclose the source of donations, unless we are saying we receive funds from criminals.

The ANC has a proud history. It is the movement of Madiba, Tambo, Hani and Ruth First. Yet today we see factions running amok. We witness NEC members insulting each other on Twitter. And no action is taken. We deploy members to represent the movement, not themselves, in government. Their mandate is the ANC's election manifesto. Yet we are now subject to persons who swore an oath to defend the Constitution, running to the media to rubbish the very Constitution this movement of Madiba drafted. It is unacceptable and unbecoming for senior leaders and Cabinet members to attack the Constitution. The failure of the ANC to discipline deployees is feeding a culture of mediocrity. In fact we are seen to reward and promote those who have been found wanting.

If comrades are tired, then they must leave. As we emerge from a decade of State Capture, we cannot tolerate ANC public representatives publicly attacking our Constitution. Our performance in the 2021 local elections was not a surprise. It was expected given an unemployment rate of 44%, rampant corruption and deteriorating public services. What have we done to turn the tide, to

correct our mistakes?

Judging by the behaviour of some of our councillors who think being an effective opposition means knocking over tables and disrupting council meetings, we have not learnt much. If we continue on this road, then we must accept that we will lose the 2024 elections. Growing the economy and creating jobs must be at the centre of government's work

We do not seem to appreciate the extent of the economic crises facing workers. We cannot sustain an unemployment rate of 46% and bleed a million jobs a year. Every sphere of government and SOE must have job creation and economic growth at the heart of their work. The government did well to create 500,000 job opportunities with the Presidential Employment Stimulus and to increase its funding to R24-billion per annum. We need to double this to R50-billion to create two million jobs.

We need to modernise the UIF and Compensation Fund systems to ensure that all workers are registered for them and receive their money timeously. The National Minimum Wage has improved the wages of more than six million workers, in particular farm, domestic, construction and hospitality workers. The government needs to move with speed to implement the National Minimum Wage Commission's recommendation to increase the minimum wage from 1 March 2022. This will help more than six million workers to feed their families and equalise 900,000 domestic workers to the National Minimum Wage. Workers cannot afford delays.

We must extend the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant beyond March, increase it to the food poverty line and use it as the foundation for a Basic Income Grant. We must provide relief to battered sectors of the economy.

The banks must be engaged to provide affordable loans for businesses. These relief measures must be incentivised to support job retention and creation. We need to mobilise every bit of stimulus for the economy, including the finalisation of Regulation 28 of the Pension

Funds Act.

The government and the private sector need to accelerate the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, in particular ramping up local procurement, providing additional support, including debt relief, for Eskom to ensure we have reliable and affordable electricity, fixing Transnet and Prasa, and rebuilding our other embattled SOEs and ensuring that their workers receive their salaries.

We need a social compact with the government and business where they commit to halting retrenchments and creating jobs. Central to renewing the movement and growing the economy is a well-governed state. Corruption and factionalism have bled the state. We are now paying the price with municipalities that cannot fix potholes, deliver water or electricity. Many municipalities' financial records are so bad that the Auditor-General cannot make sense of them.

The Zondo Commission did well to shine a light on State Capture and corruption. Our movement has been found badly wanting, in particular comrades we had entrusted to run the government. We need to see the law enforcement agencies move with speed to act on its findings. We need to move with speed to implement its recommendations. If this doesn't happen, then we must not be surprised when corruption continues unabated.

Central to our efforts to cleanse the state must be to overhaul the public procurement system, to ensure a single, transparent online public procurement system for the entire state and the finalisation of the Public Procurement Bill. SARS must be reinforced and empowered to undertake lifestyle audits of members of Cabinet, provincial executives and mayoral committees, senior management of the state and SCM officials.

Equally if we are serious about building a capacitated developmental state, then our ally needs to respect collective bargaining in the PSCBC, SALGA, SOEs and the entire state. We need to respect signed agreements and the need to protect

the wages of public servants and workers from inflationary erosion.

We must not allow Treasury's rush to reduce the public deficit and debt, to hollow out or collapse key institutions that protect workers, such as the CCMA, or to weaken DTIC and other economic cluster institutions key to saving jobs and growing the economy.

Cosatu is pleased with Parliament's passing of the three progressive gender-based violence bills. What is needed now is for the government to enact and implement them. We need to ensure that the police and all government organs are geared to ensure they come into effect. As a movement, we need to embark on strategic campaigns to turn the tide against the unacceptable levels of violence and abuse faced by women, children and vulnerable persons.

Let us show practical international solidarity

We have said many words of solidarity about Cuba, eSwatini, Venezuela, Western Sahara, Palestine and Zimbabwe, but with little practical solidarity. Cosatu is mobilising resources to send shipments to Cuba. We have blockaded border posts in eSwatini. These are not enough.

We need to ramp up political solidarity in the international forums, a SADC intervention in eSwatini, and to ramp up trade and investment with Cuba and Venezuela. The African Continental Free Trade Area will be central to this.

Concluding remarks

We are at a crossroads. We have a simple choice. We can continue as is, unemployment will pass 50%, state organs will collapse, the movement will die, it will be removed from office in 2024. Or we can make the hard choices, cleanse the movement of factionalism and criminals, deal decisively with corruption, fix the state, grow the economy and slash unemployment. Our choice as Cosatu is the latter. We hope our Alliance partners will join us on that path.

Amandla!



POPCRU

leading with the vaccination campaign in the security cluster

the COVID-19 pandemic has increased health care crisis across the globe. The World Health Organization [WHO] has urged global citizens to 'vaccinate' against the pandemic which has collapsed the economies, eroded full-time jobs, and caused a lot of death across communities.

Many private pharmaceutical companies have been smiling towards the bank as many are making a lot of money through production for profits of these vaccines.

A debate across the globe whether to vaccinate has erupted, with some employers threatening dismissals to those workers who refuse to oblige.

The WHO has led a vigorous campaign in member states which says, 'Get vaccinated as soon it's your turn to protect yourself from serious disease and death'.

Some workers and individuals are rejecting 'mandatory vaccinations' on the ground of religious convictions, health status or just exercising their human right to reject the jobs.

Of course, many have experienced mild effects after being vaccinated against Covid-19 which health care workers and experts says it is normal, as these side effects go away within few days.

Some of the side effects, included amongst others, Fever, headache, fatigue, and pain at the injection site. In some instances, Covid-19 Complications may include pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), multi-organ failure, septic shock, and death.

On the other hand, Global Federations such as the Public Services International [PSI] has been 'urging governments to support the proposal backed by India, South Africa, Kenya and close to a hundred countries for a WTO waiver on Covid-19 vaccines. Our affiliates' members have unremittently delivered vital public services throughout the pandemic. And we

are concerned that the monopoly powers given to pharmaceutical companies by the World Trade Organization's agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) will mean companies can make extravagant profits, while workers and the public have made efforts and sacrifices, working tirelessly and sometimes in extremely difficult circumstances, to ensure we overcome the crisis.

If these waivers are not implemented, pharmaceutical companies will be able to prevent other manufacturers from producing Covid-19 vaccines and medicines, impeding scaling up of production. WTO rules ensure big pharma has a monopoly over the market and can dictate prices even to governments, which will consume public finances required for a healthy recovery.'

ORGANIZED LABOUR PERSPECTIVE ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE CCMA CASE ON VACCINATION

- Organized labour expressed their views on the issues through a joint statement released early in 2022, titled "Organised Labour statement on CCMA ruling on the dismissal of a worker for refusing to vaccinate", which states that;
- "Organised Labour at NEDLAC, represented by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) and the National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU), is extremely disappointed by the CCMA's upholding the dismissal of a worker who had refused to vaccinate.
- Organised Labour believes that dismissals of any worker must be avoided at all costs.
- Workers have families that they are responsible for.
- We have an unemployment rate of 46% that is rising daily. Sending any worker into the unemployment queue is to condemn their families to poverty.
- Organised Labour supports the vaccine rollout programme. Unions in all three Federations have worked across their sectors to educate and persuade their members, workers, and their families on why vaccinating is safe and the most effective way to save lives and livelihoods. Organised Labour believes that education and addressing the fears of workers and society is the best way to persuade people to vaccinate.
- Threatening workers with dismissal will only serve to poison what has already become a very charged and divided debate across the world.
- Vaccinations cannot be the sole responsibility of workers. Only 14 million out of South Africa's 60 million people are employed.
- If we are to achieve the 70% vaccination levels, then this must be a society-wide approach and not one that is simply dumped upon workers. This has the unnecessary effect of raising workplace tensions and thus undermining labour market stability.
- The Federations hope the worker in the case ruled upon by the CCMA will exercise her right to take the ruling on review.
- The Federations and their Affiliates will be engaging their structures, members, and employers at their workplaces on why it is important for as many people as possible to vaccinate. We will seek to address the concerns of those who are hesitant to vaccinate and to resolve tensions and disputes with employers and affected workers. Unions will assist any worker threatened with disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- The most effective way to address these matters is for all workplaces to abide by the Ministerial Directive on workplace vaccinations. It requires employers to undertake a needs-based assessment of their workplaces and to engage with workers and unions on their vaccination policies. This includes providing reasonable accommodation for those who have not been vaccinated and may include exemptions for medical, religious, or constitutional reasons. It also includes allowing affected workers to work remotely or from alternative sites in their workplaces.
- South Africa is a constitutional democracy. This requires dialogue to resolve complex and sensitive matters. Dismissing workers who have fears will only serve to polarise a very toxic debate and in fact, feed into the hands of the anti-vaxxers. This is a distraction that we simply cannot afford when we should all be working together to encourage people to vaccinate, to save lives and livelihoods."

LABOUR EXPERTS PERSPECTIVE ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE CCMA CASE ON VACCINATION

CCMA Strikes again: Mandatory Vaccinations are acceptable

By: Aadil Patel, Amy King and Dylan Bouchier

On 25 January 2022, the CCMA published an award in the matter of GK v Ndaka

Security and Services (FSWK2448-21). In this matter, the commission was called upon to determine whether the employer committed an unfair labour practice in terms of section 186(2)(b) of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) when an employee was prevented from accessing the workplace and therefore could not carry out his duties following his refusal to comply with the employer's mandatory vaccination policy. In essence, the employee's complaint was that the employer instructed him not to return to the workplace until he had been vaccinated against COVID-19. He was however offered an alternative to submit weekly negative COVID-19 test results, at his own cost.

The employee is employed as a safety practitioner at Ndaka Security and Services, in the business of providing security services to, among others, Sasol Ltd (Sasol). In providing the services to Sasol, the employer runs its operations at the Sasol site with approximately 36 guard posts. The employee's post includes identifying risks on the site and engaging various stakeholders including his colleagues, clients, and the public. The employer's decision to send the employee home was informed by Sasol's requirement to have a 100% vaccination rate on site. The employee subsequently referred a dispute on the grounds that he was unfairly suspended from duty. The commissioner considered the procedure followed by the employer in arriving at its decision.

The employer had conducted three risk assessments over the course of 2020 and 2021 to determine appropriate measures to safeguard its employees and clients against the spread of COVID-19. Clearly influenced by Sasol's imperative to have a 100% vaccination rate, the last risk assessment conducted in October 2021 identified classes of high-risk employees and requested those employees to become vaccinated. The employer engaged in negotiations with trade unions and arrived at an agreement in respect of a mandatory vaccination policy. Following the process to determine the need for a mandatory vaccination policy and who would be affected by it, the employer approached the employee to request that he become vaccinated. A further meeting was held with the employee to discuss his concerns regarding vaccination and to persuade him to comply with the policy. He persisted in his refusal, so the parties offered him an alternative of submitting weekly negative COVID-19 test results, at his cost.

This, and some other alternative accommodations were extended to other employees including working in an isolated office and working from home on a 'no work, no pay' basis to those able to perform their duties under those circumstances. The decision to suspend the employee was informed by his refusal to comply with either of the choices offered to him: vaccinate or submit weekly COVID-19 test results. The employee informed the employer that his reasons for refusal included that, among others, he was protected in terms of section 12 of the Constitution (the right to freedom and security), he was a devout Christian, and relied on his body's natural immunity and his faith to recover from COVID-19. The employee was unwilling to submit weekly negative COVID-19 test results either.

As the employer disputed that the instruction to stay at home amounted to suspension, the first issue the commissioner was required to determine was whether the decision taken by the employer fell within the ambit of an unfair labour practice i.e., whether this conduct constitutes a form of suspension within the parameters of the LRA.

In order to arrive at a finding the CCMA considered various factors and legal principles. The employer is a security company providing an essential service and its employees are considered frontline workers under the Regulations to the Disaster Management Act. The employee shared an office with ten colleagues and his duties included visiting all sites and interacting with all personnel.

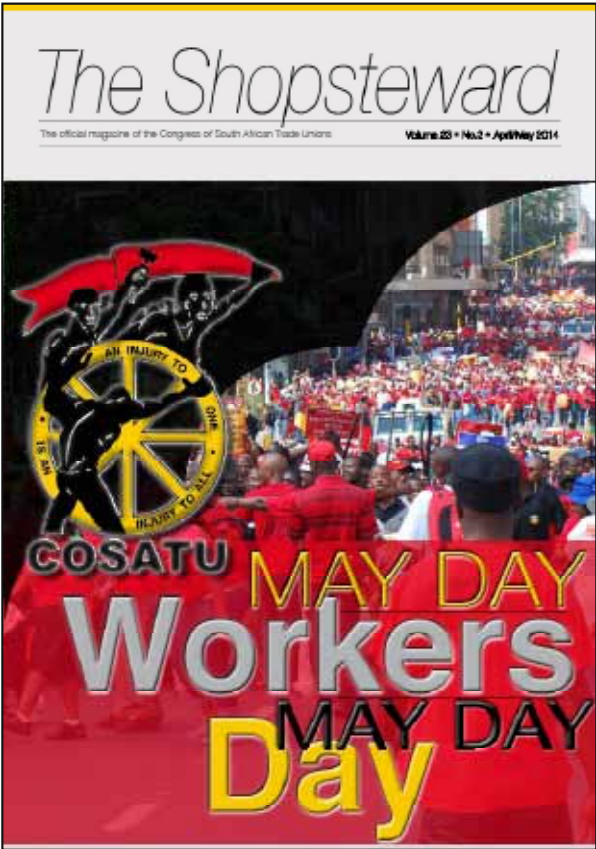
The employee's reliance on his religion as a reason to refuse vaccination was found to be woefully lacking as there was no theological or scientific support that the Christian faith precludes its members from being vaccinated. Finally, while many recover from COVID-19 without the benefit of the vaccine, it has been proven that vaccination curbs the rate of infection and significantly reduces the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms.

Having considered these factors as well as various legal principles from the Constitution to regulations empowering employers to implement mandatory vaccination policies, the employer's decision to send the employee home was indeed a suspension, however the CCMA found that it was not unfair and therefore did not constitute an unfair labour practice. The CCMA has reiterated its support for employers who lay down procedures in the workplace in the interest of the health and safety of its employees and the public at large. The CCMA recently adjudicated a similar dispute based on mandatory vaccination policies in TM v Goldrush Group (GAJB 24054-21) where the employee's dismissal pursuant to her refusal to be vaccinated was found to be fair.

Subscribe to The Shopsteward

THE SHOPSTEWARD is a unique magazine. Most newspapers and magazine owned by millionaires and reflect the outlook of the rich and powerful. The Shopsteward is produced by COSATU and gives the workers a point of view on the big issues in the workplace, the community, politics and the world. Why not

make sure you get issues by
subscribing?



Shopsteward Subscription

COSATU's website offers an option to download the subscription form from there, you can print it out and resend it back to us. www.cosatu.org.za

Subscription rates

The cost of six issues is

South Africa		Foreign subscription	
Workers and students	R45	Airmail	
Salaried employees	R55	Southern Africa	R290
CBO's and NGO's	R80	Other countries	R310
Institutions	R80	Surface mail	
Companies	R90	All countries	R180



Subscriber contact details

Surname

Name

Designation

Company

Address

Country

Tel

Fax

Cell

Email

Payment options

☐ Cheque Enclosed, payable to COSATU

☐ Direct transfer:

Banking details:

Name of Account: COSATU CEC

Bank: First National Bank

Branch code: 255005

Account number: 62345348644

Account type: Current

Please put in reference: SSJ & Your name

Name of credit card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CVC (Last 3 digits on the reverse side)

--	--	--

Expiry date/.....

Signature Date

Please post, fax or email proof of payment to
COSATU House, 110 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein
P.O. Box 1019, Johannesburg, 2000 or
Fax to +27 (0) 11 339 5080/6940
OR Email nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za

For Subscriptions and Distribution please contact
nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za or Tel: +27 (0) 11 339 4911