



COSATU RESOLUTIONS

COSATU RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT INAUGURAL CONGRESS, DECEMBER
1985 AND AT FIRST CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, FEBRUARY 1986

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1. POLITICAL POLICY

THAT this Congress noting:

1. South Africa is going through its severest economic crisis ever with millions unemployed, retrenched and without any jobs and with no social security or benefits; the cost of which is measured in the loss of lives, through poverty and starvation, and massive degradation and demoralisation of the workers and all the oppressed people in SA.
2. The economic crisis is part and parcel of a political crisis. The state is incapable of meeting even the minimum democratic demands of the people and has to instead resort to violent measures to stifle all opposition.
3. The present state of emergency with its accompanying arrests of thousands of people, the killing of hundreds and banning of democratic organisations such as COSAS also affects workers.
4. Capital is taking strident steps to dissociate itself from the crisis it has integrally contributed to, hoping that the removal of blatant apartheid measures would ensure the survival of capitalism.
5. The main victim of this political and economic crisis is the working class.
6. Workers experience repression, hardship and suffering, not only at their workplace, but also in every other aspect of their lives and within the communities where they live.

Hereby resolves that:

1. This federation and the working class should play a major role in the struggle for a non-racial and democratic society and this federation will not hesitate to take political action to protect and advance the interests of its members and the wider working class.
2. This Congress asserts the economic, political and organisational independ-

dence of the federation and all its affiliates and asserts the independent political interests, position, action and leadership of the working class in the wider political struggle.

3. We should do this by taking up political struggles through the membership and structures at local, regional and national level as well as through disciplined alliances with progressive community and political organisations whose interests are compatible with the interests of the workers and whose organisational practices further the interests of the working class.
4. The federation will strive to ensure that its members participate effectively in the progressive organisations and campaigns that conduct democratic struggles against oppression and economic exploitation in the interests of the working class and a democratic society.
5. The federation will make sure that there is full discussion of the demands and aims of workers in the struggle at all levels of the federation.
6. In the interests of building unity the federation shall not affiliate to any political organisation within the democratic struggle in South Africa at the present time.

2. RIGHT TO STRIKE

This federation noting:

1. That the strike is a legitimate right and necessary weapon of the working class in their struggle against bad working conditions and low wages.
 2. That the strike is internationally accepted as an essential element of collective bargaining.
 3. That freedom of association, assembly and picketing for strike action are also fundamental rights, internationally, in industrial struggle.
 4. That the infringement or curbing of these rights is detrimental to the social and economic interests of the workers.
 5. That the right to strike is severely curtailed in SA.
 6. That a strike involves a democratic form of struggle.
 7. That picketing is an integral part of a strike and of morally persuading fellow workers not to break a strike.
 8. That essential service workers are not allowed to take industrial action in pursuing their demands.
- Therefore resolves:
1. To continue a relentless campaign which will allow workers full freedom of association, assembly and picketing for strike action. This requires that all forms of security legislation that deny these rights be removed.
 2. To ensure that where workers have followed mutually agreed dispute procedures with employers, there will be full job security during such strikes. This requires that eviction from accommodation and other such measures be outlawed.
 3. To campaign and respond vigorously against police and state intervention in strikes or industrial disputes.
 4. To fight for the right of trade unions to establish strike funds.
 5. To ensure that strikers are free to establish and control strike committees.
 6. To fight for the removal of the designation of essential services and that all workers be allowed to share equal rights.

3- INTERNATIONAL POLICY

That this Congress noting that:-

1. The international trade union movement is split by ideological divisions that derive from the situation of the 'Cold War'.
2. South African workers still have to achieve unity that would see the emergence of a single powerful national trade union centre.
3. The majority of people in SA still suffer under a brutal and violent system of national oppression and racial exploitation.
4. In the present situation in SA, affiliation by the Congress to any international co-ordinating centre, will not allow SA workers to participate fully and actively in all activities of these organisations.
5. Any affiliation is bound to draw us into the web of international politics and introduce the dangers of division and collapse that arise out of the practices of these organisations.

Therefore resolves that:

The Congress will not affiliate to either the ICFTU, WCL, WFTU.

But undertakes:

1. To strengthen fraternal links with progressive worker organisations in all countries which are committed to our struggle for freedom in South Africa and to the building of true international working class solidarity.
2. To develop a systematic programme of travel, study, research and activity that would broaden the education and perspective of our working class leadership and membership.

4. MULTINATIONALS

Africa.

THAT this Congress noting:

3. The congress begins a national campaign to inform, expose, clarify for everyone the manipulations of these MNC's in all aspects of our lives.

1. The existence of massive MNC's both foreign and national which reap super profits in SA because of the starvation wages they pay us.

2. Our lives are today controlled by a few individuals who through their vested interests wield great power in our society which is used often to the detriment of the working class.

3. The MNC's are an integral part of a brutal and violent system of national oppression and capitalist exploitation.

4. These MNC's undermine consistently the struggle of workers for just living conditions and decent wages by transferring their production from areas and countries where workers are powerfully organised to areas where workers are still not organised.

5. These MNC's by being able at will to increase the price of goods by controlling the market supply and demand and provoking crises which leads to massive retrenchments and the subsequent erosion of workers wages and leads to undermining of the workers' standards of living.

6. That plant closures and redundancies are planned well in advance to circumvent union opposition.

7. The continued violation of trade union rights in companies owned, held and licenced to multinational corporations.

Therefore resolves that:

1. Workers and all other progressive sections of our country should unite to challenge the growing power of the MNC's.

2.. The congress research and monitor the activities of MNC's within South

5. NATIONAL MINIMUM LIVING WAGE

Seeing that:

The majority of workers in SA are earning starvation wages because of the present economic system; constantly rising prices (inflation) are making what little money workers have, worth less and less every day.

Employers in SA continue to make massive and completely unrealistic profits when compared with employers in other capitalist countries.

Many millions of workers do not have any minimum wage protection whatsoever.

The issue of a living wage is one of the strongest points for organising the unorganised.

We hereby resolve:

1. That the Central Executive Committee establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage.
2. Then initiate and conduct - in alliance with other progressive organisations and trade unions in the country - an ongoing national campaign for a legally enforced national minimum living wage for all workers in South Africa, by amongst other things fighting in every industry through worker action and negotiation for that minimum living wage to be paid by all employers.
3. Fight for this minimum living wage to be automatically linked to the rate of inflation.
4. Struggle for the abolition of GST on all essential items and worker control over all deductions like pensions and UIF, which are being financed by workers but used against workers by the racist and anti-worker government.

5. Fight to open all the books of every organised company so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system, and on that basis can demand their full share of the wealth they have produced. Should the wealth not be there, then it will only prove the inefficiency of employer management and strengthen the case for worker control and management of production.

6. WOMEN

This Federation noting:

1. That women workers experience both exploitation as workers and oppression as women and that black women are further discriminated against on the basis of race;
2. That women are employed in a limited range of occupations, doing boring and repetitive work with low and often unequal pay;
3. That due to overtime and night work women workers are subjected to many dangers while commuting;

4. That women workers often suffer sexual harassment in recruitment and employment;

5. That most women workers in South Africa lose their jobs when they become pregnant;
6. That pregnant women often have to work under conditions harmful to themselves and their unborn child.

Resolves to fight:

1. Against all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the federation;
2. For the equal right of women and men to paid work as an important part of the broader aim to achieve full and freely chosen employment;
3. For equal pay for all work of equal value - the value of work must be determined by organised women and men workers themselves;
4. For the restructuring of employment so as to allow women and men the opportunity of qualifying for jobs of equal value;

5. For childcare and family facilities to meet workers' needs and make it easier for workers to combine work and family responsibilities;

6. For full maternity rights, including paid maternity and paternity leave and job security;

7. For the protection of women and men from all types of work proved to be harmful to them, including work which interferes with their ability to have children;

8. Against sexual harassment in whatever form it occurs;

9. For adequate and safe transport for workers doing overtime and night work.

Now commits itself:

1. To actively campaign in support of these resolutions;
2. To negotiate agreements with companies wherever possible as part of this campaign;
3. To actively promote within its education programme, a greater understanding of the specific discriminations suffered by women workers and ways in which these can be overcome;
4. To establish a worker-controlled sub-committee within its education programme to monitor progress made in implementing this resolution and to make representations to the education committee.
5. To budget for the workings of such a sub-committee;
6. To actively promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the federation.

7. EDUCATION

This federation noting:

1. That the present education system in South Africa is designed to maintain the working class in ideological bondage.
2. That the present education system is designed to continue and reinforce the values, ideas and practices of the ruling classes.
3. That the present education system is aimed at fostering divisions and anti-democratic values within the working class.
4. That education is vital in the liberation struggle of the working class.
5. That education must serve the interests of the vast majority of the people of the country.

Therefore resolves:

1. To establish a national, regional and local education programme for the federation to:
 - a) ensure that this education programme politicises, mobilises and organises the working class so that they play the leading role in the liberation of our society and its transformation into an economic, social and political system that will serve the needs of those who are now oppressed and exploited.
 - b) develop an understanding and capacity to wage our struggle by democratic means that will allow maximum participation, decision making power for workers both now and in the future society we wish to build.
 - c) develop the human potential to the fullest and to create and transform skills and abilities so that they are accessible to the oppressed and exploited.

- d) develop the understanding among the working class that their struggle forms part of the world struggle against oppression and exploitation.
2. To establish a Federation newspaper which will:
 - a) express the views and policies of the Federation and its affiliates.
 - b) record the struggles of the Federation and its affiliates.
 - c) counter the dominance of the bosses' media by popularising democratic ideas, values and traditions among the working class.
 3. To organise and commemorate the important cultural events and resistance days in the working class calendar, for example, May Day and June 16 and Federation Day.
 4. To recommend to the Central Executive Committee of the Federation that they appoint an education officer and newspaper editor.
 5. To establish a National Coordinating Education Committee made up of:
 - a) regional and local committees of workers.
 - b) union representatives.

8. DISINVESTMENT

This Congress:

1. Believes that all forms of international pressure on the South African government - including disinvestment or the threat of disinvestment - is an essential and effective form of pressure on the South African regime and we support it.
2. Further believes that if this government remains intransigent in its racist, anti-democratic and anti-worker practices, then this pressure will have to increase as an act of solidarity with our struggle for liberation from exploitation and oppression.
3. Commit ourselves to ensure that the social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all and further commit ourselves to the principle of international working class solidarity action as the most powerful form of solidarity action with our struggle.

9. BANTUSTANS

CONGRESS Noting:

That the bantustan system was imposed on the African people, against their will, with a view to thwarting the just struggle for One Person One Vote in a unitary SA.

That various bantustan administrations have practised extreme forms of oppression against the oppressed people - including trade unions.

Noting in particular:

The banning of SAAWU in the Ciskei, the banning of all unions in the Boputhatswana bantustan and the killing of trade unionists and other democrats by tribally based organisations

Hereby resolves that:

1. The bantustan system be totally rejected and that the Federation struggle - together with other democratic forces - for the creation of a democratic and unitary SA.
2. We shall not hesitate to exercise our right to organise in plants based within the bantustans and that we are fully prepared to defend ourselves against repression by whatever effective means at our disposal.
3. That we are completely and absolutely opposed to the super-exploitation occurring in these areas and declare our commitment to reject the idea and practice of workers receiving less wages and worse conditions of work.
4. That we express our solidarity with those communities around Durban and elsewhere who are struggling against being incorporated into the bantustans.

10. MIGRANT LABOUR

This federation noting:

1. That pass laws were legislated by the apartheid regime to control and dehumanise the lives of the working class in SA.
2. That pass laws and influx control served to strengthen the hand of capital to exploit and oppress the working class in its endeavour to generate super profits.
3. That the economic and social hardships of the migrant labour system includes the break-up of family life and relationships.
4. That the migrant labour system seeks to further divide the oppressed and exploited workers into permanent residents and migrants.
5. That if the apartheid regime persists threatening to repatriate migrant workers to the homelands and neighbouring countries.

Resolves to:

1. Fight for the scrapping of the migrant labour system including pass laws and influx control.
2. Fight for the right of workers to seek work wherever they wish and to reside with their families wherever they wish and that proper housing be provided as a right for all workers and their families near their place of work.
3. Call for a national strike should the apartheid regime carry out its threat to repatriate any migrant workers.

11. FEDERALISM

This Congress noting that:

1. South Africa's bitter history of industrialisation and exploitation has forged one nation.
2. The attempts by the apartheid regime to create and reconstruct separate states and nations which will be combined into some federal system are fraudulent and undemocratic.
3. That the intention of the proposed federal system is to maintain power and control in the hands of the present minority and perpetuate an oppressive and exploitative system.
4. That the demand of all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa is for a unitary state based on One Person One Vote.

Resolves to:

1. To reject as a total fraud the new proposed federal solution.
2. Re-affirms our belief in a unitary state based on One Person One Vote.
3. Work towards the destruction of all barriers and divisions so that we are united irrespective of language, race or creed.

And further believes that:

Only with the total unification of all people into South Africa will we be able to re-build our rich land and make a real contribution to breaking the chains of poverty and economic exploitation that bind Africa.

12. NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL UNIONS

Noting:

1. That all affiliates have previously committed themselves to the establishment of one national union in each sector of industry.
2. That the structures of the federation are less effective with so many affiliates.
3. That we will be unable to protect worker interests and advance their rights unless we build large, broadly-based industrial unions capable of dealing with the highly centralised structures of capital.

Therefore resolves:

1. To confirm its commitment to the establishment of one national affiliate in each industry and to national co-operation between such affiliates as a matter of great urgency.

2. That should such developments not have materialised by the end of March 1986, a Special National Congress be convened in June or July 1986 to assess such failure.

3. That in order to facilitate the establishment of national industrial unions, affiliates are urged to establish a single union in each of the following sectors:

- a) Food and Drink;
- b) Textile, Clothing and Leather;
- c) Paper, Wood and Printing;
- d) Mining, Electrical Energy;
- e) Metal, Motor Assembly and Components;
- f) Chemical and Petroleum;
- g) Commercial and Catering;
- h) Transport, SA Transport Services, Cleaning and Security;
- i) Local Government and Public Administration including

Education, Health, Posts and Telecommunications;

j) Domestic Workers.

4. That all structures of the federation be used to encourage mergers of affiliates operating in the same industry.
5. That the Central Executive Committee establish priorities in relation to resources available with a view to the establishment of national affiliates in the following sectors:

- a) Construction;
- b) Agriculture.

6. That the Central Executive Committee be directed to facilitate the implementation of this resolution and to this end take such action as may be necessary. Further that the Central Executive Committee may also evaluate the viability of the sectors outlined above, with particular reference to problems which may exist in all sectors.

13. REGIONS

That this congress resolves:

1. That the regional areas of the federation be:

1. Northern Transvaal
2. Witwaterstrand/Vaal
3. Highveld
4. Western Transvaal
5. Northern Natal
6. Southern Natal
7. Orange Free State
8. Northern Cape
9. Western Cape
10. Eastern Cape

2. That the Central Executive Committee be instructed, that immediately when feasible as provided for in clause 9.1. of the constitution of the federation, that regional structures be established in such regional areas.

14. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

THIS CONGRESS

Believing:

That the Congress and its affiliates should follow a clear programme of working towards financial self-sufficiency in all respects but may require financial assistance in certain respects.

That at present the building of the Congress and its affiliates requires financial assistance.

Believing further

1. That such financial assistance must not be used to create dependency and divisions within our worker movement.

2. That the uncoordinated and unchecked access by affiliates and the Congress to financial assistance will create a decline in organisation and potential division.

3. That a lack of coordination on the part of donor organisations will result in the wastage of Congress energy and resources in dealing with numerous applications.

Resolves that

1. To ensure that the provisions of the constitution regarding payment of affiliation fees are strictly adhered to.

2. To co-ordinate applications for assistance for the Congress and its affiliates in line with the International Policy adopted at this congress.

3. That affiliates should inform the CEC of applications made to any

organisation for financial assistance.

4. That as the first step towards complete financial self-sufficiency the federation should strive to meet all running expenses with affiliation fees.

5. That funding be directed as far as possible to particular projects such as education and a newspaper.

15. UNEMPLOYMENT

Believing:

That all able-bodied men and women have a right to work.

Noting:

That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing every worker at all times.

That these unemployed workers are used as a reserve pool of labour by the bosses to keep wages low and to provide a source of scab labour in the event of strikes.

That the interests of all workers, whether employed or unemployed, are the same - the right to a job at a decent living wage.

That the unity of employed and unemployed workers is essential in the struggle against scabbing and to advance the struggle for the right to work at a living wage.

That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing workers at all times and is a waste of the human resources of this country.

And further noting:

That in SA there are millions of unemployed - a number that is increasing daily through retrenchments.

That the introduction of new technology for profiteering purposes is making the whole unemployment situation even worse. This is further aggravated by pressure from employers for higher productivity.

That many are abandoning all hope of finding suitable employment in the immediate future.

That for thousands of school leavers there is virtually no prospect of getting employment and therefore no possibility of drawing UIF benefits.

That unemployed workers are not organised in SA.

Congress therefore resolves to:

1. Fight as one united force to defend all jobs threatened by retrenchments; fight the closing of the factories; and fight for participation in and control over - right from the planning stage - the implementation of any new technology. And fight all attempts by employers to make workers work harder and attempts to rationalise production, because in the present system this always leads to unemployment.
2. Campaign for a 40 hour week at full pay and a ban on overtime.
3. Fight for free and increased unemployment benefits and that these benefits be paid in SA.
4. Fight for a subsistence fund, in addition to unemployment benefits, supplemented by rent, transport and medical concessions for all unemployed workers.
5. Demand that the state initiate a national programme of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed and to improve services and facilities in working class communities.
6. Fight for work-sharing on full pay whenever workers face retrenchments.
7. Establish a national unemployed workers union as a full affiliate of the new federation to struggle for the realisation of the right of all to work and security.
8. Struggle for a fair, democratic and rational political and economic system which can guarantee full employment for all people in Southern Africa at a living wage.
9. To give full support to efforts by retrenched and dismissed workers to establish co-operatives based on the principles of COSATU.

16. DEREGULATION

This federation notes that:

1. The economy of South Africa is dominated by a few very big corporations.
2. These corporations are becoming more and more dominant.
3. Small businesses can never have a significant effect on the South African economy and can never get rid of unemployment in South Africa.
4. The campaign to deregulate small businesses and decentralised businesses now being pushed by the government and some of the big corporations is a political attack on the living standards of all the workers, which will take away all the protection of minimum wages and working conditions from many workers. This will drag down the living standards of all the workers in South Africa.
5. This is being done to weaken workers' organisations so that workers can be forced to be more productive, but workers will still not share fairly in the wealth they produce.

And so resolves:

1. To organise all workers as the best way of defending themselves against these attacks from the state.
2. To expose to everyone the true nature of what the state and some employers are doing.
3. To oppose the deregulation campaign with all our force.

17. MAY 1 AND JUNE 16

This Congress:

Noting:

1. That May 1 is celebrated internationally as the workers day and 1986 is the 100th anniversary of May Day.
2. That June 16 symbolises the sacrifices of our people in the struggle for liberation.
3. That workers have no interest in racist political public holidays such as Republic Day, Kruger Day, Founders Day and Day of the Covenant.

Resolves that:

1. We should fight for June 16 and May 1 to be paid holidays.
2. We should be prepared to sacrifice racist political holidays if necessary.
3. The federation should initiate and organise celebrations on May 1 every year.
4. The federation should participate actively in the commemoration of June 16 together with other progressive organisations.

18. SOUTHERN AFRICAN UNION COOPERATION

This federation noting:

1. That foreign and South African multinational corporations (MNC's) have for years exploited workers in Southern Africa by reaping huge profits and exporting them to Europe and America.
2. That workers in Southern Africa are employed by the same MNC's and subjected to similar conditions of control, exploitation and oppression.
3. That many of them are union bashers and have undermined the legitimate right of workers to organise trade unions.
4. That these MNC's, as the major agencies of imperialism, have cooperated with reactionary regimes in pursuit of super-profits.
5. That MNC's can only be resisted if there is unity and worker-to-worker contact in various countries of Southern Africa.
6. That the problems faced by the workers of Southern Africa are integrally linked and that their futures are tied together.

Therefore resolves:

1. That unions affiliated to COSATU should actively pursue links with progressive unions in Southern Africa so as to strengthen worker unity.
2. That COSATU should form constructive relationships with fraternal federations in Southern Africa.
3. That every effort be made to unite workers of Southern Africa and improve solidarity work.

19. ATTACKS ON NEIGHBOURING STATES

This federation noting:

1. That South Africa is the last bastion of white rule in Africa.
2. That the South African State is a major destabilising force in the sub-continent.
3. That the South African State has continued to pursue unprovoked aggression on the neighbouring States.
4. That the people attacked in these countries are the families, children and friends of our members.
5. That these aggressive acts on the workers and their families in neighbouring countries are of concern to all workers internationally.

Therefore resolves:

1. That the federation develops relations with fraternal federations in Southern Africa so as to resist these attacks of aggression.
2. That a unity of understanding, purpose and action of Southern African workers is necessary and a prerequisite of broader freedoms in the sub-continent. Only such relations and actions can resist the Apartheid Regime's policies and the pernicious practices of multinational corporations.
3. That the federation vigorously highlight the atrocities of the South African Regime and take appropriate action.

20. STATE OF EMERGENCY

This Inaugural Conference

Believing:

1. That the declaration of a State of Emergency has been used to wage a war of repression against all sections of the oppressed communities and to try to crush democratic organisations.
2. That the cause of all violence in South African is the existence of the apartheid system, and that there can be no peace while it exists.

Calls:

1. For the immediate lifting of the State of Emergency.
2. For the withdrawal of the SADF and all apartheid security forces from the townships.
3. For the unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees, the unbanning of banned individuals and organisations, as a prelude to the creation of a democratic South Africa where all shall live in peace and prosperity.

21. UNITED ACTION AGAINST REPRESSION OF UNIONS/UNIONISTS

This Inaugural Conference

Believing:

1. That an attack on any individual trade unionist or union is an attack on the federation as a whole.
2. That resistance to attacks on trade union rights requires that we stand together as one, to resist all attacks on any individual unionists or unions.

Noting our commitment to the universal working class slogan:
'AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL'

Resolves:

1. That in the event of any repressive action being taken against any trade unionist or union within our ranks, the Central Executive Committee must immediately call for action from all affiliate unions in support of this individual or this union.

22. CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

This Federation noting:

1. That Capital and the local state are spending millions of rand to celebrate the centenary of Johannesburg;
2. That they are planning the celebrations next year without consulting the workers who have built Johannesburg, the gold mines and the industrial complexes we have today;

Therefore resolves:

1. To organise a boycott of all centenary celebrations;
2. To ensure that all unions under the banner of COSATU organise an alternative programme to highlight 100 years of exploitation and oppression in Johannesburg and in particular the mining industry.