



# The Shopsteward

The official publication of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

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# COSATU

## 14TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

New COSATU National Office Bearers elected





**Solly Phetoe**  
**Editor in Chief**

# Editorial note

This is happening while latest job figures and economic projections paint a dire picture of the pending gloom and suggest that in the coming months more and more people will be plunged into poverty. The economy continues to be bogged down in a crisis that has persisted over the last ten years. All reports show poverty trends in South Africa confirm our fears that the socioeconomic status of the majority in South Africa is deteriorating whilst few people are getting richer due to economic policies that favour the rich. When applying the food poverty line which is the rand value below which individuals are unable to buy food for adequate health.

Current policies have clearly benefited white women and India /Asians and have entrenched the apartheid colour bar rule in the workplace whereby firstly white women are given training and promotion opportunities followed by Indians.

These numbers are depressing because the government has just announced that it no longer expects SOEs to consider BEE compliance when doing procurement. The objectives of BBBEE remain important and valid. Most companies and wealth remain largely in white and male hands. Race and class continue to go hand in hand with poverty.

However, we are disappointed by the lack of progress we have made in transforming the economy and ownership since 1994. This requires introspection by all stakeholders on what needs to be done to address the legacies of apartheid and colonialism that continue to scar our nation.

The tendency for BBBEE to benefit a few is worrying. Whilst we want to deracialise classes, our focus as a trade union federation is on ensuring that the poor and workers benefit not an elite. This necessitates consideration on how the laws and policies of the nation need to be adjusted to ensure we direct policies and programmes to benefit the poor not the elite. The statistics are worrying and speak to a small elite benefiting in the main.

The recent ANC NEC meeting was silent on the need to support local procurement or on what is the interim plan to promote local procurement and BBBEE in public procurement whilst the Public Procurement Bill is processed through Parliament, which will take until mid-2024 to be concluded. We think Treasury went too far and unnecessarily so. We intend to meet with them shortly at Nedlac and hope to agree on a way forward.

In this last edition of Shopsteward, we wish all our readers happy holidays and a safe festive season. We need to spend wisely this festive season and relax and recharge so that we can start the new years with vigour to fight the battles ahead.

***Happy Holidays to everyone!***

**T**his copy of our Shopsteward comes out after our 14th National Congress and on the eve of the ANC 55th National Conference. The 14th National Congress proved once and for all that the federation of Elijah Bharayi is alive and well. Our congress received a report that proved once and for all that the federation is still providing the necessary leadership in this country. Many of our troubled unions are stabilizing and we are on the process of ensuring that by the beginning of 2023, all our affiliated unions are on a stable footing.

We also resolved on waging some solid campaigns against employers who are exploiting workers. These battles are not going to easy, but history tells us that if we are united and prepared, we can wage them successfully. We also need partners to fight these battles. We need to work with everyone, including other unions, federations, communities, and progressive civil society.

Our partnership should be harnessed to fight racism, corruption and defend our revolution. Racism and corruption are alive and well in this country and we must be ready to fight them in the workplace and in our society. Most of you experience racism your workplaces every day. But the biggest sewer where racists swim is on the farms. South African farm workers are some of the most oppressed workers in the country. There is still modern-day slavery thriving on our farms. They do not die because of poor working conditions, but they are killed by employers.

They do not enjoy paid sickness, family, and annual leaves. They do not get UIF, because their employers do not pay the money, they deduct from them. They do

not enjoy full maternity leave benefits and rights. They are dismissed arbitrary without the employers following proper disciplinary procedures. These workers are evicted with no regard to legal due processes.

We are also in the middle of a mobilization campaign in the public service with workers preparing for a strike after the collapse of the wage negotiations. This is a fight that workers cannot lose because it will have consequences for the entire public sector and private sector going forward. We are also grappling with the collapse of the SOEs with the Post Office threatening to retrench 6000 workers. We are also witnessing job losses in the private sector with Sibanye-Stillwater threatening to retrench more than 2000 workers.

The biggest battle for workers going forward though is going to be over the fight against the privatisation of the SOE's and any possible retrenchments of SOE workers. The reality is that privatisation will detrimentally affect the socio-economic interests of the poor, which includes workers and the working class in general.

It will also adversely affect the state's capacity to provide basic services to the poor; provide for infrastructural development; intervene to restructure the economy to ensure growth and employment creation; and play a developmental role in general. There will be more job losses and it will foster the casualisation of labour, with more and more workers being hired on limited fixed-term contracts of employment. Privatisation also removes workers from the bargaining units established over many years in the public sector, generally leading to a reduction in incomes, benefits, and job security.

About 16 million people that are extremely food poor and unable to obtain enough food to provide them with sufficient diet for healthy development. These figures should not come as surprise as 24 million people are depended on social grants. The World Bank describes SA as an upper middle-income country because of per capita income but also declared that we are the most unequal country in the world.

Whilst a trade union traditionally should only use class as a tool of analysis in SA it is inescapable fact that the victims of colonialism and apartheid are blacks Africans. Between 2011 and 2015 the percentage of black Africans and coloured living in extreme poverty increased from 43.4% to 47.7% for blacks and for coloureds from 20.2% to 23.3% and regardless of sex, black Africans have always had high numbers of people living in extreme poverty.

Contrarily, the percentage of poor Indians and Asians decreased from 2.9% in 2011 to 1.2% in 2015 and for poor whites decreased from 0.5% to 0.4%. Black Africans and coloureds require more intervention from the state to help them move out of poverty compared to white and Indians/Asians. This means that we must urgently revisit our employment equity laws and BEE laws to re-define and establish a hierarchy of historically disadvantaged persons and economically marginalised to ensure that the beneficiaries are firstly blacks and coloured and then others.

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Norman Mampane - **Editor**

## Word from the Editor

### **W**elcome to COSATU 14th National Congress Special Bulletin.

It [Congress] was a historic Workers' Parliament in 2022 in which affiliated trade unions rallied behind the Congress Theme; "Build Working Class Unity for Economic Liberation towards Socialism." The building blocks are evident in the superlative degree of plenary engagements on policy matters, organizational renewal and heightening recruitment campaigns to strengthen the federation on the ground and also galvanizing international allies to advance decent work for all and marching towards Socialism.

In this edition, we cover all Congress related activities, including the election outcomes of the National Office Bearers. We thank all delegates, worker leaders, partners, Small Medium Enterprises and workers across all sectors of the economy for supporting a successful elective Congress. COSATU has noted the successful celebrations of the South African Communist Party [SACP's] Red October Campaign and the federation fully supports the campaign.

"There could be no better way to capture the aspirations of the working class in our present day society than the three demands put forward by the SACP; Land, Food and Work. The very basis of every production is land and the very basis of every life is food and the very basis of human existence is work. Therefore, it is correct to identify these 3 inter-related and

primary struggles of humanity. The capitalist crises and the deepening environmental destruction together with the COVID-19 pandemic have produced crises of unimaginable proportions, the skyrocketing levels of hunger, inequalities, unemployment, crime and corruption in all our communities." COSATU has also appreciated the preparations towards the African National Congress 55th National Conference scheduled to take place on December in Gauteng and we wish the revolutionary Movement successful deliberations.

"The ANC must indeed be more assertive in advocating a global political and economic architecture that is democratic, fair and inclusive. Therefore the ANC must utilize the Conference to deepen implementations of resolutions to take the National Democratic Revolution forward, amongst others, tackle state capture, corruption, maladministration in the state, accelerate quality service delivery in communities, advance transformation of society by addressing poverty, inequality, unemployment, economic exclusion and eradicating gender based violence and a burden of diseases."

On the International front, we are fresh from the 11th SATUCC Congress held at Boksburg and we congratulate the leadership collective elected, with COSATU President Zingiswa Losi re-elected to lead the regional body within SADC.

The World Bank, the IMF, or economists around the world have expressed concern about an upcoming recession in the world.

If we the people work not to stop

this, then innumerable problems like unemployment, poverty, hunger, crime, illiteracy, terrorism will arise in the world. The world is still preoccupied with tackling the devastating effects of Covid-19 pandemic in the world of work.

We are looking forward to pursuing class struggle with more revolutionary vigour and attain full implementation of Decent Work Agenda across the globe and eradicate social injustices suffered by the working class in every community. Workers are expecting the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Sharm el-Sheik November 2002, Conference of the Parties [COP27] in Egypt to be implemented in member states and workers are forthright on demanding a Just Transition to save jobs and that international labour federations or labour centres must work together to raise the climate change education ambition of every country, to navigate against the effects of severe floods, droughts, unprecedented storms, heat waves, hunger, food scarcity, poverty, unemployment, a burden of diseases and wars as a result of a struggle for survival.

There is a popular view that "Climate change has devastating impacts on people, their communities, and their jobs and livelihoods. Yet, migration can become a meaningful climate resilience and adaptation strategy for sending and receiving communities. Ensuring this positive outcome requires that migration is based on choice, planned through a consultative, rights-based and equitable process that adheres to international standards, including international labour standards that ensure decent work for migrant

workers." Africa must address geopolitical wars in Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, and others parts of the world such as in Ukraine. This applies to threats of wars between South Korea and North Korea.

Imperialists must cease to provoke unnecessary wars across all continents or regions! World peace must be promoted to ensure that human development flourishes! The historic Brazilian Presidential campaign for Lula was much more than a coalition of political parties.

Many analysts hold a view that Lula's victory suggests that he must pay attention to the source of his success. "The route to a greener and fairer future is not through focus groups, it is through mobilisation of a multi-racial working-class."

We noted that Lula's election campaign was anchored around 'a transformative platform to defeat fascism, secure social justice, and save the future of our planet. Lula's platform offered an alternative to impoverishment, hatred, and ecocide: wealth taxes, debt-forgiveness, equal pay for men and women, more affordable housing, an increase in the minimum wage, and a mass poverty-relief programme.' There are noble lessons to take home!

Congratulations President Lula! Congratulations to all elected Shopstewards across all workplaces and Back to Basics Campaign is on course!

**It is not yet Uhuru!**

*Ntai Norman Mmapane*  
**COSATU The Shopsteward Editor**



## COSATU concluded its 14th National Congress

29 September 2022

**M**ore than 2 500 delegates assembled at Gallagher Convention Centre at Midrand to participate in the 14th Elective National Congress from the 26th until the 29th of November under the Theme; 'Build Working Class Unity for Economic Liberation towards Socialism.'

The 14th Congress took place amidst a class onslaught launched against the poor working class by capitalists across the globe and the delegates through plenary debates alluded to the 'deepening crises of capitalism, amply demonstrated by the very high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequalities as the daily experiences of workers and communities.'

Opening COSATU 14th National Congress, President Zingiswa Losi said "It has been an honour to serve as the President of your Federation for the past 4 years.

It has been a long journey. Vladimir Lenin once said, "There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." "And then there are the past four years where we battled a global pandemic, an economic recession, frequent loadshedding, the July 2021 violence, staggering unemployment, struggling State Owned Enterprises and municipalities, rampant corruption, a painful local election, the 2022 floods and the year is not over. As we reflect over these tumultuous 4 years, let us remember our many fallen comrades, friends and family. We cannot forget the General Secretaries of NUM and

SAMWU, David Siphunzi and Koena Ramatlou, Minister Jackson Mthembu, Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe Dennis Goldberg, the founding father of Zambia, President Kenneth Kaunda and many others. We owe it to their sacrifices and dreams, to pick up their spear, to continue to fight and persevere to defend the rights, improve the lives of and give hope to the working class. We are gathered here at this 14th Congress, not as a matter of ritual or constitutional formality. We are here to reflect on the battles we have waged on behalf of workers collectively over the past 4 years, to celebrate our victories, to learn from our defeats, to rejuvenate our Federation and to strategize for the struggles ahead.

I am confident that as we engage, critique and debate over these 4 days, that we will do so in a manner that will make our members proud, that will give hope to workers and that will set an example for all to follow. We must always cherish our comradeship and unity. Unity is hard work and if we are not careful it can be lost in a single moment of insanity. It must be nourished every day by all of us. We only need to look at the fate of countless trade unions and liberation movements to see what happens to those who treat unity as a slogan."

"Yet we have survived. We have the scars and wounds. We have lost painful battles and we have won historic victories. We have learned from our mistakes and are wiser for it. Since our last congress,

unemployment reached an all-time high of 46%. Some of these lost jobs have begun to be recovered including 638 000 during 2022 with unemployment decreasing by 2% over the past 2 quarters. This is our number one crisis. No society can be sustained with 1 out of 2 people unemployed, with 70% youth unemployment. We are in danger of creating a permanent class of unemployed. 28 years into democracy, despite all the efforts of government, we remain the world's most unequal society with rising levels of poverty and indebtedness. In December 2019, few had heard of Covid-19. Yet within weeks, it had consumed the world. We lost more than 100 000 South Africans to it. We were compelled to shut down the economy and institute a state of disaster as we sought to contain and overcome it. Against all odds, we did well. Workers and society responded to the call by the President for us to work as one to defeat this pandemic. We are proud of the role Affiliates and the Federation played during this moment of crisis. We must never forget the sacrifices of our nurses, doctors and paramedics who worked tirelessly to save millions of lives. The losses of hundreds of health workers are a loss not only to DENOSA, NEHAWU, SAMATU and SAEPU, but for all of us. We must not forget the many workers across the nation who fell to the pandemic, including SAPS members, municipal

cleaners and retail workers. We are proud of how our Affiliates responded to Covid-19. SACTWU worked factory by factory to ensure that clothing and textile workers not only received their UIF Covid-19 TERS but also to engage and encourage workers to vaccinate. We remember the daily videos prepared by SADTU to persuade teachers on why it is critical for all of us to vaccinate, to save lives and livelihoods. We applauded the leadership of POPCRU when they led from the front and were among the first to vaccinate to show workers that it was safe and the right thing to do. We applauded the efforts by SASBO to persuade banking workers to vaccinate, to defend those who were dismissed for not vaccinating and ensure those workers are reinstated."

"Yes, we have turned the corner on the pandemic, but we need to remain vigilant, to receive our booster shots and maintain healthy lifestyles. We owe it to our families and our health workers. We applaud



Newly elected COSATU lead





Leadership at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand

the work done by COSATU at Nedlac, working daily with government, our sister federations and business to manage the pandemic, stabilize the economy and provide economic and social relief. These were uncharted waters. The UIF was never built for the shutdown of the entire economy. Despite the many challenges, we managed to ensure that over R64 billion was released credit free from the UIF to help more than 5.5 million workers take care of their families. We worked to ensure the banks gave 3 months loan relief to consumers and that government provided relief to fragile economic sectors. Working with government we managed to ensure the roll out of the SRD Grant to more than 10 million unemployed persons. With all its challenges, it is the foundation for the Basic Income Grant that we have long championed. We need to retain and expand it, fix its weaknesses, increase it to the food poverty line and link its recipients to skills training and employment

programmes. With all of our frustrations with government, we must not forget how we have worked tirelessly with it to roll out the largest relief measures since 1994. The Presidential Employment Stimulus has provided work opportunities, skills and a minimum wage for over 800 000 young people. We need to increase this to 2 million people in the 2023 budget. We must engage government on the various employment programmes, to address the issues we are not happy with, to improve on those that work. We need to ensure that no person is denied the right to work, to develop skills and acquire experience.”

“This must include improving the role that the SETAs must play.”

We must be alarmed by the state of governance.

“The reports by the Auditor-General on the state of municipalities is a horror story. A decade ago, 10% of our municipalities were in financial distress. Today it is 90%. 43 have collapsed. 151 are on the brink of

collapse. Many municipal workers are sent home without being paid, from Renosterberg to Amahlathi. SA Express and Mango collapsed leaving 1500 and 800 without jobs and the monies owed to them. The RAF has issued retrenchment letters to 400 workers. SAA shed more than 8000 of its jobs. The Post Office is planning to retrench 6 000 workers. Whilst we must continue to fight to save their jobs and wages of workers at our SOEs, we must come with concrete solutions that will ensure these SOEs are saved. If we don’t, then we must not be surprised when they collapse, and our members lose their jobs. We must do the same with local government. It is clear we cannot sustain 259 municipalities. Many of them lack a rates base.”

What is our alternative? Can we develop a coherent road map to move towards the District Development Model?

“If we don’t, then we must expect to see a repeat of what happened in Frankfort and Lichtenburg, where Clover closed their dairies because the municipalities no longer provided essential services. We cannot afford to see rural communities plunged into absolute despair. We should not think that this cannot happen at national and provincial departments. The signs are there. The frequent loadshedding and deteriorating generation capacity at Eskom, the failure by SITA to provide reliable internet services to government, the numbers of vacancies at Home Affairs, the declining head count at SAPS, the never-ending infrastructure backlog in our schools, the chaos at NSFAS, the failure to hold people accountable for corruption at the State Security Agency and the list goes on. We correctly condemn the reckless austerity budget cuts to key frontline service departments.”

**And then what? What are we doing to expose corruption? When some of our own members are implicated, do we keep quiet?**

COSATU concluded its 14th National Congress at Midrand

Newly elected COSATU Collective leadership at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand

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under the Theme; ‘Build Working Class Unity for Economic Liberation towards Socialism.’

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# Worker Issues



AFADWU delegates at COSATU 14th National Congress plenary

us. We only need to look at the fate of countless trade unions and liberation movements to see what happens to those who treat unity as a slogan.”

Workers have faced countless socio-economic crises since COSATU's 13th National Conference in 2018. “Yet we have survived. We have the scars and wounds. We have lost painful battles and we have won historic victories. We have learned from our mistakes and are wiser for it. Since our last congress, unemployment reached an all-time high of 46%. Some of these lost jobs have begun to be recovered including 638 000 during 2022 with unemployment decreasing by 2% over the past 2 quarters. This is our number one crisis. No society can be sustained with 1 out of 2 people unemployed, with 70% youth unemployment. We are in danger of creating a permanent class of unemployed. 28 years into democracy, despite all the efforts of government, we remain the world's most unequal society with rising levels of poverty and indebtedness. In December 2019, few had heard of Covid-19. Yet within weeks, it had consumed the world. We lost more than 100 000 South Africans to it. We were compelled to shut down the economy and institute a state of disaster as we sought to contain and overcome it. Against all odds, we did well. Workers and society responded to the call by the President for us to

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## What is our alternative?

Can we develop a coherent road map to move towards the District Development Model?

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And then what? What are we doing to expose corruption? When some of our own members are implicated, do we keep quiet?

“These are the hard issues we must grapple with. We must honour the sacrifices of our SAMWU shop stewards who blew the whistle against corruption at VBS and were then assassinated. If we are to honour their sacrifices, then we must support the call by POPCRU to reverse the neo-liberal budget cuts to the SAPS. We cannot accept that we have moved from 208 000 members of SAPS in the early 2000s to 172 000 today. We must support NEHAWU, DENOSA, SAEPU and SAMATU in their call for the filling of health vacancies. We must support the call by SADTU to ensure all schools are well resourced to enable them to be places of learning and growth. We applaud the excellent work done by the staff of SARS to rid it of state capture and corruption. This year alone, the hard work of employees at SARS, brought in an additional R60 billion in tax collection, enabling government to



continue paying the SRD Grant and retain the Presidential Employment Stimulus. We have been engaging with government and business on the President's call for a social compact. Whilst we support the call for a social compact, we have made it clear to government that we will not sacrifice workers' hard-won rights.

We will not allow our progressive labour laws to be weakened. We will not allow workers to be thrown under the bus for the failures of government to govern or business to grow the economy. The social compact must be based upon progressive principles, it must defend the rights of workers, provide relief for the unemployed, rebuild the developmental state, reduce poverty and inequality, and address the fundamental obstacles to growing the economy and creating decent work. The foundation for the social compact must be the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan which speaks to stabilizing and growing the economy. It calls for securing and rebuilding Transnet and Metro Rail so they can provide reliable transport for workers and our products. It includes the Eskom Social Compact providing clear interventions for stabilizing and investing in Eskom so it can provide reliable and affordable energy without which the economy cannot grow. This includes slashing Eskom's debt and tackling corruption at it. It requires Eskom to be supported to invest in and own its own renewable energy generation capacity. It must include the need for the industrialised world to finance a just energy transition that leaves no worker or community behind. The ERRP calls for all of us to support locally produced goods. We have long championed this call. SACTWU has been a pioneer in the localization campaign. Yet often our actions do not match our words. The clothes we wear, the food we buy, the cars we drive, the furniture we use." Do we check if they are locally made?

"Our pension funds are the foundation for the economy. The PIC is the largest investment fund in Africa. Do we challenge our pension and investment funds to invest more in local jobs?

Do we ensure that all of the t-shirts we produce for our conferences are Proudly South African? How will this economy grow and create jobs, if we do not support it?

"Whilst some unions are active in the industrial master plans, many are not. This must be corrected. These master plans are key to growing the economy and creating jobs."

We have scored many victories at Nedlac and Parliament. The challenge is to ensure they are implemented. Amilcar Cabral wisely said "Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children."

"COSATU and its Affiliates has won many progressive victories at Nedlac and Parliament that are now the laws of the Republic.

#### Some of these key victories include:

- The National Minimum Wage raising the wages of 6 million workers, especially the 800 000 farm workers and 900 000 domestic workers, who received a 17% increase in 2022.
- The Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act expanding maternity leave payments and including still born births and 3rd trimester miscarriages. UIF payments were increased and extended from 8 to 12 months.
- The Parental Laws Amendment Act providing 10 days paid parental leave and 10 weeks paid adoption leave.
- The Compensation for Occupational Injury and Diseases Amendment Bill that will now include domestic workers and extend cover for workers exposed to violence, PTSD and occupational illnesses many years after exposure at work.
- The Employment Equity Amendment Bill strengthening our employment equity law and requiring companies doing business with the state to be in compliance with our labour laws.
- The National Credit Amendment Act protecting indebted workers from losing their essential possessions in the event of defaulting on their debts.
- The Competition Amendment Act empowering the state to tackle monopolies and to take into account the impact on workers when approving mergers.
- The Companies Amendment Bill

requiring companies to provide their financial reports to unions and to disclose their wage gaps in their annual reports.

- The Copyright Amendment Bill allowing for affordable access to educational materials.
- The Performers Protection Amendment Bill recognizing the rights of actors, musicians and other performers.
- The National Health Insurance Bill will lay the foundation for the long championed NHI.
- The PIC Amendment Act providing for worker representation on the PIC Board, transparency and accountability, and a pro-worker investment mandate.
- The Expropriation Bill will empower government to expropriate land, including without compensation where needed, to accelerate land reform.
- The Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Amendment Act recognizing title rights of millions of township and rural residents."

"Allow me to make a special mention of the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill that is now before Parliament. It is in response to COSATU's call for financially distressed workers to be allowed limited access to their pension funds. It includes public and private sector workers. Treasury has agreed to the COSATU's proposals to ensure that it addresses the needs of workers. The final drafting is being worked on. Parliament will pass it in 2023. We are pushing for it to come into effect by October 2023. This will provide badly needed relief for millions of workers and avoid the need for members to resign and cash out their entire pension funds when they are struggling. Parliament passed the Municipal Structures Amendment Act which prohibits all municipal workers from holding office in a political party. The DPSA has now tabled a similar Bill at Nedlac. We have rejected these provisions as an unconstitutional infringement upon the rights of workers to express their right of political association. We are engaging government and the ANC to scrap these provisions. We will not accept any attacks on the constitutional rights of workers." If we are to advance working-class struggles, then we must defend our movement.

"It is not by accident that COSATU and its predecessor SACTU, have

been part of the Alliance. Workers deliberated on joining the Alliance at length. The Alliance, like any marriage, has its ups and downs. However, with all its challenges, it remains the best vehicle to advance the struggles of workers. The ANC and the SACP, with all of their challenges, their strengths and weaknesses, remain the most progressive and relevant political formations to drive the demands of the working class."

"Let us not be fooled by the peace time slogans of the opposition parties. They were nowhere to be seen when workers had to go on strike in Durban in 1973 or when COSATU House was bombed in 1987 nor were they to be seen the UDF was banned. These very same opposition parties have consistently voted against our progressive labour laws in Parliament. They have promised to repeal them if they are elected to government. They have stated unambiguously that they will scrap the minimum wage, end collective bargaining, remove protections from unfair dismissals, slash the salaries of and retrench public servants, and sell all our SOEs.

The ANC is not perfect. It has made serious mistakes. It is battling to cleanse itself of the demons of corruption and factionalism. It is contested by various class forces. Yet it has stood with COSATU when we demanded the constitutional enshrinement of workers' rights, the passing of our labour laws and our many other progressive laws.

Our task is to defend workers' hard-won victories. We must contest the ANC and the Alliance to ensure that the voice of workers is heard and not sidelined. We must help to rid the ANC of criminal elements if it is to be saved. We must continue to support the SACP. Its voice is critical now more than ever. The Left Axis of the Alliance must be strengthened. Workers sent a clear message to the ANC in the local elections. If the ANC does not get its act together, deliver quality public services, tackle corruption, fix Eskom, save Metro Rail and Transnet, grow the economy, create jobs and provide relief for the unemployed; then we will face a repeat of the disastrous 2021 election results in 2024. This is something that workers cannot afford. Winning the 2024 elections is not about ensuring jobs for comrades in Parliament. It is about defending the hard-won victories



# Worker Issues

and rights of workers. We cannot afford to fail. A government led by the opposition parties will spell the end of the many victories workers have achieved. A coalition led by the ANC will struggle to deliver the demands of workers. We cannot afford to gamble upon the rights of workers." Workers are not only under siege at home, but also across the world.

"Workers in Cuba continue to suffer under the US blockade, workers in Venezuela are reeling from an economy on its knees, Palestinians remain under occupation, the Sahrawi continue to be denied the right to self-determination, Zimbabweans are forced to flee an economy that cannot provide jobs, Swati workers' rights are routinely violated, and workers in Ukraine and Russia face a devastating war among brothers. We applaud the solidarity campaigns with workers across the world by our Affiliates and our Provinces. Let us engage on how these efforts can be expanded. We congratulate the efforts played by Affiliates and COSATU to provide leadership in SATUCC, ITUC, WFTU, the ILO and the BRICS. It is critical that we increase our participation in engagements on the African Continental Free Trade Agreement as well as AGOA. These will be key to local jobs."

If we are to be victorious in the battles we wage for workers, then we need a strong and vibrant Federation.

"COSATU can only be as strong as our Affiliates. We remain concerned about the challenges some experience. The CEC has been actively assisting such Affiliates. We have seen a positive turn around in SAMWU and a steady increase in its membership. SAMATU has successfully held provincial congresses. We must continue working with Affiliates that continue to experience challenges, including CEPPWAWU, CWU and AFADWU.

It is critical for us to engage frankly on what needs to be done to assist struggling Affiliates. At times these are leadership challenges. In others it is the nature of the sector. What is needed is to honestly diagnose the challenges, to develop a realistic programme to resolve them and to work together to implement them.

What we cannot afford to do is to divide workers, to fight over positions or to destroy unions. To do so is a failure of leadership, it is a

betrayal of workers. We have made progress in admitting AFADWU. We need to engage more on how to bring other unions into COSATU if we are serious about achieving our goal of one union, one industry, one federation, one country.

We need to reflect on why only 27% of workers are unionized? What are our programmes to organise the unorganized? What creative strategies are needed to increase our membership to 2 million by the next congress? To attract young workers?

We are pleased that we recently held the COSATU Young Workers' Summit. We need to work to ensure each Affiliate launches its young workers' structures. We applaud the successful launch of the COSATU National Gender Committee.

How can we adopt recruitment strategies to organise Uber drivers, workers who work from home and other e-platform workers?

How can we help TUMSA organise musicians and SATDWU organise taxi drivers? How can we assist SADSAWU to recruit domestic workers? And SACTWU, SACCAWU and AFADWU to organise farm workers?

The best way to recruit workers is for us to service members. What mechanisms are we putting in place in to ensure this happens, and that grievances are dealt with?

We have won victories at Parliament. Are we training our shop stewards and members to understand these new laws, so they are empowered to ensure their implementation on the ground?

COSATU ensured South Africa ratified the ILO Convention 190 on Combatting Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Workplace. Can we organise campaigns to popularize this call? Can we work with POPCRU to ensure that domestic workers are protected from sexual harassment and violence?

The 3 Gender Based Violence Acts have come into effect. Let us work with SADTU to ensure all learners and parents are aware of their progressive provisions. Let us work with POPCRU to ensure that the sexual offenders' register is operational. Can we pay special attention to the needs of LGBTQI Plus workers and their struggles with victimization? We have seen during Covid-19 the critical role that the UIF plays, yet 4 million workers are not registered with it. Can Affiliates develop programmes to

ensure every worker is registered with the UIF? Employers, in the public and private sectors unashamedly undermine collective bargaining over the past few years. Our own comrades in government unilaterally abandoned a signed wage agreement with public servants in 2020.

Treasury attempted to replicate this in local government and Eskom. Employers in the private sector have followed suit. In the Post Office, they don't even bother to pay workers' benefits. We have witnessed our own ally; the ANC fail to pay its staff.

Collective bargaining is under siege. The only way to defend collective bargaining, is to recruit, to organise, to conscientize, to educate and train, to service, to unite. If we neglect our unions, ignore members' needs, focus on internal squabbles, foster divisions then we must expect employers to sense weakness and undermine and collapse collective bargaining.

A well organised and a united union cannot be defeated.

We applaud the efforts of SACTWU to ensure workers in the clothing and textile sectors receive above inflation increases. We commend the victorious battles led by NUM to ensure workers at Sibanye are united and received what they are due. We salute the efforts of NUM and SATAWU to work with NUMSA, Solidarity, AMCU and UASA and other unions to defend the rights of workers and win their demands.

If we are to defend the rights of public servants, then we must be united as NEHAWU, SADTU, POPCRU, DENOSA, PAWUSA, SAMATU and SAEPU in the PSCBC. If we are divided, then how will we be victorious?

Unity requires compromises, not dictates. It requires humility, not triumphalism. It requires sobriety, not slogans. That is what Karl Marx called for when he said, "Workers of the World, Unite"! Our sister Federations are with us today. We are pleased that they could honour us with their presence. We have worked hard at Nedlac to achieve that unity in action. We must continue to deepen these bonds. Comrades allow me to conclude, we have a long week ahead of us.

I would like to thank the leadership of the CEC for the support they have given the Federation, its NOBs and myself. None of our victories

would have been possible if it were not for the support we received from the CEC and our Affiliates. The honest and robust engagements we experience in the CEC give me hope for workers.

It has been a privilege to work with the collective of the NOBs of COSATU. They have helped stabilize, rebuild and take COSATU to new heights when many armchair critics had written the Federation off.

The NOBs worked tirelessly not only for the past 4 years, but in fact their entire adult lives in service of the working class. The General Secretary, cde. Bheki Ntshalintshali, has risen from being a taxi driver and a worker at SASOL to a living encyclopedia of the history of COSATU. Cde. Deputy General Secretary Solly Phetoe is at his happiest when organizing farm and mine workers. When we worried about his recovery from his car accident in 2019, he was asking for reports on COSATU's campaigns from his hospital bed. Cde. 1st Deputy President Mike Shingange is indeed a fighting fit shop steward, never afraid to raise the voice of workers.

Cde. 2nd Deputy President Louise Thihe, one of the few women who have risen to become President of an Affiliate, has been a fearless role model for all women. Cde. Treasurer, Freda Oosthuizen, has juggled the challenges of keeping COSATU afloat during difficult times. And she takes no prisoners!

"I would like to thank the staff of the Federation. You have led the charge in organizing workers, waging campaigns, raising the voice of workers in every media platform 24/7, in training shop stewards, in addressing workers' grievances, in waging battles at Nedlac and Parliament and the Alliance, in keeping the machinery of COSATU well-oiled and running at all times."

"I would like to thank all of you from the NOBs to the CEC, Affiliates and staff for the support you have given me as the President of this mighty Federation of Elijah Barayi and Ray Alexander. I hope I have done justice to the support and trust you have placed in me. I will be forever grateful and humbled." Enkosi. Siyabulela. Baie dankie. Thank you. Matla!



## Extracts from the 14th National Congress Declaration

“The 14th National Congress reaffirmed its perspective of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as an intertwined struggle with our cause for socialism. Delegates were resolute in their commitment to the NDR as a struggle to advance the resolution of the intersecting class, race and gender contradictions embedded in our society, which are the legacy of the triple forms of oppression that the majority of our people suffered under Colonialism of a Special Type (CST). Therefore, the Freedom Charter remains our yardstick in our conjunctural assessment of the direction of the NDR. In this regard, whilst we have noted the advances and gains that have been made since the 1994 democratic breakthrough, we are convinced that the persistence and deepening of the class, race and gender inequalities in our society is directly related to the Neoliberal trajectory that the country has taken over nearly three decades.”

### **Celebrating the legacy of a fighting and militant working class**

“We honour the proud struggles of workers and the heroic achievements that led to the defeat of apartheid colonialism and the attainment of democracy. In this context, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which is one of the founding and leading affiliates of our federation over the past 37 years of our unbroken struggles. In the same vein, we proudly celebrate the 50 years of the Durban strikes, which shook the foundations of apartheid in 1973 and created the renewed impetus of trade union militancy that led to the birth of COSATU, some years after. This we shall commemorate every year, particularly on its 50th anniversary in 2023. This resoundingly successful Congress, was joined by our allies in both the domestic and international front, the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP)

as well as from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU). It was also attended by our domestic and international guests, a range of progressive organisations and representatives of our allied trade unions from our own continent, Africa, Cuba, Western Sahara, Palestine, Ghana, Zimbabwe, eSwatini, Venezuela and many others.”

### **The Analysis since the advent of Our Democracy in 1994 and the ANC government**

“Throughout this period of six consecutive ANC-led governments, the rates of unemployment, poverty and inequalities have remained at crisis levels and in turn these triple-crises have reinforced the crisis of social reproduction and the cost of living experienced by the working class and rural poor, especially women and the youth.

This explains why our society continues to be engulfed by high-levels of crime, gender-based violence and the abuse of children. As part of this Neoliberal trajectory, the penetration of capital into the operation of the state through public-private-partnerships and the outsourcing of public functions has engendered a widespread endemic of corruption across all spheres of government, State Owned Companies and agencies, as highlighted by the capture of the state we have and still experience.

Congress acknowledged that the balance of class forces remain in favour of monopoly capital. Despite the ANC being a leading agent in the political terrain, the structure of the economic base has not fundamentally changed. Instead, this balance of class forces has locked the country in a Neoliberal trajectory which has been characterised by the shift to the low-wage services sector, deindustrialisation, financialisation,

mechanisation and retrenchments. The combined effects of all these multiple crises have plunged our revolution and the leading role of our movement into a crisis of legitimacy. The ANC as a leading component of the Alliance and a dominant party in government, is rapidly losing the moral high-ground as a leader of society. At same time, these multiple national crises are now aggravated by the systemic effects of global capitalist accumulation, whose exploitation of nature is causing zoonotic pandemics such as the COVID-19 and an ecological crisis which is manifesting in climate change. As in other countries of the global-south, especially in Africa, the shifts in the long-term climate and weather patterns marked by regular heat-waves, draughts, floods and the expansion of deserts are costing lives, ruining livelihoods and intensifying food insecurity, migration and social instability.

Consistent with the overall analysis and conclusions from the proceedings of this congress, we have adopted resolutions and a medium-term strategic vision that cut across all our pillars to gear the federation to fight for an alternative low-carbon and developmental trajectory as a key element of the NDR and the struggle for socialism.”

“Congress noted and welcomed the fact that the SACP has recently held a successful 15th National Congress.”

“The federation supports the SACP’s overarching strategic political message of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor. Everything considered in the current conjuncture, our political programme shall be driven by the following key tasks:

- To build capacity of the federation and affiliates to undertake systematic ideological and political education on Marxism and Leninism and our conjunctural political programme based on our resolutions, with

a special focus on our shop-stewards, organisers and staff and leadership at all levels. In this regard, we shall also develop a joint ideological and political training programme with the SACP.

- The tasks of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor shall be on the terrain of deepening of the NDR. In this regard, our Socialist-Axis shall endeavour to mobilise formations of the MDM and other mass community based organisations in responding to the immediate triple-crises, the high cost of living, the crisis of social reproduction and the struggle for a just transition.
- We shall establish and strengthen gender structures across all affiliates in order to build capacity and position the COSATU Gender Forum to play a catalyst role and be at the centre of building a working class led and radical national women’s movement.
- We shall undertake concrete steps to strengthen our internal capacity to propagate our critique of capitalism and the Neoliberal economic trajectory. In this regard, we shall articulate our policy perspective on building the Developmental State as part of the battle of ideas and building working class hegemony as part of the struggle for socialism.”

“Over the period under review and based on the mandate from the 13th National Congress, the priority of our political programme was to strengthen the federation as part of building working class hegemony in the NDR. We called for the reconfiguration of the Alliance and undertook to support the ANC in the coming elections on that basis, but key to that undertaking is the fight for the renewal of the ANC and the end of factionalism.



# Worker Issues

Based on the robust deliberations that ensued, this congress came to the following conclusions:

- That whilst there has been some improvement in the relations between the ANC and other components, the reconfiguration of the Alliance has not materialised in practice. Instead, fundamental disagreements on macroeconomic policies implemented by government remain and such disagreements have been the root cause of the lack of unity and cohesion within the Alliance.
- Whilst the ANC insists that it remains the sole strategic political centre of the Alliance, as an organisation the ANC remains deeply divided and organisationally paralysed. Objectively, the ANC can no longer claim to have the capacity to be the strategic political centre of the Alliance and to lead the NDR. The working class must take responsibility to reassert its leadership role as the primary motive force.
- The persisting fundamental divergences on macroeconomic policies for the future of the country and the deep-seated internal factional divisions and organisational paralysis of the ANC raise questions as to what would justify the continuation of the Alliance in the current form."

"Congress noted and welcomed the fact that the SACP has recently held a successful 15th National Congress. The federation supports the SACP's overarching strategic political message of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor. Everything considered in the current conjuncture, our political programme shall be driven by the following key tasks:

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- We shall undertake concrete steps to strengthen our internal capacity to propagate our critique of capitalism and the Neoliberal economic trajectory. In this regard, we shall articulate our policy perspective on building the Developmental State as part of the battle of ideas and building working class hegemony as part of the struggle for socialism."

"Workers have faced countless socio-economic crises since COSATU's 13th National Congress in 2018. Unemployment reached an all-time high of 46% in 2021. Whilst some of these lost jobs have begun to be recovered during 2022, unemployment remains our number one crisis. No society can be sustained with 1 out of 2 people unemployed, with 70% youth unemployment. We remain the world's most unequal society with rising levels of poverty and indebtedness. In December 2019, few had heard of Covid-19. Yet within weeks, it had consumed the world. We lost more than 100 000 South Africans to it. We were compelled to shut down the economy and institute a state of disaster as we sought to contain and overcome it."

Against all odds, we did well. "Workers and society responded to the call by the President for us to work as one to defeat this pandemic. Congress lauded the role Affiliates and the Federation played during this moment of crisis and the sacrifices of our nurses, doctors and paramedics who worked tirelessly to save millions of lives. COSATU applauds the tireless efforts by Affiliates to help workers receive their UIF monies during the lockdown as well as to encourage workers and their families to vaccinate and observe the health and safety measures to minimise

the spread of COVID-19. COSATU working with government, our sister federations and business managed to ensure that over R64 billion was released from the UIF to help more than 5.5 million workers, that the banks gave 3 months loan relief to consumers, that government provided relief to fragile economic sectors and that the SRD Grant was rolled-out to more than 10 million unemployed people. COSATU calls for the extension of the SRD Grant and its equalisation with the Food Poverty Line. With all its challenges, the SRD Grant is the foundation for the Basic Income Grant that we have long championed. Congress resolved to resuscitate our advocacy of the Basic Income Grant, including by building a coalition with other progressive organisations. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the inequities of our already poor health care system and the predatory nature of the private health care system. The health system staggered under the weight of mass testing and caring for large numbers of severely ill people within a short space of time.

The public health sector is still characterised by poor quality of service which has been exacerbated by reckless austerity budget cuts and rising frontline service vacancies. Congress resolved to intensify our efforts to mobilise our members to ensure the implementation of the National Health Insurance [NHI] and to fight against the extreme profiteering of the private health industry. COSATU welcomes the progress that has been made in processing the NHI Bill in Parliament and looks forward to its passage into law. The Congress recognised that corruption between the public and private sectors is rife with the procurement of PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic being yet another horrific example. Congress resolved that the process of bringing to book those government officials and business people involved in corruption to be fast tracked. The dismantling of workers' rights and attack on collective bargaining linked with many other features of our society, means that workers' incomes have stagnated and reduced while the incomes of the richest have skyrocketed. COVID-19 has entrenched this. The result is that South Africa's record-beating inequality remains just that, the highest in the world."

"The Congress mandated the Federation to initiate an aggressive

campaign to overcome inequalities. Organisation and mobilisation of our members will help to fight the challenges workers face but we also need to make amendments to our labour laws to pursue the decent work agenda and address gaps in the labour laws. When new labour laws were introduced after the dawn of democracy, South Africa was touted as a trailblazer in defending workers' rights. However, since then, our rights have been eroded, piece by piece. Through a denial of basic trade union rights, pervasive casualisation, increased automation and attacks on labour market institutions including bargaining councils and the CCMA, workers do not receive the protection they used to. The COVID-19 pandemic has also been used by employers to renegotiate and vary downward working conditions, wages, and benefits. At municipal level, precarious work, in the form of casualisation and outsourcing, is being facilitated by the EPWP programme. COSATU will demand an end to casualisation and launch an anti-casualisation campaign targeting EPWP and the CWP to ensure these programmes are insourced into the state and their participants integrated into the public service and local government employment structures. Congress affirmed that women are still subjected to all forms of discrimination at the workplace. This takes the form of, inter alia, the lack of childcare facilities and transport after late night shifts, and being subjected to the indignity of being compelled to provide sexual favours for their survival at work."

"Congress agreed that COSATU should establish a programme to mobilise all sectors of society to do more to curb the gender-based violence pandemic and called on the private sector and government to supply free sanitary products to all indigent women. COSATU welcomes the recent passage of the three Gender Based Violence Acts and will work to help ensure their implementation. Congress identified collective bargaining as a platform to advance the campaign for gender equality and build women leaders. It resolved to use this platform and train women negotiators to participate in collective bargaining matters. Also on bargaining councils, the Congress resolved to develop a campaign to defend bargaining councils, including to help stop the efforts to roll back our historical gains. Congress identified



collective bargaining as a tool to build unity in the federation. It noted that pursuing joint collective bargaining efforts across affiliates will promote unity. To encourage this unity, the CEC should annually develop one common and new collective bargaining demand which all affiliates should pursue. Pursuing unity should also be the objective across federations and unions. Congress recognised that the fragmentation of the labour movement in South Africa has impacted negatively on the power of organised workers and our ability to win concessions from government and capital. This Congress has mandated the CEC to rigorously pursue the objective of uniting the trade union movement. To help deal with the extent of unemployment and inequality set out above, COSATU has been engaging with government and business on the President's call for a social compact. Whilst the federation supports the call, we have made it clear to government that we will not sacrifice workers' hard-won rights. We will not allow workers to be thrown under the bus for the failures of government to govern or business to grow the economy.

The social compact must be based upon progressive principles. It should defend the rights of workers, provide relief for the unemployed, rebuild the developmental state, reduce poverty and inequality, and address the fundamental obstacles to growing the economy, including by dealing with monetary and fiscal policies, and create decent work. The foundation for the social compact must be the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Programme, in particular its provisions to secure and rebuild Transnet and Metro Rail, to ramp up local procurement, to extend relief to the unemployed and rebuild the developmental state. COSATU has reaffirmed its support for the industrial master plans as key

platforms to grow the industrial base of the economy, save and create jobs. Congress called on the federation to lead the fight against austerity, commodification and corporatisation of government, including education and training and the security cluster."

"On Eskom, Congress affirmed that it remains a national strategic asset that is indispensable in the socio-economic development of the country. It is pervaded by endemic corruption and poor governance. The frequent loadshedding and deteriorating generation capacity at Eskom is of great concern, including because there is no end or solutions in sight. Workers, their communities and their jobs are being badly affected. The Eskom Social Compact provides clear interventions for stabilizing and investing in Eskom so it can provide reliable and affordable energy without which the economy cannot grow. Congress called on COSATU to support practical measures to end load-shedding, addressing criminality in and around Eskom, expand its maintenance budget, whilst at the same time vehemently opposing the efforts to fast-track the liberalisation of the electricity sector and the creation of an independent transmission company. Congress considered the climate crisis.

It recognised that the world is facing an unprecedented ecological crisis but emphasised that this should not be separated from the broader critique of the bourgeois political economy. It resolved that the Federation should call for the implementation of the 2019 ANC election commitment on the repositioning of Eskom to play an active role in the renewable energy infrastructure.

The same problems being experienced at Eskom are evident at other SOEs with many close to collapse, threatening our members' jobs and the delivery of services. We

must come with concrete solutions that will ensure these SOEs are saved. Workers' jobs are threatened on an unprecedented scale. To create some relief, the Federation discussed two measures."

"Firstly, when companies are liquidated, workers are not guaranteed to receive one cent; and when companies are in business rescue, workers suffer great uncertainty and may not receive incomes. This needs to change including by prioritising the preference claims of workers in insolvency and making changes to the Business Rescue regime. To do so, we will propose amendments to the Insolvency and Companies Acts. Secondly, Congress resolved that workers should have access to part of their retirement funds whilst they are employed to help them deal with short-time and layoffs when they don't receive wages and other emergencies."

"Congress discussed other issues around retirement funds, including the amendments to Regulation 28 of the Pension Fund Act pertaining to the relaxation of restrictions on overseas investments. Congress expressed its unhappiness with this amendment, emphasising that more investments should go towards local investment, including in infrastructure, to grow jobs and our economy. Congress also mandated COSATU to convene a conference to develop a shared policy framework on retirement fund investment mandates to ensure our savings are used in the sustainable development of domestic manufacturing and infrastructure. To alleviate the indebtedness of our members and workers in general, Congress declared that the National Credit Regulator (NCR) should revisit its fee guidelines to lessen the burden on consumers while they seek relief. Debt councillors and the NCR should be empowered to consolidate debt

and/or write off a portion of the outstanding amount and/or reduce the interest rate and lower the repayment instalment terms where circumstances justify it.

COSATU will work with government to ensure the implementation of the National Credit Amendment Act providing for protection of consumers who have fallen behind with their debt payments, from having their essential possessions being repossessed. Congress reviewed the housing situation and concluded that while government has provided free housing to the poor and mostly unemployed through the RDP scheme, workers have largely been excluded. It was resolved that the Federation should call on the government and the private sector to avail serviced land for free to allow workers to build their own houses."

"Discussing the state of municipalities, Congress noted that they have a constitutional obligation to deliver services to residents, irrespective if residents are able to pay for rates and taxes due to high levels of poverty and unemployment, and that the number of municipalities that require intervention due to political instability and financial distress has been growing. This means that municipalities are often unable to pay employees wages. To deal with this, Congress resolved that the equitable share allocation for poorer municipalities should be increased and that Provincial Governments should rigorously execute their constitutional mandate of playing an oversight role over the affairs of municipalities. There is a need to review the municipal funding model and for a road map towards the District Development Model to ensure the rebuilding of local government and its ability to fulfil its constitutional mandates."



**NUM Delegates in plenary at the 14th National Congress**



## The SACP is ready to govern!



SACP General Secretary, Cde Solly Mapaila delivering message of support to the COSATU 14th National Congress

Addressing the 14th National Congress plenary, the South African Communist Party (SACP) General Secretary, Solly Mapaila said ‘We bring you revolutionary greetings from the entire leadership and membership of the Communist Party to appeal to all delegates to together, let’s build a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor to roll back the neoliberal macroeconomic framework.’ ‘We bring you revolutionary greetings from the entire leadership and membership of the Communist Party. First and foremost, we wish this 14th National Congress of COSATU a resounding success and COSATU to grow from strength to strength in both membership and influence in advancing and defending the interests of workers.’

### The political tasks facing COSATU at its 14th National Congress and beyond

‘One of the critical tasks facing the national democratic revolution is to deepen strategic relevance against waning hope among the masses. There are many reasons the revolution is facing this situation. Key concerns include the betrayal of the Alliance’s revolutionary historical mission, commitment to neoliberalism, and a decline in the influence of the working-class on

the strategic content and direction of the transformation process.’

‘Here are some considerations on the strategic tasks facing the national democratic revolution and COSATU at this National Congress and going forward.

1. There must be a definite change in the balance of class forces in favour of the working-class both inside and outside of the movement. To achieve this, the COSATU 14th National Congress has to come out with a radical economic, social and political programme anchored in a militant posture on taking up working-class struggles. The erosion of working-class gains will continue if the working-class fails to grasp this moment and to rise to the occasion. We will all become an irrelevant relic, even though we will be proud of our past history.
2. A militant programme to reclaim the leadership role of the working-class struggles and mobilisation. This would require, amongst others, supporting the SACP’s mass programme for socialism by building a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor in the here and now.
3. Stopping the neoliberal economic trajectory pursued by the government. The National Treasury and the Reserve Bank

are the leading institutions in pursuing the neoliberal trajectory. In fact, stopping the neoliberal trajectory must be considered as a precondition for supporting the ANC electorally if this support has to continue. The working-class must not sign a blank cheque.

4. A clear working-class agenda for accelerated transformation of society, for retention and reconfiguration of political power to drive radical economic and broader social transformation in favour of the working-class and to advance towards socialism. This radical agenda must be placed on the agenda of society. No one will free us except ourselves, let us sharpen the class contradiction towards socialism.
5. Reconfiguration of the Alliance and driving agreed framework of renewal, including contesting the ANC as a class force to achieve the renewal. The working-class cannot fold its arms while other class forces and even lumpen networks are contesting the ANC. The working-class must contest the ANC to alter the balance of forces both inside and outside the movement in pursuit of revolutionary renewal, working-class interests and the broader programme to complete

our liberation and advance universal social emancipation.’ Roll back the stranglehold of neoliberalism and its austerity agenda on our economy and society

‘Given the urgency with which we need to build maximum working-class unity to roll back neoliberalism, the SACP proposes the following working-class programme of action.

1. Overthrow the neoliberal macroeconomic policy regime and its austerity agenda to a truly new people’s economy. This should include rejecting any social compact that excludes the adoption of a new macroeconomic framework. Therefore, monetary, fiscal and international trade policies must all be reviewed to prioritise manufacturing and minerals beneficiation and localisation in pursuit of industrialisation to create employment massively towards the right to work for all. This requires the adoption of a high impact, comprehensive industrial policy to take the lead and for macroeconomic policy to follow and support the industrialisation imperative. Industrialisation and employment impact of existing master plans must, therefore, be re-appraised and strengthened as part of



formulating the much-needed coherent industrial policy.

2. Poverty eradication and radical reduction of inequality as economic and social development policy goals, with clear targets. This must include a decisive advance towards a universal basic income grant. Instead of terminating the SRD Grant at the end of March 2023, the government must maintain and improve it towards a universal basic income grant.
3. A more progressive tax structure, including wealth and inheritance taxes, and re-examination of the corporate income tax regime to support the ability to meet the needs of the people.
4. Structural transformation of the financial sector to rollback commercial banking monopoly and make the banks and other financial service providers serve the people. The funds in the hands of the banks and other financial service providers considerably include deposits, savings and premiums from the people. How they deal in these funds cannot be left to the unelected and unaccountable capitalist bosses alone.
5. The transformation of the financial sector must include building the presence of the state in the sector. Immediate steps must include state takeover of the stake held by the Reserve in African Bank instead of selling that stake to profit-driven interests. However, we are not referring here merely to pursuing one state bank but to building a developmental public banking sector, including sectoral banks, to support building national production and supporting industrialisation. The prevailing regulatory universe must be reviewed to make this possible, among others, by distinguishing state-owned banks at the national, provincial and municipal levels from commercial banks. This review must also foster an enabling environment for worker- and community-controlled co-operative banks and financial institutions, credit union leagues and

savings schemes to thrive.

6. The adoption of a differential interest rate policy to direct credit according to transformation and developmental priorities.
7. Amendment of the Reserve Bank mandate to target and account for employment creation.
8. Reduction in financial services fees to tackle financial exploitation.
9. A massive public infrastructure rollout and maintenance based on public led programme and not tenderisation madness.
10. Clamp down on destruction and looting of public infrastructure, state capture and other forms of corruption, including through a comprehensive response to the report of the Commission of Inequity into State Capture.
11. Intensification of the struggle to eliminate racialised and gendered inequalities and gender-based violence in the workplace, the economy and society at large.

Together, let us build a powerful, social movement of the workers and poor to drive these and other transformation and development priorities."

## **The energy crisis and the environment**

"The SACP proposes the following on the electricity crisis and the dilapidating nationwide load shedding.

1. The electricity crisis disrupts production and the provision of public services, including healthcare. Under this situation, all talk of industrialisation and employment creation sound like nothing but hot air. Cuts in water supply in other parts of the country have the same effect and disrupt care and social reproduction in households and communities.
2. South Africa needs a different, people-centred approach to undo the damage caused by the legacy of successive colonial and apartheid regimes, neoliberalism, and lawlessness. As things stand, as a matter of urgency, measures must be put in place to exclude hospitals, clinics and other healthcare

institutions and activities from load shedding to save life.

3. In the same vein, as a matter of urgency, we need to go all out to dismantle the entire structure of the neoliberal policy regime and its continuation by the government of the day. Our priorities, we propose, must include campaigning for public investment in new power generation capacity. Both fiscal and monetary policies must play a decisive role in ensuring public investment in new power generation capacity. This must include adequate support for innovation, research and development in clean coal technology.
4. Related to the point we just made, there can be no just transition through strategies that will lead to retrenchments instead of protecting workers and creating employment for the unemployed. There can be no just transition through strategies that will produce ghost towns. There can be no just transition through strategies that will continue to increase electricity tariffs, making it unaffordable for the workers and poor, as well as for the lower sections of the middle class. As a matter of principle, electricity must be accessible on a developmental basis. This will also support industrialisation and employment creation. We need to go all out, dear comrades, to build a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor to fight the battle."

## **State-owned enterprises and co-operatives development**

Mapaila reiterated that "The causes of the crisis facing other state-owned enterprises or public entities do not differ any much from the trajectory that has weakened the capacity of Eskom to live up to the energy needs of the people and the economy. There are many similarities in the causes that have resulted in the crisis faced by the SAA, PRASA, the South African Post Office, DENEL, the SABC, PetroSA, Transnet, the list goes on. In no small measure, neoliberal policy

choices and failures, state capture and looting have coalesced in weakening or virtually destroying these and other public entities. The SACP proposes to the 14th National Congress of COSATU that the federation, building wider trade union and working-class unity, working together with the Party, should go all out to intensify the struggle in pursuit of the working-class demand for the government to turn around state-owned enterprises and other public entities. This must be part of the wider working-class demand for the varied public economy characterised, among others, by well-managed and thriving public utilities, state-owned enterprises, and worker and community-controlled co-operatives.

Earlier this week, someone speaking from the ranks of the opposition, possibly displaying what V.I. Lenin, identified as an infantile disorder, opportunism and childishness, accused COSATU and the SACP of privatising public entities. That person was showered with media coverage for spreading the claptrap. By the look of things, that person is a new arrival in the entire history of our well-known gallant struggle against privatisation. Going forward, and as part of the reconfiguration of the Alliance, no one must be allowed to attack the SACP and COSATU in parliament without a response in parliament or elsewhere."

## **Workplace restructuring and defence of collective bargaining**

"Capital has restructured the workplace to maximise profit. This has taken place hand in hand with creating oligarchs. It is the context in which the Sibanye-Stillwater paid its CEO Neal Froneman an astronomical R300 million in 2021. Similarly, MTN, which together with Vodacom, makes up a duopoly in the mobile information and telecommunications technology network sector, paid its CEO Ralph Mupita R84,2 million in 2021. FirstRand paid its CEO Alan Pullinger R48,29 million, including the value of long-term incentives awarded in 2020 and 2021. Within the same group, FNB paid its CEO Jacques Celliers R41,61 million. There is one thing in common



# Worker Issues

that the oligarchs at these and other companies are driving. They are curtailing the peanut wages that they pay the downtrodden, saying they are unaffordable. This is capitalist barbarity. Hand in hand with strengthening capacity to tackle workplace restructuring, including engaging on matters relating to the introduction of new production technology, the progressive trade union movement has to unite workers regardless of affiliation and federation to intensify the distributive struggle in the workplace and on a sectoral or industrial basis. Technological change and work restructuring require trade unions to invest in research and development and continuous training of shop stewards and appointed officials as part of building the capacity to engage on these matters. Workplace restructuring by the capitalist bosses to maximise profits has produced a situation where retrenchments and unemployment overwhelm employment creation. The SACP pledges its unwavering solidarity with the workers and trade unions currently in collective bargaining processes, both in the private and public sectors."

## **Strengthening the socialist axis of the Alliance and building wider worker unity.**

"We need to jealously guard the relationship between COSATU as a progressive trade union movement and the Communist Party. We must not allow wedge drivers from inside or outside our movement and country to drive a wedge between our organisations. Our organisations, despite their own weaknesses, remain the central organs of the workers and working-class interests. In the same vein, we need to work together to organise the unorganised into progressive trade unions and politically into a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor. We need to pay more attention to building stronger COSATU presence in the industrial sectors of the economy, as it is the case in the public sector. Working together, we must grow the federation from strength to strength in all sectors of the economy. We are saying this, dear comrades, welcoming the progress that the federation has registered

as detailed in the reports to the congress. Besides strengthening our own organisation, including through joint membership and leadership capacity building programmes, we need to foster fraternal relations with other worker and working-class formations. The National Union of Mineworkers, for example, has forged a collaboration with other unions in the mining and energy sectors based on the common demands of the workers. The recent National Day of Action involving a joint effort by COSATU, and SAFTU joined by the SACP, and other organisations is another important example. We need to build on these efforts to forge popular left fronts. To build on this work, the SACP proposes the convening of a joint trade union consultative conference to develop a sustained programme of action based on the common demands of the workers in pursuit of their objective interests as a class."

## **Reconfiguration of the Alliance, a popular left front and a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor**

"Equally important, we need to work together to realise the reconfiguration of the Alliance. The SACP 15th National Congress resolved that the Central Committee should finalise the important issue of Alliance reconfiguration at its next Augmented Plenary. Related to this, the SACP welcomes the proposal in the composite resolutions and reports to this congress for COSATU to convene a Special National Congress or central committee in the coming year to review progress on the reconfiguration of the Alliance, to decide the next cause of action. We propose that the SACP and COSATU as working-class organisations should march together in one step, reaching out to other worker and working-class organisations to forge popular left fronts and build a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor. While we must contest the space to secure a favourable outcome on the reconfiguration of the Alliance and renewal and unity of our movement, we must avoid investing all our hopes in a positive outcome on both fronts. Building an independent voice and

the capacity of the working-class on all fronts of the struggle is critical not only for the reconfiguration of the Alliance but also for future state power considerations in the event of a negative outcome on the reconfiguration of the Alliance and the renewal of the movement. For there can be no unity with thieves if they prevail. Similarly, there can be no principled and programmatic unity with the leaders who are not prepared to give practical effect to the reconfiguration of the Alliance and the achievement of a successful renewal of the entire movement. To be sure, renewal must embrace a renouncement of neoliberalism in favour of elaborating national democratic revolutionary policy to advance towards the aims of the Freedom Charter decisively. Therefore, not only COSATU but also the SACP may have to convene a Special National Congress as part of ensuring that we march together as one in every step we take, while forging wider working-class unity and building inviolable and unbreakable programmatic ties with the masses on the ground.

There is one issue that we need to state as a matter of record. Someone was saying the SACP is not ready to contest elections. Please allow us to respond to that in one sentence: "The SACP is ready to contest elections: FULL STOP." Do not ever say the SACP is not ready. What is necessary, however, are engagements with the broader working-class population, with worker organisations and, yes, with our allies. Principled and programmatic unity remains essential. We ourselves as the working-class will need it more going forward. Especially, the process of democratic engagement is important to ensure that, as the Party of the working-class, we move together with and for the workers and poor in every step we take."

## **The international situation**

Mapaila said "The world is characterised by a deepening threat to the emergence of a multi-polar world based on co-operation for peace and human development equality. The threat is driven by the insecurities of declining influence by the US, backed by its imperialist allies. The bipolar axis of the

imperialist US and Europe seeks to impose its worldview, using the institutions they control, such as the IMF, and their military alliance, NATO, to force other states to follow their neoliberal policy prescriptions and expansion in Eastern Europe. Expansion by the US-dominated NATO in Eastern Europe aimed at encircling the Russian Federation, with China as another target. This is the context in which the US has been provoking China in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. We live in an era of war and indeed shall only know peace once war is permanently abolished. But as V.I. Lenin observed: "War cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished, and socialism is created".

The provocations against Russia and China by the United States directly or through NATO saw the people of Russia and China responding firmly in defence of their national independence and sovereignty. We express our solidarity with the people of Cuba against imperialist aggression, including economic blockade and occupation of the Cuban territory on Guantanamo Bay by the United States. We pledge our solidarity with the progressive forces in Latin America, with the people of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, to mention but a few, for a leftwards advance, and against the United States-led imperialist aggression. We stand in solidarity with the people of Western Sahara against the occupation of their country by Morocco."

Mapaila concluded by saying "The SACP supports the people of Swaziland struggling for democracy, and against the autocratic regime of the absolute monarch. We stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine against occupation by the US-backed apartheid regime of Israel. In the same vein, we stand in solidarity with the people of Syria and the Kurds in the Middle East. We support the Freedom of Abdullah Öcalan Movement. Once more, we wish the COSATU 14th National Congress a resounding success."



# COSATU Newly Elected Collective Leadership



Newly elected COSATU leadership at Gallagher Convention

**C**OSATU 14th National Congress elected the following collective leadership to lead the federation for the coming four years term of office;

- President-Comrade Zingiswa Losi
- 1st Deputy President-Comrade Mike Shingange
- 2nd Deputy President-Comrade Duncan Luvuno
- General Secretary-Solly Phetoe
- Deputy General Secretary-Comrade Gerald Twala
- National Treasurer-Comrade Freda Oosthuisen

The 14th National Congress resolved to retain the core guiding focus areas on leading the organizational strategy and pay more attention to a] strengthening workplace organization, b] leading a massive membership recruitment and retention, c] enhance ideological training and capacity building amongst all affiliated trade unions, d] accelerate and heighten organizational campaigns on areas such as decent work agenda, climate change, social justice and lastly, to strengthen the re-organization of the unorganized workers and all platform workers in the labour market.

On the International front, the 14th National Congress reiterated that “international solidarity mobilisation

and campaigning, working with other trade unions and progressive forces on the African continent, throughout the global south and all over the world, is critical”

#### And the following programmes will be prioritised;

- Climate Change Campaigns to mitigate against the current ecological and climate change crisis facing global citizens;
- Fighting against Fighting against deindustrialisation, anti-developmental policies and growing crisis of unemployment and job losses
- Fighting the ruthless power of Multinational Companies and corrupt elites
- Fighting against the militarisation of international relations and the huge erosion of democratic, human rights and justice for workers and the poor
- Building a global working class movement for solidarity against attacks on workers’ rights, inequalities, poverty, Gender Based Violence and poor wages

“In this regard, the 14th National Congress clearly pronounce on the work to intensify solidarity with the people Cuba, Palestine, Western Sahara, eSwatini, Zimbabwe and

Venezuela. We shall work further to strengthen COSATU work with the WFTU, ITUC, OUATUU, ITUC Africa and SATUCC to drive a united, effective and transformative struggle for workers rights, industrialisation on the continent, challenge monopoly companies and demand job creation to end hunger, poverty and unemployment.”

In closing the 14th Congress, COSATU President Lungiswa Losi said “It is a privilege to bring this historic 14th Congress of the Federation of JB Marks and Ray Alexander to a close. As we entered this congress, our detractors said that COSATU, was a spent force, a relic of the past, of no consequence to the struggles of the working class. We have proven their messages of doom to be worthless slogans. We have shown that we are clear, we are determined, we are united as COSATU. We remain resolute in defence of workers, of collective bargaining, of the gains we have achieved since 1994. We will never back down, we will not abandon workers in their moment of need. We will not waiver in our determination to build socialism and liberate the working class from the exploitation of capitalism. The prophets of doom have said COSATU is a toy telephone. We have shown that this Federation of John Nkadimeng and Violet Seboni, is alive and well. This Federation was at

the forefront of defending the working class during the greatest battles the world has seen since 1994.”

Losi reiterated that “It was COSATU and its Affiliates who worked tirelessly to ensure 5.5 million workers received R64 billion from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. It was our health workers, the members of the militant NEHAWU, DENOSA, SAMATU and SAEPU who defended the nation in its darkest moments. It was our members of POPCRU who kept the nation safe when it was under curfew. It was our members of AFADWU, SACCWU and SACTWU, who fed the nation when the economy was locked down. It was our mighty SADTU, SACTWU, NUM, DENOSA, POPCRU, NEHAWU, SASBO, PAWUSA and in fact all Affiliates, who worked from factories to schools, from hospitals to banks, from mines to farms; to mobilise workers to receive their vaccines. It is this Federation of Chris Dlamini that ensured the foundation for the Basic Income Grant, the SRD Grant, was rolled out to 10 million unemployed South Africans. Let no one dare say that this Federation of John Gomomo and Nana Abrahams is nowhere to be seen.”

**Where were these armchair critics of COSATU?**



# Worker Issues

“This Congress has reaffirmed that this Federation remains battle ready and ideologically clear as workers face the greatest challenges of this generation.

“We cannot normalise a 44% unemployment rate, rising levels of poverty and inequality. We will no longer tolerate municipal workers being sent home unpaid. We will not accept the retrenchments of postal workers. We will wage relentless battles in defence of workers’ hard-won labour rights and collective bargaining. No employer, be it government, State Owned Enterprises [SOE’S] or the private sector will be allowed to undermine collective bargaining without facing the wrath of workers, our Affiliates and COSATU. Let this warning be heard loud and clear. We will not accept the abuse of any worker. They are not the slaves of any employer. We will defend the public services workers depend on, to protect SOEs from privatisation, to expose corruption and mobilise against austerity budget cuts. We must continue to show principled class orientated leadership and provide clear proposals on what must be done to rebuild Eskom, to secure Transnet and Metro Rail, to fix our municipalities, and save our SOEs.”

“COSATU will redouble its efforts to ensure the implementation of the Eskom Social Compact in full. Government must give the necessary support to Eskom to slash its debt burden, ramp up maintenance and invest in its own generation capacity. COSATU with NUM will continue to work relentlessly to defend Eskom as a publicly owned utility, to ensure reliable, sustainable and affordable energy and a Just Energy Transition that will leave no coal worker, no Eskom employee, no community behind. Our Affiliates must lead from the front in the industrial plans, in buy local campaigns and in compelling government and business to play their roles in saving and creating jobs and spurring inclusive economic growth. We will push for the fast tracking of the Companies Amendment Bill to tackle the apartheid wage gap that is predominant in the mining, retail and banking sectors. COSATU working with SAMWU and NEHAWU, continue to pressure government to end outsourcing and to absorb the participants of the Expanded Public and Community Works Programmes

can own land.”

COSATU will remain the bulwark in defense of a progressive, developmental state that is biased towards the needs of the working class and the rural poor.

Losi alluded that “The Federation will continue to demand government accelerate the war against corruption and state capture, including strengthening the Public Procurement Bill, the banning of politicians from doing business with the state, and tackling tax evasion. COSATU will ensure the prohibition of municipal employees from holding positions in political parties is scrapped and that similar proposals to infringe upon the constitutional rights of public servants are abandoned. COSATU remains resolute in support of Affiliates, both public and private, in defence of collective bargaining and the right to earn a living wage.

Government must return to the PSCBC and honour the last leg of the 2018 public service wage agreement. Workers will not forgive government until this cancerous tumour is removed from the history of collective bargaining. The Federation is pleased with the progress being made in processing the National Health Insurance Bill through Parliament. We urge Parliament to remain resolute in defence of this historic Bill and ensure its safe passage into law. COSATU will continue to work through Parliament to finalise the Tax Revenue Laws Amendment Bill that will allow struggling workers limited access to their pension funds.”

Workers are clear, they demand the reconfiguration of the Alliance and its bias towards the working class restored and the Left Axis deepened.

1908s. Workers are angered by the behaviour of some in government and the ANC. Workers have time and again raised their cries in the 2016 and 2021 local elections, at May Day and countless other times. It is time our comrades listened and addressed workers’ demands. The last leg of the 2018 public service wage agreement must be honoured, collective bargaining respected, Eskom saved, load shedding ended, SOEs and public services defended, municipalities rebuilt, corruption tackled, jobs created and the economy stimulated. If the ANC wants to win the 2024 elections, then it must listen to the working class. This Congress has reaffirmed its support for the SACP, the vanguard party and the need for it to contest elections as part of the advancement of the National Democratic Revolution. Its voice must be heard loud and clear.”

“COSATU will undertake engagements with the SACP on the modalities of this call in line with the consultation processes adopted by the SACP’s recent national congress. The Alliance must be reconfigured to ensure all Alliance partners are equal members. COSATU as a class conscience Federation, will intensify its solidarity campaigns with workers in Cuba, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, eSwatini, Western Sahara and Palestine. We will continue to advance working class campaigns in international fora from SATUCC to ITUC, from the ILO to WFTU. The voice of workers is clear, we must oil the engines of the Federation and strengthen the capacity of Affiliates, if we are to emerge victorious in the battles we wage. We will ramp up our recruitment campaigns, to ensure that we reach the 2 million membership target by the 2026 15th

national congress. We will redouble our efforts to recruit farm and domestic workers, to organise Uber drivers and retail workers. Affiliates will continue to invest in servicing members. Education and training programmes will be intensified for shop stewards and members to be combat ready. COSATU will continue to support Affiliates experiencing challenges in particular our beloved CWU, SATAWU, CEPWWAWU and AFADWU. COSATU will continue to engage Unions outside to join the Federation of Mark Shope. We will continue to work with our sister federations in pursuit of our founding call of one union, one industry, one federation, one country. We will intensify our campaigns to advance working class struggles in all platforms, from bargaining councils to master plans, from the Alliance to streets, from Nedlac to Parliament. We will not cede an inch to capital in our defence of workers’ rights. The message from Congress is clear, “Build working class-unity for economic liberation towards socialism”. That is our mandate. We dare not fail workers. Let us depart, return to home and get to work. We do not have the luxury of time when workers are under siege.”

COSATU Collective leadership salutes all delegates for a successful 14th National Congress

Losi concluded that “Thank you to all delegates and the leadership here. Your contributions have been heartening and inspiring. There is much to be done, including by the November CEC. Allow me to thank the outgoing General Secretary, cde. Bheki Ntshalintshali and 2nd Deputy President Louise Thipe for all the work and dedication you have shown to COSATU and workers for more than 40 years. Words cannot do justice to all you have done for this Federation. Cdes. GS and President, you steered this Federation during its most difficult days. You stabilised, rebuilt and took COSATU to new heights. You never faltered. You persevered. We owe you a debt of gratitude that may never be fully expressed. We hope and trust that we will not lose your wisdom and that we may continue to seek your guidance and counsel. We will need your support as we navigate these uncharted waters. Re a leboga. Ndza khensa.”







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## COSATU President Zingiswa Losi – Closing Address at COSATU 14th National Congress

29 September 2022

**L**eadership of the Federation, Affiliates, the Alliance Partners, Guests Delegates, the membership of our Affiliates and workers across the nation, Good afternoon comrades.

It is a privilege to bring this historic 14th Congress of the Federation of JB Marks and Ray Alexander to a close.

As we entered this congress, our detractors said that COSATU, was a spent force, a relic of the past, of no consequence to the struggles of the working class. We have proven their messages of doom to be worthless slogans. We have shown that we are clear, we are determined, we are united as COSATU.

We remain resolute in defence of workers, of collective bargaining, of the gains we have achieved since 1994. We will never back down, we will not abandon workers in their moment of need. We will not waiver in our determination to build socialism and liberate the working class from the exploitation of capitalism. The prophets of doom have said COSATU is a toy telephone. We have shown that this Federation of John Nkadimeng and Violet Seboni, is alive and well.

This Federation was at the forefront of defending the working class during the greatest battles the world has seen since 1994. It was COSATU and its Affiliates who worked tirelessly to ensure 5.5 million workers received R64 billion from the UIF. It was our health workers, the members of the militant NEHAWU, DENOSA,

SAMATU and SAEPU who defended the nation in its darkest moments.

It was our members of POPCRU who kept the nation safe when it was under curfew. It was our members of AFADWU, SACCAWU and SACTWU who fed the nation when the economy was locked down. It was our mighty SADTU, SACTWU, NUM, DENOSA, POPCRU, NEHAWU, SASBO, PAWUSA and in fact all Affiliates, who worked from factories to schools, from hospitals to banks, from mines to farms; to mobilise workers to receive their vaccines. It is this Federation of Chris Dlamini that ensured the foundation for the Basic Income Grant, the SRD Grant, was rolled out to 10 million unemployed South Africans.

Let no one dare say that this Federation of John Gomomo and Nana Abrahams is nowhere to be seen. Where were these armchair critics of COSATU? This Congress has reaffirmed that this Federation remains battle ready and ideologically clear as workers face the greatest challenges of this generation. We cannot normalise a 44% unemployment rate, rising levels of poverty and inequality. We will no longer tolerate municipal workers being sent home unpaid.

We will not accept the retrenchments of postal workers. We will wage relentless battles in defence of workers' hard-won labour rights and collective bargaining. No employer, be it government, SOEs or the private sector will be allowed to undermine

collective bargaining without facing the wrath of workers, our Affiliates and COSATU.

Let this warning be heard loud and clear.

We will not accept the abuse of any worker. They are not the slaves of any employer.

We will defend the public services workers depend on, to protect SOEs from privatisation, to expose corruption and mobilise against austerity budget cuts. We must continue to show principled class orientated leadership and provide clear proposals on what must be done to rebuild Eskom, to secure Transnet and Metro Rail, to fix our municipalities, and save our SOEs.

COSATU will redouble its efforts to ensure the implementation of the Eskom Social Compact in full. Government must give the necessary support to Eskom to slash its debt burden, ramp up maintenance and invest in its own generation capacity. COSATU with NUM will continue to work relentlessly to defend Eskom as a publicly owned utility, to ensure reliable, sustainable and affordable energy and a Just Energy Transition that will leave no coal worker, no Eskom employee, no community behind.

Our Affiliates must lead from the front in the industrial plans, in buy local campaigns and in compelling government and business to play their

roles in saving and creating jobs and spurring inclusive economic growth.

We will push for the fast tracking of the Companies Amendment Bill to tackle the apartheid wage gap that is predominant in the mining, retail and banking sectors. COSATU working with SAMWU and NEHAWU, continue to pressure government to end outsourcing and to absorb the participants of the Expanded Public and Community Works Programmes into public employment.

COSATU applauds the passage of the Expropriation Bill by the National Assembly. This is an historic victory for the working class that COSATU has long championed. It will be a key tool to accelerate land reform to ensure all South Africans can own land.



Newly elected CO



COSATU President, Zingiswa Losi

COSATU will remain the bulwark in defence of a progressive, developmental state that is biased towards the needs of the working class and the rural poor. The Federation will continue to demand government accelerate the war against corruption and state capture, including strengthening the Public Procurement Bill, the banning of politicians from doing business with the state, and tackling tax evasion.

COSATU will ensure the prohibition of municipal employees from holding positions in political parties is scrapped and that similar proposals to infringe upon the constitutional rights of public servants are abandoned. COSATU remains resolute in support of Affiliates, both public and private, in

defence of collective bargaining and the right to earn a living wage.

Government must return to the PSCBC and honour the last leg of the 2018 public service wage agreement. Workers will not forgive government until this cancerous tumour is removed from the history of collective bargaining.

The Federation is pleased with the progress being made in processing the National Health Insurance Bill through Parliament. We urge Parliament to remain resolute in defence of this historic Bill and ensure its safe passage into law. COSATU will continue to work through Parliament to finalise the Tax Revenue Laws Amendment Bill that will allow struggling workers

limited access to their pension funds. Workers are clear, they demand the reconfiguration of the Alliance and its bias towards the working class restored and the Left Axis deepened.

The ANC, the SACP and the Alliance were built upon the sacrifices of the working class, from the mine and other workers' strikes from the 1940s to the 1980s. Workers are angered by the behaviour of some in government and the ANC. Workers have time and again raised their cries in the 2016 and 2021 local elections, at May Day and countless other times.

It is time our comrades listened and addressed workers' demands. The last leg of the 2018 public service wage agreement must be honoured, collective bargaining respected, Eskom saved, load shedding ended, SOEs and public services defended, municipalities rebuilt, corruption tackled, jobs created and the economy stimulated.

If the ANC wants to win the 2024 elections, then it must listen to the working class. This Congress has reaffirmed its support for the SACP, the vanguard party and the need for it to contest elections as part of the advancement of the National Democratic Revolution. Its voice must be heard loud and clear.

COSATU will undertake engagements with the SACP on the modalities of this call in line with the consultation processes adopted by the SACP's recent national congress.

The Alliance must be reconfigured to ensure all Alliance partners are equal members. COSATU as a class conscience Federation, will intensify its solidarity campaigns with workers in Cuba, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, eSwatini, Western Sahara and Palestine.

We will continue to advance working class campaigns in international fora from SATUCC to ITUC, from the ILO to WFTU. The voice of workers is clear, we must oil the engines of the Federation and strengthen the capacity of Affiliates, if we are to emerge victorious in the battles we wage. We will ramp up our recruitment campaigns, to ensure that we reach the 2 million membership target by the 2026 15th national congress. We will redouble our efforts to recruit farm and domestic workers, to organise Uber drivers and retail workers.

Affiliates will continue to invest in servicing members. Education and training programmes will be intensified for shop stewards and members to be combat ready. COSATU will continue to support Affiliates experiencing challenges in particular our beloved CWU, SATAWU, CEPWAWU and AFADWU.

COSATU will continue to engage Unions outside to join the Federation of Mark Shope. We will continue to work with our sister federations in pursuit of our founding call of one union, one industry, one federation, one country.

We will intensify our campaigns to advance working class struggles in all platforms, from bargaining councils to master plans, from the Alliance to streets, from Nedlac to Parliament. We will not cede an inch to capital in our defence of workers' rights. The message from Congress is clear, "Build Working Class-Unity For Economic Liberation Towards Socialism".

That is our mandate. We dare not fail workers. Let us depart, return to home and get to work. We do not have the luxury of time when workers are under siege.

Let us finalise our preparations for October 7th, the International Day of Decent Work. Thank you to all delegates and the leadership here. Your contributions have been heartening and inspiring. There is much to be done, including by the November CEC.

Allow me to thank the outgoing General Secretary, cde. Bheki Ntshalintshali and 2nd Deputy President Louise Thipe for all the work and dedication you have shown to COSATU and workers for more than 40 years. Words cannot do justice to all you have done for this Federation. Cdes. GS and President, you steered this Federation during its most difficult days. You stabilised, rebuilt and took COSATU to new heights.

You never faltered. You persevered. We owe you a debt of gratitude that may never be fully expressed. We hope and trust that we will not lose your wisdom and that we may continue to seek your guidance and counsel. We will need your support as we navigate these uncharted waters. Re a leboga. Na khensa. We wish delegates a safe journey home. Matla!



## FAREWELL Comrade Louise Thipe & Bheki Ntshalintshali, says workers



Comrade Louise Thipe thanking workers at the 14th National Congress Gala Evening in Midrand

**T**he President of the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union [SACCAWU] Comrade Louise Thipe was duly elected as COSATU 2nd Deputy President at the 13th National Congress in 2018 in Midrand and has now relinquished her position into retirement, and after taking over from the former 2nd Deputy President, Comrade Tyotyo James, who is now a Member of Parliament.

Comrade Louise grew in Ga-Rankuwa, Pretoria where she was employed in 1984 by Pick 'n Pay and joined the Retail and Allied Workers Union (RAAWU) as a rank and file member and this Union, together with the Hotel And Restaurant Workers Union (HARWU) later merged into the Commercial and Catering Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA). This where her ideological acumen was sharpened and her organised labour activist initiated."

"During the period between 1987 and 1989, CCAWUSA unfortunately suffered a split, with the two parts declaring themselves the right successors in title thus fighting to maintain the right to use the CCAWUSA name. CO-SATU intervened and following the adoption of the position of One Industry, One Union, the two factions in the split reconciled and SACCAWU was born. Cde Boitumelo

was elected as a Shopsteward in 1988, subsequent to which she was elected (in 1990) into the Executive Committee and later in that same year elected as Chairperson of the Pretoria Local. This automatically qualified her to be a member of the Regional

appreciated the reality that there was a need to compel companies to support women emancipation within the workplace, particularly in the Retail Sector (where young women workers are in the majority), the struggle of Child Care Facilities in the workplace

that were key to the struggles for and achievement of the Parental Rights Agreement, which to date remains one of the most progressive in the Country, which provides for 9 months paid maternity leave. This represents a milestone yet to be matched in SACCAWU and many other unions.

She was a member of the Regional Education Committee and she was given coordinating responsibilities as a worker. In 1999 she was elected to the position of 1st Deputy President of SACCAWU, and allocated as a NOB designated to oversee Gender and Education amongst other responsibilities. During this period, she served in the Central Executive Committees of both SACCAWU and COSATU. In 2013 when the then-President could not continue serving as President, Cde Louise became the Acting President, until 2017 when she was formally elected to the position of President by Congress."

"Comrade Louise served and continued to serve her union, SACCAWU with distinction and has been delegated to represent it at various institutions and organisations both within the borders of South Africa. Amongst others, she represented SACCAWU in the Gender Structures as well as Industrial Relations Committee. Internationally she served in various UNI Global Union structures including the Global Commerce Committee,



SACCAWU delegates in plenary at COSATU 14th National Congress

Executive Committee.

SACCAWU delegates in plenary at COSATU 14th National Congress  
SACCAWU structures recognised her commitment and leadership abilities and tasked her to form part of the programmes to establish Gender structures. In this context and having

became the primary objective.

She was also a strong protagonist in the struggle to ensure that women workers are not exposed to long working hours without due regard for safety, security and wellness of working mothers. She was instrumental and part of the activists



Bheki Ntshalintshali has retired from active trade union politics at the 14th National Congress held at Midrand. He is now regarded as the former trade unionist and a former General Secretary of COSATU having

bail the charges were added to include suspicions of being a terrorist. Though I got a bail I and to appear in court every month for two years. At the end of the trial I was fined a mere R50 for driving a taxi outside

using even today while my real name given to me my parents is Veli. After completing my Junior Certificate I could not receive my sym-bols to be admitted at High School and I had to wait for my certificate. While waiting

again I got two nick names – Mtshana because it was how my uncle called me and everybody followed suit but others called me Mshagaan which I would explain some time in the future if I get time. Within a year I



**Bheki Ntshalintshali addressing delegates in plenary at the 14th National Congress**

Women's Committee globally. She has represented COSATU in a number of missions and was part of the mission that was sent to Zimbabwe to represent COSATU in the process of unifying the CWIU, but stood down the following year in London. He returned to South Africa in 1996 and took part in the talks which merged the CWIU into the new Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union. Later in the year, he became the Organising Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), rising to become Deputy General Secretary.

Ntshalintshali elaborating on his participation in the liberation struggle said "I was arrested near Swaziland for driving a taxi (own car) outside of its operating area without a permit which normally was traffic offence that would render one arrested but issue with a traffic ticket. When appearing in court for a

of its operation routes without a permit. I had lost all the interests of going back to school. I found my self employed at Sasol 3 in Secunda,

Mpumalanga. It was there that I was recruited to the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), a FOSATU affiliate in 1981 as a member. I was elected as a shop steward, chairperson of Sasol 3 and Deputy Chairperson of the SASOL Plants SASOL 2 and 3). In 1984 I together with 6500 workers were dismissed by SASOL who was then a parastatal for participating in a political stay away on 5 & 6 November 1984, which was called by UDF in support of COSAS."

"The name Beki (Bheki) was given to me by a white-man official at Home Affairs when I applied for my identity document. This is the legal name I am

I was employed by the school in which I was studying as a Librarian teacher for a year. Career Life Eventually my certificate came but there was no money to further my studies as my younger brothers were at secondary school then.

My parents decided that I was the one to be compromised. I came to Johannesburg undocumented in that I did not have section 10 (1) (a) and I had running battles with police and used all manner of tricks available to me to remain in Johannesburg. I was deported out of Joburg more than four times (issued with 72 hours special to leave Joburg) and every time I was sent off I would get a new ID and came back.

Without proper documentation I was almost unemployable in Johannesburg. I eventually got employed by my uncle who owned taxis at the time. Here

graduated in the taxi industry from being a taxi driver to be taxi operator (Owner). My intention was not to stay long in this industry. Due to the nature of the industry, the violence, roughness, greed, rudeness and the fact that I was street wise, life and death were two sides of the same coin.

Many people that I knew died of violence while other closer to me were arrested for all sorts of things I decided to leave the sector. I had enough money to go back to school and look after my young brothers who were at high school by then", reiterated Ntshalintshali. Farewell Bra Tiger, as Comrade Bheki is affectionately called in union structures!



# Worker Issues



## Newly elected COSATU 2nd Deputy President, Duncan Luvuno

COSATU 2nd Deputy President, Duncan Luvuno in plenary celebrations in Midrand



**T**he former National Union of Mineworkers Health and Safety National Chairperson, Comrade Duncan Luvuno was duly elected as COSATU 2nd Deputy President at the 14th National Congress held at Gallagher Convention Centre, at Midrand.

Comrade Duncan has been a Kriel Power Station Branch Deputy Secretary in the Highveld Region for a period of three years dating 2006 until 2009. During the same period he was given the responsibility by workers to act as a Branch Secretary. Comrade Duncan then assumed the responsibility of a Branch Secretary in 2010 until 2012.

According to the NUM Constitution as amended at the 2019 NUM Special Congress in Durban and approved by the Registrar of Labour Relations, Branches are responsible to, amongst others recruit members, and unite them into a single labour organisation organizing in the mining, construction, metal and allied industries in order to enhance their economic and social welfare.

He was very instrumental in NUMs goal of improving the wages of workers and foster unity and cooperation within the Branch and



Newly elected COSATU National Office Bearers

also acted in the best interests of the workers. One of his responsibilities was to ensure members remain in good standing within NUM.

As a Branch Secretary, amongst others, he ensured that recognition agreements were honoured by employers and also ensure that the processes of election of shopstewards was driven through organizational principles such as Worker Control. Comrade Duncan ensured that organizational meetings and subcommittees were

well coordinated and decisions well according to the prescribed Constitutional frameworks.

Around 2013, Comrade Duncan was then elected as a Deputy Branch Chairperson with responsibilities, amongst others, to preside over meetings, promote generally the interests of members and deal with grievances of members and protect their job security and employment prospects in the Branch.

Comrade Duncan later in the

same period served as NUM Highveld Regional Youth Structure Chairperson, with responsibilities to organize young workers within the union structures.

From 2013 until 2015, Comrade Duncan was elected as the Branch Chairperson and also re-elected as the Highveld Regional Youth Structure as Chairperson. When the NUM was going towards the National Youth Structure Conference, he emerged as a National Youth Structure Chairperson.

At the 16th National Congress of the Union of Mineworkers which was held at Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg, held on June 20-22, 2018, he emerged as the National Chairperson responsible for Health and Safety.

He has been a National Executive Committee Member for the years serving as a National leader until he was duly elected at COSATU 14th National Congress held at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand from the 26th-29th September 2022.

**Congratulations to Comrade Duncan Luvuno!**





## Newly elected COSATU Deputy General Secretary, Gerald Twala

COSATU Deputy General Secretary, Gerald Twala



**C**OSATU 14th National Congress has duly elected Comrade Gerald Twala as the Deputy General Secretary at Midrand after the Independent Election Commission [IEC] facilitated the election processes in terms of COSATU's Constitution clause 3.5; 3.5.2 which regulates the 'election of National Office Bearers'.

After delegates participated in the nomination and election processes, Comrade Gerald Twala was declared as the leader with majority votes.

Comrade Twala is the former COSATU Limpopo Provincial Secretary after joining the SAMWU at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality around 2004 where he was employed as a Youth, Gender and Disability Officer and later as the Integrated Development Planning Manager.

He was a teacher at Burgersdorp Finishing Centre (Tzaneen) and Mkhuhlu Comprehensive School (Mkhuhlu, Bushbuckridge) around 1998 after training from Tivumbeni College of Education (Tzaneen), where he graduated with a Secondary Teacher's Diploma in 1996. Comrade Twala was elected as a Shopsteward and he was responsible, amongst others, to recruit workers, represent them in management meetings and



Comrade Twala at COSATU 14th Congress plenary celebrations in Midrand

defend their labour rights at the workplace in 2005. Later in the same period he was elected as a Local Secretary of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality Local (Limpopo Province) in 2005.

Comrade Twala at COSATU 14th National Congress plenary celebrations at Midrand. In the same period, Comrade Twala was elected as the SAMWU Far North Regional Deputy Chairperson responsible to preside on organizational meetings and

participate in various organizing activities.

Comrade Twala was then elected at COSATU Tzaneen Local Deputy Chairperson and assigned the role of coordinating affiliated trade unions in the economic hub of Tzaneen and surrounding areas and later in 2007, he assumed the position of COSATU Tzaneen Local Chairpersonship. And also, he was representing workers in COSATU Limpopo Provincial Shopstewards Council.

In 2009, Comrade Twala

assumed the position of SAMWU Far North Regional Secretary and served in the SAMWU Provincial Executive Committee in Limpopo. He ensured municipal worker's issues are on the agenda of the Federation's campaigns and later he was elected as SAMWU Limpopo Provincial Deputy Secretary in 2012 and served in SAMWU Central Executive Committee for a period of three years.

Comrade Twala around 2014 was elected as COSATU Limpopo Provincial Secretary, a position he occupied for a period of eight [8] years. Comrade Twala was a member of COSATU

Central Executive Committee during the same period.

He led various organizational campaigns in the province and championed to become an Advocate of workers across all sectors of the economy in the province. And at COSATU 14th National Congress held at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand as the Deputy General Secretary.

**Congratulations to Comrade Gerald Twala!**



# COSATU 14th National Congress

## Gallery





# COSATU 14th National Congress Gallery







# **COSATU 14th National Congress**

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**Solidarity Messages from Allies and fraternal organizations**



**C**OSATU 14th National Congress utilized the plenary session to afford its international allies and fraternal organizations to deliver messages of solidarity, amongst others, to harness the existing relations and further expose the contradictions and opportunities of uneven class consciousness and level of organisation in the international trade union movement to advance a real working-class agenda. There is a need to improve living standards of workers, in defence of collective bargaining, social security, fighting unemployment and high prices, defending the rights of immigrants and refugees, prohibition of child labour, health and safety at the workplace and the reduction of working time and increase in leisure time for the working class to participate meaningfully in other activities of their choice.

The World Federation of Trade Unions General Secretary, Pambis Kyritsis delivered its message in plenary and said 'We at the WFTU, we are particularly proud, inasmuch our Federation, firmly stood beside the people of South Africa, since the first day of its foundation. It organized internationalist solidarity of workers worldwide. It defended Nelson Mandela and all the other leaders of the struggle, not only with announcements and resolutions but also by organizing global campaigns and militant mobilizations all over the globe.'

"October 3rd, the WFTU founding day, has been established by our Federation as an international Action Day. This year, under the general slogan: We will not pay for the capitalist crisis and the imperialist wars. - Wage and pension increase Now."

"We call on workers in all countries, together to strengthen and massify the unions. To resist and mobilize. The struggles taking place in several countries are our hope and our future. Solidarity is our weapon. Today's dominant issue on the agenda of trade unions is the dramatic deterioration of workers' living standards." "I have no doubt that COSATU will continue on this path with solidarity and internationalism, in the militant spirit of its glorious history, for a better world, free of imperialistic wars and interventions, without any kind of discrimination and without man-by-man exploitation."

Kyritsis concluded that "The world is facing a phase of extreme intensification of political, economic, and military rivalries, aiming at controlling and exploiting the economic resources of our planet. The peoples pay the cost of the Imperialist rivalries with death, refugees, and also with the deterioration of their living and working conditions. The dangers and threats to world peace, have dangerously escalated after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At the same time the imperialists are attacking

the people of Palestine, Cuba, Afghanistan for their own interests, continuing their interventions and sanctions against Syria, Venezuela and elsewhere. That is why it is necessary to continue our internationalist action. In the period we live in, the economic crises of capitalism follow one another. The pandemic has not only dramatically widened social inequalities but has also been used for new attacks on democratic rights and trade union freedoms. For us, it is clear that only through the struggles and with organized militant demands the goals of the labor movement are realized and social progress achieved. Struggles for the satisfaction of the contemporary needs of the workers at all levels: salary, employment, security, culture, and mental. To defense of the democratic and trade union freedoms, collective bargaining, and the stable, permanent, and agreements-regulated labor and protect the autonomy of the Trade Unions and their class orientation away from bureaucracy, corruption, and manipulation by the capital and employers."

The International Trade Union Confederation, Samantha Smith, the Director for the Just Transition Centre said "I appreciate the invitation to be with you and am honored to be a guest at your Congress. I bring you greetings on behalf of the ITUC. I am the Director of the ITUC Just Transition Centre. We are a global center for unions, set up by ITUC to support unions in the struggle for a real just transition. It is a great privilege to be able to work with and learn from COSATU and its affiliates as you fight to keep and create good jobs, a developmental state and an Eskom that serve the public, and against privatization. COSATU's history and struggle for social justice continues to inspire our movement, also on just transition. Our General Secretary Sharan Burrow deeply regrets not being here today but has asked me to give the following speech on her behalf. Congratulations on all your struggles for a more just, more inclusive and democratic South Africa, the world needs your leadership. I am sad not to be with you. I am making my way back from the United Nations General Assembly where the core of our demands and your demands for a new social contract - our demands for jobs, quality jobs with fundamental rights and respect for collective bargaining, universal social protection and just transition have been heard by the UN Secretary General. Antonio Guterres launched a Global Accelerator for jobs, social protection and just transition. Placing the ILO with workers and employers in the lead he also called on all agencies and UN country Directors to assist. The central objectives include;

- 400 millions decent jobs created, esp. in the green, care and digital economy
- 4 billion people covered by social protection floors

- Just transition for all

"The ITUC has added a target of formalising 1 billion informal jobs. We know there are jobs in care - health, education, child care and aged or community care and we want all nations to join the global alliance for care - to invest in care."

Smith reiterated that "We are proud of COSATU's fight for a real just transition and your demands for a national climate jobs plan. These are the strategic plans we need for the fight for just transitions in all nations. But we also need universal social protection. Without social protection we have no resilience against global shocks. Essential public services, pensions and basic incomes for those without jobs, like the basic income grant for which COSATU is fighting, is well supported globally. There is a massive 87% support for the provision of affordable healthcare and 87% affordable access to education with nearly equal support for measures to protect peoples' incomes. Our global polling tell us that with the convergence of crisis including historic levels of inequality, the climate emergency with extreme weather events creating loss of lives, homes and livelihoods, the pandemic and now the inflationary spikes in energy and food prices people are living in despair. People are fearful for the future and social and industrial unrest is growing in every country. Two thirds - 66% of people - are worried about their jobs. And we have a rampant inflation crisis where every second household (51%) say income is falling behind the cost of living."

Friends of Cuba Society, represented by Mrs Lefika Chetty said "Revolutionary greetings and best wishes to COSATU for your 14th Congress. First off, we in the Friends of Cuba Society wish to take this opportunity to convey our sincere gratitude for all the relentless Internationalist struggle's that COSATU has been waging to ensure that the working class agenda remains on the center stage. And so, COSATU continues to be committed to the campaign against the illegal extra-territorial US economic blockade of Cuba. We know that the struggle to re-assert the proletarian counter-hegemony in the face of robust capitalist-inspired discourse constructed, maintained and entrenched by capitalist relations and its bourgeoisie apparatus remains on course. The forces of imperialism in all their guises are increasing their offensive on the poor and downtrodden each and every day. We see casualisation of labour, increasing retrenchments, soaring unemployment, attack of workers' rights, and escalating immiseration of the working- and under-classes each day. Peasants are no exception to this profit-driven madness. Comrades, your congress is taking place at the time when the ever-widening gap between the poor, deprived and

marginalized humanity and the rich, mind-managers is assuming grotesque proportions. Never have the sharp lines of demarcation between the world proletarian and bourgeoisie been so sharply drawn. Never before has the challenge of defending the gains of the working class, raising working class consciousness about causes of its wretched condition, and taking the war back to the imperialists been so crucial. We are acutely aware that the Cuban American diaspora in Miami is intent on forging instability in Cuba through a campaign it calls 'democratising Cuba' - #SOSCuba. There's generally a belief in these circles that the tightening of the blockade and negative consequences of the corona pandemic, will spark widespread anger and resistance in Cuba, which will result in a revolt and ultimate overthrow of the revolutionary government. This will not happen! the Cuban people stand steadfast against such 5th column shenanigans. But we are particularly worried about the conduct of the right-wing US government led by President Joe Biden, which has put regime change as cornerstone of its foreign policy objectives not only in Cuba but in countries with revolutionary movements in Latin America i.e. Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Uruguay and so on. Cuba and all progressive governments can rely on African solidarity as we will continue to demand end of US economic blockade on Cuba, USA to surrender the territory of Guantanamo to Cuba and ends all secrets regime change initiatives to Cuba and Latin America. All peace-loving people of the World stand with Cuba!"

Meanwhile, Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses - Intersindical Nacional. Sindicatos [CGTP-In] from Portugal said "On behalf of CGTP-In, I thank you for the invitation to accompany you in this 14th congress of COSATU and I greet all delegates as well as the workers they represent. We are following with great interest your reflection on the set of issues that you have considered necessary to discuss and we will have it present in our own reflection. We wish success to the achievement of the guide lines and tasks defined by you of organizational reinforcement, greater sectorial deployment and workers represented. We express our confidence that class unionism will be strengthened here and that this corresponds to the expectations and desires of South African workers and international solidarity. We reiterate CGTP's interest in maintaining friendly and cooperative relationships between our organizations."

***The struggle continues, comrades!  
Long live South African workers.  
Long live COSATU.  
Amandla!***





## Zingiswa Losi re-elected, as SATUCC PRESIDENT in Boksburg

**D**elegates from Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe and Namibia from the Southern African Development Community [SADC] gathered at Birchwood Conference Centre, Boksburg in South Africa to participate in the 11th elective Congress of the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council [SATUCC] under the Theme: "Revitalization of Trade Unions in Southern Africa-How best we deliver our Mandate"!

SATUCC celebrating its 39th Anniversary was established 'to form a strong regional trade union body that could play a role in the political liberation struggle and influence policy at the regional level in favour of workers. Today SATUCC and is the only formally recognised representative regional trade union confederation with a special status in the SADC. And it was also to strengthen solidarity amongst trade unions in the sub region, and specifically to give voice to labour issues at the regional level. SATUCC is the platform

for labour providing forums for trade unions and workers generally to engage and influence policies nationally and regionally through the active and effective participation of affiliate national federations.'

SATUCC's Congress took place amidst mix feelings of the Southern African Development Community [SADC] still remaining the most unequal region on the continent, with Namibia and South Africa being confirmed as having higher inequality than the rest and Lesotho being the least unequal in the region.

In the region, domestic food price inflation remains high around the world, with Zimbabwe hard hit by food inflation which stands at around 340%

To make the situation worse, the war in Ukraine has altered global patterns of trade, production, and consumption of commodities in ways that have kept prices at high levels which is predicted to exacerbating food insecurity and inflation towards the end of 2024. High food prices have triggered a global crisis that is driving millions more into extreme poverty, magnifying

hunger and malnutrition.

According to a World Bank report, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major setback in global poverty reduction. Now, rising food and energy prices fuelled by climate shocks and conflict have halted the recovery.

SADC's average score for regional integration is quite low. Nine of SADC's 16 members perform around the mid-point. SADC has three high performers, with South Africa leading comfortably.

SADC's average score are most pulled down by a gap in regional infrastructure. South Africa achieves a near-perfect score, but the next two performers, Seychelles and Mauritius, score far below and the bottom five performers (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Tanzania) score near zero. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania do better on productive integration, where they fall into the average zone, but SADC's average score for productive integration is not much better than for integrated infrastructure.

SADC's country rankings appear to reflect the current

state of socioeconomic integration in the community, where the best-performing countries have flourishing economies and enjoy a relatively good standard of living. SADC's strength lies in the free movement of people.

SATUCC Congress was convened, amongst others, to mitigate against these sad developments in the region.

### Commitments to Change the Status Quo!

Deliberations ensued to change the lives of the people with SADC and member states were urged to organize all working people within the region to promote decent work agenda and social justice.

Amongst the key recommendations tabled in plenary were the following;

- SATUCC members have a responsibility to pursue the ratification of ILO Convention 190 in their respective countries.
- Male gender champions campaign must be supported across SATUCC and affiliates to conscientize workers and all parties about gender equality
- SATUCC and its affiliates must reprioritise to

campaign for the people living with disabilities in the world of work SATUCC and its affiliates must vigorously campaign for childcare facilities at various workplaces to cater for working mothers to promote safety of their dependents and to enhance work-home balance mechanism

- Gender Equality in the world of work is a trade union issue and all SATUCC affiliates must embrace gender struggles within their organisations and affirm the status of women in leadership and managerial positions
- South Africa, Namibia, Somalia, Mauritius, Nigeria and Central African Republic have ratified ILO Convention 190 and we appeal to SATUCC and affiliates to put pressure on their governments to participate in the eradication of violence and Harassment in the world of work
- Gender discrimination must be rejected in every workplace and Shopstewards must become Gender Activists to lead in that regard



- SATUCC and affiliates must engage on remuneration policies which is premised on equity, equal pay for work of equal value as part and parcel of monitoring gender campaigns at the workplace Gender Equality
- #SATUCC and affiliates must engage on #Workplace50/50 and develop gender campaigns to implement workplace gender equality initiatives to sustain the monitoring of Gender Equality
- SATUCC and its affiliates need to develop workplaces gender equality tools to measure and monitor full implementation
- impact to ordinary people on issues such as Climate Change, Social Justice, Decent Work or to address challenges of gender discrimination, inequality
- We must reprioritise using internal media platforms to promote the human rights of migrant workers and governments must play their roles to regulate movement of migrants
- SATUCC and affiliates must reprioritize taking public podiums to condemn atrocious practices against migrant workers in each member state and collaborate with the mainstream media to present sustainable



Minister Thulas Nxesi addressing SATUCC 11th Congress

- of employment equity plans to enhance equal treatment of men and women workers
- Gender equality in society is a human rights issue and SATUCC and its affiliates must play a critical role to empower and workshop all the workforce about issues of #EqualPay, gender equality, gender discrimination
- SATUCC and its affiliates must ensure that women and men are engaged in sustainable gender campaigns to promote gender equality in the world of work through individual and collective efforts
- SATUCC and its affiliates must monitor implementation of Sustainable Goals in every country and compile reports to assess the
- campaigns against racism, xenophobia and hate speech
- SATUCC and affiliates must encourage workers to avoid using discriminatory and stigmatising terminology when addressing issues related to migrant workers
- SATUCC and affiliates must encourage their media officers to participate in the ILO
- Global Media Competition to raise awareness about the risks and dangers of irregular, unsafe governed labour migration, including their recruitment
- SATUCC and affiliates must play a meaningful role in each member country on the #TogetherCampaign to promoting the dignity, security and respect for migrant workers
- SATUCC and affiliates

must put up campaigns to raise awareness on rights and responsibilities of migrant workers in countries of destination, through promotion of access to information at all times

- SATUCC and affiliates must develop sustainable and special campaigns to combat forced labour situations as well as violence and harassment particularly affecting women migrant workers and children
- Former SATUCC Executive leadership before the 11th Congress
- The newly elected President, Zingiswa Losi when closing the plenary session said “We wish all delegates and their federations strength to rebuilding SATUCC and the Congress is officially closed. Safe travels to your respective countries.”

#### SATUCC 11th Congress Elected leadership

- Zingiswa Losi from COSATU, South Africa was duly elected as President
- Joy Beene from ZCTU, Zambia elected as SATUCC Vice President
- Godfrey Selematsela from FEDUSA, South Africa elected as Treasurer

#### Additional members are;

- T. S. Mbereki from BFTU, Botswana
- Neo Otukile from BOFEPUSU, Botswana

#### Messages of Solidarity

The Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU] in South Africa wished delegates at the 11th Congress successful deliberations and COSATU General Secretary, Solly Phetoe said, “SATUCC should be alive to rebuilding SATUCC, and as a working class movement ensure that the socio-economic ills in society are eradicated within SADC Region and beyond. Crucial for

SATUCC is the maintenance of worker power and democracy, and unity across the labour movement.”

“Since the last Congress in 2018, it is observed that although overall unemployment rates are generally low for some member states, the majority of jobs are informal, precarious and characterised by high levels of working poverty. This is attributed to the slow pace of structural change in most countries, and premature deindustrialisation in other economies, which has limited prospects of higher labour productivity across all sectors, notably in industries where the share of manufacturing is declining.”

Phetoe said “COSATU has taken mandate from the federation to prioritise resolutions that talk to building a financially stable SATUCC, organisational building, and strengthened programmes on solidarity with the workers of Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.”

Meanwhile, SATUCC 11th Congress received messages of solidarity from various partners such as Solidarity Center, the International Labour Organization, Pretoria Office, Labour Service Organizations and also the Department of Employment and Labour in South Africa.

The Employment and Labour Minister in South Africa, Honourable Thulas Nxesi wished SATUCC 11th Congress successful deliberations.

Hon Nxesi said “The Labour laws in South Africa cover all workers irrespective of race, gender, religious belief or origin. However, what is disturbing, is tendencies by

some employers who take advantage of vulnerable workers, given the current high unemployment levels, to exploit them and subject them to unacceptable conditions or undermine the current labour laws and standards.”

“These kind of practices have led to sporadic incidents of conflicts and unnecessary frictions between locals and foreign nationals”.

“Wherever you go in the SADC region, you will find South African natives moving freely and even other neighbouring foreign nationals enjoying the same freedom as well in South Africa. I am raising these because there are people who continue to propagate falls legends and beliefs that South Africans are Xenophobic.”

“We continue to support initiatives at SADC and the African Union levels aimed at ensuring cooperation in easing the movement of people as a key element of economic and political integration.”

South Africa has established an Inter-Ministerial Task Team on Migration and Employment in 2020, led by twelve [12] Ministers and senior Public Servants from various Departments led by the Ministers of Employment and Labour and Home Affairs, to amongst others, to collate inputs from stakeholders to formulate the National Labour Migration Policy in the country and also to ensure that labour migration to and from South Africa is undertaken in the interests of both migrant workers and the South African economy and society.



Delegates, partners and staff of SATUCC at the 11th Congress





## SADTU celebrates its **32nd Anniversary** in Kempton Park

SADTU National Office Bearers leading the plenary proceedings at the NGC in Kempton Park

**T**he South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) General Secretary, Mugwena Maluleke said that “The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) is a product of the liberation struggle, as well as prolonged and difficult negotiations involving both the newly emergent teacher unions and the established race-based teacher associations which amalgamated into a single, progressive teachers’ union on 6 October 1990.

The birth of SADTU saw thousands of teachers from at least eighteen organisations from all corners of South Africa, coming together to sign the union into being. This historical event has been described by teachers as, ‘the day of victory’. SADTU became the first national unitary, non-racial and nonsexist union to have been formed in South Africa. Its leadership and members have steadfastly pursued and linked its organizational objectives, as well as its education programmes, to the broader politics of the liberation struggle and the development of a democratic state. This is evidenced by the fact that SADTU leaders and

members now occupy key strategic positions in government and society at large. The history of SADTU would be incomplete without reference to the high levels of inequality that characterised South African society, and its schooling system.

SADTU is a product of deep-rooted historical forces and socio-political waves that ushered in the transformation of South African society. A significant milestone in this historical process are developments during the late 1940s and 1950s, when early opposition to apartheid manifested itself. The period between the mid and late 1950s was characterised by the African struggle against the implementation of Bantu Education. The main architect of Bantu education, Dr. H.F.Verwoerd asserted in his speech presented before the Senate of the Parliament of the Union of South Africa that, ‘where possible the various types of schools now in existence must be controlled by whites, in co-operation with bodies composed of Bantu members.’ The apartheid policy of segregation and separate development thus extended into all social spheres, including

education. It divided South African society by implementing state control over education, with the intention to protect white privilege and power. The consequences were negative for the African teaching force, as it led to unequal funding for black education, resulting in inferior teacher training programmes, low salaries, poor conditions of service and underresourced schools. Prior to the National Party’s (NP’s) introduction of apartheid education, the African education system was administered by the Department of Native Affairs.

After the NP came into power, a Commission of Inquiry headed by Dr. W. W. M Eiselen was appointed in 1949, to transform African education. This Commission established the ‘Bantu Local Authorities’ in the reserves and white urban areas, comprising chiefs and nominated members. These bodies were established to enforce apartheid educational plans, as well as to control the labour force in the reserves. In 1951, the Bantu Authorities Act was enacted. Two years later, the Bantu Education Act was promulgated in 1953. In his statement, Dr. Verwoerd

proclaimed that ‘education should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society.’

By 1954, the Act was amended to eradicate missionary schools and training colleges such as, Adams College, Lovedale and many other schools. Government subsidies were terminated and missionaries were offered an option to sell their schools to the government. Arguably, no single legal measure proved more traumatic in the history of black education in South Africa than the Bantu Education Act of 1953. The roots of Black resistance to apartheid education, however, can be traced back to the political culture that was generated in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In its inception, this political culture was spearheaded by the Ethiopianist movement- which was dominated by teachers and clerics who later formed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912. The founders of the ANC were against the limited African education provided by the mission schools. They blamed the state for curtailing opportunities for Africans, and the church for



forcing African Christians out of the orthodox denominations through the use of factionalist, paternalist, as well as segregationist tactics. The sustenance of the apartheid system was embedded in education, and hence the struggle against the regime has always been led by teacher mobilization and resistance.

This struggle saw the birth of SADTU in 1990. This year, the union celebrates 24 years of its existence. Within this period, SADTU has done much to transform the education system in South Africa and improve the working conditions for teachers. Whilst the union has made fundamental progress in redressing the past imbalances, it remains confronted with the challenge to take forward the struggle for equal and quality education."

Maluleke said that "SADTU has grown to become the biggest union in the education and public service sector in South Africa with more than 260 000 members and therefore

*becoming the biggest union in the education sector, and fully embracing and celebrating World Teachers' Day. The Day is celebrated to acknowledge and appreciate the teachers for the role they play in developing learners to become better citizens and make formidable contributions to their immediate communities and society in general.*

*The theme - The transformation of education begins with teachers - is correct. One of the few positives from the Covid 19 pandemic crisis was that it gave further undisputable proof that teachers are indeed the main drivers of our education systems. Without teachers, it is impossible to provide an equitable and quality education system to every learner. Teachers rose to the occasion and showed their mettle and devised ways to keep in touch with their learners under the difficult circumstances."*

Maluleke reiterated on celebrating World Teachers Day on the 5th

October 2022 that "We call on the Department to increase investment in capacitating educators in Early Childhood Development and improve their conditions of service to be in line with other teachers. Their status and level of remuneration do not inspire one to strive to the best of their abilities. We will never stop to call on government to improve the conditions of service by employing more teachers in order to reduce class sizes, improve school infrastructure and provide psycho-social support to teachers. To teachers, you are role models to learners and communities you come from; continue to show up, be professional, be on time, prepared and work."

## Happy Birthday SADTU

Meanwhile, SADTU concluded its National General Council which was addressed by Alliance partners, the ANC President, Cyril Ramaphosa, COSATU General Secretary, Solly Phetoe and SACP 1st Deputy General Secretary, Madala Masuku and international allies

from countries such as Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia. Other speakers were The Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga.

SADTU General Secretary, Maluleke reiterated that 'the NGC was duly attended by the Union's National Office Bearers, provincial Chairpersons and Secretaries, Regional Chairpersons and one additional regional delegate per five thousand paid up members or part thereof, make up the National General Council.

More than 250 delegates including guests are expected to attend the NGC. The NGC meets at least once in five years to ratify decisions of the National Executive Committee and adopt policy issues of major importance in between National Congresses. The NGC shall, among others, assess progress on resolutions taken at the 9th National Congress held in 2019.'



# WHO AM I?

by Thobile Maso

UCOSATU yintlangano yabasenzi

Aluta continua!

I am the Congress of South African Trade Unions

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!

UCOSATU yintlangano yabasebenzi

Aluta continua!

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!

UCOSATU yintlangano yabasebenzi

Aluta continua!

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!

UCOSATU yintlangano yabasebenzi

Aluta continua!

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!

Who am I?

UCOSATU yintlangano yabasebenzi

Aluta continua!

I am the power to be reckoned with

I am for the country without exploitation

For a caring society, without disease and hunger

For a society with freedom and bread for all

For a society in which no one lives of

labour of another

For a society without capitalism

For a society built on socialist ethics

I am still standing!

UCOSATU yintlangano yabasebenzi

Aluta continua!

An injury to one, is An injury to all!

Solidarity forever!

Organise! Or Starve!

Power to the people!

Power to the working class!

Power to the workers!

Who am I?

Who am I?

You are COSATU!

Who am I ?

You are COSATU!

Who am I ?

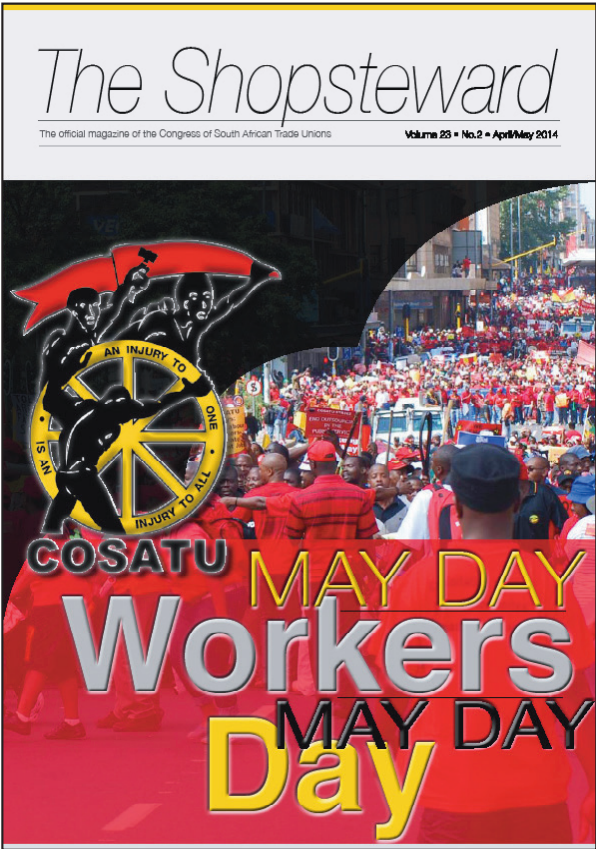
You are COSATU!

**Composed by Thobile Maso**



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