



The Shopsteward

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Myrtle Witbooi

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Solly Phetoe
Editor in Chief

editorial note

this latest copy of the Shopsteward is coming out at a very busy time for the federation as we are preparing for the May Day celebrations and the 50th Anniversary of the Durban strikes. We have seen a steady decline in unemployment, but the economy remains stagnant and efforts to unbundle and privatize public enterprises continue to be pursued by the government. In the last budget speech, there continued to be a reduction in social expenses and workers are subjected to low wages and low pensions. We are seeing serious attacks on labour rights and a growing rise of precarious and temporary work.

The working class needs to unite regardless of colour, religion, and

sexual orientation. Workers should wage their struggles based on their class interests, starting in their workplaces.

Our campaigns and struggles should prioritize access to unemployment benefits for everyone out of work. As the progressive and class-oriented federation of workers, we need to fight for the full respect of the wage and labour rights of migrant workers.

The government is colluding with capital to continue to manoeuvre and shift the burden of the economic crisis to the working class, whilst at the same time opening more policy and political space to deepen their accumulation agenda.

Our government has long succumbed to the temptation of adopting regressive and contractionary policies by cutting social expenditures. The policy choices made by the sixth administration have failed to deal with the essence of colonialism and apartheid capitalism. The colonial and apartheid economic and political policy platform is firmly intact. We continue to be the most unequal country in the world, according to the World Bank.

There is rising popular discontent, and a growing sense of alienation, frustration, and despair amongst a significant stratum of the youth, the unemployed, and the working poor.

To fix this, there is a need

to dispense with the illusory assumption that the state is above class conflict. The current socio-economic situation reflects the class character of the policies that have been implemented by the state since 1996.

The state is a powerful force with a lot of influence. It holds a monopoly on tax, prints money, and engages in borrowing on behalf of the country. It influences who has access to national productive resources and determines how they are deployed and used. It is within this context that the role of the state should be understood and framed.

Over the last couple of weeks, the federation's affiliates in the public service have been convening pickets

across all provinces to protest over the unilateral implementation of 3% of salary adjustments last year by the government.

We continue to experience load-shedding, fuel price hikes, and the rising cost of food. We fully support all our members who are bust taking to the streets to push back against the attacks on collective bargaining and who are also pushing for economic transformation. Makro workers and Post Office workers are under siege. The only solution is to unite and fight.

Loadshedding continues to wreak havoc on the economy and the government has played the last card, of reducing the Eskom debt and declaring a state of disaster.

Despite the ANC government expressing its commitment to building a developmental state and the notion of radical socio-economic transformation in the South African state has been taken over by private interests, both the established white business and the emerging black business. The influence of white business interests tends to be manifested in policy development not only at the Treasury but

across government, and in large construction projects of the National Infrastructure Plan. Whilst black business interests tend to be largely involved in boards of the SOEs and in the delivery of outsourced services such as security, office letting, cleaning, catering, housing, IT, etc.

In the period under review, we have found ourselves involved in a terrain that is characterized by contradictory or mutually opposed efforts and processes by the same government in which there is continuity with the Neoliberal agenda in the state on the one hand, whilst at the same time there is talk and some efforts to move in the direction of the developmental state.

This has created the current confusion where sectors that were previously under government control like the energy, rail, and ports are given to the private sector, but the ANC meetings continue to talk the language of a developmental state.

Organizationally, the Federation is busy with a recruitment campaign. Each member of a union has a responsibility to recruit more workers to join a union and the best way to

do this is to celebrate the union's success and spread good practices in our local branches. Workers should be able to understand that unions are not just there for their protection if they have problems at work, but they also help with education and training plus other membership benefits.

We reiterate our message to all COSATU shop stewards, organizers, and members, let us all recruit, mobilize and consolidate our campaigns in the workplace as a way of pushing back against monopoly capital. The only way we will build the federation is by addressing the worker's day-to-day and bread and butter issues of workers.

We need to listen, respond, and report back to workers daily. The last congress reminded us that members are the lifeblood of our unions and the bedrock of the federation's existence. It also made it clear that our recruitment campaign should be undertaken with special attention on member orientation and service delivery. As we continue to roll out our recruitment campaign, we will do well to remember that.

The federation is also busy pushing back against the rise in women and child abuse in the country. Women continue to be the face of poverty, especially black working-class women. Socio-economic conditions and patriarchal attitudes that justify and perpetuate the abuse of women are driving the staggeringly high rates of domestic violence and rape in South Africa.

Women and girls are by far the most at risk and most affected by gender-based violence. Women remain responsible for the bulk of unpaid reproductive labour. This includes all of the work that contributes to reproducing society, such as housework, childbearing, and child-rearing, which is invisible, not paid, and not counted in national statistics.

The battle continues and the workers need to take an active interest in the activities of their unions. Let us work to build our unions and support each other on the picket line.

Aluta Contiu!



Norman Mampane - Editor

word from the editor

this year, 2023, is going to be a busy season as the country prepares for the 7th general elections in 2024 and celebrates the 30th anniversary of the dawn of South Africa's democracy.

We are welcoming new entrants in the labour markets as many workers and interns were employed in various sectors. We are making an appeal for all of them to join COSATU affiliated trade unions to advance a just course towards Socialism. The participation of workers in the provincial #RailwaySafetyBill hearings is commendable and long overdue and the Bill should be passed with urgency to address the safety concerns of communities. Some commuters are calling for the ban on mushrooming of informal settlements along the railway line to enhance security and protect the railway system and classify it as a national asset to prevent theft and vandalism. We must support calls by commuters for tight security on our railway infrastructure and ensure that trains become an affordable means of transportation to work.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the 1973 Durban Strikes

The 1973 Durban strikes were part of a wider political ferment in the city in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when it became a generative site of political experimentation and innovation. It is responsibility of every worker to appreciate the application of a founding principle of solidarity and work with all workers to attain an ideal society in which internationalism, worker solidarity is heightened and that all workers become conscious against any capitalist and imperialist systems which exploit the working class for profits.

Concerns about purchasing power as wages decline and inflation rises!

Every worker must be politically conscious to denounce colonial systems of exploitation.

The poor are getting poorer while the rich are getting richer

The devastating austerity crisis in the public sectors is causing a serious challenge for current employees, with workers suffering from stress, exhaustion and unbearable workloads amid a retention and recruitment crisis. Corporate greed

and power has fueled the situation as more retrenchment becoming rife. The rising inequality will reduce economic growth across all countries and thus deepening unhappiness. Because those at the bottom spend money down the shops, while the richest stash it abroad! With many trade unions leading collective bargaining processes in various sectors, employers must get round the table with workers and rather than holding down wages, they work on delivering the pay rises that workers need to pay their bills and put food on the table.

According to Patrick Kelly, Chief Director at STATSSA responsible for price statistics said 'inflation was at 7.2 % but food prices were up by over 12% year on year - and particularly some foods like bread and maize meal are up dramatically.' 'Prices of milk, eggs and cheese products rose by 10,9% in the 12 months to Nov, slightly higher than the rate recorded in Oct (10,5%). Coffee whitener increased by 4,6% between Oct and Nov and full cream long life milk by 2,4%.' [Statistics South Africa, 14 December 2022]. Bread and cereal products have had the most significant impact on overall food inflation, with the annual rate reaching 20,6% in Dec. [Statistics South Africa, January 2023]

Cost of living is too high!

Faced with the current cost-of-living crisis, social dialogue is an essential tool for finding effective mitigating measures and recovery policies.

A universal basic income has become unavoidable!

All progressive trade unions must consciously work together at the shop floor level to fight for low paid workers who tend to disproportionately be from marginalized communities, affecting women, young workers and/or single parents. Trade unions must be at the forefront of fighting for pay equality. We are gradually getting past COVID-19 pandemic crisis which devastated health system. And economies across the globe, with million citizens dying as a result of the comorbidities associated with the pandemic, and continue to send messages of condolences to the affected families who lost bread winners. However, workers must be vigilant to

protect themselves by demanding personal protective equipment to curb the spread of the pandemic. For every country to recover fully from the adverse effects of the pandemic, social security must be strengthened for the working class to cushion them against the hardships. We must rebuild and renew our social security systems, strengthen public services that help everyone, and create suitable work that pays people at least the real Living Wage. For the record, post-Covid economy must be built in the interest of workers not wealth accumulation of a few.

Across the globe, there is a new revival of trade union militancy to reject the flawed role of Central Banks primarily preoccupied with raising interest rates which damage economic growth by shifting disposable income from poorer households (who spend their income) to wealthier ones (who hoard their money).

The strikes which took place in France, United Kingdom for example, are inspiring! Some progressive economists argue that Central Banks must participate in job creation projects. Workers on the streets are ready to ditch a market capitalism that favors a few and replace it with a socialist economy that is pro-worker and pro-union. neoliberalism's legacy is destroying nations, with the global top 1% owning 38% of global wealth, while the bottom half of humanity owns a mere 2%. On the International side, we continue to observe the continuing war by Russia and Ukraine which inflicted more economic hardships in most countries, with rising prices of food and other commodities. On the other hand, South Africa must fasttrack migration policy to ensure that labour unrest sparked by lack of jobs should be well managed.

Labour migration is a global phenomenon and South Africa must apply legislative framework to resolve the challenges. BRICS debate is upon us as South Africa will be chairing the economic bloc in 2023. The Senior government officials from SA and the South African Chapters of the BRICS Business Council, BRICS Women's Business Alliance and the BRICS Think Tanks Council met at Mabula Lodge in Bela Bela, Limpopo to use the First BRICS Sherpa and Sous-Sherpa meeting to

introduce SA's priorities and expectations as Chair of BRICS. There are growing calls in Brazil and Argentina for a South American currency to counter the hegemony of the US dollar.

Questions are still asked about the benefits of belonging to BRICS and what is their assistance to address the energy crisis in the country. What are political implications of the changes in Brazil towards BRICS and what posture will it take to address geopolitics across the globe?

Lastly, over the past decade, COSATU has banked enhancing its communication platforms by taking advantage of the new forms of media. And trade union's communication has increasingly focused also on online media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatzup which have become the primary arena for looking creative ways to sustain quality membership service and building relationships between unions and their grassroots, or between the leadership and the rank-and-file.

We urge workers to conduct such work within the confines of the founding principle of worker control and with a conscious mind of promoting internal democracy. Solidarity as a doing word, and to understand it as an active process, we must inculcate a culture where we support each other across class, race, and international borders.

Seizing the means of production is the only way to go for a brighter future - not an economic system that is ready to implode. First, the economic system of capital will implode, then the means of production will be 'seized'. ie. repurposed to produce useful goods and services rather than producing results.

Best wishes to all newly elected Shopstewards and worker leaders! True communists-revolutionaries-do not think of fame or reward for their work but are only concerned with attaining social justice for all. We are encouraged by worker struggles in the UK, France, Denmark, Greece, Brazil fighting for social justice! Let us recommit to our ambitious vision and to continue to work alongside African countries to realize a greener, more sustainable, and more inclusive future for all

It is not yet Uhuru!



DURBAN STRIKES

50th Anniversary

Reflecting on the happenings of

1973 Durban Strikes & its aftermath!

the Daily Mail which won the Pringle Award, named after Thomas Pringle, an editor who fought government censorship in the early 1800s, was closed down with vivid records of the bravery of workers during the 1973 Durban Strikes. The newspaper was acclaimed as one of the world's 50 greatest newspapers in 1979, one of South Africa's best known newspaper, mainly because of its unrelenting campaign against the iniquities policies of apartheid. It spoke truth to power and providing a public platform for labour organizations to air their views.

From 1950 the Nationalist government passed a range of laws designed to restrict the media, including the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950; Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1953; Criminal Procedure Act, 1955; Riotous Assemblies Act, 1956; Police Act, 1958; Inquest Act, 1959; Prisons Act, 1959; General Law Amendment Act, 1962 (The Sabotage Act); Publications and Entertainment Act, 1963; Terrorism Act, 1967; Prohibition of Political Interference Act, 1968; The General Law Amendment Act, 1969 (BOSS Law); Gathering and Demonstration Act, 1973; Publications Act, 1974; Internal Security Amendment Act, 1976; Protection of Information Act, 1982; Registration of Newspapers Amendment Act, 1982 and the Internal Security Act, 1982. In 1957, Prime Minister JG Strijdom told Parliament that the English language press was "South Africa's greatest enemy". When the Nationalist government came into power in 1948, it began to restrict the media.

For that effect, more than 100 laws were passed to control the press.

Daily Rand Mail also covered the South Africa's worst mining disaster which occurred in 1960 in the Coalbrook mine near Sasolburg where 435 miners died. The South African Congress of Trade Unions [SACTU] mourned the loss and organize a large all-day rally meeting in Johannesburg. Mine management would not allow reporters to talk to black miners, who were locked in segregated compound waiting for news of their fellow workers.

Durban strikes: Police hold 250

On 10 November 1972, the Rand Daily Mail reported that four African employees of a factory in Industria in Johannesburg were charged with going on strike and sentenced to 150 days in prison.

This kind of abuse was common because African workers were not allowed to join registered trade unions. In 1973, all that began to change. On 10 January the Mail carried a story about a strike by African workers at Coronation Brick and Tile in Durban. This moment represented the beginning of a movement that would change the face of South Africa. The headline noted the workers' promise, "We will be back".

Within days it was clear from the pages of the Mail that something historic was underway. Labour reporters suddenly had their hands full, especially in Durban, reporting strikes at the docks, in transport companies, manufacturing, textile factories and at the Municipality. The strikes soon spread to other parts of the country.

The Mail joined calls from many quarters to raise wages and to legalize African Trade unions. Articles published pay rates for black workers in various industries, demonstrating how low they were and how badly unions were needed.

This was confirmed by the Lucy Mvubelo, General Secretary of the National Union of Clothing Workers on 12 January 1973. Other workers at the Frame factory were agitated and addressed on many occasions by Barney Dladla, one of the Shopstewards. Union organizers such as Halton Cheadle and David Hemson were prominent role players to organize Frame workers.

The events of January 1973 lit a fire of resistance in the workplace. Within months several new African Trade Unions were formed. Throughout the year, strike action took place, and wage demands were won in a number of sectors. One of the flashpoints was the Frame textile group in Durban, then the largest employer of African workers in Natal. In early 1974 workers organized a major strike affecting the whole company. On 22 January the Mail led the arrest of 217 strikers, amid tear gas and batons. But the pressure began to tell. By the end of the month Frame raised wages significantly.

The Mail ran an article reflecting on the Frame strike and the events of the previous year, declaring that, "Behind the Confidence of their striped shirts, Natal employers are petrified". They argued that the only way forward was for the black trade unions to be

recognized. While Phillip Frame bitterly resisted the Mail's advice until his death, a few years later the Group was forced to recognize the union. Ironically, in the 1990s after the Mail had itself had closed, the unthinkable happened and the very same Union SACTWU, bought the Frame Group to save it from closing down. [DAILY RAND MAIL, Johannesburg, Tuesday, 22 January, 1974]

On 9 January 1973 around 2 000 workers in the Coronation Brick and Tile factory in Durban downed tools after the employers rejected their demand for a wage increase from R8,97 to R30 per week. Subsequently, workers in various sectors around Durban also went on strike demanding higher wages and better working conditions. For instance, on 10 January workers at A.J Keeler Transport went on strike and other strikes followed between the 15 and 24 January. British-controlled Frame group with several textile plants suffered as the wave of strikes spread.

The wave of strikes that hit Durban, and the rate at which they spread revealed a new force which many employers had not been prepared. Wide media coverage of the striking workers caused an outcry from various quarters including the White public, and government at the shockingly low wages being paid to workers. The police gesture surprised many people as they kept a low profile. These strikes spread to Pietermaritzburg, Richard's Bay, Johannesburg and other cities during the year.



Photo by **Graham Boynton**

50th

Anniversary

of the historic **1973 Durban Workers' Strikes**

by **Sithembiso Bhengu & Alex M. Mashilo**

The South African working-class, taking its cue from the 1973 Durban workers' strikes, should build maximum unity and join hands in forging a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor. This is what the conditions of today require, towards overcoming the persisting high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality, and to advance towards a socialist transition.

Capitalist exploitation of workers will be eliminated under the socialist transition and prosperity from production, trade and other economic activity will be equitably shared in a movement towards a higher phase of development in which society will inscribe on its banners "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs!"

The 50th anniversary of the Durban workers' strikes

Monday, 9 January 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of the Durban Workers Strikes. From one factory to another, the 1973 Durban strikes grew in leaps and bounds, becoming a movement which gave birth to new, militant trade unions.

Thousands of workers took down tools and marched from Avoca to Briardene, in Durban i. By the end of January that year, workers in over 100 factories had embarked on industrial action. The strikes impacted various industries -

construction, clothing and textile, mills, harbour, the docks, manufacturing, metal and transport sectors, to mention but a few.

Despite a number of the striking workers being dismissed, the workers continued with the strikes. In addition, the strikes catalysed the re-organisation of African industrial workers into trade unions. Moreover, the workers increasingly re-connected the workplace struggle with the broader liberation struggle and thus played an important part towards the defeat of the apartheid regime. This occurred in the context where the Alliance comprising the progressive trade union movement, the Communist Party and the African National Congress, supported by formations of the mass democratic movement, including the progressive civic movement, ultimately again assumed the organisational form of the connection between the workplace and broader political struggle for liberation.

Where did the strikes begin, why, and how did they develop?

The apartheid regime intensified repression in the 1960s after banning political and industrial organisations pursuing the struggle for liberation and social emancipation, having started by banning the Communist Party in 1950

under the Suppression of Communism Act. This also coincided with the golden age of "industrial capitalism" characterised by high growth rates, especially in the United States (US) and Western Europe. It became more difficult to organise under the intensified repression by the apartheid regime, but this challenge had to be overcome in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression at some point. That moment occurred in the decade of the 1970s when the capitalist-world economy erupted into a crisisⁱⁱ.

There was a significant decline in the fortunes associated with the capitalist "golden age". A confluence of factors resulted in the capitalist crisis, including squeeze in oil production, and rising oil prices, as the Middle East was embroiled in a conflict with the western imperialist regimes, primarily the US. Middle East countries had taken issue with the support for the Zionist apartheid Israeli regime by the US-led western imperialist forces. In the US, the Federal Reserve Bank dissociated the dollar from the gold standard, forcing other world markets to follow suite. These shifts coincided with oversaturation of mass-produced goods in world markets, affecting mass production as a capital accumulation regime. Leading markets in the world-capitalist economy

collapsed. Capitalist bosses reacted to the crisis by retrenching many workers in the Global North and the share of workers income from production and trade collapsed. South African workers felt the crunch by the end of 1972ⁱⁱⁱ.

As the new year began, Coronation Brick and Tile workers raised their complaints regarding wages and poor working conditions. Management ignored their pleas. In the morning of 9 January 1973, the workers, who demanded wage increases, downed tools and marched to a nearby stadium singing, "Ufil' umuntu, ufile usadikiza. Wamthint' esweni, esweni usadikiza" [A person is dead, but his spirit still lives. If you poke the iris of his eye, he still comes alive]. Thus began the first of the 1973 Durban strikes.

By mid-morning, management had called the Zulu king Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu to address workers. During the engagements workers outlined their wage increase demands and complained of inhumane exploitative working conditions. The monarch suggested that the worker form a committee to negotiate with management. Somehow this went against the expectations of the newly formed KwaZulu Bantustan government, which looked forward to the king reprimanding the workers for striking and imploring them to return to work.

durban strikes

The Bantustan government revealed itself as essentially an instrument of capital's accumulation interests and rule.

In the workplace, management was coercing workers to go back to work, insinuating, supported by the Durban municipal authorities, that the strike was a communist plot against the government - meaning the apartheid regime! The workers refused. The communist plot continued!

The striking workers went on to form a workers' committee, through which they negotiated with management. On the fourth day they stopped the strike after compelling the employer to accede to their demands for wage increases, and some benefits. Taking their cue from the first strike, on 10 January 1973 workers at A.J. Keeler, a transport company, embarked on industrial action. Although their demands were not met, this contributed to the overall momentum of the 1973 Durban strikes, which spread to other areas. Workers at T.W. Beckett & Co., a factory outside Durban, went on strike. The employer responded by threatening to fire 150 workers and enlist support from police and municipal authorities to quell strikers. The workers defied the threat. They continued with the strike until management accepted negotiation and offered some wage increases.

The next recorded strike started on 22 January 1973. More than 200 drivers went on a picket at a transport factory at the Pinetown Depo. Management reacted by dismissing workers and replacing them with drivers from the company's Pretoria and Bloemfontein Depos. However, this tactic failed. The replacement drivers also joined the strike upon arriving at the Pinetown Depo. By the end of January 1973, over 29 strikes had taken place.

The biggest strike was by garment workers in the Frame Textile Group. This one began on 25 January in New Germany v. The strikes in the Frame Group spread like wildfire. Over 6,000 workers joined. Also joining the strike were workers from Smith and Nephew, another textile factory in New Germany. The strikes were met with police repression, with the police detaining and beating up the workers. The company managements coerced the workers to negotiate through a liaison committee (a legislated sweetheart committee), but the workers rejected it. From these strikes the workers in the sector mobilised and organised into the Garment Workers Industrial Union.

More strikes followed, affecting the docks, transport, the mills and manufacturing sectors, covering the industrial stretch from North Coast to Pietermaritzburg. News reports approximated about 100,000 workers joined the strikes, which affected over 100 factories between January and March 1973.

The workers embarked on the strikes against the background of growing pressure from rising costs of living. The rand depreciated against the dollar and the pound, an aftermath of the capitalist economic crisis of the early 1970s and reactions to the crisis by the imperialist regimes, notably the US.

When they embarked on the strikes, the workers did not have a representative trade union. As formerly indicated, successive colonial and apartheid regimes, starting in 1924, respectively, prohibited African workers to organise into trade unions and excluded them from participation in and coverage under collective bargaining. vi As Eddie Webster states in his book *Cast in a Racial Mould*, South Africa's industrial relations regime reflected the apartheid workplace, articulating racial despotism with apartheid authoritarianism vii.

The rise of militant non-racial trade unions from the 1973 strikes

The strikes ushered a rebirth of a militant black union movement and contributed to working-class struggles that connected workplace with the wider national liberation struggle. As the South African History Online states:

The strikes signalled the beginning of a turning point in the long struggle of Black, Coloured and Indian workers to build non-racial trade unions and to open up the possibility of mass struggle against the Apartheid regime.

The Durban strikes marked the first stage of mass action that contributed to the spirit of rebellion in the country. The strike signalled the growth of militant non-racial trade unionism, the evolution of an alliance between workers, the broad united front of progressive organisations and the banned underground liberation organisations. Above all, the strike signalled the central role of working-class organisations in shaping the ideology, strategy, and tactics of the struggle against Apartheid and racial capitalism, which culminated in the fall of the Apartheid regime in the 1990s.

Conclusion

Sithembiso Bhengu^{viii} argues that the history of black industrial workers in

Durban is slightly different from that of the black mining and industrial workers in other parts of the country. To support the argument, Bhengu uses Dunlop as the empirical case, the first industrial factory that recruited black migrant workers as semi-skilled industrial operators in 1942 after white and Indian workers embarked on a strike actionix. The stevedores soon followed. So were the textile mills, leading to the Durban Chamber of Business commissioning research, conducted by the Department of Economics at the University of Natal, examining the "suitability" of black migrant workers ("natives") to the rigour of industrial mass production.

This racist research report, as evident in the title and purpose, was published in 1950. Industrial factories in Durban, from North Coast Road, Umgeni, the harbour and Congela, Jacobs to Prospecton, as well as in Pinetown and New Germany, to Hammarsdale and Pietermaritzburg, were first movers in employing black workers as industrial operators by the late 1960s. By the beginning of the 1970s, black migrant workers in Durban constituted the core of the industrial proletariat - wage labourers, taking the centre stage in the labour process of the mass production accumulation regime in South Africa.

Therefore, the 1973 Durban strikes were underpinned by the black workers' structural power, argues this intervention. Erik Orlin Wright defines workers' structural power as the power they derive simply from their structural location in a particular economic activity.

What this intervention also argues is that the strikes were underpinned by an emergent workers' associational power, which they consolidated into the trade unions that they formed based on their structural location and power. Wright defines workers' associational power as the power that they derive from their collective organisation. Above all else, the workers increasingly became conscious of their position as the industrial proletariat, driving the industrial economy. They must as well have been aware that the employers would be hard-pressed if they would summarily dismiss the entire semi-skilled workforce, argues Bhengu.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Durban strikes, we should be inspired by the gallant and courageous fight by the workers, who worked under the most despotic apartheid workplace

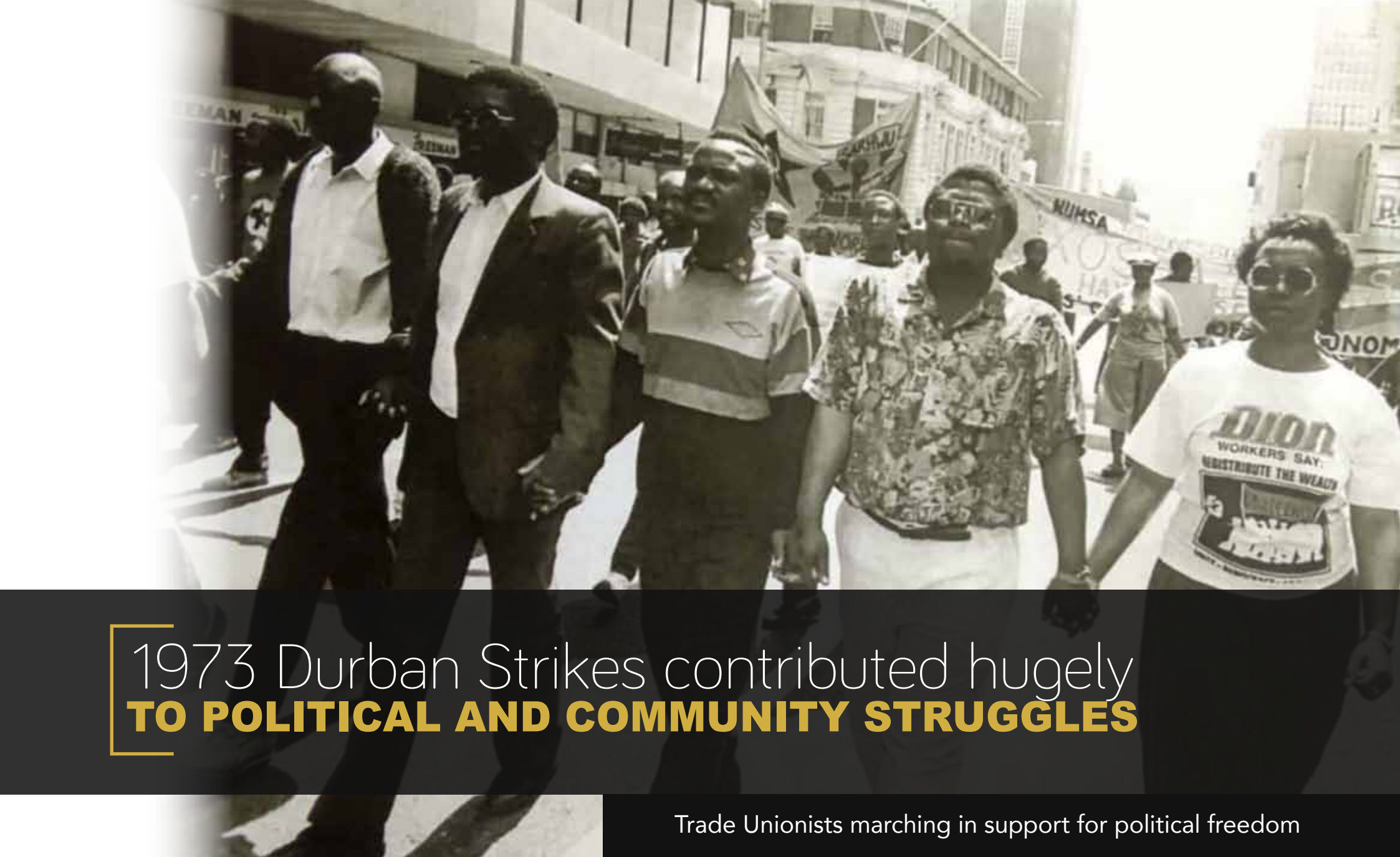
regime. They risked not only their employment and livelihoods but also their lives under apartheid oppression. These workers became the forbearers of the re-emergence of militant worker struggles and a decisive momentum in the broader struggle for the defeat of the apartheid regime.

Taking our cue from the 1973 Durban strikes, we need to strengthen our resolve to build a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor.

Bhengu is the Director of the Chris Hani Institute and Mashilo is a member of the Central Committee of the SACP

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1973 Durban Strikes contributed hugely TO POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Trade Unionists marching in support for political freedom

the 1970s were a time of political upheaval in South Africa, when the struggle against apartheid inside the country was growing stronger by the day. The detentions and banning of union organizers and volunteers in the early days of 1970 showed the regime that workers were becoming a new threat to authorities.

The way in which the police treated workers across various sectors showed that the regime regarded worker formations as the enemy. The most basic demand at various workplaces was the formation of elected workers' committees as a challenge to the authority not only of employers, but also of the intransigent government. There were debates in various worker organizations on how to balance the shop-floor issues and political concerns. But the union was clear that the apartheid system was against the interests of workers and needed to end.

Ever since the Programme of Action led by the African National Congress and the Defiance Campaigns in the 1950s and through the struggles of the 1970s, it was clear that political consciousness was raised within many communities. Trade Union organizers strongly believed that the oppression of workers in general and black people in particular were linked and that the struggle for workers' rights was tied to the struggle for democratic rights. If you were involved in the workers' struggle, that inevitably meant being involved in politics. Many threats were posed that government would smash the trade

unions if they became too openly political. But many argued that trade unions must become independent and take the political struggle forward.

'Ex-General Workers Union [GWU] and T&GWU [Transport and General Workers Union, established in the aftermath of the 1973 Durban Moment organized the passenger and goods transport industry and in the municipal, hospitals, cleaning and security sectors] former Education Officer, Msokoli Qotole alluded that 'we treated worker meetings with great respect. However, far he had to come, usually on public transport, he tried to be on time. He was dressed formally to convey how seriously he took the occasion.

He listened carefully and took his time in replying to questions or getting up to make a point. He was never a rabble-rouser, who relied on emotion to win people over. His manner showed the respect due in a meeting, an attitude that was perhaps carried over from rural life in an earlier time and that he and many migrant workers shared. As an organizer, we worked closely with shopstewards in the factories to influence them on politics and this model of leadership drew on the traditions of discipline, commitment, honesty, reliability, willingness to listen to opposing points of view and respect for others. All these qualities fitted comfortably with union's emphasis on democracy and workers' control, which was carried over into the training of shopstewards. [Standing Together, The Story of Bonakele Wilson Fundani, a Trade Unionist, First Edition,

2014] Many shopstewards recruited several workers who were developed to take up other issues in the community or in political formations to demand democracy in South Africa. Trade unions and organized supported community or student's demands around issues on rejecting rent increase, bus fares, or issues in schools as part and parcel of the political demands such as the release of imprisoned leaders and also demanding that May Day [1 May] should be declared as a public holiday to honour workers who are toilers for the capitalist class.

Many workers were organized thereafter to join May Day rallies by trains. Many workers were detained under the section 50 of the Internal Security Act for leading an illegal march. This forced many shopstewards to become frontline political activists in the struggle for political freedom.

In the same year, more than 1.5 million workers across South Africa stayed away from work on 1 May and were joined by unemployed people, taxi drivers, self-employed people, shopkeepers, students, teachers and hawkers. Following the stayaway, many companies agreed in negotiations with trade unions to recognize worker formations.

Trade unions such as the Construction and Allied Workers Union emerged around 1973 as a result of the merger T&GWU, MAWU, SAAWU, General and Allied Workers Union [GAWU], Brick, Clay & Allied Workers Union [BRICAWU] and the National General Workers Union [NGWU],

with a paid-up membership of 30 000. Other trade unions which emerged was the Paper, Wood and Allied Worker Union [PWAWU]. The development of recognition and the recognition agreements is inextricably tied to the development of industrial relations in South Africa in general. From the late 1960s and into the 1970s, three things happened that were to influence the regulation of employment in South Africa dramatically. Firstly, white opinion in South Africa began to withdraw support for discrimination on the basis of racial colour in the field of labour.

Secondly, blacks evinced an increasingly strong and militant opposition to the pre-1979 labour law and labour policy and thirdly, the various codes of the employment practices such as the Sullivan Code, the European Economic Communities Code and the SACCOLA Code forced multinationals and ultimately all companies to reassess their approach to their black workforces.

These three factors, acting together, seem to have produced two results. Employers began to consider their black workers as persons and less as units of production only, and government, whether consciously or unconsciously, detected a major change in the way in which South African society was regarding employment of blacks. This found expression in the institution of the Commission of Inquiry into the Industrial Legislation during the first half of 1977.



‘The post Durban strike moment created a great sense of revolutionary consciousness and new strikes arose demanding eradication of class exploitation and the race rule’

- Reflections on the 1973 Durban Strikes

extracting African Communists Editorials in 1974

the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary since the 1973 Durban Strikes is a historic moment today to zoom on how building organization from below was mastered by workers across sectors of industries across the country during a period where legislative framework by the apartheid regime restricted recruitment, mobilization and operations of trade unions established primarily by Africans.

The then worker organizations and their shop floor leaders believed in the organization and spoke on behalf of their constituencies. Therefore maintaining organizational internal cohesion is a great lesson to be learnt from the 'Durban Moment', and also the leaders were acceptable to lead with no splits interest because the regime was brutal. Many trade unionists suffered the consequences of organizing across all

shop floors. 'The independent hegemony of the progressive organizations was of paramount importance.'

This was confirmed by the African Communist Editorial Notes in 1974 which shouted praises to workers for their hegemony in demanding economic justice across all sectors of the economy. [The African Communist, No56, First Quarter of 1974, South Africa, A Time of Challenge, Inkululeko Publications]

The South African Communist Party Central Committee plenary session in 1974 through Chairman YM Dadoo recorded the 'growing contradictions and stresses of a racist regime as a result of the inspiring initiatives of the African workers and oppressed and outlined practical steps to be taken to meet the challenges head-on.'

It confirmed that the events of the last nine months have confirmed that white

supremacy system in South Africa has no future and the unrest deeply reflected signs of a colonialist structure that is waiting to crumble and noted the more significant and renewed militancy and upsurge amongst all sections of society and the exploited people.'

'Growing spirit of resistance against the regime was well-spread across the society, with growing opposition to rural resettlement, resistance amongst students and communities fighting against heightened repressive measures in the post-1960 period ushered new hope for liberation and freedom.'

'Student militancy exploited the situation despite arrests and the Coloured and Indian communities accelerated their identification with the struggles of the African workers in particular. During that time the John Vorster regime's campaign

for 'dialogue attempts to overcome its isolation from Back Africa have been rebuked, as witnessed at the United Nations General Assembly demonstrated in October the previous year when every African state walked when apartheid regime representatives delivered a speech. Outside Africa too the world-wide solidarity advances to mobilize world opinion against the racist regime gained momentum. Even at Geneva at the International Labour Organization, which offered a platform for representatives representing 186 million workers also came out to support the demands of workers. It united unanimously for the first time in support of the trade union movement against a system of apartheid and racial discrimination which was a crime against humanity. The crisis of apartheid was growing and conditions were ripening for improve working conditions of African workers through legislated frameworks which excluded

durban strikes

racial discrimination. The Durban Strikes were significantly connected with the deep crisis and stresses as a result of socio-economic structure of an apartheid system of separate development.'

'.....the struggle for a revolutionary change in South Africa got a major boost from the Durban Strikes.'

'.....it was clear that the morale of the Nationalist ideologists had broken down. And it was clear that the intention to create a white South Africa geographically and economically independent of black labourers and its inexorable laws of economic development was not coming to fruition and destroyed apartheid idealists' ambitions. The percentage of black labour employed in secondary industries increased steadily and spectacularly from 57.6% of the workers in 1936 to 66.6% in 1951 and to 70.3% in 1967 according to the 1972 Institution of Bantu Relations Annual Survey.' The trend continued!

This was a result of the militancy of the events prior to the Durban strikes and thereafter. The same pattern showed itself in the mining industry and thus showing itself in almost every sphere of urban and rural employment figures, with Africans constituting 82.7% of the labour force. The creation of job opportunities in and around so-called Bantustans by a process of industrial decentralization exaggerated the situation.'

'.....the attempts to keep Africans out of skilled jobs was continuously being undermined and workers forged ahead to demand eradication of job reservations. The capitalist rule of maximizing its profits using non-whites as cheap labour was crumbling. It was evident to those who wished for a white economy in the white state, eventually were admitting that they cannot do away with their dependence of black labourers. However, the apartheid idealists were adamant to maintain the cheap labour system. The urbanization of back proletariat from the countryside became uncontrollable and the post-Durban strikes moment presented a huge challenge for the regime to cope with the demands for better working conditions and better wages. The demand for citizenship grew in the Bantustans because majority enjoyed no political rights and enriched the political struggle for political liberation across the society. In the Bantustans, with the population growing an anxiety of labourers becoming 'permanent stand-by labour force', was brewing. This was fueled by growing lack of economic opportunities, shortage of cattle as a form of rural activity, starvation and regular famines and increasing mortality.'

'The migrant labour system became unbearable to manage as a result of the Durban strikes as labourer's wages were increased across various workplaces and became a pulling factor.'

'Growing pressures from the masses fueled demand for labour reforms.'

The United Party argued that the issue of 'Africans domiciled outside the homelands' must be resolved by the National Party led by John Vorster.

'During the no-confidence debate in the Assembly, Mr. Dave J. Marais and Sir de Villiers Graaff attacked the National Party on the question of Africans who are domiciled outside the homelands. Mr. Marais said the Government did not seem to grasp the fundamental fact that there would be millions of detribalized Africans living in the industrial areas of South Africa by the turn of the century. With its "politically naive" policy, the Government was creating a landless, rootless, and voiceless proletariat which constituted the flashpoint of the country's race problems. The fact must be faced that the millions outside the homelands were not temporary citizens, but an integral part of South Africa with a decisive and vast rôle to play in the future of the country. Assembly, 1 February, Hansard 1 cols. 159-62. Mr. Marais suggested that urban Africans must be provided with better residential and social amenities; there must be an immediate acceleration of work training methods for them; there should be a relaxation of influx control to provide job mobility and an uninterrupted home life; deserving Africans should be exempted from the pass laws and be given an opportunity to obtain freehold title for the land on which they lived in the urban areas.' [Aluka digital library records on the Survey of race relations in South Africa: 1972]

During the 1970s and 1980s, the NP-led white apartheid government faced internal unrest in South Africa and international pressure for accommodation of non-Whites in South Africa. It resulted in policies of granting concessions to the non-White population, while still retaining the apartheid system. The NP-led government began changing laws affected by the apartheid system that had come under heavy domestic and international condemnation such as removing the pass laws, granting Blacks full property rights that ended previous major restrictions on Black ownership of land, and the right to form trade unions.

Some regarded that moment like 'it was one minute to midnight.' JJ Cloete, a senior economist for Barclays Bank stated that 'South Africa has reached a breakneck moment.....and it may now be out of hand', as reflected in the [Weekly Star 21. July 1973].

'In the mines where the real income of the average black labourer was no higher in 1972 than in 1911, the average 22% rise in wages meant that black miners were earning less than R21 per month. The zeal to close the wage gap between white and black labourers grew and workers were ready to exert pressure by using political means and also utilize sectoral trade union opportunities.'

'The shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labour, with the expansion of the economy as a whole threatened to cause havoc in important sectors of industry, resulted in admission of black workers into certain skills previously monopolized by white workers. Steps taken by the regime for the controlled influx of African in some white work was hugely broken down, not by working class solidarity but by growing cases of bribery, ranging from life-time guarantees of existing white class to make the so-called African advances look insignificant. The growth of black trade unions rose, with demands to 'legalise' African trade unions but attempts were still made by white regime to make them powerless and vulnerable.'

The right to strike became a focal point, with employers restating that vast categories of workers were outlawed to go on a strike. Sectors such as sanitation, passenger transportation, farming, domestic work, railways were deemed essential services and thus outlawed to strike to render the black trade unions meaningless. As a result, Wage Boards were flooded with disputes to resolve. African workers residing in some towns no longer needed permission to take jobs in some sectors. The usual tight control over movement of African workers was slightly relaxed. Within each district labour mobility was now under their control wherein centralized government boards started to make statements that 'the local authorities lacked the vigour in implementing the pass laws.'

Pressure from sporting bodies also threatened that South Africa must be put under international isolation because of the racial segregation. The post Durban strike moment created a great sense of revolutionary consciousness and new strikes arose demanding eradication of class exploitation and the race rule. The struggle against the wage gaps was heightened across all sectors of industries. Africans were ready to overcome the insoluble contradictions of the apartheid system. It was demonstrated clearly that the unity of the oppressed black people was a fundamental component for liberation and there can be no compromise on a policy which divides the people based on race or colour of their skin.

Changes in the country were entirely dependent upon mobilization of the oppressed people with the black working class advanced instrument and it cannot be brought about at the pleasure of the white state. The SACP argued that the Party supports the bravery of workers during the 1973 Durban Strikes on the basis that it upholds the unity of the working class throughout the world, without any discrimination based on race or colour. The Party rejected the narrow ideology of the bourgeoisie economy which divides the workers which led to massive cases of chauvinism and racialism.

'The Party upholds the efforts of the African National Congress to build up and defend the rights of the African nation in the country.' The Party urged workers to achieve the fighting unity of the African, Coloured and Indian people against white domination. The Party rejected a system which led to the advancement of privileged strata while leaving blacks in particular in the dark corner; displacing the black working class from assuming their rightful status in society merely on the basis of the skin colour.

The Party cautioned all those who may attempt to isolate each other on the basis of advancing black consciousness on the basis of ideology. The Party argued that all the noble attempts, the energies and passions against white supremacist can at the very least divide the achievements of the 1973 moment. The Party analyzed these events after the experiences of the formation of SACTU, the Black People's Convention and later the Black Allied Workers Union [BAWU] of 1972.

SACP'S hegemonic influences across the working class!

The Party argued that no true trade union located amongst the oppressed people can afford isolate itself from the strata fighting for political rights without betraying the interests of its members on the basis of 'we do our own thing'. The 1973 upsurge of mass activity was successfully taken by communities in general to re-establish organized platforms of challenging the race rule, opening up new possibilities of raising the struggle for liberation to deepen the class contradictions and expose the stresses of the apartheid regime to the international community.

The Party called for the simultaneous intensification of class struggles in the course of which the people will feel as human beings and gain more confidence as citizens. The Party called on everyone to never resign themselves to having their human rights subjugated to detriment of their dignity. The Party acknowledged the unquestioned bravery of the revolutionary

durban strikes

trade unions and called for mass scale protests against the apartheid regime.

The Party called for all African communities to undertake organized actions to answer the enemy in kind; actions which related to the issues affecting them; enhance the day to day mass struggles with the possibility of transforming it increasingly into mass resistance campaigns and ultimately into a nationwide armed challenge. The Party paid greater urgency to set up tasks to reject the government-created Works Committee and create their own factory committees free of employer and government influences. The Party alluded to a renewed organizational drive to organize all workers on white farms.

The Party agitated to all African trade unions, including Indian and Coloured workers to be fully under the control of workers as an attempt to diffuse the elements of confusion and divisions workers based on the colour of their skin.

The Party agitated that in the countryside mass mobilization must ensue to have an audience with the masses to prevent the rural re-settlement and also cast aside Bantustan's policies. The Party argued the key to the successful advancement in the liberation struggle, and advancement of the African communities from exploitation by the white state is in the hands of the liberation Alliance headed by the African National Congress. The strengthening of the underground machinery and other levels remains a priority as does the effective clandestine links between the underground and all centres of opposition in towns and in the countryside.

The Party argued that it was necessary for underground structures to sharpen its propaganda weapons and to ensure that messages and guidelines of the liberation Alliance reaches all sections of our people with increasing frequency.

The Party argued that the people at all levels are encouraged to take their own initiatives to create clandestine links under proper conspiratorial conditions which will ensure that we rebuff the anti-Communism tendencies. The apartheid regime undermined the ICU in the twenties and gravely undermined the ANC in the early thirties, and now was the time for all sectors of society to rise against the race rule.

The Party endured to enhance its propaganda machinery through publications such as the Inkululeko-Freedom and the African Communist to spread the messages in various African languages with Marxism-Leninism as the only correct revolutionary theory for all the stages of historical development and attain the national liberation.

The Party argued that ideological work was considered as a key component of the national liberation, with political training scheduled to take place in every trade union established to raise the people's cultural and ideological levels of national consciousness and revolutionary movement consciousness and understanding the objective prerequisite of the national liberation revolution.

The Party argued the people have acquired a new political consciousness, which it was impossible to conquer! The Party argued that the apartheid rule had smashed traditional structures of the masses and natural economies beyond

repair and replaced all systems with colonial administrations which were a byword for incompetence, corruption and stagnation.

The Party argued if the regime built some roads, railways and other infrastructure it was for the purpose of facilitating the transportation of the wealth of Africa to Europe and America. Nationalism and Communism were treasonous heresies which led many into prisons, being subjected to the whip and the hangman's noose! Colonialism has been a horrible calamity, a disaster to only promote the imperialist powers and bash Socialism. The Party argued the illegal regime must be toppled with immediate effect! The Party argued that there are only two possible paths of development, two political systems.

The one is that followed by the countries of the West and America; the capitalist road. The second is that followed by the USSR since 1917, joined by East Europe and Asia and by CUBA; the road to socialism. In order to choose wisely, we must understand what is about each of them and weigh their advantages and disadvantages. Nowadays nearly all goods, including more and more products, are produced by large enterprises using expensive machines and employing hundred or even thousands of workers.

The great difference between them is this: Under capitalism these productive enterprises are owned privately at the expense of exploitation of labour power. The wages paid by the employers does not reflect the value of the hardship endured labour at the point of production. The surplus value as Karl Marx called it,

is pocketed by bosses, with workers only receiving peanuts. Under socialism, the productive enterprises are owned by the masses.

There are no capitalists and no exploitation. The purpose of production is to provide for the constantly rising material and cultural needs of the people. Socialism comes into being through the conscious struggle of the working class. Under capitalism, there are every sort of class-divided society, with a sharp conflict of interest and therefore a struggle constantly between the two main classes; the capitalist class and the working class. The workers want higher wages, shorter hours, less exploitation. And the capitalists want workers to work harder and longer and for far more less money.

The capitalists use the state machine to suppress the workers as instruments for one class to dominate others. In a capitalists state the dominant class is the bourgeoisies or capitalists and occupy the most powerful economic position and have a final say in all important matters of society.

In a socialist society the capitalists would be deprived of economic control and political power. A socialist state would be in the hands of the working class, which unites the peasantry and the working intellectuals with the economy working for the benefit of all. The only solution is to fight for a state in which socialism will work for all the masses. We support the struggle for African countries to advance Socialism!

Victory is certain!

The Reserve Bank has a role to play in **EMPLOYMENT CREATION**

Response to Governor Lesetja Kganyago on the mandate of the Reserve Bank

by COSATU President, Zingiswa Losi

The debate around the mandate and role of the Reserve Bank continues to divide opinions in this country, with the Reserve Bank hierarchy resisting the push for the expansion of the mandate.

Recently, while in Davos, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Lesetja Kganyago argued that the Bank does not have tools to create jobs and that it's the education system that needs to be adjusted, therefore, the push for the expansion of the mandate of the bank is mute. We agree with the Governor that there is the need to push for the reorientation of our education system to focus more on improving system outcomes. For a long time, our focus has been on opening the doors of learning and improving literacy levels. As a result, many young South Africans are sitting at home with qualifications, but they lack the skills that are needed by the economy.

Unfortunately, despite some heavy initial investment in education and despite increasing enrolment, our education curricula has not undergone profound structural changes. Too many learners leave universities with degrees in humanities and not enough with degrees in science, engineering, medicine and not enough learners and graduates leave the system with practical skills, training, and experience. But this does not mean that the Reserve Bank's mandate cannot be adjusted, and the bank has no role to play in employment creation. Monetary policy, the domain of the Reserve Bank has a profound impact on the South African economic environment and the ability of the country to meet its development goals. Monetary policy

influences the conditions under which the private financial sector can create credit, it determines the growth rate of the money supply and the level of interest rate. This interest rate, perhaps the most influential price in the economy, then impacts on core areas of economic activity - aggregate demand, investment, inflation, thus workers purchasing power, and the sustainability of the public sector. Determination of monetary policy is therefore not a purely technical question but has profound implications for all aspects of economic life.

Whilst it is critical to manage inflation to protect workers' meagre wages from being eroded by inflation, there is a need for a balance between managing inflation and stimulating the economy and reducing unemployment. The Reserve Bank's overzealous approach to increasing the repo rate by a whopping 250 basis points over the past 15 months is suffocating the economy. It is making it unbearable for workers already drowning in debt and struggling to save their homes.

The ever-increasing repo rate spurs the commercial banks to also indulge in excessive rate levels imposed upon low-income earners already battling to keep afloat. The decision to scrap the Currency and Exchanges Act of 1933 and the introduction of flexible exchange controls has facilitated the flight of capital out of South Africa, with many big corporations leaving the country for US and Europe. These companies took with them massive resources from a country that they had exploited for over a century under inhumane repression. Today private sector companies take out about R85 billion out of the country.

These massive outflows of capital have deprived the country of badly needed resources for productive domestic investment. That loss of money to the GDP also costs the economy about 150 000 jobs. Even the ideologically conservative International Monetary Fund said about three years ago that it wouldn't pass judgement on certain capital controls if they are introduced for national goals and security reasons.

The Federation has consistently argued that South Africa needs capital controls to maximise the resources available for productive domestic investment. Such capital controls would include the regulation of short-term capital flows, and the penalising of speculative capital. Even, the most developed economies do introduce necessary temporary measures to prevent a mass exodus of capital outflows during a time of crisis or to protect their currencies.

The Reserve Bank is also the regulator of banks, which means that they decide the amount of money that is lent out, to whom and for what purpose, therefore holding the power to reshape the economic landscape that affects us all.

The Reserve Bank, therefore, has a responsibility to regulate this creation of the new money supply and in a country like South Africa, we expect the reserve bank to ensure banks lend for productive purposes that creates jobs or boosts Gross Domestic Product [GDP], instead of consumption or for assets, causing asset price inflation.

Creating skills alone will not fix unemployment, we need many young people to also be job creators and

get involved in entrepreneurship. Programmes or interventions to improve labour-force skills can be effective in urban regions or in intermediate regions but have little impact in rural areas where take-up rates are low. This is where entrepreneurship can come in to fix the unemployment problems. This can take the shape of individual businesses or cooperatives.

One of the key challenges facing small businesses is the lack of funding. Young people are rarely targeted with subsidised credit, and they are not well served by the formal sector financial institutions. By becoming so profit seeking, micro lending institutions have also contributed to the marginalisation of young people as they resorted to charging high interest rates and demanding collateral security for informal financing.

The Reserve Bank can, therefore, help with employment creation by imposing quantitative controls on commercial banks to ensure that a portion of their loans go to priority sectors that drive the growth path and create jobs on a larger scale. As workers, we favour an approach that incorporates both the developmental imperatives and protects the currency. These are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory. We need a central bank that will pursue an inclusive monetary policy and that will regulate the finance sector with a view to ensuring that there is a redistribution of income and wealth to all South Africans as mandated by the Freedom Charter.

SACP & COSATU to deepen ties

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE AIMS OF THE WORKERS AND THE POOR

Solly Mapaila, SACP General Secretary and Solly Phetoe, COSATU General Secretary, 15 February 2023

The National Office Bearers of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) held a bilateral session on Monday 13 February 2023, in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The meeting took place at a difficult time when our democratic transition is facing serious challenges, not least the multiple capitalist system crises and its results. Inequality, unemployment and poverty are persistently high, and the productive capacity of the state, among others in major State-Owned Enterprises, has deteriorated.

In 1996, the government adopted the neoliberal economic policy called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), as “non-negotiable” and “cast in stone”. In the same year, unemployment rose to the crisis-high annual levels of above 20 per cent, increasing with every global capitalist crisis and worsened over time. At 43,1 per cent in the third quarter of 2023, total unemployment affected approximately 12 million active and discouraged work-seekers.

The neoliberal shock therapy that the 1996 GEAR class project imposed exposed the semi-peripheral, underdeveloped South African economy to the extents of the impact it endured from external shocks. It also paved the way for capital flight and associated domestic crises, such as the 2001 currency depreciation crisis.

Putting profit interests before the people, neoliberalism emphasised privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation, among others to insinuate private competition to Eskom in energy generation as a sector.

Eskom’s productive capacity to generate electricity, transmit and distribute

it uninterruptedly aged, deteriorated and started failing. In some areas, it collapsed altogether. There was no single successful state power station replacement since the government adopted the neoliberal White Paper on Energy in December 1998 under the auspices of GEAR. The maintenance of Eskom power stations was also compromised under the approach followed.

This led to Eskom’s productive capacity being lesser now than going back. The conditions for the development of the current electric power generation under-capacity crisis developed from there, leading to the dilapidating load-shedding.

The destruction of Eskom’s productive capacity undermined the impressive post-1994 household electrification programme. So were the poor designs, poor work and failures to meet completion deadlines at the belatedly introduced Medupi and Kusile Power Station projects.

These are also among the factors that built up the Eskom debt crisis and led to the collapse of the chimney stack at Kusile Power Station in 2022 and the explosion at Medupi Power Station in 2021.

The two accidents amounted to additional costs, also causing further project completion delays. Together with governance decay and corruption under corporate state capture, neoliberalism is directly responsible for the energy crisis and the general deterioration of the productive capacity of the state, not least in major State-Owned Enterprises such as Eskom.

Outsourcing and sabotage in outsourced operations are part of the problem of neoliberalism and corporate capture of State-Owned Entities.

Uniting the working-class against neoliberalism and state capture

The SACP and COSATU share the strategic imperative to unite the working-class through active campaigning, mass mobilisation, political education and building a powerful, socialist movement of the workers and poor. This is essential to confront capitalist exploitation, neoliberalism and corporate state capture.

The aims of our shared programme include intensifying the struggle to increase the total productive capacity of the state as rapidly as possible, as part of the national-revolutionary democratic imperatives to meet the material needs of the people. To this end, it is critical to secure the turnaround of all major Public Entities, including, but not limited to, Eskom, TransNet, PetroSA, and PRASA.

The SACP and COSATU will not form part of any programme to collapse Public Entities. We reject the statement by the Presidency that government departments and local government should get off the Eskom grid in favour of renewables through private sector involvement.

The notion will remove a key income stream from Eskom and harm it further. The state cannot abandon its responsibility to generate, transmit and distribute energy in favour of private capital and leave the workers and poor with no power.

As a public utility, Eskom must be supported adequately to thrive. The government should look for better ways to address its debt as a matter of urgency, as part of the wider imperative to turn Eskom around.

This imperative should include increasing the total productive capacity of

the state to generate electricity to meet the energy needs of the people.

We say “No to the South African Post Office retrenchments and collapsing of public entities”. The SACP and COSATU are deeply concerned about the South African Post Office’s intention to retrench around 6,000 workers. The information emerged just after President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the State of the Nation Address on Thursday 9 February 2023, asserting that government programmes were designed to leave no one behind. The retrenchments, if allowed to proceed, will leave not only the affected workers but also their dependents behind, with a massive impact amid the persisting high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. The contemplation of the retrenchments by South African Post Office directly contradicts what the President said.

The SACP and COSATU call on the government to stop the planned South African Post retrenchments. We will support the trade unions organising at the public entity, including the COSATU affiliate, the Communication Workers Union, in the fight against the contemplated retrenchments. The South African Post Office should form part of the public entities that the government has to turn around and modernise technologically and operationally to thrive.

Retrenchments in other sectors

Besides the planned mass retrenchments by the South African Post Office, we have seen capitalist bosses in the retail and mining industries, among others, continuing with retrenchment plans. Together, supporting trade unions organising in the affected sectors, including COSATU affiliates, we will

strengthen our efforts in the struggle against the retrenchments.

A state bank and transformation of the financial sector

In delivering the State of the Nation Address, President Ramaphosa said the government will transform the Post Bank to establish it as a state bank by first ensuring that it is granted a required licence. The working-class, including the rural masses, needs the branches of the South African Post Office to be extended to roll out the services of the forthcoming state bank.

Beyond that, the SACP and COSATU will work together to intensify the financial sector transformation campaign. Instead of a single state bank, this struggle aims to achieve a developmental state banking sector, as well as a thriving co-operative banking sector, to diversify and de-monopolise the financial sector.

Public investment corporation

The Public Investment Corporation and the Government Employees Pension Fund must develop financial products to support working-class needs and infrastructure development, including housing and education.

The national state disaster in energy

The declaration of the national state of disaster in energy as a way of intervening to resolve the energy crisis must not be used to implement a neoliberal policy framework. Also, during the national state of disaster in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a nexus of unscrupulous public sector officials and representatives and private sector interests corrupted procurement to enrich themselves. The government must not allow this to rear its ugly head again. To this end, mass mobilisation will also be essential. The energy national state of disaster must benefit our people who need a solution as a matter of urgency.

Alliance Economic and Energy Summit

The SACP and COSATU reaffirmed their call for an urgent Alliance Economic and Energy Summit, towards a common economic, energy and social policy direction. This should help South Africa to resolve the interrelated crises of energy and high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality, and to strengthen the fight against corruption and crime. Minister of Electricity in the Presidency

While the idea to appoint a Minister of Electricity in the Presidency may be well-intentioned, the lack of consultation directly contradicts the spirit of a reconfigured Alliance

and programmatic unity. Our joint commitment to the reconfiguration of the Alliance aims to see the Alliance play its role as a strategic political centre of the national democratic revolution, as opposed to tailing what the government decides with no consultation, including imposing policy direction on the movement.

The pronouncement undermined the role of the Alliance, excluded a consideration of other options, and portrayed a picture of Presidential unilateralism. This must be addressed. We will play our role in this regard as well.

The national budget for the 2023/2024 financial year

We look forward to the upcoming national budget for the 2023/2024 financial years, to be tabled next week. We call on the National Treasury to abandon its restrictive fiscal policy, which is obsessed with pursuing austerity or “fiscal consolidation” in relation to the national debt, instead of tackling economic stagnation to turn around the economy as a source of revenue.

Austerity or “fiscal consolidation” affected developmental priorities and targeted curtailing workers’ income, the so-called public service wage-bill in the public sector. In this regard, the focus has been on workers at lower levels in the public service hierarchy, rather than the managerial or executive levels.

The restrictive fiscal and monetary policies have affected spending in the economy, as well as the expansion of domestic productive capacity. To this extent, the restrictive macroeconomic framework has affected employment creation.

Additionally, the monetary policy followed by the South African Reserve Bank has contributed to rising household debt obligations through interest rate hikes. In this context, the economy is now teetering on the brink of a recession not only because of the energy crisis but also because of the restrictive macroeconomic framework.

We call on the government to deliver a people-centred budget that emphasises employment creation at scale to address the unemployment crisis. This policy should also target poverty eradication and inequality reduction.

The measures to achieve sustainable employment creation should include adequate support for co-operatives, the social economy, and the not-for-profit sector. The importance of a strong focus on developing the productive capacity of the state cannot be overemphasised.

Advancing, deepening and defending the national democratic

revolution

We remain concerned about the rise of anti-majoritarian forces who are hell-bent on implementing neoliberal policy reforms and following the same path that brought us to this economic and energy crisis. We will not keep quiet and watch the gains of the revolution being reversed. Besides elevating these matters in the Alliance Secretariat and Political Council, we will intensify our joint campaigns and the struggle for a change in policy direction.

The objectives of this struggle include the imperative to secure a new macroeconomic framework that will help South Africa to industrialise its economy, advance large-scale employment creation, poverty eradication, radical inequality reduction, and a caring social policy. It is part and parcel of this struggle to establish a universal basic income grant.

Urgent repealing of unconstitutional provisions in the Municipal Systems Amendment Act

COSATU and the SACP are deeply disturbed by the increasing numbers of municipal workers being threatened with dismissal by municipal managers for exercising their constitutional rights to hold office in a political party. This is untenable. It is a blatant undermining of workers’ hard-won constitutional rights, and a naked attempt to demobilise the working-class and collapse the building of working-class power.

The ANC in Parliament needs to repeal the unconstitutional provision in the Municipal Systems Amendment Act that suppress the political rights of all municipal employees. We must revert to the original wording in the Act, which the Alliance had agreed to. Such limitations should apply, if adopted, to municipal managers and senior managers reporting directly to them. Whilst this matter is attended to by the ANC in Parliament, COSATU and the SACP will support the South African Municipal Workers Union in its appeal to the Constitutional Court to declare this provision unconstitutional.

Confronting violence, gender-based violence and general criminality in our communities

The SACP and COSATU are deeply concerned about the rising number of killings, both targeted and mass killings, in places of entertainment and elsewhere, including in other industries. The problem reflects the prevalence of premeditated, organised killings in what also appears to be a complex web of underworld activities and gangsterism. South Africa needs thoroughgoing investigations to get to the root of the problem, refine its national approach to community safety and policing, and more effectively combat crime and corruption.

We convey our condolences to the families of those who lost their loved ones because of the violence, including the family of the rapper and activist Kiernan ‘AKA’ Forbes. AKA was murdered on 10 February 2023 in Durban. It is hurting that the perpetrators of many of the crimes continue to roam around the streets, with no success in hunting them down and bringing them to book.

We wish the family of the Tshwane University of Technology’s student Ntokozo Xaba solace. Ntokozo was stabbed to death in a case of gender-based violence at the university’s Ekhaya Junction campus on 2 February 2023. Institutions of higher learning should be the sites of knowledge production and not slaughterhouses. We call on the law enforcement authorities to do everything in their powers to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to book.

Through our Red Forums and Shop Steward Councils, we will mobilise our communities to launch Community Defence Units and to ensure Community Policing Forums play their role more effectively in fighting crime to the finish.

Unite Swaziland’s progressive forces to bring down the oppressive Tinkundla regime. The recent provocative and brutal posture of Mswati the autocrat is disgusting, to say the least. We call upon all progressive forces in Swaziland to unite the people’s camp and confront the enemy with full might.

The recent cold-blooded assassination of former Swaziland People’s United Democratic Movement General Secretary and Human Rights Activist, Thulani Maseko, is nothing but a cowardly act of a collapsing tyranny. The ANC-led government and the Southern African Development Community should push hard to secure the unbanning of political parties in Swaziland and return of exiles for a peaceful dialogue to take place, towards democracy.

Consolidation of joint programmes and campaigns

The SACP and COSATU will implement joint programmes and campaigns, which will include celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Durban Workers’ Strikes, calling for an inquest into Chris Hani’s assassination, and fighting the rising cost of living.

Issued by SACP and COSATU

'Economic and Employment Indicators and Trends in South Africa'

NEDLAC's perspective for 2023 in support of the NEDLAC SOCIAL PARTNERS' ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

The Month in Review

2023 is expected to be a difficult year for the world economy with growth expected to slow in many regions – especially Europe. Inflationary pressures are expected to moderate slightly across most regions, but monetary policy is likely to remain relatively restrictive and could even tighten further in Europe where inflation is expected to remain high.

Within this context the South African economy enters the year with a post-COVID recovery that appears to be losing momentum. The Reserve Bank's leading business cycle indicator has trended lower over a number of months and the coinciding indicator has remained relatively flat at activity levels that are still below pre-COVID levels.

Earnings in the formal labour market

showed some signs of returning to pre-COVID patterns in Q3 2022, with the shares of over-time and bonus rising relative to a year earlier. However, an increased share of formal employees are employed on a part-time basis – suggesting that many employers have spare capacity and wish to maintain some flexibility.

Consumption expenditure by households has been a persistent driver of economic growth since 2015 and there was a notable recovery in many of the sources of household income in 2021. However, rapid increases in the prices of food and transport have forced most households to spend relatively more on these items, leaving relatively less for other forms of spending. Government consumption spending has been a

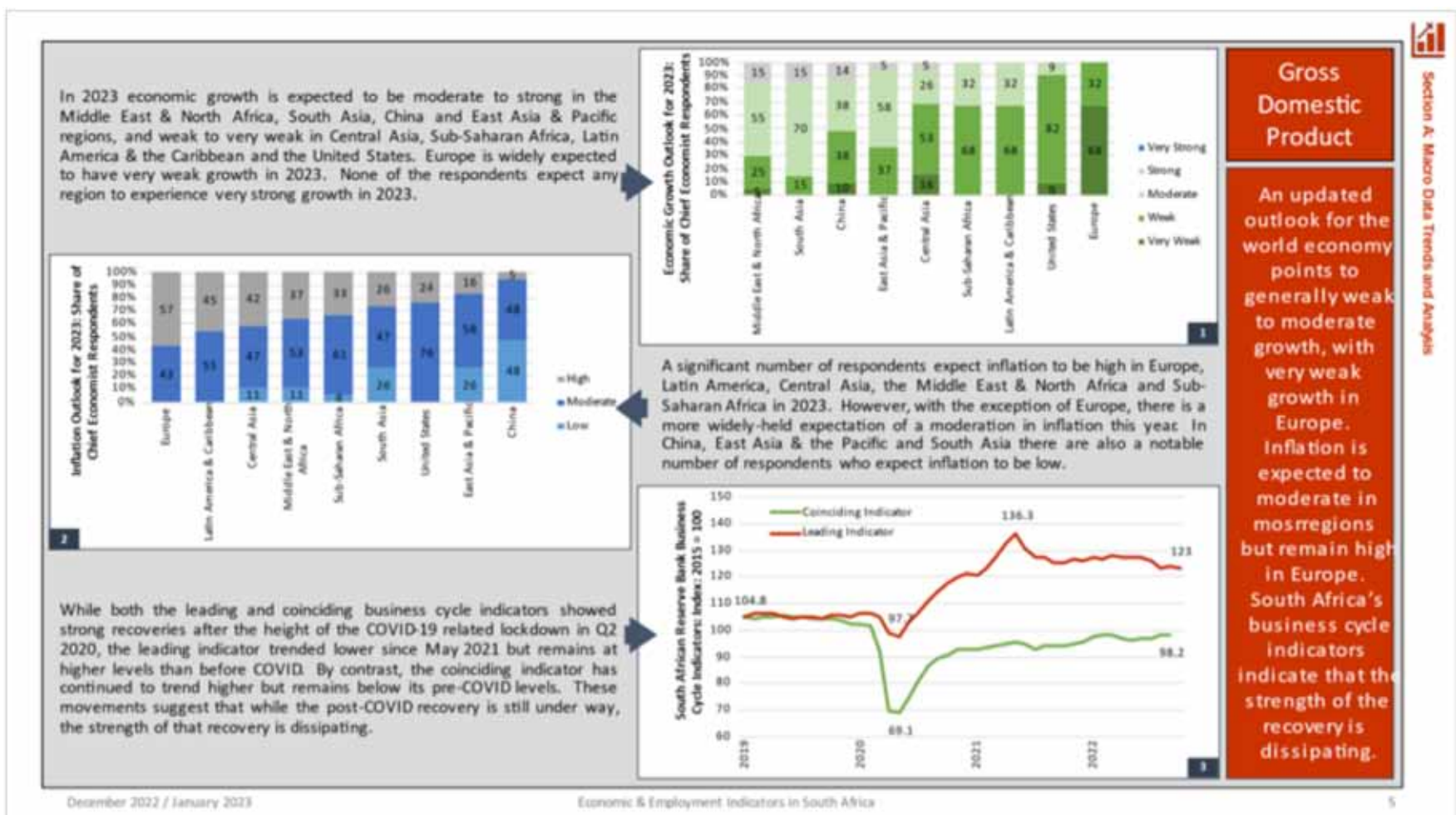
stabilising influence on the economy – growing at a relatively steady and higher rate than the overall economy, since 2015. Total government spending as a share of GDP was higher in South Africa than the unweighted average for most regions of the world, with the exceptions of Europe and Oceania.

Declining levels of gross fixed capital formation expenditure have been a persistent drag on economic growth and in recent years the levels of investment were insufficient to offset the fixed capital consumed. As a result the fixed capital stock has stagnated, serving to limit the country's growth potential further.

Despite the low levels of fixed capital formation, South Africa continues to have a trade deficit in respect of both capital and consumption goods.

This deficit has, in recent times, been more than offset by a trade surplus on intermediate goods – which includes most mining exports. At the sector level, only agriculture, forestry and fishing, finance, insurance, real estate and business services, general government administration and community, social and personal services have consistently made a positive contribution to the growth in South Africa's economy since 2015.

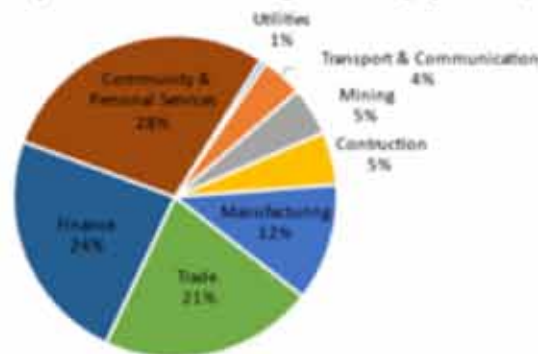
Profitability measures in many sectors and sub-sectors – particularly platinum mining, utilities and manufacturing – reflect a deterioration. A recent ILO study indicates that many South Africans are not satisfied with their work-life balance. This largely stems from high rates of unemployment and under-employment.



Employment

Community, social and personal services (including government administration) is the largest formal employer. The contribution of overtime and bonus payments to formal earnings has returned to pre COVID levels, but the share of parttime employees has increased.

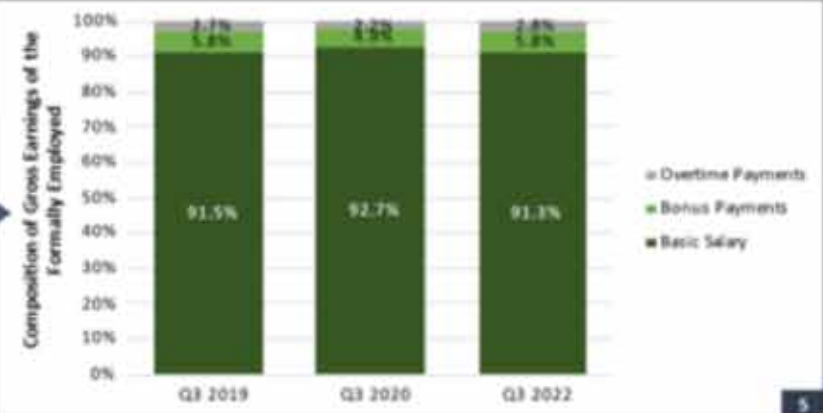
Sector Composition of Total Formal Non-agricultural Employment in Q3 2022



While basic salary continued to account for more than 90 percent of total earnings in Q3 2022, the share of bonus and overtime payments increased back to their pre-COVID levels and collectively accounted for almost 9 percent of total earnings.



Of the 9.98 million people formally employed in South Africa in Q3 2022, 28 percent were located in the community, social and personal services sector. This includes government administration. Twenty-four percent were employed in finance, insurance, real estate and business services, 21 percent in trade, hotels and restaurants, 5 percent each in construction and mining, 4 percent in transport, storage and communication and the remaining 1 percent in the utilities.



The proportion of formal employment of people employed on a full-time basis declined to 88.9 percent in Q3 2022, compared with 90 percent in Q3 2019 (before COVID) and 90.5 percent in Q3 2020. The share of formal employment accounted for by part-time appointments rose steadily in recent years – from 9.5 percent in Q3 2020 to 11.1 percent in Q3 2022. This may indicate that many businesses are still operating below their capacity.

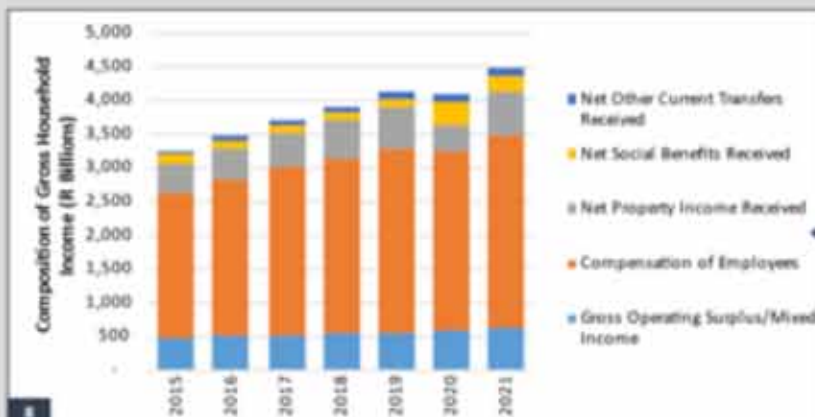
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Households

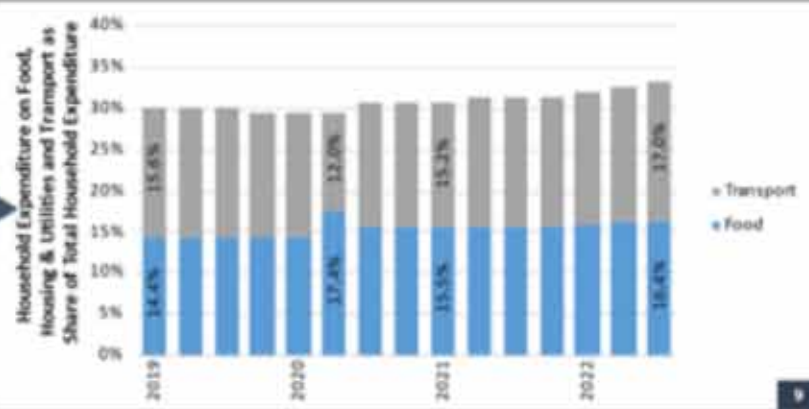
Although it was relatively more negatively affected by the COVID-related lockdown, household consumption expenditure has increased at a faster rate than South Africa's total GDP since the start of 2015. By the third quarter of 2022 real household consumption spending had risen by 9 percent while the overall economy only expanded by 4 percent. This indicates that household consumption spending has generally been a driver of economic growth over this period – rather than a retardant.



As a result of more rapid increases in prices than overall inflation, the share of total household expenditure devoted to food and transport increased from 30.1 percent at the start of 2019 to 33.4 percent in Q3 2022. The average household spent 16.4 percent of their total spending on food in Q3 2022 – up from 14.4 percent in Q1 2019. Spending on transport rose from 15.6 percent to 17 percent over the same period. The effects of significant increases in electricity prices have largely been neutralized by relatively lower increases in the price of housing – with which it is grouped in the data.



The gross income of households increased by 10 percent in 2021 to reach almost R4.5 trillion. Compensation for employment accounted for 64 percent of this, followed by net property income (15 percent) and gross operating surplus/mixed income (13 percent). Net social benefits received accounted for 5 percent of gross income and net current transfers received for the remaining 3 percent.



Household consumption spending has been a consistent driver of economic growth in the South African economy since 2015. Household incomes largely recovered in 2021, but increased spending on food and transport is serving to crowdout other forms of spending.

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Government

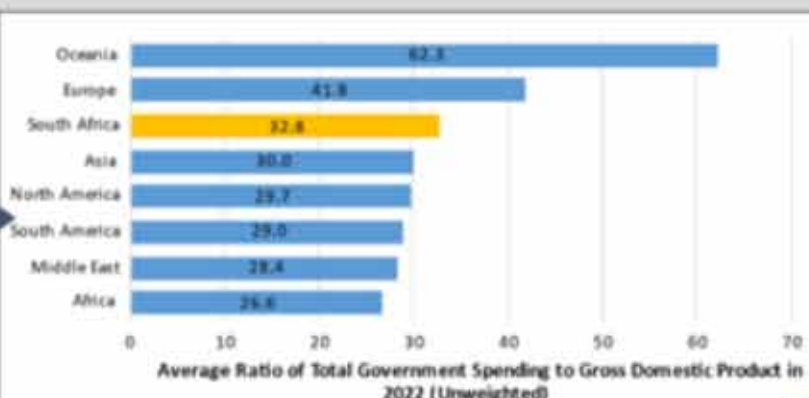
Government consumption expenditure has trended steadily upwards and has mostly been a positive contributor to growth since 2015. The ratio of government spending to GDP in South Africa is higher than most regions except Europe and Oceania. Progress in reducing average monthly borrowing requirements has stalled in recent months.



The role that government plays in an economy is generally a function of the stage of development of that country or region, societal norms and attitudes and fiscal means. An analysis of total government spending to GDP for different regions in 2022 indicates that the average unweighted ratio ranged from under 27 percent in the case of Africa to over 62 percent in the case of Oceania. South Africa had a ratio of almost 33 percent.



By Q3 of 2022, real consumption expenditure by general government had trended 8 percent higher when compared with the start of 2015 and was largely unaffected by the COVID pandemic. With the exception of the third and fourth quarters of 2018, it increased at a faster rate than overall GDP and can therefore be regarded as a moderate growth driver over this period.



In the year to November 2022, the national government needed to borrow an average of R24 billion per month to make up for the shortfall between revenue and expenditure. While this is significantly lower than the average of R48 billion per month in the year to April 2021, it is still 41 percent higher than the corresponding average of R17 billion for the year to January 2019.

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Investment

After largely tracking the broader economy between the start of 2015 and mid-2016, the level of real gross fixed capital formation trended steadily lower and by Q3 2022 was 17 percent below its 2015 levels. It was severely impacted by the COVID-related lockdown and recovered somewhat since then. However, since mid-2016 the low levels of investment in fixed capital have been a persistent (and in recent years increasing) drag on economic growth.



Although the levels of net fixed capital formation of the public sector trended progressively lower since 2015, in the COVID era it is private businesses that have invested significantly less in new fixed capital formation than the fixed capital that was consumed. In 2020, private businesses invested R95 billion less in new fixed capital than they consumed. This "deficit" dropped to R26 billion in 2021.



Gross fixed capital formation represents new additions to the fixed capital stock of the country. However, these additions of offset by the consumption of the fixed capital stock as a consequence of use and redundancy. In recent years new fixed capital formation has failed to materially exceed the consumption of fixed capital – resulting in stagnation of the fixed capital stock. This impacts the Country's future growth potential.



Declining levels of gross fixed capital formation have been a persistent drag on economic growth since the start of 2016. In net terms there was no addition to the country's fixed capital stock in 2020 & 2021. Net public sector fixed capital formation declined steadily since 2015, & private businesses were net disinvestors in 2020 & 2021.

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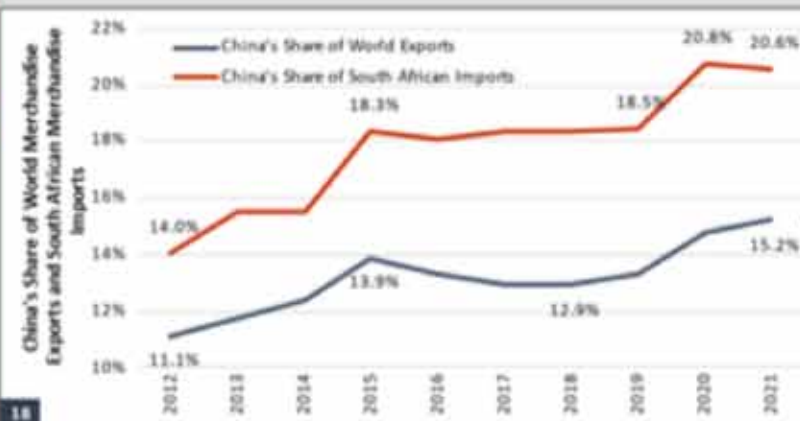
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International Trade

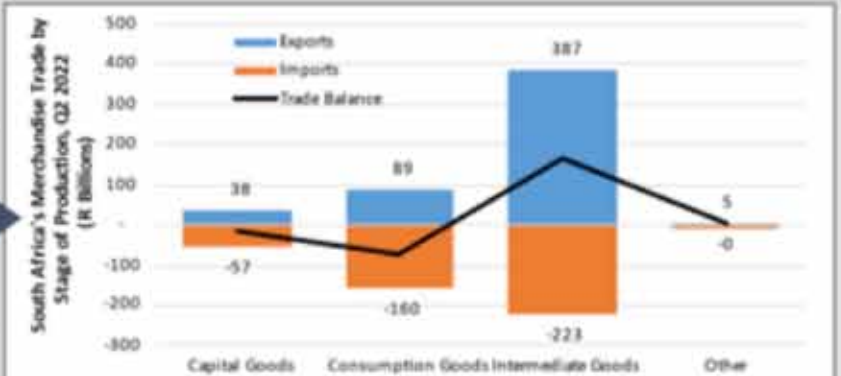
Lower import leakages tended to boost economic growth for most of the period after 2015, but exports underperformed since 2019. South Africa is a net importer of both capital and consumption goods but has a trade surplus in intermediate goods. China's share of world and South African imports rose further during COVID.



An analysis of South Africa's trade in goods by stage of production in Q2 2022 reveals a relatively small deficit of around R19 billion in the case of capital goods, a larger deficit of R71 billion in the case of consumption goods and a healthy surplus of R164 billion in respect of intermediate goods.



Between 2015 and 2019 exports tracked GDP performance while imports were relatively lower – due largely to reduced imports of capital goods. In the COVID era both exports and imports were initially more negatively affected than the overall economy but they recovered strongly since the height of the lockdown and are now aligned with the performance of the overall economy.



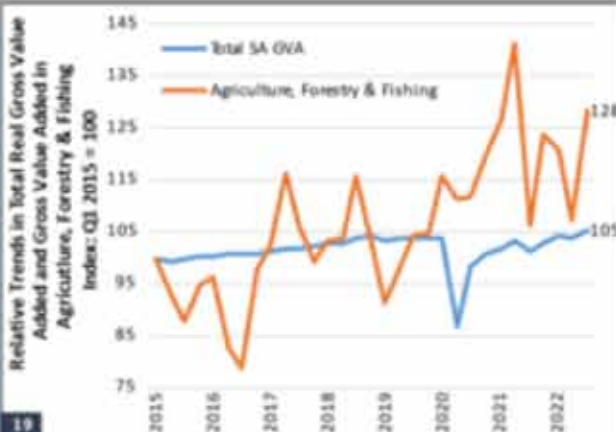
China's share of world merchandise exports rose from just over 11 percent in 2011 to 15.2 percent in 2021. Over the same period China's goods exports to South Africa increased from 14 percent of imports to 20.8 percent in 2020, before dropping slightly to 20.6 percent in 2021. Between 2015 and 2019, China's share of South African imports remained relatively stable at between 18 and 18.5 percent, but its share jumped quite sharply in the COVID era.

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AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING



Since 2020, real GVA in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector has consistently grown at a faster rate than total GVA. Compared to other sectors, the negative impact of COVID-19 was limited. Sector GVA increased by 28 percent between the start of 2015 and Q3 2022.

Net profit margins and return on asset measures in the forestry sub sector consistently trended lower between 2017 and 2021, indicating a decline in profitability and less effective utilization of assets to generate returns.

MINING & QUARRYING

Since 2015, real GVA in the mining & quarrying sector trended lower than total GVA, and by the third quarter of 2022, was 11 percent lower than its 2015 levels. The sector was severely impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown, but recovered in late 2020 and early 2021 before resuming its downwards trend. It showed a slight recovery the Q3 of 2022.

The persistently negative profitability ratios of the platinum group metals sub-sector point to production costs rising faster than revenue.



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MANUFACTURING



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Real GVA in the manufacturing sector trended 8 percent lower in the third quarter of 2022, compared to 2015 levels. The sector was negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, dropping as low as 66 percent of 2015 levels.

Between 2017 and 2021, profitability ratios in the basic iron and steel products sub-sector were only positive in 2019. The ratios suggest that firms are unable to consistently extract a return from their assets given prevailing sales and production costs and utilization levels.

ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER

Real GVA in the electricity, gas and water sector trended consistently lower than 2015 levels and underperformed against total GVA. By the third quarter of 2022, against a backdrop of persistent loadshedding and an energy crisis, the value added of the sector was 16 percent lower at the start of 2015.

Operating losses and rising production costs negatively impacted profitability ratios in the electricity and gas sub-sector between 2019 and 2021. While the scale of the losses decreased during the COVID era, they remain significant.



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CONSTRUCTION



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Between 2015 and 2017, real GVA in the construction sector broadly matched that of total GVA. However, since 2017, the sector consistently under-performed relative to total GVA and by Q3 2022 was 29 percent below its 2015 levels.

Despite this, the building and complete construction sub-sector consistently managed to generate positive returns – although the scale of these returns was significantly lower in 2021.

TRADE, CATERING AND ACCOMMODATION

Real GVA in the trade, catering and accommodation sector largely tracked total GVA between 2015 and 2017, but consistently underperformed relative to total GVA since 2017. Despite some recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, sector GVA was 2 percent lower than 2015 levels in Q3 2022.

Between 2017 and 2020, profitability ratios in the hotels and restaurants sub-sector were positive and fairly consistent. In 2021 both the net profit margin and return on assets were negative. This could partly be attributed to impacts of COVID-19 regulations and travel restrictions on operations.



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TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION



In the periods preceding the Covid -19 pandemic, real GVA in the transport, storage and communication sector generally increased at a faster rate than total GVA. While the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a sharp contraction of the sector, it subsequently made a strong recovery and by Q3 2022 was 4 percent higher than its 2015 levels.

Both the net profit margin and return on assets profitability ratios of the telecommunications sub - sector were consistently positive between 2017 and 2021. However, there was a significant decline in returns from 2019 onwards.

FINANCE, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Since 2015, real GVA in the finance, insurance, real estate and business services consistently outperformed total GVA and by Q3 of 2022, was 23 percent higher than its 2015 levels. Only the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector experienced a larger relative increase over this period.

In the periods preceding 2020, the net profit margin in the real estate activities sub sector was relatively high but trending lower. In 2020, both profitability ratios deteriorated significantly but there was some recovery in 2021.

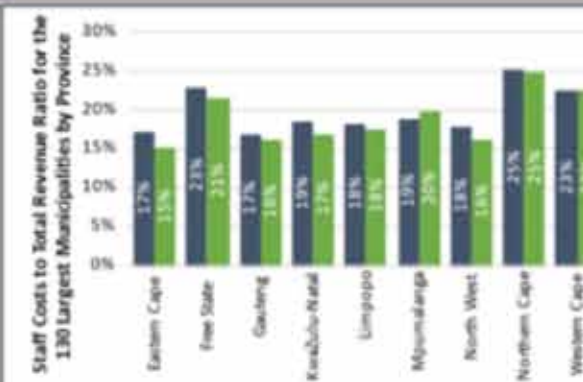


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GENERAL GOVERNMENT



Real GVA in the general government sector grew at a relatively consistently rate since 2015. By the third quarter of 2022, sector GVA was 9 percent higher than its levels at the start of 2015.

On average, municipalities in the Northern Cape had the highest ratio of staff costs to total revenue, followed by the Western Cape and Free State. Mpumalanga was the only province where the staff costs to total revenue ratio increased between Q3 2021 and Q3 2022.

COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES

Between 2015 and 2019, real GVA in the community, social and personal services sector grew at similar rate to total GVA. Following a strong recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, sector GVA was 11 percent higher in Q3 2022 than at the start of 2015.

Both the net profit margin and the return on assets of the health and social work sub -sector were consistently positive between 2017 and 2021. However, the return on asset ratio trended lower over this period.

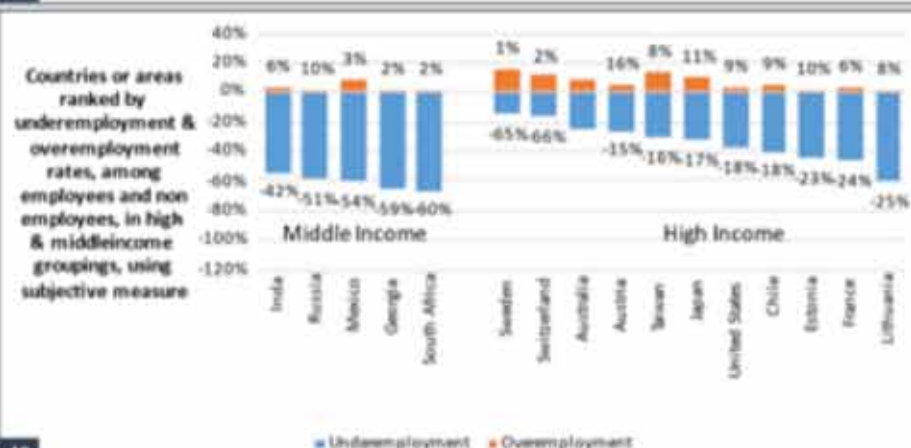
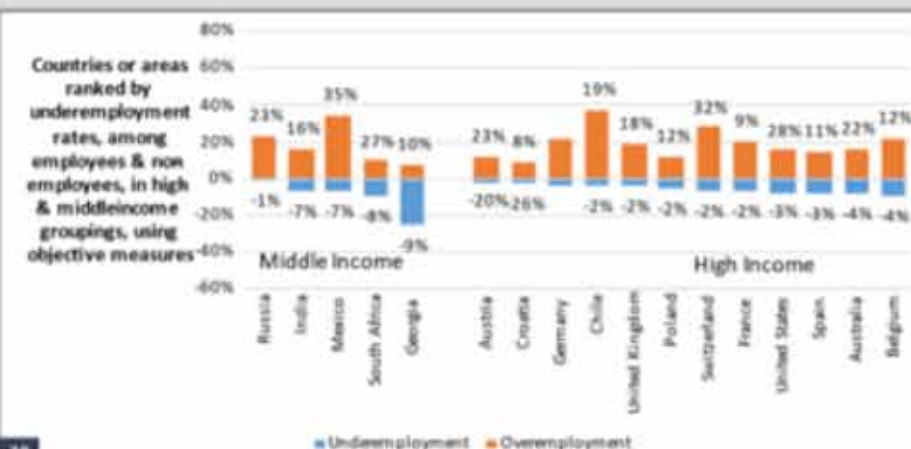


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International Labour Organisation (ILO) Global Report on Working Time and Work-life Balance Around the World (2022)



The ILO's report on global working time focuses on the actual number of hours of work, working time arrangements, and their implications for work-life balance. The report explores various longitudinal trends related to the number of hours worked, both immediately before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The country comparative analysis also explores working time arrangements and reviews the most prominent types of working time arrangements that currently exist, such as shift work, part-time work and flexi-time arrangements, and their effects on workers' work-life balance.

The report also provides detailed analysis of the matches and mismatches between workers' actual hours of work and their preferred hours of work, as well as the effects of such matches and mismatches on work-life balance. It utilizes various survey data to inform the findings. In the case of South Africa, these include the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) & ISSP Work Orientations IV module.

According to the report, working time mismatches take the form of either underemployment (where the actual hours of work are fewer than those desired by a worker) or overemployment (where the actual hours of work exceed those desired by a worker). The report adopts two methodological approaches to measuring time-related underemployment and overemployment at the national and international levels: The "objective measure" refers to a worker's preference for a specific change in hours of work; the "subjective measure" refers to a more continuous change in hours of work.

- The objective measure of working time mismatches involves the expressed preference for a wholesale change from a part-time to a full-time job or vice versa.
- The subjective measure of mismatch includes a preference to move incrementally within a part-time job to either longer or shorter part-time hours of work.

The figures show the ranking of underemployment by country or area, suggesting that some countries or areas do better at providing jobs that match workers' hours-of-work preferences than others. It also highlights the fact that underemployment tends to be lower in high income countries (as well as the Russian Federation). Regarding subjective measures for under/overemployment, countries with higher time-related underemployment include South Africa, Georgia, Mexico and Lithuania, at more than 60 percent. Workers in those countries seek more hours to increase their earnings.

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Data sources used in this document

Section A

Graph	Source of data
1	World Economic Forum Chief Economists Survey, December 2022
2	World Economic Forum Chief Economists Survey, December 2022
3	South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin
4	Statistics South Africa QES (P0277)
5	Statistics South Africa QES (P0277)
6	Statistics South Africa QES (P0277)
7	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
8	South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin
9	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
10	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
11	International Monetary Fund Fiscal Monitor
12	National Treasury Revenue and Expenditure
13	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
14	South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin
15	South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin
16	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
17	South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin
18	TradeMap (using COMTRADE data)
19	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
20	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
21	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
22	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
23	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
24	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)

Section B

Graph	Source of data
25	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
26	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
27	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
28	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
29	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
30	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
31	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
32	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
33	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
34	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)
35	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
36	Statistics South Africa GDP (P9110)
37	Statistics South Africa GDP (P0441)
38	Statistics South Africa Annual Financial Statistics (P0021)

Section C

Graph/ Table	Source of data
39	ILO. (2022). <i>Global Report on Working Time and Work-life Balance Around the World</i> . Geneva: International Labour Office, 2022
40	ILO. (2022). <i>Global Report on Working Time and Work-life Balance Around the World</i> . Geneva: International Labour Office, 2022

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Economic and Employment Indicators and Trends in South Africa

Issue # 12 (December 2022 / January 2023)

Purpose of this Report

This report has been prepared in support of the NEDLAC Social Partners' Economic Recovery Action Plan.

The report provides a snapshot of key macroeconomic and employment trends based on official statistics and other relevant sources of data.

Disclaimer

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Hamba Kahle Comrade

Myrtle Witbooi

Early in January 2023, the Labour Movement was struck by the devastating news of the passing on of South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union [SADSAWU] General Secretary and the International Domestic Workers Federation [IDWF] President, Comrade Myrtle Witbooi.

Comrade Witbooi was described across the globe as 'an advocate who led the international fight for domestic workers' rights.' Currently there are 24 countries which have ratified ILO Convention 190 on elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work and we can attribute such strides to some of her efforts by advocating for domestic workers to such processes in their own countries.

She played a crucial role at the International Labour Conference by influencing women across the globe to support the adoption of the International Labour Organization's Convention 190 which was about the eradication of violence and harassment in the world of work. Releasing a statement, the Congress of South African Trade Unions praised Comrade Witbooi as 'an embodiment of selflessness and service to the vulnerable workers.' Solly Phetoe, COSATU General Secretary said 'She was an indefatigable champion of

*COSATU mourns the
passing of South African
Domestic Service and
Allied Workers Union
[SADSAWU]
General Secretary
Comrade Myrtle Witbooi*

domestic worker's rights at home and internationally, including at the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The trade union movement has lost a tireless fighter for social justice and a fearless warrior, who inspired us. She was present thirty-seven years ago when COSATU was born in the belly of the Apartheid beast to fight for decent wages, improved working conditions and freedom from oppression.'

Phetoe said 'She kept us all honest with her firm guidance and presence; she always reminded everyone that the best leaders are those that are ready and willing to serve the people. We pledge in our own way to carry on her mission and to bring an end to the exploitation of domestic workers and other vulnerable workers.'

'We send our heartfelt to her family, friends and organization.'

'Hamba kahle Cde Myrtle hamba kahle, your spirit and legacy will live forever.' Comrade Myrtle lost a courageous battle to cancer.

Messages from across the globe!

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing [Wiego] described Comrade

Witbooi as an Activist for human rights, a Leader, a Comrade and a Friend.'

Wiego said 'We will remember and honour her ground-breaking legacy advocating for domestic workers' rights in South Africa and around the world. as the International Domestic Workers Federation International Domestic Workers Federation, she left a remarkable legacy in her fight against domestic worker exploitation.'

United Nations Women said 'She helped the fight to end slavery for all. She changed the course of history. She is Myrtle Witbooi. #SheisWe.'

International Domestic Workers Federation [IDWF] said 'It is with a broken heart that we share news of the tragic loss of our president Myrtle Witbooi. After a long battle with cancer, Myrtle is now at peace, leaving behind her a strong legacy and an unwavering will of resilience, compassion and power.'

The world lost a joyous champion for women, workers, and human rights yesterday.

Messages of condolences

'Myrtle Witbooi was a seismic force for Domestic Workers rights in South Africa and globally. She was a leader in building a global domestic workers movement and securing international labor protections. It was a great honor to work with Myrtle Witbooi. I mourn her passing, and remain inspired by her unwavering commitment, vision, solidarity and joy.' -Nisha Varia, advocate, researcher, trainer at Human Right Watch

European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions [EFFAT] said 'While we mourn her, the EFFAT family celebrates her inspirational legacy of a lifelong fighter, activist and trade union leader that did so much for the international recognition of domestic workers worldwide.'

SOLIDAR & SOLIDAR Foundation said 'The SOLIDAR family is heartbroken at the news of Myrtle Witbooi's passing. She was a fighter and fought til the end with the support of her family, comrades and friends. Our deepest condolences to International Domestic Workers Federation, her family and all who knew her and fought alongside her for workers' rights.'

UDW is social justice union: We fight for workers and our communities said 'Myrtle Witbooi was a fierce fighter for domestic workers globally. She was the president of the International Domestic Workers Federation. A dear friend and we will finish the work that she began. Rest in Power my Sister.' Cindy Berman, Independent Human Rights Advisor-

'Devastated by the death of Myrtle Witbooi - one of the most inspiring, powerful leaders I have had the privilege to know. Domestic worker, fought for rights of most marginalised workers, created international trade union federation for domestic workers. Hamba kahle, Myrtle.'

Comrade Myrtle Witbooi fought for recognition of "those left in the backyards" and the "women who iron your shirts."

OBITUARY BY JENNIFER FISH

'Myrtle never stopped contributing and fighting for domestic workers' rights, even until the very end,' said the International Domestic Workers Federation [IDWF]

Myrtle Witbooi, a pioneering leader of the domestic worker movement died on January 16 in Cape Town at age 75. Under South Africa's apartheid rule, she began to organize women in the garage of her employer and went on to become president of the first global union led by women. For 52 years she advocated for the rights of domestic workers, upholding her presidency in both South Africa's national union of domestic workers and the International Domestic Workers Federation throughout her struggle with a rare form of bone cancer.

Ms. Witbooi's experience as a domestic worker under apartheid guided her life on the front lines of both a national and global movement to history." recognize and protect women once considered "servants" without rights. She fought for domestic workers' first legal protections in South Africa's democracy, which set basic conditions of employment and allowed over 100,000 women to receive maternity and unemployment insurance over the past twenty years. In 2008, her leadership expanded to the global organization of domestic workers, where she guided a campaign for the first international standards of protection for household workers through the International Labour Organization.

Her voice appealed to world leaders, as she asked for policy recognition for "those left in the backyards" and the "women who iron your shirts." In 2011, the United Nations adopted the first international convention for domestic worker rights—a victory that left Ms. Witbooi proclaiming "Today we've got our dignity and respect. Slaves no more, but workers just like all of us." When asked about her achievements as a global human rights leader, she would most often share her surprise about the course of her life, given her origins under the apartheid system.

Born August 31, 1947, in the Moravian mission town of Genadendal, Ms. Witbooi left for work in the city of Cape Town at age 17. She became a live-in domestic worker—one of the most important forms of labor to reinforce apartheid's interconnected race and gender oppressions.

As she cooked, cleaned, and cared for other people's children and elders, she began to ask why those considered "one in the family" are least paid and universally unprotected. "In South Africa, the law said, 'if the master speaks, you listen.' 'But I went up to the woman I was working for and I said, 'look at me, I am a woman, just like you.'" In 1971, she spoke publicly about the need for protections such as minimum wages and vacation time by writing to the Cape Town regional Clarion newspaper, which quickly made her a leading voice for domestic worker rights. "Why are we different, why are there no laws, why are we not seen as people?" The apartheid state deemed her efforts to organize workers illegal. Yet, she gathered women together in discreet locations, building support, writing letters for better working conditions, and encouraging a collective movement of those isolated in "the maid's quarters" throughout South Africa.

Ms. Witbooi went on to co-found the South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) in 1986, the first national organization for women workers in households. She joined the African National Congress resistance movement, working alongside struggle leaders Desmond and Leah Tutu and All an Boesak. During the height of South Africa's police state in the 1980s, her activism aligned with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), bringing the representation of over 40,000 domestic workers into the political struggle to end apartheid.

For organizing workers and speaking truth to power, she was sent to prison three times and nearly lost her life to a bomb attack in Cape Town's Community House. As she fought for women's and worker's rights for 27 years under apartheid, she accepted the risks to her own life for the sake of the larger freedom movement. For her, democracy had to be made, struggle by struggle, not won in a single moment. "We wanted freedom, but it was not going to be given to us on a golden platter."

A fierce grit and unwavering commitment to the freedom struggle anchored Ms. Witbooi's entire activist life. "Because of my voice, I was determined, and I didn't let anything stop me." She spoke out for equality, gender rights, and labor justice, carrying the banner "women won't be free until domestic workers are free" throughout the streets of South Africa, and later the world. Her children described a certain softness" and diplomatic ease that persistently balanced her intense determination. In her direct work with thousands of domestic workers, she modeled a practice of speaking from a place of pride and equality, as a means of confronting systems of injustice. "When a domestic worker says, but I am not

educated? I said, don't let education stop you for what you believe in."

A steadfast model of humility, as she realized international recognition, Ms. Witbooi would often recollect "I got my degree in the kitchen." South Africa's 1994 realization of democracy and its ambitious 1996 Constitution made her even more determined to demand domestic worker protections. "We were free in South Africa, but domestic workers were still last on the agenda." The first labor laws emerged with explicit exclusion of domestic workers—a contradiction Ms. Witbooi utilized to call the new leaders to task. "We challenged our government. We chained ourselves to the gates of Parliament. We locked our Minister up and we put away the key, until they give in." With these strategies, during her leadership as the President of the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU),

South Africa passed five major labor protections that included domestic workers for the first time. These victories "on paper" gave Ms. Witbooi ground to demand better practices beyond South Africa, claiming "beautiful laws are not enough because there's a struggle in the world." For fifteen years, Ms. Witbooi served as president of both South Africa's national union and the International Domestic Workers Federation. She became the international voice for domestic workers, traveling to 48 countries to advocate for the protections established in the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, while overseeing her national union's daily operations and many requests for mediation. She saw 35 countries ratify this convention and assure national legal protections for workers "in the shadow economy" worldwide.

Known widely as a principle-centered, determined, and visionary leader, Ms. Witbooi's calming force provided an assurance of ease in moments of conflict and a symbol of the ideals at the heart of the wider human rights movement. She balanced spontaneity with careful measure, and good humor with calling those in power to task. The ability to speak from her own experience reflected her most persuasive gifts. She considered the life stories of the domestic workers she met around the world to be her greatest source of inspiration.

Ms. Witbooi's address to the ILO in 2010 captures her life stance as a champion for human rights and a consistent reminder of the long haul to realize justice, "If anyone would have told me 45 years ago today, that I would be here, I would not have believed them. But I will continue fighting for domestic workers rights every day of my life, as I remember those early days that led me to this particular struggle which has now made its place in world history."

Ms. Witbooi is survived by three children, Jacqui Michels, Linda (Wayne) Johnson, and Peter Witbooi, along with three grandchildren. She leaves a legacy in both national and international organizations and the tangible legislative victories from her lifetime of activism. In an interview conducted three years ago for her biography, Ms. Witbooi shared wishes for those inspired by her story. "I want you to remember me, unite and organize. I want you to remember, if I can do it, you can do it, and together we can sing,

Amandla!"





Hamba Kahle Comrade

Frene Ginwala

EMourners gathered in great respect to pay tribute to Dr. Frene Ginwala, a freedom Fighter, a life worth celebrating in the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Dr. Ginwala became a student Activist in her early years of schooling, and many studied her Bachelor of Laws degree at Kings College, University of London in the 1950s and completed her thesis on the topic, "Class Consciousness and Control-Indian South Africans, 1960-1946".

She was born on 25 April 1932 in Johannesburg after her parents, Mr Naswan Ginwala and Ms Banoo Bodhanwala, emigrated around 1890s from India to Mozambique and later to South Africa. Frene as she was affectionately called by her peers, 'she became a multi-faceted career in politics to the very end and was a comrade of high integrity.'

*'We remember a life that was
as rich in experience
as it was in meaning.'*

*Frene Ginwala played many
parts. She was a journalist,
author, academic, barrister
and a Parliamentarian. She
was an activist, a feminist,
a pan-Africanist and an
internationalist'*

She served in various roles within the African National Congress in the National Executive Committee [NEC], in particular the sub-committee on Governance and Legislature and ANC Constitutional Committee. She served the ANC in international relations after was asked to establish external mission of the Party in Tanzania. She headed at some point the Political Research Unit in the ANC President Oliver Tambo and was renowned on her research work on nuclear programme, economic sanctions and the arms and oil embargo, in particular.

Comrade Ginwala was awarded the Order of Luthuli in Silver on her excellent contribution to the struggle against gender oppression and her tireless contribution to the struggle for a non-sexist, non-racial, just and democratic society. Many recall how she became the first National

Assembly Speaker in 1994 after the Dr. Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president of South Africa. She held that position until 2004 when she retired. She led the transformation of Parliament into a democratic 'People's Parliament', with a new democratic Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996.

Comrade Frene returned from exile after 30 years in South Africa in 1990 and served in the Secretariat in the office of then ANC President, Nelson Mandela.

Delivering the eulogy the ANC President, Hon Cyril Ramaphosa said 'We remember a life that was as rich in experience as it was rich in meaning. Frene Ginwala played many parts. She was a journalist, an author, an academic, a barrister and a Parliamentarian. She was

assignments took her. On whatever platform, given whatever opportunity, Frene Ginwala was an eloquent and persuasive champion of the cause of the South African people. With her keen intellect, her measured delivery and her clear articulation of the principles and the purpose of our struggle, she felled many a critic and earned many a friend. Through her writings, whether as a journalist, an academic or an activist, she provided both incisive critique and clear vision.'

Ramaphosa concluded that 'Frene Ginwala will be remembered as a pioneer of women's rights. At a time when scant attention was given to the many ways in which women were oppressed and exploited, Frene fought for the struggles of women to be recognised. In a political environment in which the dominance of men didn't

that no country can be free for as long as its women are not free. Having won the principle of non-sexism, Frene Ginwala was among those who were determined to give it effect. It is therefore not surprising that after her return to South Africa, Ginwala formed part of the task force to establish the ANC Women's League in the country.

She helped to set up and became the convenor of the Women's National Coalition, which brought together women from across the political spectrum to draw up a women's charter. This formation played a critical role in ensuring that the rights of women received proper attention in the negotiations process and were enshrined in the new constitutional order. As we bid farewell to Frene Ginwala, we must recognise that this struggle – for equal rights and

a better life for all. She was part of a generation that refused to be part of a South Africa that was dominated by racism, apartheid, sexism, poverty, and degradation. She promoted the constitutional basis for the entrenchment of a unified, democratic, and accountable state.

Throughout her many decades of service and struggle for the liberation movement and the new democratic Parliament, she was known for her fierce commitment to principles. She has an unblemished record that the next generations of activists and politicians would be wise to learn from. We will remember her as a courageous activist who dedicated her life to the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa. The nation remains forever indebted to her immense contribution to building a better South Africa.'



Meanwhile, the South African Communist Party said 'From a young school-going age, Frene Ginwala had the political consciousness to confront apartheid stooges, questioning her exclusion from schools which had been placed in positions of privilege by the apartheid system's politics of race, class and gender exclusion.

As apartheid laws tightened, she threw herself fully into the fight for justice and freedom. In the underground, she created secret hideouts and transits for activists and leaders of the African National Congress, including Oliver Tambo, among many others. Following the

an activist, a feminist, a pan-Africanist and an internationalist. Yet, no roll-call of her many achievements can adequately describe the person she was nor the impact that she made in the course of her life. It is telling that among her earlier political assignments she was called upon to find ways for ANC leaders to clandestinely leave the country. At a time of great uncertainty and danger, she established routes and identified means of passage where before there had been none.

Through ingenuity, through courage, through determination and diligence, she forged new paths. Throughout her life she was a pioneer, a pathfinder, a leader in the true sense of the word. She was instrumental in setting up the ANC's first office in exile, establishing the base from which – over the coming decades – the organisation would forge what was probably the most powerful international solidarity movement of our time. For three decades, she was a vital part of that movement, whether in Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, the United Kingdom or wherever else her

even invite comment, Frene Ginwala was one of the few voices that was consistent and insistent that women should occupy their rightful place in the struggle.

In this, she can be counted as part of a proud lineage of courageous women that have fought for the freedom of all in this country, men and women, black and white. She can be counted among the ranks of those women who burnt their passes in Bloemfontein in 1913 and among the women who marched on the Union Buildings in 1956. She can be counted among the women who joined the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the aftermath of the 1976 uprising and those who marched on Parliament in 2019 to call for an end to the murder of women by men. Frene Ginwala was prominent among those within the liberation movement who were instrumental in crafting a vision for a democratic South Africa that was both non-racial and non-sexist.

After a difficult and protracted struggle, she was among those that won broad acceptance for the idea

opportunities for women – is far from won. As a society, as a state and as a movement, we have yet to give full effect to the principles of non-sexism and gender equality.' COSATU mourns the passing of veteran struggle stalwart Dr Frene Ginwala.

COSATU conveyed its heartfelt condolences on the passing of the liberation stalwart. Solly Phetoe, COSATU General Secretary reiterated that 'The federation sends its condolences to all her family, friends, and comrades, who have lost a great champion of justice and democracy. Dr Ginwala was one of the visionary activists who understood that education was key in the struggle against apartheid.

She was academically orientated and contributed greatly to the consolidation of democracy during her tenure as the Speaker of the National Assembly and after leaving active politics. She was an endless campaigner for a better and more democratic South Africa. South Africa has lost a great leader, a person who was passionate about

massacre and state of emergency, Ginwala was forced to exile, where she continued her activism and played a leadership role in various fields. In exile, Ginwala utilised her skills as a lawyer, academic, leader, activist and journalist to rally the world to give solidarity to the struggle against apartheid. She exposed the regime's crimes to the world, addressing various institutions, as well as writing for and representing the liberation movement. On her return to South Africa in 1991, she continued her activism, contributing to laying the ground for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.'

Solly Mapaila said 'The SACP conveys its message of heartfelt condolences to the family of our liberation struggle stalwart Dr Frene Noshir Ginwala. The SACP also sends its condolences to the liberation movement, her colleagues in the various fields she was involved in, as well as all justice and peace-loving people across South Africa and the world.'

May Her Soul Rest in Peace!



The ANC declares 2023:

“The Year of Decisive Action to Advance the People’s Interests and Renew our Movement”

ANC President, Cyril Ramaphosa and National Officials releasing white pigeons at the stadium

On the day, 8 January in 1912, at the Waaihoek Wesleyan Church in Bloemfontein, several members including, Josiah Gumede, John Dube, Pixley ka Isaka Seme and Sol Plaatje, gathered to form the African National Congress [ANC], then called the South African Native National Congress [ANNCC].

This year, 2023, Alliance partners, the African National Congress, the South African National Congress and the Congress of the South African Trade Unions, inclusive of Mass Democratic Movement organizations gathered to celebrate the One Hundred and eleven years of its existence.

The ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa as per the Congress Movement traditions delivered the Party’s January 8 Statement at the Dr Petrus Molemela Stadium, with a full capacity of members and supporters from across the country.

Ramaphosa paid tribute to stalwarts such as Oliver Reginald Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, Moses Mabhida,

Wilton Mkwayi, Rahima Moosa, Reg September, Jessie Duarte whose contributions to the liberation struggle remains unmatched. He acknowledged that 2023 is the year to celebrate the 50th Anniversary since the 1973 Durban Strikes took place, the 40th Anniversary celebrations of the formation of the United Democratic Front [UDF], the 30th Anniversary since the brutal assassination of the SACP leader, Chris Hani, the 30th Anniversary since the passing on of Comrade Oliver Tambo and also the 10th Anniversary since the death of Nelson Mandela.

He emphasized ‘job creation, infrastructure development, fixing the energy crisis, fighting corruption and crime and building a better Africa and the world’ as key priorities for the Movement

Addressing the thousands of members and supporters, President Ramaphosa said ‘We gather here in Mangaung, the cradle of our birth, inspired by our forebears and our founders. One Hundred and eleven years later,

the spirit of resistance against apartheid colonialism and the courageous struggle for liberation and democracy still dwells amongst us. This spirit calls upon us, over generations, to recognize the injustices of our past. It calls us to honor those who suffered in our land. It demands of us to fundamentally transform the living conditions of all citizens and free the potential of each and every person in the country. The ANC acknowledges that we are at a moment of fundamental consequence in the life of our nation. Across the country, the people are going through tough times. The people are increasingly losing hope of ever finding employment or setting up viable business and those trying to eke a living in the informal sector facing harassment and red tape. The energy crisis undermines economic growth and investment prospects and persistent loadshedding destroys businesses and compromises the production of food and the provision of social services such as water, sanitation, community safety, education and health.’

Ramaphosa reiterated that during the occasion of the January 8 statement, ‘the National Executive Committee decided to advance the following six Immediate Priority Actions which are;

- To deepen the Renewal of the ANC
- To accelerate the regulation of the Energy Crisis and load-shedding
- To mobilise social partners around economic reconstruction and recovery in order to increase job creation, investment and empowerment
- To improve delivery of basic services and maintaining infrastructure
- To strengthen the fight against crime and corruption
- To build a better Africa and the world

On Strengthening the Alliance, Ramaphosa said ‘the 55th National Conference stressed the significant role the Alliance and the broad Mass Democratic Movement have played in the struggle for liberation and are therefore a critical part of the ongoing efforts to transform South Africa into

a National Democratic Society. The Tripartite Alliance constituted by ANC, the SACP and COSATU represents the organizational expression of the common purpose and unity of action that these forces share, and continue to define and redefine in the course of social transformation. It is a strategic Alliance aimed to eliminating the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in its various manifestations, and not a coalition based on tactical considerations or the subjective mood of the moment. As a leader of the NDR, the ANC will continue to work for strategic unity among all components of this Alliance, in pursuit of a national democratic society.'

'Historically, the three streams of the national liberation struggle in our country-the revolutionary democratic, the socialist and the trade union movements-have found common cause in pursuit of the objectives of the NDR as commonly understood. These forces have been impacted by the changes in the global and domestic environment over the past three decades. They also face new strategic and organizational questions about relevance, renewal and reconfiguration of the Alliance. An Economic and Energy Alliance Summit should be convened as a matter of urgency to develop a unified programme and strengthen cohesive messaging on the most effective way to use all the policy instruments available to drive inclusive growth and transformation. All the ANC's organizational tasks we outline today need to be carried out with meaningful involvement of Alliance partners, including through the inclusion of the partners in relevant sub-committees of the National Executive Committee and joint mass campaigns. The Alliance must therefore act together in a decisive, empathetic and principled manner to generate hope for a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable future for our country.'

On Economic Reconstruction and Recovery to Create jobs, Ramaphosa said 'the task of ensuring that all South Africans share in the country's wealth is far from complete. The country's unequal distribution of wealth and income is largely characterized by the racial, spatial and gender demographics of our colonial and apartheid past. The task of broad based economic empowerment should be undertaken with greater intensity and purpose. We must use competition policy, preferential procurement and other instruments to address highly concentrated ownership patterns. We need to link the provision of grants for young people to pathways into work, self-employment, training and other forms of economic development. There needs to be greater integration between social grant data systems

and platforms like SAYouth.mobi.' On Ensuring Financial Sustainability and Modernising of ANC Operations, Ramaphosa said 'the renewal of the ANC and its ability to serve the people, requires that it has the resources necessary to conduct its operations and implement programmes aimed at fundamental social transformation. National Conference recognized that the over-reliance on private sector donor funding poses a major risk to the ANC's financial stability and its organizational autonomy, and that all political parties in our country. Conference reaffirmed the principle that political parties play a central role in our constitutional democracy and must be supported by public funding. This must be done to promote the independence, transparency, accountability and integrity of political parties, and by extension, the integrity of our democratic system. The ANC will also ensure that it raises more funding from its own members through contributions and payments to the organization. As part of the process of renewal the ANC will implement an organizational re-design and modernization project to ensure that the organization is able to undertake its mandate in a rapidly changing environment in a manner that is financially sustainable.'

Ramaphosa concluded that 'the ANC needs to mobilise South Africans as agents of their own liberation, the ANC needs to engage with critical sectors in society on an ongoing basis and not just during elections. The ANC needs to communicate its policies, positions, achievements and challenges more effectively and consistently. Every ANC member, leader and deployee must understand that they are communicators who, through their words and actions, help to shape public perceptions of the movement. They therefore need to be familiar with modern communication techniques and with the policies, positions and key messages of the organization. They need to adhere to the ANC's communications protocols and message discipline. Above all, they need to make use of every opportunity to engage with constituencies and communities in conversations that convey the positions, programmes and achievements of the ANC. ANC needs to assert its position as a leading proponent of a non-racial, non-sexist and equal society. These principles need to be reflected in the organization's programmes and structures.'

'Overall, a strong ANC must rest on the foundation of strong ANC Branches. Strong ANC Branches must be built on the foundation of a cadreship imbued with a militant, principled, unwavering commitment to the cause of the people and the highest standards of organizational discipline and

revolutionary morality. Our cadreship must reflect South African society, attracting progressive people of all classes, races, faiths and cultures. The ANC must build the quality of its membership. We will do this by enhancing political education and training for ANC members, including through induction programmes for BEC's on the core values and principles of the ANC. These efforts will be reinforced by establishing political education cells to sharpen ideological, theoretical, policy and organizational skills of our members. Completion of courses at the OR Tambo School of Leadership must be a prerequisite for election to ANC leadership positions. We will further strengthen our cadreship by recruiting members of society with the requisite skills, capacity and experience to enhance our transformation agenda and build a National Democratic Society.

The renewal and sustainability of our cadreship will be ensured by drawing more young people into our ranks and leadership structures. ANC Leagues are very important in enabling the ANC to serve the people and advance their interests and sectoral needs. The Leagues need to have functional structures and dynamic programmes on the ground if they are to serve their constitutional and political purpose. This will help in guiding the adopted Vision 2032 on the renewal and rebuilding of the movement over the next ten years. The active participation of ANC Branches, Alliance partners, and other formations in society will be central to the implementation of the 2032 Roadmap, taking into account the material conditions in each locality and sector. These conditions are influenced by continuous changes in the balance of forces, locally and internationally. This demands ongoing reflection and assessment of Strategy and Tactics over the next two years to ensure wide and thorough engagement on the ANC's strategic tasks and tactical posture.'

'Restoration of vibrant organizational life of our Branches is an urgent and vitally important task of the moment.'



COSATU President Zingiswa Losi
delivering a message of support on behalf of the federation

COSATU urges the ANC 'to end factionalism and corruption dividing the movement and that many leaders are guilty of'

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi was the first Alliance partner on the podium to deliver a Message of Support at the ANC 111th Anniversary.

Losi said 'It is an honour to celebrate the 111th anniversary of the liberation movement, the African National Congress. We are indebted to the foresight of that generation who came together to seek a path to transform South Africa into a home for all who live in it, irrespective of race, gender or religion. We laud the proud history of the ANC, the battles it waged, the generations of heroes and heroines it produced and the painful sacrifices countless suffered. The constitutional democracy we enjoy today, can be traced directly to that momentous occasion here in Mangaung more than a century ago. We commend the many achievements that we have made under the leadership of the ANC, from our constitutional democracy to our progressive labour laws, from the rolling out of basic services to those who previously had none, to a national minimum wage for workers who were paid little more than a slave wage, from the management of the Covid-pandemic, to the release of R64 billion from the Unemployment



SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila at Mangaung

Insurance Fund to cushion 5.7 million workers and the SRD Grant helping 10 million unemployed. Whilst we welcome our many achievements, we cannot afford to be complacent or arrogant as workers to survive the many crises crippling our nation. The 55th Congress of the ANC as well as the SACP and COSATU's congresses have concluded. The mandates of members, workers and the public is clear. Workers are tired of the factionalism and corruption dividing the movement and that many leaders are guilty of. Mr. President and the entire ANC leadership, workers were clear in the 2021 local elections.

They have put the entire movement on notice. Dismantle the factions, remove incompetent deployees, unite the ANC and rebuild its structures. We are deeply worried that whilst workers support the step aside resolution, it appears that we are backtracking on it. We cannot compromise on matters of principle and the rule of law. Those who have been charged and convicted for criminal offences must step aside. We cannot have leaders with criminal convictions and expect society to take us seriously. If we are to rebuild the state, then we need a sane, credible and clean ANC. Comrade President you correctly endorsed the call of COSATU and the SACP for the reconfiguration of the Alliance. We look forward to engaging on the implementation of this commitment. We need a united Alliance if to turn the nation around. We are facing our greatest challenges since 1994, at the heart of addressing these, is

fixing the state. The inability of countless municipalities to provide basic services is causing many companies to close further impoverishing their communities yet we see being little being done by COGTA and SALGA to resolve these. We cannot accept losing billions to corruption across the state including at the UIF. Workers are angry that when they blow the whistle on corruption in Vhembe, Gauteng and here in Bloemfontein, they are assassinated, and no one is brought to justice.'

She emphasized that 'Workers are tired of politicians making promises about ending load shedding or protecting and rebuilding our passenger and freight rail. We need action and results. Covid-19 has shown the need for a well-oiled state machinery and the dangers of crippling the state of through reckless ill-considered budget cuts. SARS has proven the value of investing in the state. Workers have a lot invested in the ANC. It is not an accident of history that COSATU and our predecessors have been part of the Alliance. But workers expect more from the ANC and the government they have elected to office. Public servants expect government to respect collective bargaining and honour their wage agreements. Municipal workers deserve to see their salaries paid on time. ANC employees should not have to beg to see their pension contributions honoured. Whilst society praised private and public sector workers for the essential services they provided during Covid-19, workers are asking why are the ANC and government quiet when their rights

are being abused? Workers expect government to act when Makro workers are victimized for being members of SACCWU. Workers dependent upon the National Minimum Wage, expect government to take action against a staggering 45% of employers found to be ignoring the law. We need Treasury and Parliament to expedite the Amendment Bill allowing financially workers limited access to their pension funds by October 2023. We need to ensure the Just Energy Transition does not send workers to the unemployment queue or increase our already dangerously high debt levels. Government needs to stimulate the economy, slash unemployment, including expanding the Presidential Employment Programme to accommodate at least 2 million participants and enhance the SRD Grant.'

Losi concluded that 'The ANC is on notice. We face our most difficult elections in 2024. The challenges facing workers and society are massive. The ANC needs to get its act together to win the elections. Continue with factions and corruption, an economy limping from loadshedding, rising fuel prices and a 43% unemployment rate, and we will struggle to convince workers to vote for the ANC. The solutions are in our hands. We need decisive leadership. We dare not fail the nation. COSATU will continue to be a critical ally and will remain the voice of workers. We will walk this journey with you but will not hesitate to expose those who fail.'

SACP supports the Renewal and Unity of the ANC, the entire movement and reconfiguration of the Alliance

South African Communist Party General Secretary, Solly Mapaila commenced by saying 'We salute the ANC on the historic milestone of its 111th founding anniversary. We are looking forward to the January 8th Statement. The majority of our people are the workers and poor facing inequality, exploitation, unemployment and poverty in the economy. There can be no doubt. We will be inspired by revolutionary content in the measures the ANC will outline in its January 8th Statement regarding the necessity to change the material conditions of this majority of our people for the better.'

Mapaila said 'Our message today covers a few areas, through summaries:

1. Renewal and unity of the ANC, the entire movement and reconfiguration of the Alliance.
 - This requires dealing decisively with factionalism without fear or favour, openly confronting neo-liberalism, dismantling the networks of state capture, clamping down on corruption, and building collective leadership of, and accountability on the content, direction and execution of the national democratic revolution.
 - As President Cyril Ramaphosa correctly said in the Political Report he delivered to the 55th National Conference of the ANC last month,

the renewal and unity of the ANC will be incomplete without the reconfiguration of the Alliance. We cannot agree more.

- However, if we were to add, we would emphasise that the renewal and unity of the ANC will be incomplete without the renewal, unity and ever-growing support from the motive forces of the national democratic revolution and the people at large. Without the people, there can be no revolution. Let us remember. The revolution is not an end in itself. It is a means of an end. For the revolution to be a people's revolution, it must be embedded in and serve the people.
- The national democratic revolution must lift the people out of poverty, replace unemployment with the right of all to work, bring down inequality—which is still racialised and gendered, complete the cause of liberation and socially emancipate the people, the majority of whom are the workers and poor. This is our immediate challenge, which requires success in overcoming other immediate challenges.
- 2. The immediate challenges facing not only the ANC but also the Alliance and the entire country include stopping load-shedding as a matter of urgency, overcoming the overall energy production and supply security crisis, and moving forward to ensure a just transition in all respects—including in the sphere of finance. State power has a crucial role to play. We want to use this opportunity to underline the following points.
- A transition that will lead to the destruction of work through retrenchments and condemning active towns in energy producing areas into ghost towns will be unjust.
- South Africa must therefore move more decisively in advancing carbon capture and sequestration regarding coal as an input in energy production given our massive national endowment of the resource. This must form part of our mixed energy policy and just transition programme, which must include new publicly owned power stations to build self-sufficiency in electricity generation and supply.
- The imperialist powers of Western Europe, which have been pressuring South Africa to abandon the use of coal in energy production, have in contradiction rapidly increased their imports of our coal in the face of the stinging impact they experienced after their unilateral sanctions as part of the US-dominated NATO against Russia. Let us not forget.

The economies of the Global North are cumulatively the worst polluters in historical context.

- A transition that will involve financial exploitation of our country through loans and subordination of our national democratic sovereignty through loan conditionalities will be unjust. The developed Global North—by far, historically, the biggest polluters and main causers of human induced climate change—must provide resources to the Global South to support both mitigation and adaptation. It is unjust for loans denominated and repayable in foreign currency to form the bulk of the “package” the developed Global North countries want Global South countries, South Africa included, to accept.
- 3. Overcoming the energy crisis and stopping load-shedding will play an important role towards tackling the persistently high levels of inequality, unemployment, and poverty. This requires other measures, however. The measures required include the following.
- 3.1. Developing total productive forces as rapidly as possible: not least through industrialisation, a thoroughgoing skills revolution, an adequately supported research and development agenda, transformation of the mining sector—with localising the beneficiation of our mineral resources a top priority, and transformation of the agricultural sector, linking agriculture to manufacturing by developing large-scale food processing, also as agro-processing, the beneficiation of primary materials and intermediate goods from the agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors.
- 3.2. A coherent and high-impact industrial policy adequately supported by a new macroeconomic framework, particularly fiscal and monetary policies, as well as, equally important, international trade policy, must emerge as an overarching priority to tackle the persisting crisis-high unemployment through large-scale employment creation.
- 3.3. The macroeconomic framework must be redesigned to support the development, diversification and growing the levels of national production. Needless to mention industrialisation, with large-scale sustainable employment creation, an apex priority. This must explicitly be added to the mandate of, and accountability by, the Reserve Bank. Since the adoption of our constitution in 1996, the Reserve Bank has failed to deliver

on its constitutional mandate of exercising its powers and functions in the interest of balanced and sustainable economic growth. Besides making it truly the central bank of the republic in terms of ownership, the Reserve Bank must be moved from its failed conduct of monetary policy to play a developmental role.

- 3.4. Instead of being relegated to a function of one government department and deprived of adequate funding through austerity, which involves either curtailments of growth or outright cuts in budgetary support for industrial development and incentives, industrialising the economy with the overarching, coherent and high-impact industrial policy adequately supported by macroeconomic policies must be elevated to a whole-of-government priority. There must be greater co-ordination of industrial policy with a decisively supportive macroeconomic policy and other policies
- 3.5. A stronger anti-monopoly, anti-concentration and anti-dumping legislative and regulatory framework vigorously enforced should more decisively form part of our industrial transformation and development imperative, including localisation and ownership transformation. While still on this score, the property question, ownership transformation must not be locked into an exclusive preserve of elitist groupings through their capitalist schemes, including wheeling and dealing, state capture and other forms of corruption.
- As the ANC correctly declared in its Strategy and Tactics adopted in 1969 in Morogoro, Tanzania, “...our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass”.
- The “N” in the National Democratic Revolution does not stand for the word “national” devoid of content. It stands for word national with revolutionary nationalism as its theoretical content as opposed to narrow nationalism. It is important we underline this point from our shared theory of struggle on this occasion of the ANC's 111th founding anniversary.
- As Vladimir Lenin has correctly said, “Without revolutionary theory, there can be no real revolutionary movement”. The ANC was therefore absolutely correct in the

Morogoro Strategy and Tactics when it made clear the correction of our centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations.

- In summing up the way forward, the ANC underlined that “...one thing is certain—in our land this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the people as a whole and are not manipulated by sections or individuals be they White or Black.” We have no doubt that the ANC will rebound and regain its lost ground by reasserting this revolution content, including through mass empowerment covering the workers and poor in terms of ownership
- 4. Reasserting rural development as an apex priority, to eliminate under-development systematically. Directing investment into rural areas will go a long way in developing production and expanding opportunities in the rural areas.
- 5. Advancing and deepening the transformation of the financial sector to serve the people. In line with the Freedom Charter, financial sector transformation must include building a developmental public banking system and a thriving co-operative banking sector.
- 6. Tackling the rising costs of living and advancing a caring social policy, not least maintaining the Social Relief Distress Grant and improving it as a foundation to move towards a Universal Basic Income Grant.
- 7. Eliminating racial inequality and advancing gender equality as indispensable components in every policy and dealing more decisively with gender-based violence. We want to take this opportunity to reiterate our unwavering condemnation of the racist behaviour by the white men who have been charged with crimes, including attempted murder, after allegedly assaulting black teenagers trying to use a resort swimming pool at the Maselspoort resort in the Free State Province last month.
- 8. To achieve the historical mission of the national democratic revolution, working together, we must intensify our anti-imperialist struggle. We are looking forward to the ANC's contribution in taking forward this international struggle for a just and peaceful world characterised by equal development and common prosperity.

Together, let us serve the people.' Happy Birthday the African National Congress!

Class Struggle is an **ECONOMIC STRUGGLE**

argues Solly Mapaila in memory of Joe Slovo

Workers descended in great numbers at the Avalon cemetery on January 6 to commemorate the 28th Anniversary since the passing on of Comrade Joe Slovo. Joe Slovo as a South African politician, and an opponent of the apartheid system. A Marxist-Leninist, he was a long-time leader and theorist in the South African Communist Party. A lawyer by profession, Joe Slovo distinguished himself as one of the finest Ministers to serve under Nelson Mandela's cabinet in 1994. Comrade Slovo was an anti-apartheid activist, long-time leader and theorist in the SACP, a key member of the ANC, and commander of the ANC's military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

Addressing hundreds of comrades gathered at Avalon, the South African National Congress General Secretary said, 'Today marks the 28th year since we lost this gallant revolutionary, Joe Slovo, an activist member and leader of our entire liberation movement, on 6 January 1995. We commemorate Slovo amid a devastating load-shedding. Three years after Slovo passed away, the government adopted a White Paper on Energy, in December 1998. This marked the post-1994 beginnings of the devastating load-shedding we face today. This load-shedding is therefore not only a direct result of state capture activities at Eskom. It is also a direct result of the failed neoliberal policy paradigm. Under the White Paper on Energy adopted in December 1998, the government chose to not invest in new public power generation capacity as an immediate priority. This decision was against the imperative to build electricity supply self-sufficiency to keep pace with the impressive post-1994 electrification rollout. The government prioritised leaving new power generation capacity building for

private power producers, the so-called "Independent Power Producers", and to unbundle Eskom to facilitate the procurement of power from the profit-driven interests. This stance was part of the macroeconomic framework, especially fiscal policy. The government prioritised austerity, cutting budgets in a way that affected key economic and social transformation and development imperatives.'

Mapaila on Reconfiguration of the Alliance argued strongly that 'Concerning renewal and unity: If there is one point we wish to emphasise today, in memory of Joe Slovo, that is that there will be no real renewal and unity of the ANC and our entire movement without a revolutionary theory. For the renewal and unity process to succeed, the movement must throw neoliberalism under the bus, in the same way as it must dismantle the networks of state capture and deal a decisive blow to other forms of corruption. Also, the renewal and unity of the movement will be incomplete without the reconfiguration of the Alliance. The relationship of the SACP and the working-class at large to state power is part and parcel of the core tenets of the renewal and unity of the movement and reconfiguration of the Alliance. In delivering the Political Report to the 55th ANC National Conference in December 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa correctly drew attention to the process on this matter taking place in the SACP. The formulation the President used was not covered in the official text of the report he delivered. He clearly urged the ANC to pay attention to this question in a frank manner. During the first quarter of this year, 2023, the SACP will convene a Special Central Committee Plenary to receive a revised report on the implementation of its 15th National Congress resolution on the SACP and

state and popular power, including electoral considerations. The resolution is clear the SACP must more effectively contest elections without or without a reconfigured Alliance—in other words, if the Alliance remains not reconfigured, if there is no tangible progress towards the reconfiguration process.

The Alliance cannot exist as an ineffectual article of faith. Its reconfiguration must give play to collective leadership of the national democratic revolution, based on consensus-seeking Alliance consultation and collective accountability. There is no single reason, in principle, why we cannot work together if we are indeed allies.'

In conclusion, Mapaila said 'In memory of Joe Slovo, we must defend the advance towards a completely non-racial South Africa, against the many backward tendencies that have emerged, such as narrow nationalism, chauvinism and the reassertion of racist attitudes and tendencies in our country. The international atmosphere is dominated by hostility.

The US-led NATO imperialist provoked war in Ukraine is one of the many indicators of the hostility. The imperialist regimes are engaged in the same agenda in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia. At the centre of this imperialist agenda is, as we have said, an insatiable appetite to maintain world dominance and hegemony, to subordinate and control all countries, and to exploit their resources and labour. To counter this agenda, we need to build a world peace movement and intensify our anti-imperialist struggle. The working-class and its allies must intensify this struggle in every country, region and continent. We will do our part, as the SACP. Within this framework, we call for an end to all imperialist machinations, wars and aggression in

every part of the world. We express our solidarity with the people of Cuba against the criminal US blockade of Cuba and occupation of Guantanamo Bay.

We express our solidarity with the people of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and others in Latin America struggling against the US-led imperialist subordination, subversion and attacks. We express our solidarity with the people of Western Sahara and Palestine against occupation and exploitation of the occupied territories by Morocco and the apartheid Israeli regime, respectively. We express our solidarity with the Kurds against oppression in various countries in the Middle East. We call for the release of Abdullah Öcalan and express our support for a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish Question.

We express our solidarity with the people of Syria and Lebanon against imperialist machinations, occupation and exploitation of their countries or occupied territories. Our immediate challenge in Southern Africa and Africa at large is to build a strong and united working-class movement. This includes revitalising the African Left Networking Forum, the ALNEF. We will carry out both tasks more decisively. There must be peace in Sudan and Southern Cameroon, and a transition to democratisation in Swaziland. Therefore, we express our solidarity with the people of Swaziland struggling for democracy. We call for a peaceful resolution of the situations in Sudan and Southern Cameroon. We strongly condemn state terrorism in Cameroon against the people of Southern Cameroon.'

COSATU and the ANC delivered messages of support to remember Joe Slovo.



COSATU participates in the ANC NEC Lekgotla

'The ANC NEC Lekgotla's call for a business unusual approach to resolving South Africa's many problems should be supported by solid action,' declares COSATU

The African National Congress held its inaugural meeting of the National Executive Committee (NEC) Lekgotla attended by Alliance partners, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions from the 29th to 30th of January 2023 at the Esselen Park in Ekurhuleni.

The ANC resolved, amongst others, to have a special focus on the ongoing energy crisis, and adopted a Programme of Action which focuses on:

- Accelerated actions to resolve the energy crisis to end load shedding
- Specific initiatives and programmes to intensify the ANC's Renewal,
- A bold programme to mobilize social partners around economic reconstruction and recovery
- to increase job creation, investment, and empowerment,
- Steps to improve the delivery of basic services and maintain

infrastructure,

- Initiatives to strengthen the fight against crime and corruption and
- Specific actions to build a better Africa and world.

'In solving the energy crisis, the NEC Lekgotla encouraged the President of the Republic to declare a National State of Disaster, which will also require that the ANC reconnects with our communities and society, as the ANC does not have the monopoly of ideas,' said Fikile Mbalula, ANC Secretary General. Mbalula said 'We therefore call on all of society to work with us in progressively solving the challenge since it affects all of us, in particular the poor and the working class.

Lekgotla also directed Cabinet to study in detail the obstacles in delivering infrastructure, vandalism and counter revolutionary tendencies, with a view to increase infrastructure investment whilst strengthening the capability and capacity of the state. An additional 46 000 Mega

Watts was required to be added to the 26 000 MW current capacity. In trying to build and maintain capacity key concerns remain the vandalism which has posed a risk, further compounded by the fact that 6 power stations are not in operation. Government advocated for the improvement of the performance of Eskom's existing power stations whilst upgrading and expanding current capacities and capabilities in the context of the Energy Action Plan and the Just Energy Transition as proposed by the National Energy Crisis Committee (NECC).'

'Government requires a reprioritisation of the already pressured national budget which has been impacted on by global dynamics such as the performance of China and USA markets as well as the conflict in Ukraine.'

Mbalula reiterated that 'we have noted the budget and the potential to raise capital has negatively been impacted upon by the municipal debt to Eskom.

This together with national debt of R 4,8 trillion as well as the progressive social wage (which amounts to 58% of the budget) has made the budgeting manoeuvring space quite tight. Lekgotla noted that there are billions which are projected to be underspent and called for the reprioritisation of the funds to address the crisis. This can be complemented by the redesign of existing grants to optimise and aggregate infrastructure financing and capacities.

Additionally, consideration should be given for the restructuring of the Eskom debt and the financing thereof. Thus, amongst other steps to be taken is the incentivising and subsidisation of solar roof top panels for households and businesses, as well as accelerated maintenance, securing and building of the energy infrastructure.

These can be complemented by measures such as renewable energy supply and standby generation which can also be diesel, petrol and battery based in the telecommunications and

broadcast services, as these can also enhance key social services such as education and training. Further, short term actions include the reconfiguration of government such that the areas of energy security is better aligned.

Lekgotla also called for acceleration of the work of the National Energy Crisis Committee, by utilising the State of Disaster legislation to bring about a multi sphere Command Centre to better manage the crisis. Additionally, the current plan requires deepening such that it responds to the immediate challenges and further promote the:

1. Prioritisation of maintenance, management, and security of Eskom power plants.
2. Management of Load shedding such that it minimizes the impact on the economy and the provision of basic services, including water.
3. Mitigation of the decision by the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) regarding Eskom tariffs on people and the economy.
4. Implementation of measures to manage electricity demand, including the installation of solar heaters and panels and other energy efficient systems, which should be incentivised.
5. Expediting of the procurement of emergency power.

6. Relief and support to poor households, as well as, small and medium sized enterprises
7. Curb the outward migration of technical and management skills and capabilities at ESKOM, whilst mobilising further skills in areas such as engineering. Support of the Just Energy transition as a long-term programme.'

Emanating from the ANC NEC Lekgotla, COSATU General Secretary, Solly Phetoe said 'The Congress of South African Trade Unions welcomes the African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC) Lekgotla's business unusual approach to resolving South Africa's many problems and the recognition of the need to move with speed. The Federation is happy that the President and the Lekgotla have moved to endorse and adopt the Federation's proposal for the declaration of a State of Disaster to manage the electricity crisis crippling the economy. A State of Disaster will send the message to society that government is treating this crisis with the urgency it requires, it will concentrate all of government's attention and resources to stabilising and rebuilding the grid and providing government and Eskom with the necessary powers and tools to end loadshedding.

The Federation is not looking at new policies, with fifteen (15) months to go before the 2024 national and provincial elections, but the accelerated implementation of the Eskom Social Compact, the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan (ERRP), and other urgent interventions to turn the economy and state around. The Federation supports the ANC's commitment to accelerate the implementation of the ERRP, not only with regards to the Eskom Social Compact, but also to secure and rebuild our passenger and freight railway network, ramp up local procurement, mobilise financial resources to stimulate and expand employment programmes for the unemployed. These progressive commitments can only be achieved if the Lekgotla's commitments to tackle crime and corruption, rebuild the state and in particular dysfunctional municipalities, restore basic services, and accelerate the infrastructure roll out programme are honoured.

What is needed now, is for the upcoming State of the Nation Address and the 2023/24 Budget to speak to these progressive commitments and targets with the necessary budgetary allocations and interventions. A coherent government is dependent on the ANC expediting its organisational renewal programmes and in particular the suspension and subsequent expulsion

of corrupt elements and lawbreakers from the organisation. The ANC and government, need to move with speed to resolve the crises of loadshedding, unemployment, corruption, cable theft and the myriad of other calamities bedevilling this country. The ANC does not have the luxury of time, what is needed is real progress in the next 6 months, because the people are running out of patience.'

The ANC NEC processed the resolutions of the conference in line with the 2023 theme which called for "Decisive Action to Advance the People's Interest and Renew Our Movement".

Meanwhile, the Alliance partners resolved to pay special attention to curbing the effects of rising costs of living whilst creating an inclusive economy that works in the interests of all South Africans, especially women. ANC NEC Lekgotla resolved to call for the urgent convening of the proposed Alliance Economic and Energy Summit. And agreed to enhance Alliance relations by building a stronger alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African National Civic Organisations (SANCO), which is critical to the advancement the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

'THE GAINS THE WORKING CLASS and workers have achieved over many years

who hard struggles are now being derailed by capitalist. Our brochure and programme for the year will come close to counter these anomalies'

- Worker Education provision is critical Now!

The Development Institute for Training, Support and Education for Labour [DITSELA] Institute kickstarted the year with its National Educators Forum and the 2023 Programme Brochure Launch, premised on the theme "Reviving Workers Education Through Trade Union Activism."

DITSELA Institute Courses are generally aimed to ensure that worker education must empower the working class and enhance the level of trade union education to be cascaded by empowered educators to strengthen Class Consciousness. DITSELA Institute National Educators' Forum offers Trade Union worker educators to liaise with each other, share experiences across different sectors of the economy, establish Worker Education networking and support each other during cascading of programmes at the workplaces. DITSELA Institute offers Trade Union support Course aimed to address challenges federations encounter on the critical importance of sustaining organizational development, building trade union capacity to defend the class and strengthen the class struggle for decent work and also advance social justice.

Presenting the overall thrust of the 2023 Programmes, DITSELA Executive Director, Mr. Ntsilo Molumaele argued that '...the gains the working class and workers have achieved over many years who hard struggles are now being derailed. Our brochure and programme for the year will come close to counter these anomalies.' Molumaele argued that 'The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, #socialism or capitalism, is still not really settled. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and

the contradiction between the old and the new. Worker Education should take place at every workplace as a site of Class Struggle, whether in a informal, non-formal and formal way to empower the newly elected worker leaders and shopstewards to defend the class.'

'Our federations have identified the need for developing effective and sustainable union education at the provincial level. We have allocated a number of popular courses for provincial schools. In 2023, five DANLEP courses, which are Advanced Certificate in Research and Information Management, Advanced Certificate Knowledge Economy and Workplace Technologies, Advanced Certificate in Climate Change, Advanced Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety and Advanced Certificate on Trustee Development will undergo an evaluation process.'

'Trade unionists will be invited to assist in the redevelopment of these courses and we want to encourage affiliates to increase their own education capacity building programmes by working with DITSELA on material development for union's specific needs. And facilitators of the various courses are sourced from DITSELA staff, unionists, union educators, Labour Service Organization Programme Coordinators and University Lectures and other Institutes of Higher Education and we urge workers to apply through their trade unions.'

'Ditsela is currently in the process of formalizing some courses in line with the National Qualification Framework [NQF] system. By the end of 2023 we hope to continue working well together to building union's capacities and organizational strength. DITSELA is continuously striving to be a global centre of excellence in provision of workers' education. In so doing, the year 2023 is dedicated to enriching the programmes around addressing gender and socio-economic issues in society. Workers' education

needs to respond vigorously to the plight of women in particular, young workers, workers with various disability challenges at workplaces.'

'We must close ranks through mass education mobilization and empower the class to fight off social ills in various forms in society.'

Courses for 2023

- Course on Political Economy is aimed to empower workers on critical importance of understanding political economy of South Africa and the world, empower them with analysis of economic trends, economic growth imperatives and providing solutions to eradicate exploitation.
- Course on Finance for Non-Financials is aimed to empower workers on the critical importance of sound financial management and effective accountability of trade union funds and also budgeting for worker programs
- Course on Further Education and Training Certificate in Trade Union Practice [TUPQ] is aimed to empower workers on the understanding of Trade Unionism, worker rights, Political Economy, Gender Struggles and the impact of unions in the labour market Class Struggle.
- Course on Negotiation Skills, Strategy, Tactics and Disclosure of Information is aimed to empower workers on the critical importance of effective negotiations with employers, researching on demands, developing arguments and seeking social justice
- Course on Peer Educator Programme [PEP] is aimed to empower #workers on the critical importance of provision of Worker Education to empower working class to appreciate their Labour Power at point of production to eradicate exploitation of the class by bourgeoisie.
- Course on Research and Organizational Development Programme is aimed to empower

workers on the critical importance of sustainable organizational development, building trade union capacity to defend the #class and strengthen the class struggle for decent work.

- Course on Labour Law is aimed to empower #workers on the critical importance of applying labour legislation at the workplace as a site of #ClassStruggle to defend decent jobs, enforce Labour Standards and engage in collective bargaining with employers.
- Course on Occupational Health and Safety is aimed to empower workers on the core objectives of improving workplace safety and addressing issues related to health with management as a Labour Standard
- Course on Advanced Certificate Trustee Development is aimed to empower workers on the critical importance of understanding how trustees should execute their fiduciary duties in pension funds as a site of Class Struggle to defend #socialsecurity imperatives.
- Course on Labour Law Arbitration is aimed to empower #workers on the critical importance of leading arbitration procedures at the CCMA, applying labour legislation at the workplace as a site of Class Struggle to defend decent jobs, enforce Labour Standards.

DITSELA Institute has planned two Siyakhuluma Seminar series in Gauteng and Western Cape aimed to empower workers and society at large on sharpening their working class analysis of challenges facing the workers in particular in the current conjuncture in the labour markets and ensuring that trade union movement are able to respond adequately on the policy formulation, implementation and monitoring processes to mitigate against factors such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, corruption, crime, gender based violence, etc.

'Reviving Worker Education through Trade Union Activism'

- DITSELA Perspective for 2023 and beyond

Many nations are still experiencing economic globalization through changing labour markets and advancement of technological challenges. These changes are displacing full-time regular employment and thus changing the nature of work. Most of the newly created jobs are in the informal economy or of a part-time, casual, temporary or homebased nature. This has created an army of unemployed, underemployed and working poor subsisting alongside a relatively stagnant and pressurized permanent workforce. The socio-economic challenges facing South Africa and many other countries have exacerbated the existing vulnerability and exploitation of the working class by bosses, resulting in deepening levels of poverty, inequality, social polarization, job insecurity, crime and a fraying social fabric. The erosion of trade union density across all sectors of the economy poses a threat on future existence of trade unions.

The recent published International Labour Organization [ILO] publication on Trade Unions in Transition has further exposed how many workers' organizations were hugely affected the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in various countries, and destabilized major companies and workplaces, with the working class having to experience mandatory lockouts which impacted negatively on their wages.

The published series of key challenges revealed that 'the future of trade unions is at stake as many workers have lost jobs.'

By the end of 2022, the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis was still incomplete and highly uneven across the world, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries, and was

further hampered by the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine, accelerating climate change and unprecedented humanitarian challenges.

According to the ILO World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023 which provides a comprehensive assessment of current decent work deficits and how these have been exacerbated by multiple, overlapping crises in recent years, analysing global patterns, regional differences and outcomes across groups of workers, indicated that '...the critical challenges faced by trade unions in various regions include dealing with increased labour market flexibility, addressing the informalization of work, engaging in "digital unionism", supporting effective and inclusive social dialogue, reversing negative trends in trade union membership, and ensuring financial sustainability.'

The Report further illustrated that '... trade unions can expand their scope by organizing all workers, including the most vulnerable (such as young people, women, precarious workers, informal workers, migrants and workers in the gig economy), and by devising more effective and innovative ways of meeting their members' needs.'

'Trade unions have to ensure that they are relevant and attractive to workers in new forms of employment, and they should strive to facilitate inclusive collective bargaining. Young people are interested in the principles of trade unions and the topics that they work on, but not necessarily in their way of doing things. Trade unions can become more appealing to young workers, platform workers, women, precarious workers, migrant workers, workers with disabilities and informal workers.'

The Report further alluded that

'It is often difficult for trade unions to address the myriad challenges and opportunities that they face, given their limited resources in terms of time, personnel and funding. Several trade unions have taken up additional topics, such as skills development, entrepreneurial skills, and the provision of innovative and targeted services, as part of the revitalization agenda. The COVID-19 crisis prompted trade unions to accelerate their adoption of digital technologies that enable them to reach wider audiences – for example, by means of virtual training courses, webinars and meetings or through social media outlets. The General Secretary of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions, Omar Faruk Osman, pointed out that, in the wake of the pandemic, affiliated unions used digital technologies to organize young, informal and female workers, with a target of increasing their membership by 25 per cent.

However, digital technology also presents trade unions with a number of challenges. In particular, ICTs may not always be readily accessible to members and digital skills are not always well developed within trade unions. The potential benefits of a digital environment for advocacy are not fully understood, nor are the impacts that digital technologies may have in terms of facilitating the exploitation of workers. Trade unions must therefore be extremely careful to safeguard the Decent Work Agenda as they adopt such technologies. Trade unions should adopt new technologies to complement traditional methods of trade union organizing and learning. The travel restrictions and other preventive measures imposed by governments in response to the pandemic alerted trade unions to the importance of using

digital technologies to reach out to their members.

Such technologies enable unions to organize remotely and communicate with workers in workplaces or areas to which physical access is difficult. For instance, the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (CATUS) is using a freely accessible app to target young workers. The app includes an entertaining quiz that allows young workers to learn about labour law and other relevant legislation in Serbia, and it also provides access to material on trade unionism.¹⁰ Another example is COTU-Kenya, which has created digital platforms for the purpose of organizing workers in the gig economy, such as Uber drivers.

Through these platforms, workers are able to pay their union dues, together with other statutory contributions, using their mobile phones.¹¹ "We must be 'first movers' and embrace digital technology to be able to carry out our trade union activities, and we must accept that this new norm is here to stay. If we remain resistant to it, then a bleak future awaits us." – Francis Atwoli, Secretary General, COTU Kenya Online platforms, robotization and crowdwork have the potential to increase the likelihood of job destruction in some industries, of precarious work with no social protection, of labour market segmentation, of involuntary self-employment and lack of employer accountability. On the other hand, digitalization has created new ways for people to interact, mobilize and organize, and trade unions should seize these opportunities. "Digital technology has made it much easier to organize protests. It has also improved decision-making because one can easily consult with others without the need to hold a physical

meeting, as we used to do. At the click of a button, trade unions are able to widely share information and to run a campaign or mobilize workers for a certain cause.” – Alex Nkosi, ITUC-Africa.’

Revitalization is possible through advancing worker education!

In mitigating to address some of the challenges, the South African Institute for Worker Education, Development Institute for Training, Support and Education for Labour [DITSELA] has come up with an interventionist programme, premised on the Theme, ‘Reviving Worker Education through Trade Union Activism’. DITSELA Strategic Framework clearly outlines that organized worker formations need to reprioritize full implementation of worker education at all workplaces to provide more and new opportunities for workers who have lost their jobs.

‘Worker education encourages critical thinking within the labour force and conscientize them to become activists to defend jobs in general and thus we thought of a theme to revive working class consciousness in general and class consciousness in particular,’ said Ms. Khanyisile Khanyi, DITSELA Programme Manager.

‘The working class needs a unifying voice of decisive actions and solidarity to tackle challenges experienced during Covid-19 pandemic in which many companies were forced to close down because they were not rendering essential services. And many of the companies could not re-open thereafter because of loss of income, exacerbated by the perennial loadshedding from the electricity supply utility, Eskom.’

‘We need a collaborative approach with all federations nationally and other federations globally to mitigate against all these challenges faced by workers.’

‘Strengthening strong unions must entail providing worker education on various interventions such as Managing Trade unions post-Covid-19 pandemic period and invest in massive recruitment to organize the unorganized workers and unleash massive education interventions to address the socio-economic challenges faced by workers and their families. Trade Unions must develop specialized programmes to address the challenges faced by workers living with disabilities. Trade unions must create platforms for vulnerable workers to raise the issues they encounter in the informal economy related to municipal permits and/or any other restrictions which inhibit free marketing of their products to have something on the table for the family’.

The ILO World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023 recommends that ‘Trade unions have to ensure that they are relevant and attractive to workers in new forms of employment, and they

should strive to facilitate inclusive collective bargaining. Young people are interested in the principles of trade unions and the topics that they work on, but not necessarily in their way of doing things. Trade unions can become more appealing to young workers, platform workers, women, precarious workers, migrant workers, workers with disabilities and informal workers by focusing on those topics that matter to them. The adoption of digital technologies should be front and centre in trade unionism in Africa and the Gulf States. With improved access to ICT equipment and the internet, trade unions can conduct more online activities (such as recruitment, the dissemination of news and campaigns on specific topics) and achieve greater international solidarity.

Trade unions should tackle internal governance problems to strengthen transparency and accountability. By ensuring that all workers are represented in their decision-making bodies, trade unions can enhance the effectiveness and credibility of their work. Inclusive and effective social dialogue on topics that matter to workers is key to ensuring the relevance of trade unions today and tomorrow. Collective bargaining proved indispensable in the response to the COVID-19 crisis, but trade unions have to go beyond bread-and-butter issues and address concerns related to violence and harassment, the challenges of achieving a just transition and technological change.

Many good examples of trade union revitalization were discussed at the webinars, and unions can learn from these and even replicate them in other sectors and countries. These examples covered such aspects as organizing workers in the informal or platform economies, servicing migrant workers across borders, developing apps to facilitate online recruitment and legal assistance, collaboration between trade unions and other civil society organizations, and the establishment of young workers’ centres, to name but a few.

Trade unions in Africa and the Gulf States should regard the COVID-19 crisis as a wakeup call for them to redouble their efforts on revitalization – in particular, by assessing their capacity to deal with uncertainty and change. They can strengthen their strategic thinking and explore innovative approaches to the key challenges and opportunities of revitalization. It is up to trade unions to proactively address these challenges and seize the opportunities so as to ensure a relevant and representative union movement for the workers of tomorrow.’ ■



Ms. Khanyisile Khanyi, DITSELA Programme Manager preparing to deliver worker education in the provinces



DITSELA Workers’ initiated Programme at Free State in partnership with ETDP-Seta



‘Phambili Ngemfundo Yabasebenzi Phambili’, said Workers at the training sessions across the country

▶ ACTRAV Webinar Series on Trade Unions in Transition

Reviews:

ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) has organized a series of webinars for trade union leaders in different (sub) regions of the world to discuss key challenges and opportunities for trade unions in transition.

What are the good practices in trade union revitalization around the world?

In 2021, the International Labour Conference adopted the Global Call to Action for a Human Centred Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis That Is Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient (ILO 2021a). The Global Call builds on the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2019, which identified four main drivers of change in the world of work: technological innovations, demographic shifts, environmental and climate change, and globalization (ILO 2019a).

These forces of change are profoundly affecting labour markets, with major implications for the future of trade unions (Visser 2019). Against this backdrop, trade unions across the globe are seeking new ways to remain relevant to their members and society at large. There seems to be a consensus on the important role played, and to be played in the future, by trade unions in actively shaping the broader development agenda and in promoting and defending

workers' rights. However, trade unions must overcome various significant challenges if they are to continue to be relevant, effective and inclusive.

Accordingly, the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) has organized a series of webinars for trade union leaders in different (sub) regions of the world to discuss key challenges and opportunities for trade unions in transition.² Such virtual seminars were held from June to December 2021 for Southern Africa, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Western Africa and the Gulf States; they were hosted by the respective subregional confederations of trade unions: the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council, the East African Trade Union Confederation, the Horn of Africa Confederation of Trade Unions and the Organization of Trade Unions of West Africa. The webinar series has been structured around the following objectives:

- assessing key transitions and sustainability challenges faced by trade unions;
- exploring four possible scenarios for the future of trade unions;
- exchanging experience and best practices related to trade union

- revitalization;
- examining trade union responses during the COVID-19 crisis; and
- introducing the concepts of strategic thinking and foresight to support trade unions in dealing with uncertainty and anticipating change, and to enable transformative action.

The four possible scenarios for the future of trade unions that have informed the webinar series are as follows:

- marginalization – decreasing rates of unionization and ageing unions;
- dualization – where unions defend their current positions and cater to those members who are closest to them;
- replacement – where the functions of trade unions are taken over by entities such as nongovernmental organizations, social movements, governments, employers or other intermediary agencies; and
- d. revitalization – using innovative tactics and coalitions to make trade unions strong, relevant, democratic and representative actors that can organize and service the “new unstable workforce” in the global North and South (Visser 2019).

Most recently, the COVID-19 crisis has further aggravated existing challenges in areas such as trade union membership, organizing workers in the informal economy, and defending, protecting and advancing the interests of all workers (ILO 2021b). Workers' organizations need to take stock of the risks but also the opportunities brought about by this crisis and to strengthen their capacity to deal with future crises (ILO 2021c).

- See also the landing page of the ILO Future of Work initiative, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/future-of-work/lang--en/index.htm>.
- See the ILO web page “Trade Unions as Actors of Change”, <https://www.ilo.org/actrav/projects/trade-unions-in-transition/lang--en/index.htm>

Challenges facing Trade Unions

The webinar series highlighted a number of critical challenges faced by trade unions in Africa and the Gulf States, including increased labour market flexibility, the informalization of work, dwindling membership and pressures on financial sustainability.

Participants across regions raised concerns about increased flexibility in the hiring and firing of workers, caused, inter alia, by globalization and environmental and technological change.

These factors are pushing more workers into the informal economy, which is often characterized by significant decent work deficits. In such a context – where the traditional employer-worker relationship, the definition of work itself and workplaces are changing – trade union work is extremely difficult.

As a result, membership levels have been declining in many regions of the world, negatively affecting the financial sustainability of trade unions. The webinar participants concurred that the COVID-19 crisis had exposed the deep-seated inequalities and inefficiencies in the economic model pursued by governments around the world. For instance, the crisis caused a steep fall in economic output that translated into decreased employment and greater pressure on livelihoods. In this way, the crisis also contributed to the expansion of informal and vulnerable employment.

Participants further observed that the impact of the crisis on employment had been particularly severe in certain sectors, such as the tourism and travel industry.

The closure of international borders and subsequent grounding of flights resulted in retrenchments and loss of jobs among airline staff and other workers who earned a living in the transport and tourism industries. Moreover, following the lockdowns and other preventive measures imposed by governments in the wake of the pandemic, some trade unions suffered drastic losses to their membership.

It also became clear from the discussions at the webinars that the limited access of trade unions to members and workplaces during the crisis had been exacerbated – particularly in Africa – by the lack of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in terms of both infrastructure and the skills required to use digital tools.

As a result, the COVID-19 crisis indirectly led to widening restrictions of workers' and trade unions' rights, including freedom of association and social dialogue.

Additionally, collective bargaining came under pressure during the crisis, in a challenging economic context where companies had to downsize or close down altogether. For some trade unions, the main focus has been on safeguarding jobs (even where it meant accepting reductions in working time) so that their members could, to the extent possible, remain on salaried employment. Union leaders also highlighted the urgent need to prioritize negotiations with employers on reviewing existing collective

bargaining agreements in the light of the crisis (ILO 2021d).

Key issues for Trade Unions in Transition

Although the discussions during the webinars touched on a wide range of topics and varied across regions and subregions, the following common issues emerged: how the COVID-19 crisis had highlighted the need for trade union revitalization; organizing and servicing workers in the face of rising informality; internal governance challenges; promoting inclusive and effective social dialogue; digital unionism and the adoption of digital technologies; trade unions' capacity to navigate change and deal with uncertainty; learning from good practices in revitalization; and practical steps to move forward and pursue trade union renewal.

3.1. The need for trade union revitalization as highlighted by the COVID19 crisis

With regard to the main challenges that emerged during the COVID-19 crisis, the discussions at the webinars raised the following points:

X The world of work has been profoundly affected by the crisis. Tourism, road and maritime transport, aviation, construction, commerce and hospitality, entertainment and manufacturing are the hardest-hit sectors (ILO 2021b).

X Governments launched fiscal stimulus programmes of an unprecedented scale with a view to supporting income and jobs as well as preventing an outright collapse of the economy in the wake of the pandemic.

X The pandemic was not just a health crisis, but also drew attention more generally to economic, technological and environmental challenges. It has exposed and aggravated existing challenges for workers and workers' rights, particularly in relation to youth unemployment, inequality and rising informality.

X Health and frontline workers were the categories of workers most affected by the pandemic.

X Informal workers, the self-employed and casual workers were disproportionately impacted because of their inadequate protection, their lack of opportunities for income replacement and/or savings, the precariousness of their employment relationship and their exclusion from support measures (ILO 2021b).

X Trade unions were already under great pressure before the crisis owing to various factors, such as rapid technological change, globalization and climate change. Revitalization was therefore already on the agenda of many trade unions.

X The crisis has accentuated the urgent need for trade unions to intensify their efforts aimed at revitalization and transformation.

3.2. Organizing and servicing workers in the face of increasing informality

With regard to how trade unions organize workers and service their needs, the discussions at the webinars raised the following points:

X As the informal economy continues to expand further, increasing labour market flexibility is negatively affecting trade unions' capacity to organize.

X Women, young people, migrant workers, refugees and people with disabilities are the most vulnerable workers, mainly owing to the informal and precarious nature of the work that they perform, their poor working conditions, their exposure to violence and marginalization, and their lack of protection or support by public services.

X Since the world of work is changing, it is imperative for trade unions as well to change the way in which they operate, particularly how they organize workers and provide services – for instance, to workers in the informal economy (ILO 2019b).

X Unless trade unions are able to organize an increasingly unstable workforce, they will lose representativeness and, as a direct consequence, credibility and power.

X Trade unions should broaden the scope of their activities by seeking to recruit new members among vulnerable groups, such as informal workers, gig economy workers, young workers, migrant workers and workers with disabilities. X Trade unions should consider mapping the various categories of vulnerable workers and their respective needs in order to understand better how to effectively organize and provide tailored services to such members.

X Similarly, trade unions should develop and pursue innovative strategies to continue and broaden their representation of workers in general and to effectively service underrepresented workers in particular – for example, through the use of social media, online counselling and the provision of legal assistance.

3.3. Addressing internal governance challenges

As part of their revitalization agenda, trade unions should address a series of internal challenges, notably:

X strengthening internal governance and union democracy;

X enhancing the representation and participation of some categories of workers (for instance, migrants, young people and women);

X tackling deficits in their capacity (for example, with regard to the staffing of secretariats or technical and research capacity);

X strengthening union structures at the shop-floor level;

X increasing transparency and accountability;

X countering the general decline in trade union membership; X tackling the proliferation and fragmentation of trade unions;

X strengthening financial sustainability, not least by limiting trade unions' financial dependence on development partners. At the same time as addressing these governance issues, trade unions should renew their agendas and open up to experimentation, which includes exploring new strategies, emerging topics and opportunities for collaboration with other stakeholders.

3.4. Inclusive and effective social dialogue

With regard to the need for strengthened social dialogue and collective bargaining, the discussions at the webinars raised the following points:

X Effective social dialogue and cooperation between governments and employers' and workers' organizations proved indispensable when designing and implementing strategies and policies to address the negative impacts of the COVID19 crisis in an inclusive manner (ILO 2021b).

X Revitalization should be anchored in (a) inclusiveness (that is, defending all workers); and (b) effective social dialogue on the challenges and problems faced by workers during the crisis and the recovery phase.

X Trade unions must uphold social dialogue and collective bargaining as key mechanisms for enhancing working conditions and safeguarding workers' rights.

X Other aspects that trade unions need to consider incorporating into the agenda for social dialogue are: the structural transformation of economies; alternatives to a predominantly neoliberal paradigm of development; the impacts of free trade agreements on labour markets and workers' rights; the shaping of industrial policy; climate action; enhancing access to universal social protection; fostering digital skills; and extending collective bargaining to cover new and emerging forms of work.

X In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, trade unions should assess the protection clauses in existing collective bargaining agreements – for example, provisions on sick leave or occupational safety and health while working from home.

X Trade unions should call for COVID-19 to be classified as an occupational illness

3.5. Digital unionism and the adoption of digital technologies

With regard to the challenges and opportunities related to "digital unionism", the discussions at the webinars raised the following points:

X The COVID-19 crisis confronted trade unions with major challenges in the area of digital technology. These include: (a) the massive labour market upheaval caused by the shift to online work; and (b) limited access to digital technology, which is particularly relevant in Africa.

X On the other hand, the crisis served as a catalyst of digital unionism by intensifying the adoption of digital technologies by trade unions, including technologies used to organize and service their members.

X As part of digitalization, ways should

be explored to provide trade unions and workers with relevant ICT tools and infrastructure (for example, enhanced internet connectivity and access to networks, data and hardware).

X The crisis has also drawn attention to sensitive issues that were already on trade unions' agendas, such as data protection and rights, algorithmic management, telework and socio-psychological risks.

3.6. Navigating change and dealing with uncertainty

With regard to how trade unions deal with uncertainty and change, the discussions at the webinars raised the following points:

X An important dimension of trade union revitalization has to do with unions' capacity to deal with uncertainty, navigate change, experiment with innovation and explore possible futures.

X "Foresight" or "scenario thinking" can be useful tools for dealing with change, reflecting on an uncertain future and taking appropriate action. Many trade unions around the world are already

doing this in one way or another.

X Strategic thinking or foresight can be applied to various areas that are central to the revitalization agenda, including innovative organizing practices, coalitionbuilding, the pursuit of a just transition and technological change.

3.7. Learning from good practices in revitalization

Some good practices in trade union revitalization that were discussed during the webinar series are summarized in the table below:

Country / trade union	Good practices in trade union revitalization Practical examples
Argentina	In Argentina, the Platform Workers Association is organizing workers in the gig economy through a new trade union supported by the main union federations.
Australia	Trade unions in Australia have made good progress in organizing young workers. The Young Workers Centre is a onestop shop where such workers can learn about their rights at work and obtain personalized advice or legal assistance. Trade unions use virtual organizing, social media, podcasts and TikTok.
Bahrain	A trade union in Bahrain developed a mobile app to recruit unemployed young workers in the country, and established a nationwide alliance with various civil society organizations.
Benin	The main trade union organizations in Benin have adopted a joint declaration and charter aimed at strengthening common action, establishing a new union structure and improving decision-making, the recruitment of new members and financing.
Botswana	Two major federations in Botswana signed a memorandum of understanding to work together within the national forums for social dialogue.
Colombia	Trade unions in Colombia have been involved in alternative social dialogue forums (for example, at the municipal and departmental level) covering issues such as skills development, territorial planning and post-conflict situations.
Denmark	Trade unions in Denmark signed a collective bargaining agreement with a Danish-owned digital labour platform addressing matters such as the transition from freelancer to employee status, insurance coverage and dispute resolution.
Indonesia	Taxi drivers and various trade unions in Indonesia established an Online Transport Action Committee, which has engaged in dialogue with firms and the Government to better regulate the sector.
Jordan	Trade unions in Jordan are supporting migrant workers in obtaining work permits.
Kenya	A mobile phone app was developed by Kenya's Central Organization of Trade Unions to enable informal economy workers to access national health insurance.
Lithuania and Ukraine	In Lithuania and Ukraine, unions are collaborating across borders through joint campaigning and a bilateral cooperation agreement to enhance the recruitment and representation of Ukrainian truck drivers in unions in both countries.
Mauritius	There is a national platform for trade union federations in Mauritius that enables them to coordinate with one another in social dialogue forums.
Nigeria	The National Union of Textile, Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria has extended its organizing activities to selfemployed tailors, while the Nigeria Labour Congress is implementing a programme to organize platform workers.
Republic of Moldova	The main trade unions in the Republic of Moldova worked together over several years on the development of a new law on labour inspection. These efforts included coordinating with the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.
Russian Federation	Russian trade unions' engagement in national social dialogue led to the adoption of new legislation on teleworking, which was particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa)	ITUC-Africa supported its affiliates in assessing the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis in Africa, in gauging its impact on fundamental rights and freedoms of workers, and in strengthening the capacity of African trade unions for social dialogue to address the crisis.
Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)	In 2020, BWI affiliates in Africa signed tripartite agreements to prevent dismissals and protect workers' income (in full or in part) for periods ranging from two weeks to two months. BWI also supports the capacity-building of unions in relation to occupational safety and health in the telecommunications sector in Western Africa.
Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC)	In 2020–21, SATUCC used the subregional social dialogue platform of the Southern African Development Community to engage governments and employers in a discussion of social protection and the rights of migrant workers during the pandemic. SATUCC also supported its members through subregional research on the impact of the crisis on workers.
Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)	Interventions by the OATUU during the pandemic included the provision of online support, raising affiliates' awareness of COVID-19 and its impact, and the mobilization of technical and financial support for affiliates to respond to the crisis.
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)	The IUF recently established two trade unions to represent workers in the palm oil and flower sectors in Africa.

3.8. Moving forward with practical steps for revitalization

Participants in the webinar discussions identified the following practical steps that trade unions should consider so as to advance their revitalization agendas:

X develop a strategy for revitalization with clear guidelines, an implementation plan and time frames;

X explore innovative approaches, methods and tools for strategic planning, foresight and experimentation;

X devise new ways of organizing and servicing various categories of workers, taking into account their specific needs;

X reaffirm the centrality of inclusive and effective social dialogue by ensuring that the priorities of underrepresented groups of workers are reflected in trade union agendas and in social dialogue forums on current and emerging topics (such as socio-psychological risk, violence and harassment, digitalization and sustainable development);

X tackle internal democracy deficits by ensuring that young people, women, informal workers and other vulnerable groups are organized and represented in union structures (for example, by having young members participate in wage committees and giving them a seat at the executive table);

X fully embrace digital technology as a key vehicle for revitalization (for example, digital organizing in the platform economy);

X explore innovative collaborations with other unions, civil society organizations, governments and employers through coalitions, alliances and campaigns (for example, on trade and investment or the Sustainable Development Goals); and X strengthen trade union cooperation within and across regions and subregions.

Trade Union voices on revitalization

During the various webinars, testimonies were gathered from trade union leaders, academics and activists in different regions of the world.

4. Four key points emerged from these testimonies, namely:

- the urgent need to organize the informal economy in its broadest sense, encompassing rural economy workers, street vendors, migrant workers and platform workers;
- the central role of social dialogue in all its forms and at all levels (enterprise, sectoral, national, international and regional), particularly during the COVID-19 crisis, the recovery phase and beyond;
- the fundamental importance of collective bargaining as a tool for trade unions to defend workers' rights; and
- the considerable potential of "digital unionism". The testimonies highlighted several good practices, such as incorporating policies on digital technologies into collective bargaining agreements or enhancing trade union capacities to use digital technology to organize and service workers (ILO 2021c).

4.1. Urgent need to expand the scope of organizing

Trade unions are increasingly realizing the urgent need to speed up the process of transformation if they are to remain relevant. Rapid change in the world of work was accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis, as reflected, say, in the expanding use of robots and remote forms of work.

Accordingly, trade unions are obliged to rethink the ways in which they organize and mobilize workers. "Organizing has become a big challenge and we have to invent new modalities for this, moving away from the traditional arrangements where trade union officials would visit enterprises to recruit members. Now we have to do this virtually, but there are connectivity issues in remote areas." – Francis Atwoli, Secretary General, Central Organization of Trade Unions of Kenya (COTU-Kenya) Trade union revitalization calls for the stepping up of efforts to provide spaces in the representative structures of trade unions for, among others, young people and women, and to increase the recruitment of informal workers, who for a long time have been left out of unionization campaigns.

For instance, the IndustriALL Global Union has developed a programme for its affiliates in Africa to support the formalization of artisanal smallscale mining, while trade unions in Senegal and the Syrian Arab Republic have made good progress in organizing informal workers.⁵ Such efforts became even more relevant during the COVID-19 crisis, given its disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups of workers, such as those operating in the informal economy.

"Trade unions in the Arab States region need to take urgent action to make up for the losses suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic and quickly adapt to this new situation." – Prof. Jamal Rahmani According to the Executive Secretary of the East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC), Caroline Mugalla, her organization is promoting the exchange of good practices for organizing informal workers – in particular, through the creation of a network of informal economy organizers in Eastern Africa. Moreover, EATUC has developed a trade union manual on organizing the informal workforce based on participatory engagement with activists from various Eastern African countries. "In the Arab States region, there are over 15 million migrant workers, some of whom have stayed in their host countries for decades. This is another pool of potential new members for trade unions in the region." – Mustapha Tlili, Executive Secretary, Arab Trade Union Confederation

Some informal workers in Eastern Africa have been organized into cooperatives. For instance, a trade union for motorcycle taxi riders in Rwanda also operates as a cooperative that offers its members financial services, safety and health education, and representation in negotiations with the Government to secure better working conditions. In the United Republic of Tanzania, female informal workers who sell assorted crafts and handmade products have

been organized into groups through which they are able to effectively engage with local government authorities.

4.2. Social dialogue and collective bargaining during the COVID-19 crisis

Trade unions all over the world have stood on the front line of national and international efforts to deal with the unprecedented pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Social dialogue and, in particular, collective bargaining have played a crucial role in trade unions' negotiations with governments and employers' organizations to protect workers' rights during the crisis and beyond (ILO 2021b; ILO 2021d). "Trade unions can no longer simply see their mandate as being about solely organizing and representing workers on bread-and-butter issues. Gender, culture, ethnicity, migration, climate change, sustainable development and sexual violence against women are all extremely important topics that need to be included in social dialogue." – Caroline Mugalla, Executive Secretary, EATUC The need for social dialogue to be at the centre of recovery efforts was highlighted by the ILO constituents in the Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis That Is Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient (ILO 2021a), adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2021. However, social dialogue forums in many African countries remain weak and have proved ineffective when it comes to developing robust responses to the crisis.

"In some African countries, governments used the pandemic to suppress or undermine social dialogue. Policies to deal with its consequences were designed without the involvement of trade unions, whose members were among the hardest hit by the crisis." – Alex Nkosi, African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) The important question as to whether COVID-19 should be considered an occupational disease remains unresolved in various social dialogue platforms in many countries. Whereas workers tend to argue that it should, employers tend to disagree. As a result, insurers may be hesitant to provide insurance cover for COVID-19-related health problems. However, interesting good practices have emerged among some trade unions with regard to using social dialogue effectively during the COVID-19 crisis (ILO 2021b; ILO 2021d).

According to Tendai Makanza, a programme officer at IndustriALL, a mining sector union in Ghana developed, through social dialogue, occupational safety and health provisions and recovery plans for the mining sector. This union also set up an association for miners' wives and launched an outreach programme aimed at raising awareness of environmental and social challenges among communities in mining areas while developing collective sustainable actions to address them. The programme also served to identify the needs of miners' households during the pandemic, enabling the design of appropriate support measures. In Zimbabwe, IndustriALL affiliates in the

mining, energy, chemical, textile and clothing sectors established a joint occupational safety and health and collective bargaining forum to develop collective actions and strengthen solidarity in response to the major challenges faced by workers during the crisis. This forum has also been used to share resources for enhancing trade union interventions in the workplace, such as the provision of legal advice and assistance, joint industrial action and capacitybuilding for occupational safety and health.

4.3. Using digital technology to reach out to members

Trade unions should adopt new technologies to complement traditional methods of trade union organizing and learning. The travel restrictions and other preventive measures imposed by governments in response to the pandemic alerted trade unions to the importance of using digital technologies to reach out to their members.

Such technologies enable unions to organize remotely and communicate with workers in workplaces or areas to which physical access is difficult. For instance, the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (CATUS) is using a freely accessible app to target young workers. The app includes an entertaining quiz that allows young workers to learn about labour law and other relevant legislation in Serbia, and it also provides access to material on trade unionism.¹⁰ Another example is COTU-Kenya, which has created digital platforms for the purpose of organizing workers in the gig economy, such as Uber drivers.

Through these platforms, workers are able to pay their union dues, together with other statutory contributions, using their mobile phones.

¹¹ "We must be 'first movers' and embrace digital technology to be able to carry out our trade union activities, and we must accept that this new norm is here to stay. If we remain resistant to it, then a bleak future awaits us." – Francis Atwoli, Secretary General, COTU Kenya Online platforms, robotization and crowdwork have the potential to increase the likelihood of job destruction in some industries, of precarious work with no social protection, of labour market segmentation, of involuntary self-employment and lack of employer accountability.

On the other hand, digitalization has created new ways for people to interact, mobilize and organize, and trade unions should seize these opportunities. "Digital technology has made it much easier to organize protests. It has also improved decision-making because one can easily consult with others without the need to hold a physical meeting, as we used to do. At the click of a button, trade unions are able to widely share information and to run a campaign or mobilize workers for a certain cause." – Alex Nkosi, ITUC-Africa

The COVID-19 crisis prompted trade unions to accelerate their adoption of digital technologies that enable them to reach wider audiences – for example, by means of virtual training courses, webinars and meetings or through social

media outlets. The General Secretary of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions, Omar Faruk Osman, pointed out that, in the wake of the pandemic, affiliated unions used digital technologies to organize young, informal and female workers, with a target of increasing their membership by 25 per cent. However, digital technology also presents trade unions with a number of challenges. In particular, ICTs may not always be readily accessible to members and digital skills are not always well developed within trade unions. The potential benefits of a digital environment for advocacy are not fully understood, nor are the impacts that digital technologies may have in terms of facilitating the exploitation of workers. Trade unions must therefore be extremely careful to safeguard the Decent Work Agenda as they adopt such technologies.

4.4. Setting priorities amidst numerous challenges and opportunities

It is often difficult for trade unions to address the myriad challenges and opportunities that they face, given their limited resources in terms of time, personnel and funding. Several trade unions have taken up additional topics, such as skills development, entrepreneurial skills, and the provision of innovative and targeted services, as part of the revitalization agenda. In Uganda, trade unions in the chemical sector are helping women to develop their entrepreneurial skills so that they can diversify their sources of income.

These training activities are also used to discuss and develop support mechanisms for tackling genderbased violence and sexual harassment in the world of work. IndustriALL is assisting its affiliates in Africa (notably in Zambia) to procure ICT infrastructure and to develop their capacity through training courses that introduce them to new ways of organizing workers.

12 In South Africa, unions in the textile sector have established a health centre to provide medical support, including support on COVID-19-related issues, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable workers.

13 “Establishing comprehensive workplace wellness programmes does not feature in social dialogue in our region [sub-Saharan Africa]. Collective bargaining is usually focused on remuneration and working conditions.” – Tendai Makanza, IndustriALL Participants in the ACTRAV webinars also shared their experience in incorporating concerns related to home work into collective bargaining and social dialogue processes.¹⁴ According to Prof. Dung Pam Sha, some affiliates of the Nigeria Labour Congress have taken the following steps in recent years as part of their revitalization efforts: X The National Union of Textile, Garment and Tailoring

Workers of Nigeria has extended its organizing activities to self-employed tailors. X Telecommunications workers are being organized by the National Union of Postal and Telecommunication Employees. X Lottery workers are being organized by the National Union of Lottery Agents and Employees. X Some platform workers have been organized into a union yet to be officially named.

A number of global federations and African trade union confederations conducted rapid assessments to gauge the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on various sectors (see the box below). These assessments allowed trade unions to share experiences and good practices in responding to the crisis at the national and regional level. X Trade union studies of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on workers in Africa Rapid assessments were conducted by trade unions and trade union confederations as follows:

1. The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF), the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC), the East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC) and the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) conducted separate studies on the impact of the crisis on workers in their respective subregions.
2. The Building and Wood Workers’ International (BWI) and the Organization of Trade Unions of West Africa (OTUWA) conducted separate studies on the impact of the crisis on the informal economy in West Africa.
3. The Nigeria Labour Congress conducted a study on the implications of the pandemic and response measures, such as lockdowns, for gender-based violence.
4. Affiliates of the Nigeria Labour Congress jointly commissioned a study on the impact of the crisis on the automobile sector. Sources: IUF, SATUCC, EATUC, ITUC-Africa, BWI, OTUWA, Nigeria Labour Congress. In response to violations of workers’ rights in the construction sector in Eastern Africa, the Building and Wood Workers’ International and its affiliates there conducted a subregional campaign to organize workers in large infrastructural projects undertaken by multinational corporations and funded by international financial institutions. As a result of this campaign, many young workers and female workers in the construction sector

in Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania joined trade unions, with some of them assuming leadership positions.

15 Testimony by Dr Steve. Akoth, Associate Researcher at EATUC

Conclusions: Advancing Revitalization of Trade Unions

As part of ACTRAV’s work programme on trade unions in transition, a series of webinars were organized in Africa and the Gulf States to discuss key challenges and opportunities for trade union revitalization. The discussions were structured around several themes: the main transitions facing trade unions and related sustainability challenges; possible scenarios for the future of trade unions; positive experiences with trade union revitalization; trade union responses during the COVID-19 crisis; and how trade unions can navigate change. The critical challenges faced by trade unions in these regions include dealing with increased labour market flexibility, addressing the informalization of work, engaging in “digital unionism”, supporting effective and inclusive social dialogue, reversing negative trends in trade union membership, and ensuring financial sustainability.

Trade unions can expand their scope by organizing all workers, including the most vulnerable (such as young people, women, precarious workers, informal workers, migrants and workers in the gig economy), and by devising more effective and innovative ways of meeting their members’ needs. Trade unions have to ensure that they are relevant and attractive to workers in new forms of employment, and they should strive to facilitate inclusive collective bargaining. Young people are interested in the principles of trade unions and the topics that they work on, but not necessarily in their way of doing things. Trade unions can become more appealing to young workers, platform workers, women, precarious workers, migrant workers, workers with disabilities and informal workers by focusing on those topics that matter to them.

The adoption of digital technologies should be front and centre in trade unionism in Africa and the Gulf States. With improved access to ICT equipment and the internet, trade unions can conduct more online activities (such as recruitment, the dissemination of news and campaigns on specific topics) and achieve greater international solidarity. Trade unions should tackle internal governance problems to strengthen transparency and accountability.

By ensuring that all workers are represented in their decision-making bodies, trade unions can enhance the effectiveness and credibility of their work. Inclusive and effective social dialogue on topics that matter to

workers is key to ensuring the relevance of trade unions today and tomorrow. Collective bargaining proved indispensable in the response to the COVID-19 crisis, but trade unions have to go beyond bread-and-butter issues and address concerns related to violence and harassment, the challenges of achieving a just transition and technological change. Many good examples of trade union revitalization were discussed at the webinars, and unions can learn from these and even replicate them in other sectors and countries.

These examples covered such aspects as organizing workers in the informal or platform economies, servicing migrant workers across borders, developing apps to facilitate online recruitment and legal assistance, collaboration between trade unions and other civil society organizations, and the establishment of young workers’ centres, to name but a few. Trade unions in Africa and the Gulf States should regard the COVID-19 crisis as a wakeup call for them to redouble their efforts on revitalization – in particular, by assessing their capacity to deal with uncertainty and change. They can strengthen their strategic thinking and explore innovative approaches to the key challenges and opportunities of revitalization. It is up to trade unions to proactively address these challenges and seize the opportunities so as to ensure a relevant and representative union movement for the workers of tomorrow.

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Devastating earthquakes struck working class communities

TURKIYE AND SYRIA

Thousands of people were killed by the magnitude 7.8 and 7.6 quakes. Countless injured, millions homeless; in the freezing cold, snow and rain

Thousands of people in Türkiye and Syria have been reported dead, injured or stranded following February 6, 2023, 7.7 magnitude earthquake. International Labour Federations have released critical emergency supplies to help those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria and working closer with organized labour to assess the needs on the ground and secure additional resources as part of the ongoing emergency efforts.

UN aid convoy of trucks have been carrying food for more than 17,000 people impacted with families having lost their homes. Chilling winter days and nights have exacerbated the situation, with surviving families resorting to make fire to keep warm. Some of the affected areas are Armanaz, Jenderez, Melles, Aleppo, Ramadiyah, Armanaz, Adlib, Salqin, Azmarin and Jandires. Death toll is expected to rise as those trapped cannot hang in much longer.

Hundreds of dead people were removed from the rubble of their destroyed homes.

There is a great shortage of search capacities and equipment in some areas. Residents were criticizing what they call 'slow searches and rescue efforts.' 'Families were not prepared to leave without getting their relatives out from the rubbles, dead or alive.'

According to the **International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF]** "Thousands of children and families are at risk after two devastating earthquakes and dozens

of aftershocks. Around 13.5 million people in Türkiye live in areas impacted by this week's earthquakes. As UNICEF we are working with government partners to provide life-saving support for vulnerable children."

The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres said "We will launch a flash appeal for donors to those affected by the earthquake. Now is the hour to stand up for the people of Türkiye and Syria. The United Nations is racing to assist those in need following Monday's devastating earthquakes. Now is the time to explore all possible avenues to get aid and personnel into all affected areas. We must put people first. I am deeply saddened by the news of the devastating earthquakes and offer my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims."

SOLIDARITY MESSAGES FROM INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS

International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions said "Due to the magnitude of the damage and the great needs left by the devastating earthquake that struck our people in Syria, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions is launching an Arab and international campaign to collect in-kind and cash donations for the benefit of the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck northwestern Syria at dawn on Monday."

General Federation of Trade Unions

in the Syrian Arab Republic alluded that 'Our country, Syria, has been exposed on Monday, February 6th, 2023, to a devastating earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale, which had led to an initial death toll of thousands of martyrs, tens of thousands of wounded, the collapse of hundreds of residential buildings, other cracks, and severe damage to infrastructure, services, and vital facilities. Immediately, the Syrian state, led by President Bashar al-Assad, has mobilized the state's capabilities to face the effects of this earthquake and its repercussions, which are still continuing to the present time. We appeal to the United Nations, International Labor Organization and all labor organizations around the world to stand sincerely with this humanitarian catastrophe, which requires relentless pressure on all Western countries that impose the unjust economic blockade on Syrian people to lift this unjust siege that prevents the entry of heavy equipment, rescue equipment and hospital supplies that contribute in removing the rubble to save thousands of innocent people who are stuck under the rubble of buildings. We call on all the free people in this world to stand up for their humanity, to stand with the Syrian people with support and solidarity in these exceptional circumstances. We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all trade union organizations in the Arab world and the entire world that

have expressed their sincere solidarity with the suffering of our people, as a result of the devastating earthquake. We thank everyone who has expressed their willingness to provide assistance to the Syrian people in these difficult circumstances."

Education International [EI] General Secretary David Edwards said "As the death toll rises beyond 17,000 with tens of thousands injured after a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Turkey and Syria on 6 February, Education International has issued an urgent action appeal calling member organisations to show solidarity and financial support to education unions engaged in relief actions on the ground. Recent estimates from the World Health Organization state that up to 23 million people could be affected by the disaster. We are in contact with our members in Syria and Turkey who have reported terrible devastation, countless loss of lives, and serious damage to schools and neighbourhoods. We have shared our condolences and firm commitment. We assured them that Education International and its members are mobilizing to show solidarity now and as they rebuild their lives, schools, and communities."

The World Federations of Trade Unions [WFTU] General Secretary WFTU, Pambis Kyritsis has called on the immediate withdrawal of sanctions against Syria

Kyritsis said "On Monday morning 6th of February, a massive earthquake

reaching 7.8 degrees on the Richter scale struck the region of southern Turkey – north Syria, followed by tens of aftershocks and a second major earthquake reaching 7.5 degrees.

At the time the shocked humanity is still counting the victims in both Turkey and Syria, as the death toll reached 15 thousand, tens of thousands are injured, and hundreds of thousands are homeless seeking shelter in severe weather conditions. WFTU can't stay silent about the fact that imperialist forces have imposed sanctions on Syria. The sanctions on Syria have been affecting the Syrian people for years now, resulting in a lack of fuel, electricity, medical supplies, and industrial machines that are essential to every country and nation for their daily life. The Syrian people had already suffered enough from the war and they deserve a chance to live freely and with dignity. Today in light of this catastrophe, these sanctions must be lifted immediately, as they are affecting the search and rescue operation after the disastrous earthquake.

The sanctions against Syria are prohibiting heavy machinery and medical supplies even food supplies from entering Syria and now, more than ever, they are necessary for the survival of tens of thousands, and for rescue operations of people that are still stuck under the debris of their own homes.

The WFTU demands the immediate withdrawal of the imperialist sanctions against Syria, to put an end to the barbaric and inhumane policies of blockades and embargos. These policies are killing people that are stuck under the debris, killing the injured with a lack of medical supplies, leaving tens of thousands in streets to face harsh weather conditions, and leaving hundreds of thousands without any usable infrastructure. We stand beside the General Federation of Trade Unions of Syria and the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and we support their struggle for the release of affected people. We once again call the Trade

Unions and the workers all over the globe to express their practical solidarity and practical support through the launched campaigns to make less painful this huge disaster."

Meanwhile, with 26 million people affected by the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, the World Health Organization [WHO] has launched a flash appeal for USD \$42 million for the immediate response in both countries. The United Nations has announced that as many as 5.3 million people in Syria may have been left homeless due to earthquakes.

According to the independent Risk Catastrophe firm in Germany and Australia '6,000 Engineers are doing the #earthquake building damage assessment in Turkey as we speak. They have evaluated 1,000,000 housing units inside of just a few days in the damaged area. An amazing effort using drone data and ground checks and their address-based register in Turkey.'

'We are still tracking at around

estimation model still has a slightly more optimistic median = 52,355 (23k-106k).'

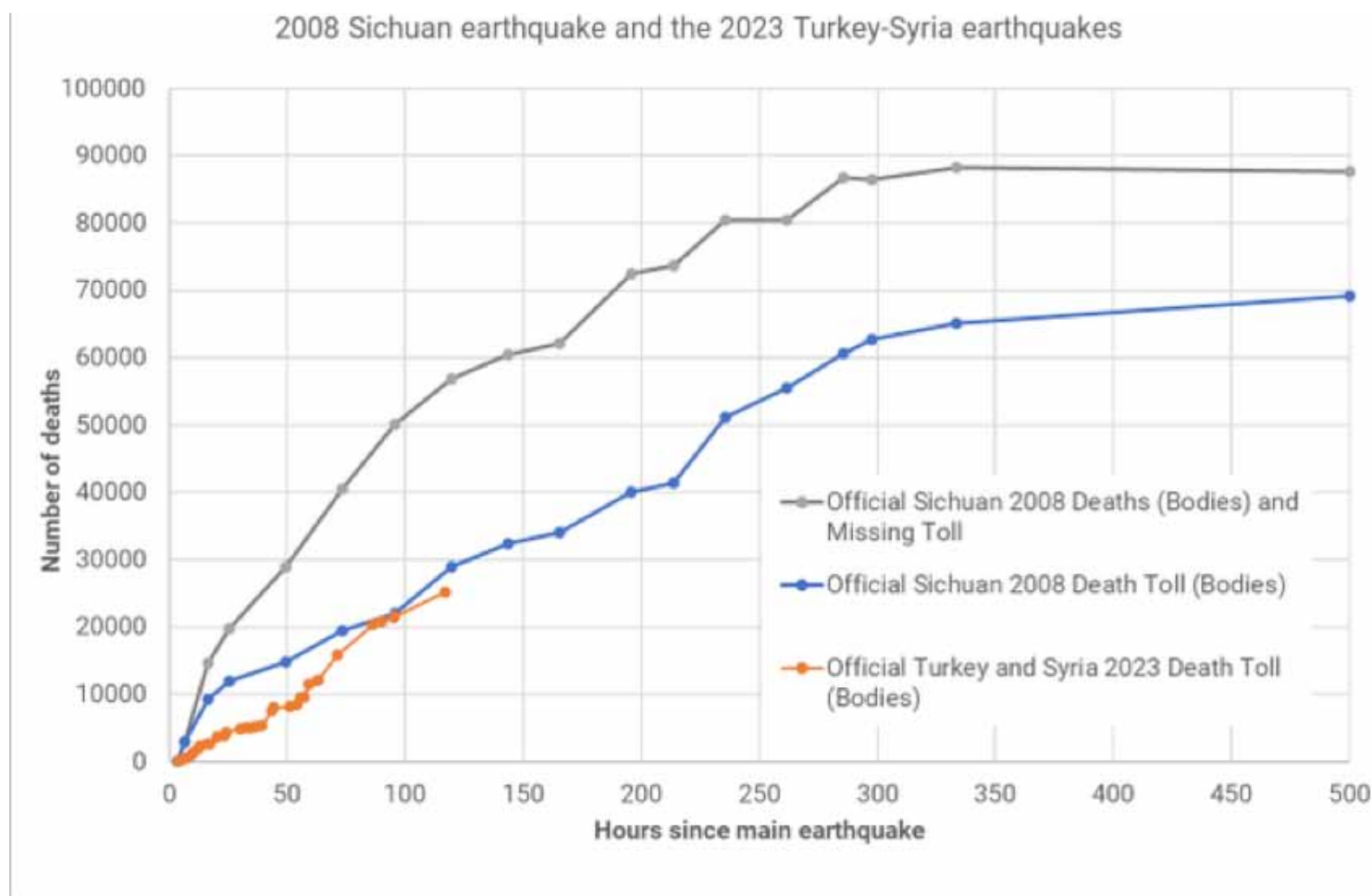
South Africa has sent rescue teams to Türkiye and Syria to alleviate the hardships suffered by rescuers to save lives and bring normalcy to the two countries through humanitarian aid.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) said 'The Party sends its message of heartfelt condolences to the families of all those who perished and wishes speedy recovery for those injured. The SACP, further, welcomes the selfless rescue and aid efforts that have come from across the world, including the efforts of rescue and health workers from both affected countries. With the two countries facing terrible cold weather conditions, many people are still trapped under the rubble, exposed to the elements. More solidarity is urgently necessary to ensure that all those who remain buried under the rubble are rescued

helping the people, the majority of whom are working-class and poor, without any conditionalities and attempts at usurping their national independence and capturing their domestic policy spaces. The people of Syria and Turkey must not be forced to give up their right to self-determination in exchange for the much-needed aid. This is a ploy often used by imperialist forces against other nations, especially when they are facing difficult situations.

The SACP will oppose any such move whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head. The SACP calls upon the working-class across the world to continue to support the people of Syria and Turkey. Progressive forces in South Africa must also band together and send practical solidarity to the affected people, particularly the working-class and poor who need it the most.'

Condolences to all those who perished under the debris and speedy recovery to all affected by the collapse



the same level as Sichuan for the #TurkeySyriaEarthquake death toll, meaning that unfortunately 75-90,000 deaths are likely from this event. Our earthquake loss

and urgently receive medical care. It is important that any form of assistance from other countries and international organisations must be focused on

of buildings.



'EMPLOYMENT OF MEDICAL DOCTORS is non-negotiable,' declares SAMATU

The South African Medical Association Trade Union [SAMATU] led a massive National Day of Action in four provinces on the 26th January 2023 demanding employment of medical doctors in Healthcare institutions across the country. The National Day of Action came after numerous engagements with the National Health Department did not come with tangible outcomes.

SAMATU argued that the employer was abdication its responsibilities of provision of essential health services by improving the quality of life of all citizens who continue to suffer due to inadequate personnel. According to the union, 'the National Department had committed to find employment for the

unemployed doctors.' Addressing the march in Tshwane, SAMATU General Secretary, Dr. Cedric Sihlangu said, 'The State continues to pay huge sums of money due to litigations as a result of medical malpractice caused by overloaded medical personnel and consequential human errors. Majority of doctors are suffering from burnout as a result of workload and thus affecting the quality of life of citizens in general and patients in particular.'

'SAMATU has not received a positive response from the authorities and thus workers decided to lead a National Day of Action to raise issues of mental health, burnout, frustration and depression as a result of being understaffed in health institutions.'

'SAMATU demands that all duly qualified and registered medical practitioners currently unemployed in South Africa must be employed within two weeks, that all vacant registrar posts be funded within a period of three months and that South Africans should be prioritized first, that all contracts of employment offered to doctors be permanent and that the second phase of Occupational Specific Dispensation [OSD] of doctors be inclusive of overtime worked'. *'Mismanagement of public funds in the National Department is worsening the situation.'*

COSATU President, Zingiswa Losi supporting the march at the offices of National Health Department said 'we are gathered here to pledge our solidarity

with SAMATU and all healthcare workers in South Africa and raise our voices for government to improve their working conditions and also employ more staff to render quality public services.' 'We urge the Minister of Health to respond positively to the demands of healthcare workers', concluded Losi.

The Minister of Health, Dr. Joe Phaahla came over to receive the memorandum of demands and promised 'to address the issues contained in the memorandum and further committed to request funding from the National Treasury to address the backlogs in the department.'

SAMATU acknowledged all workers, trade unions and stakeholders who participated in the National Day of Action marches across the country! ■



SAMWU workers on strike

SAMWU leading struggles against non-payment of third parties by municipalities

The South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) has in the recent years launched mass campaigns against municipalities failing to honour their obligations to employees by paying their salaries on time. The Emfuleni Local Municipality became of the defaulting employer to pay workers their monthly salaries on time.

SAMWU Gauteng Provincial Secretary, Mpho Tladinyane elaborated that 'the Emfuleni Local Municipality has failed to consistently pay workers in time and the concern workers are holding is about the general collapse of service delivery within the municipality.' Workers led a successful march on the 31st January 2023 'to raise their voice on non-payment of third parties such as pension and medical aids which are months in arrears.'

Tladinyane said 'Workers nearly faced a black Christmas as their salaries were only paid on the eve of Christmas. Furthermore, workers

are concerned about the continuous attachment of the municipality's bank account by Eskom and other service providers, outsourcing of municipal services, the rampant fraud and corruption within the municipality and the high vacancy rate.'

'We call on the Emfuleni Local municipality to address the concerns of workers with immediate effect', concluded Tladinyane during the handing of the memorandum of demands. Meanwhile, The South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) in the Petrus Mashishi Region (Johannesburg) has been concerned with the political developments at the City of Johannesburg.

SAMWU Petrus Mashishi Regional Secretary, Thobani Nkosi said 'We have taken note of the developments last week at an ordinary Council meeting which ousted the anti-worker and anti-black Cllr Mpho Phalatse as Mayor of the country's largest economic hub. We welcome the decision by parties in

the Council to remove her as mayor. Cllr Phalatse has done nothing but bring pain, suffering and prejudice against workers in the City.

Notably, Cllr Phalatse was the mastermind of denying residents, particularly those in predominantly black areas, services. We, therefore, have once more welcome this development and believe that it will bring a sigh of relief to workers and a breath of fresh air to residents of the City. We equally note that the Council further voted in Cllr Thapelo Amad as the new mayor of the City.

We congratulate Cllr Amad on his newly found responsibilities and trust that he will be nothing similar to his predecessor. In welcoming Cllr Amad, we want to send a strong message to him and his executive that as SAMWU we will not allow workers in the City to once again be treated in the manner which they were under Cllr Phalatse.'

NUM 40TH Anniversary

celebrations at Peter Mokaba Stadium



Workers enjoying the **National Union of Mineworkers 40th Anniversary** celebrations

The National Union of Mineworkers celebrated its 40th Anniversary at the old Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane, Limpopo on the 3rd December 2022. And the celebrations were massively attended by members, with a splendid performance by national artists such as the African Queen, Makhadzi and King Monada.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) congratulated its affiliated union, the National Union of Mineworkers on reaching an impressive milestone of 40 years of leading workers struggles. Solly Phetoe, COSATU newly elected General Secretary said 'The NUM is a pioneering union that was a founder affiliate of COSATU. It was also at the forefront of shaking the foundations of the Apartheid regime after waging a miner's strike in 1987 when the country was experiencing a state security onslaught. The 1987 three-week strike saw about 300 000 workers coming out on strike. This was significant because the

Apartheid economy was also struggling under the sanctions that were imposed on the country. The union was able to link its shopfloor issues with societal issues and that has been the legacy of NUM before after the 1994 democratic breakthrough.'

Phetoe reiterated that 'The NUM is one of the unions that form the backbone of our federation. It has produced quality leaders at all levels and some of them have gone to serve the Alliance and the country in different capacities. The union has been exemplary in waging strikes and negotiating better wages and conditions for workers in the mining, construction, energy, and metal sectors.

The NUM's effort of self-correction and renewal is inspiring and provides a template for other unions and alliance formations, on what it means to practice what you preach. The leadership on the NUM deserve credit for building a vibrant democratic union that has the confidence of workers.

COSATU will continue to walk side by side with NUM as we wage battle on behalf of its members and the working class.' COSATU affiliated trade unions attended celebrations at the stadium to wish the NUM more successful milestones.

Zola Saphetha, General Secretary of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] said 'the National union takes its opportunity to congratulate our sister union, the National Union of Mineworkers [NUM] on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. The NUM was formed on the 4th December 1982 in Klerksdorp, North West Province. Indeed, the NUM since its formation has been a shield and spear of mineworkers, workers in general and the broader working-class.

The NUM has an impeccable track record of waging a relentless struggle for mineworkers in order to improve their wages and working conditions whilst improving their economic and social welfare. In the 40 years

of its existence, NUM has been a fighting and campaigning union that places the interests of workers at the centre against the super exploitative mining, construction and energy conglomerates, which have subjected workers to unbearable and inhumane working conditions and poverty wages all in the name of profit maximisation. NUM has been instrumental in waging campaigns in mining, construction and energy industry for the benefit of workers.

These include amongst others: better wages, fighting retrenchments and privatisation, defending collective bargaining, health and safety in the workplace, retirement funds benefits, and educational bursaries through the JB Marks Education Trust. As NEHAWU, we congratulate NUM on this historic milestone of 40 Years being a shield and spear of mineworkers and working-class in general.'

Long Live NUM Long Live!

SATAWU members demand **BETTER WAGES** in the passenger sector



The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union in the passenger sector has commenced their negotiations with the employer. The first round of passenger wage negotiations started from the 24th-27th of January 2023.

Jack Mazibuko, SATAWU General Secretary said 'The passenger sector is one of the biggest sectors in the country as millions of commuters rely on it traveling to and from their different destinations daily and it plays a huge role in the country's economy that is not doing so well. The union is of the view that the employer must come with a better and a meaningful offer as the cost of living is too high in this country, also considering the fact that our members and workers are the ones working very hard and making billions of rands to these companies.'

SATAWU tabled the following demands to the employer for the first year [2023-

2024]:

- 15% increment across the board and all allowances
- 75% to be paid by the employer and 25% to be paid by the employee on primary health care
- Family responsibility leave to cover an employee when the spouse is sick

2nd Year, 1st April 2024-31st March 2025

- 15% increment across the board
- Bi-articulated bus allowance [R1000 per month]
- Train bus allowance [R800 per month]
- Annual bonus
- Night shift allowance
- Pay all drivers per hour spent on the bus

The employer offered the following;

- 3.5% increment across the board, including all allowances for 3 years
- 3 Year Agreement

- Nothing offered on primary health care

Mazibuko alluded that 'The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union wishes to reassure its members and workers that it will continue engaging the employer, however the organization will not accept anything far from the worker's demands. The 3.5% offered by the employer is in fact an insult to the poor and the working class. SATAWU is committed in protecting its members and workers, the organization is equally committed in fighting against inequality, poverty, exploitation and abuse in workplaces.

It is for that reason that the union does not even consider what is tabled by the employer. We are more than willing to sit down and talk with the employer, and we are hopeful that in the 2nd round the employer will table a better offer. We will keep on updating workers when as negotiations continue to take place.'

Meanwhile, SATAWU was shocked by a decision taken by Mthonjaneni Local Municipality to ban trucks on the R66 road in Melmoth, KwaZulu-Natal without consulting all relevant stakeholders.

'SATAWU represents the majority of the employees in the road freight sector and found this distasteful. The union has called on all truck companies, relevant stakeholders, motorists and workers to come together to find ways to get to the bottom of these unnecessary truck accidents and possible ways to deal with them. Banning trucks on the R66 road will inconvenience the workers and the economy of the country.'

'The Mayor of the Municipality must be engaged to consider the decision and we urge our members to remain calm as the union is engaging with the municipal management.'



SACCAWU led strike at Makro stores for decent wages

SACCAWU intensifies its substantive demands at Makro stores

The South African Catering and Commercial Workers Union [SACCAWU] intensified its campaign for a Living Wage at Makro in 2023 by engaging in nationwide industrial action. SACCAWU were concerned with 'the collapse of negotiations with the company.'

SACCAWU Deputy General Secretary, Mduduzi Mbongwe alluded that 'It is the intransigence of the Makro bosses which resulted in a wage dispute. Makro employers have expressed unwillingness to accept reasonable demands from the union during wage negotiations.'

SACCAWU members are demand the following;

- An across the board increase of R900.00 or 12% whichever is the greater
- Minimum Wage R8000.00

- An improvement of Commission from 10% on margin to 20% margin for Salesperson
- Increase in Category 3 working hours from 160 to 195 per month
- 13th Cheque to be made separate from the December salary
- Uniform Allowance of R100.00
- Moratorium on Retrenchments for the duration of the agreement

COSATU affiliated trade unions in solidarity with SACCAWU members 'have condemned the intimidation of the Shop Steward and attempts to divide workers by the Makro bosses.'

COSATU Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary, Mkhawuleli Maleki, said 'the suspension of workers by the employers have made workers to be more determined to fight until they achieve their demands. COSATU supports the unity of the workers as they pursue the agenda of

improving their wages and conditions of employment. The Walmart anti-union philosophy must be resisted at all costs in defense of collective bargaining.' The federation said 'Walmart should stop playing dirty tricks but focus on working with the union to find an amicable solution to the current impasse.

The substantive demands are reasonable in line with the escalating cost of living. This company like all others has benefitted from tax cuts and other incentives that have been offered by government. The Federation calls on South Africans to support the striking Makro workers by boycotting the company over the festive season. We also encourage other workers to show solidarity to these striking workers by joining their planned activities. If we do not support each other on the picket line, we will meet each other on the unemployment line.'

Communication Workers Union

forges ahead with national industrial action at SAPO



Let us salute public service unions for starting the mobilisation process against wage stagnation. We also salute SATAWU, NUM, SACCAWU, CWU and all other unions who have taken to the streets to protect collective bargaining and defend workers!

the Communication Workers Union (CWU) led a shut down in November 2022 to raise issues at the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, National Treasury, at the Post Offices, at Parliament in the Western Cape and the Union Buildings in Tshwane.

The union demanded a 15% salary increase across the board and other statutory benefits that have never been improved for years from the employer.

CWU served the South African Post Office with the forty-eight notice of its intention to embark on an industrial action in terms of Section 64(1)9(b) of the Labour Relations Act.

This came because of workers at Post Office, particularly those belonging to MEDIPOS medical aid scheme could not access their medical aid services because of no payments by the State

Owned Enterprises [SOEs. In the process, workers who live with chronic diseases and depend on medication for their health sustenance were left stranded.

Aubrey Tshabalala, CWU General Secretary said 'The union obtained a certificate of none resolution which followed after the deadlock on salary negotiations. It has now been more than 2 years that SAPO workers have not received any increase and to top it off, they are still owed the 2021/22 back pay. The short pay of the pension fund has worsened and impacted negatively on workers' future savings.'

Tshabalala emphasized that, 'the state of the SOE's infrastructure is decaying and working conditions are unbearable. The State has been actively involved in bottle necking the business of Post Office through the years by cutting its subsidy yet

regulating the entity on pricing. The separation of the Post Bank and Post Office proves to be the worst decision taken yet the Minister of Finance sees no reason to bailout SAPO.'

'CWU believes that the shareholder (the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies) has neglected its significant role at the SOE and allowed things to deteriorate. The union is outraged at the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies' Minister Ntshavheni's style of leadership which is plunging the entire sector into a crisis.

The Minister is detached from reality and not regarding workers as key components of the sector by sidelining labour in all strategic engagements. This led to a number of disastrous actions that some are impossible to implement such as her proposal of 10G

free data for each and every household, to digital migration (without proper consultation with key stakeholders), a board-less SABC, a board-less SAPO, the Spectrum auctioning and many other key decisions taken under her leadership.

The union will also take an aim at the Treasury calling for the bailout, the subsidy for the Post Office and that the state must use SAPO as their primary service provider. At the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, CWU calls for an action being taken on the 0 – 1kg exclusive legislation in favour of SAPO, the appointment of the new board and accountability from SAPO executive management', concluded Tshabalala.



The Public Transport Crisis in South Africa: **THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FOUR REVOLUTIONS** by Mondli Hlatshwayo

Overloaded Metrorail train in South Africa as a result of an affordable public transportation system

Despite the ongoing academic and policy debates on the urgent need for South Africa to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the reality on the ground is that the transport infrastructure and the public transport system are nowhere near the conditions forecast as required for the 4IR.

The notion of the 4IR as a framework for understanding technological surges and development has been questioned by some leading scholars of innovation and development. The destruction of the transport infrastructure in conjunction with the electricity crisis that negatively affects the working of traffic lights, the flow of traffic, and the running of electric trains makes a mockery of the call of the state and State President, Cyril Ramaphosa, for economic growth and investments in the country.

The First Industrial Revolution (1IR), Transport and Coal

The 1IR, which roughly began in 1769 and ended in 1870, was driven by coal and steam engines, the textile industries, and iron. Later, James Watt designed a steam engine that was energy efficient and widely used by British industries from 1776. The cities of Manchester and Liverpool in England of the 1IR benefitted from the coal-powered engine when the steam engine was used as a mode of transport to move goods and people

between the two cities.

The very first public steam railway system was between Britain's Stockton and Darlington in 1825. Steam power of the 1IR enabled the expansion of transportation and the development of rail, sea, and road transportation of goods and people.

The discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa in 1867 and 1886, respectively, accelerated industrialisation under British colonial rule. Machinery, tools, and equipment used in the 1IR of Britain were instrumental in the mining, manufacturing, and transportation sectors of the economy.

As part of South Africa's 1IR, the Point to Durban – the steam train public railway line – was launched in 1860. This was a time lag of 35 years, if we consider that the first steam railway line in Britain was completed in 1825.

The 2IR and Transport

Largely led by national corporations of the Global North, such as Germany's Siemens and Bayer, and the USA's Edison Electric Illuminating Company of New York, the 2IR began after the 1870s. In essence, this revolution was comprised of electrification, chemicals, petrol, diesel, electric trains, diesel trains, and the subsequent rising output of petrol and diesel vehicles. In the 1890s, Rudolf Diesel invented

an engine that was named after him, paving the way for the elimination of steam-driven engines in the railways. By the 1930s, the latter replaced steam trains in Europe and in the USA on a massive scale. Economically, the diesel engines were efficient.

The first electric train moved between Ladysmith and Chieveley in what is now known as KwaZulu-Natal, facilitating the massive expansion of the railway networks connecting various economic nodes of southern Africa. Subsequently, diesel-electric driven trains were introduced in South Africa in 1939 and transported goods and people.

Diesel-driven buses became a common mode of transport in South Africa from the 1940s. The first political activity of the former President Nelson Mandela was the Alexandra mass march against bus fare increase and the bus boycott of 1943. Fobosi (2021) reports that in the 1930s, Natalspruit, on the East Rand, had Valiants, Chevrolets, and other sedan vehicles with permits allowing them to ferry a limited number of black passengers from the black townships to town.

The Third Industrial Revolution (3IR) and its Implications for Transport

Beginning in 1969, the 3IR was engineered by the increased usage of electronics, information and

communication technologies (ICTs), and computers.

In 1969, the US Department of Defence developed systems that are used for Internet communication today. Facebook was launched in 2004, marking the beginning of the social media era (Metz, 2021). The 3IR led to the use of electronics and computer systems in cars and buses.

For taxis, there were attempts to introduce 3IR technologies, such as smart card systems, so that cash could be centrally collected in some taxi ranks in Gauteng.

However, this system collapsed because taxi drivers did not have cash at hand to cover their daily expenses. Also, it compelled them to declare their exact earnings to the taxi owners.

Measures to reform and modernise the taxi industry have failed. For example, in 2006, a taxi recapitalisation programme was introduced by the state to ensure that modernised and safer taxis were on the roads to minimise road carnage.

The technology is very old and tends to be dysfunctional; vandalism, theft, corruption, lack of investments, and mismanagement within the transport system hinder the introduction of key elements of the 3IR that would have improved the conditions of transport users.

The 4IR and Transport

The 4IR commenced in 2008, and relies on artificial intelligence, the internet of things, sophisticated robots, 3-dimensional (3-D) printing, block chain bullet trains, and cloud technology. All these technologies have revolutionised production in profound ways.

The modes of transport for this revolution are bullet trains, self-driving trucks, and cars travelling faster than the speed of aeroplanes.

Inspired by the 4IR, during his State of the Nation (SONA) address in 2019, President Ramaphosa exclaimed: 'We should imagine a country where a bullet train passes through Johannesburg as it travels to Musina and it stops in Buffalo City on the way from eThekweni to here in Cape Town.'

However, there is a huge disjuncture between what Ramaphosa said about bullet trains as one of the key modes of transport and the actual reality of public transport in South Africa (BBC, 2019). Below, I demonstrate this point further.

The Gautrain, a train system operating in the north of Gauteng, was launched in 2010, just before South Africa's hosting of the FIFA World Cup. The highest speed of the train is 180 km per hour – making it to be the slowest train when compared to the fastest trains in the world.

The table above shows that in 2021, Japan had a bullet train with a speed of 602 km/h. However, Japan faces tough competition from China, which has the largest speed train network in the world (Wallach, 2021). A method that enables trains to run on the rails without touching the steel of the track but supported and controlled by the magnetic field is called the magnetic levitation (maglev) whose origins date back to the early 1900s.

Just before the World Cup in 2010, the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system was introduced between Soweto and Johannesburg in 2007. Some bus lines were added later, and there is a plan to expand the service to other black townships.

Also, President Ramaphosa understands the transport crisis or the failed transport revolution, because in 2019, during his participation in the electoral campaign of the African National Congress (ANC), he was stuck in a train for three hours on his way to Bosman train station in Tshwane.

The taxis are the largest mode of transport used by 10,7 million people; this is followed by 6,3 million people who used cars or trucks as drivers. Trains were not a popular mode of transport, except in the Western Cape and Gauteng where 1,6% and 1,5% of household members use this mode of transport, respectively.

While passengers in the Global North, some parts of Asia, and other parts of the world are accessing public transport that is relatively reliable and affordable and that could be regarded as part of the 4IR, public transport in South Africa remains a curse that has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

About 30,000 workers in South Africa are involved in various forms of e-hailing platform work (IOL, 2021).

Relying on smartphones regulated by algorithms and GPS, which is built upon the sophisticated work of Albert Einstein, platform workers are able to process and deliver food orders and other goods to customers who would normally have to drive and collect these items themselves.

Numerous countries, including Japan, China, Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong, and many others are enjoying sophisticated public transport systems that enable workers, students, the general public, and tourists to freely move around the cities and towns (Pallavi, 2019). These countries have what can be regarded as 4IR transport systems with functional bullet trains and other complex transport systems, while South Africa faces its own 'Dark Age' with no end in sight.

To sum up the points made in this presentation, public transport and its current crisis has entrenched racial and class inequity in South Africa because the black population in the townships and rural areas do not have access to quality public transport – even after 28 years of democracy.

Vandalism, theft of transport infrastructure, and the lack of adequate investment in public transport are most likely to

entrench inequality with regard to access to transport.

Way forward

It appears as if attempts to reform transport for the better require organising civil society structures, such as #UniteBehind, around concrete demands that include additional investment in safe public transport and transport infrastructure.

In the context of decay, potholes, vandalism, and cable theft, localised community organising and vigilance is the only possible solution that can help improve public transport in South Africa.

Commuter associations are another possible organisational response that can help commuters negotiate fares with the train, bus, and taxi authorities.

Taxi violence and general lawlessness associated with the taxi industry require a state that can use its powers to protect commuters, especially women and children using this mode of transport.

By Mondli Hlatshwayo, from the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation University of Johannesburg, a presentation done at DITSELA Siyakhuluma Seminar on the 28 October 2022 at Johannesburg

Table 1: World's Fastest Trains

World's Fastest Trains	Country	Speed record
L0 Series Maglev	Japan	374 mph (602 km/h)
CRRC Qingdao Sifang 2021 Maglev*	China	373 mph (600 km/h)
TGV POS	France	357 mph (575 km/h)
CRH380A Hexie	China	302 mph (486 km/h)
Shanghai Maglev	China	268 mph (431 km/h)
HEMU-430X	South Korea	262 mph (422 km/h)
Fuxing Hao CR400AF	China	260 mph (418 km/h)
Frecciarossa 1000	Italy	245 mph (394 km/h)

Source : Wallach, 2021



‘MYRTLE WITBOOI

is a liberation
struggle stalwart
and Champion of
the working-class’,

declares SACP

The South African Communist Party (SACP) conveyed their message of condolences on the passing on of Comrade Myrtle Witbooi.

Solly Mapaila, SACP General Secretary said ‘the SACP dips its red flag and conveys its deepest condolences to the family of liberation struggle stalwart and champion of the working-class, Myrtle Witbooi (31 August 1947 – 16 January 2023). May her children Jacqui, Linda, and Peter, as well as her three grandchildren, be comforted by her sterling work in fighting for the rights of the working-class in South Africa and the world.’

Mapaila alluded that ‘The SACP also sends its condolences to the liberation movement and the entire working-class, both in South Africa and beyond, in particular domestic workers, a sector to which she devoted her life to uplift.’

‘Becoming a domestic worker from the age of 17, Myrtle Witbooi spent the largest part of her life advocating

for the rights of the working-class, domestic workers in particular. Her involvement in struggles of domestic workers led her to comprehend the interconnectedness of the working-class struggle and the struggle against apartheid rule. Thus, with class, race and gender oppression deepening during the apartheid period, she fully committed herself to fight against the apartheid system, joining the African National Congress in the national liberation struggle.

In 1986, Witbooi helped to co-found the South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU). Constituted by over 40,000 women workers, SADWU later affiliated with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), breathing new life not only to the struggle against apartheid but also to the working-class struggle in general.

Her activism did not end with the dismantling of the apartheid system, however, since capitalist production relations continued, with domestic workers, the vast majority of whom were, and remain, women,

being among the worst affected by inequality. Her devotion to struggle led to the legal recognition and protection of domestic workers’ rights. Over 100,000 women gained maternity rights as well as access to unemployment insurance. In the year 2000, Myrtle Witbooi helped to form the South African Domestic and Allied Workers’ Union (SADSAWU), where she became the union’s General Secretary. SADSAWU’s participation in international conferences led to the declaration of domestic work as decent work in 2006 and helped to establish a global standard designed to extend labour protections for domestic workers.

The union’s work also led to the adoption of Convention 189 at the 100th Labour Conference of the International Labour Organisation in 2011. Witbooi’s dedication to domestic workers’ struggles led to her election as the President of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF).

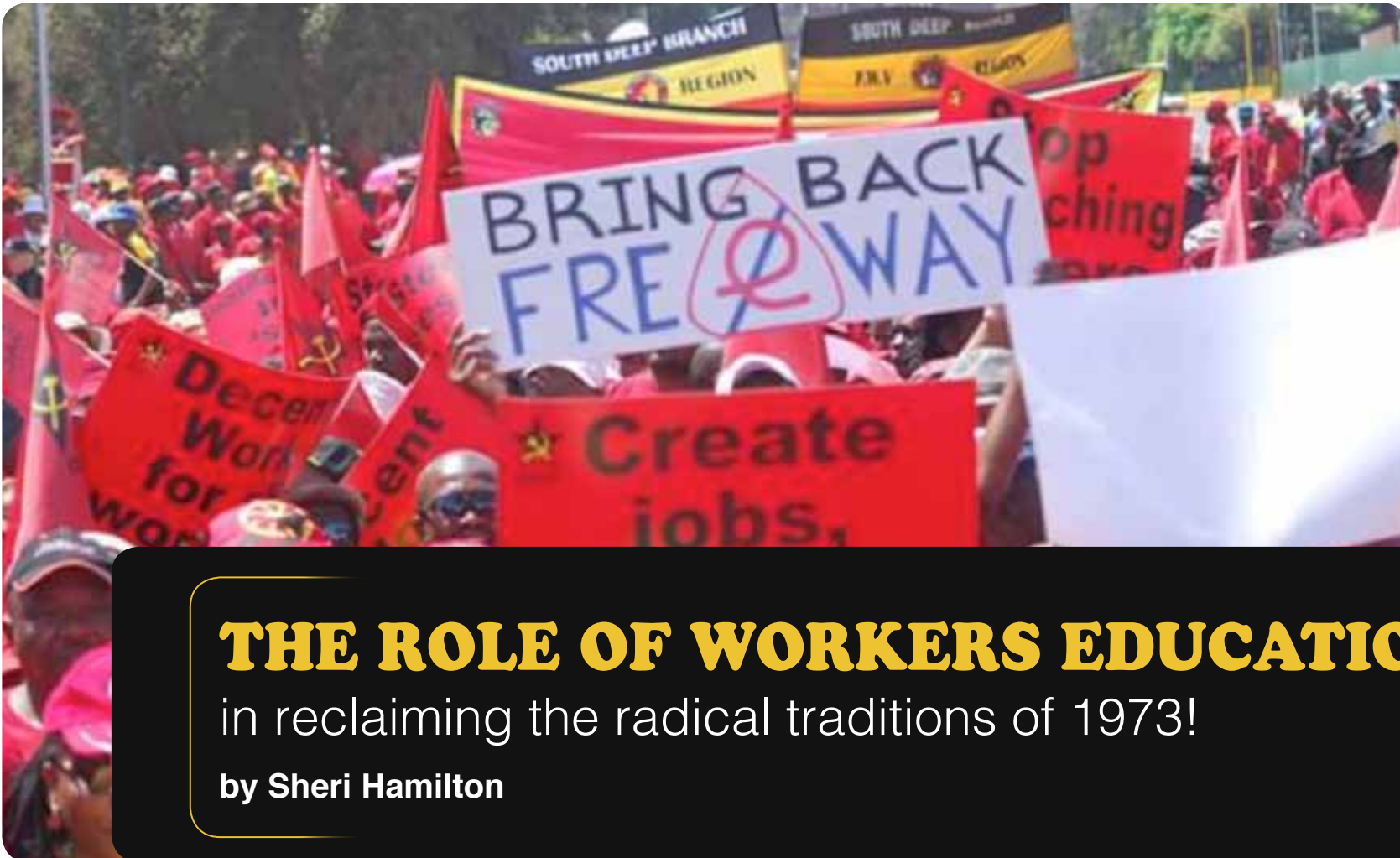
The passing of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Sectoral

Determination for Domestic Workers were part of the successes earned through the crucible of struggle by Witbooi and her comrades. While these were notable successes from the legal front, Witbooi understood that translating the law into practice would not happen automatically. As such, she went on to engage in relentless activism to ensure that the victories “on paper” would translate to real victories in the workplace and in the rest of society, to lead to dignified treatment of domestic workers.

In paying tribute to Myrtle Witbooi, the SACP reiterates the necessity for more domestic workers to be organised into trade unions so that they earn a living wage and win fair working conditions.

The SACP also calls for the working-class in South Africa and abroad to unite in defence of their collective rights, including uniting in the struggle against gender and class oppression’, concluded Mapaila.

**Hamba Kahle Comrade
Myrtle Witbooi!**



THE ROLE OF WORKERS EDUCATION

in reclaiming the radical traditions of 1973!

by Sheri Hamilton

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Durban Strikes which represented the breaking of the chains of one of the most repressive periods in the history of the struggle against apartheid.

It provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the labour movement today with that of the 1980s. The anniversary comes at a particularly critical moment for the labour movement because of economic, political and social crisis that besets the country today.

In stark contrast to the 1980s, the labour movement now is characterized by disunity, scattered across several federations and non-aligned unions, and ideological incoherence.

The ideological and organizational decline are inextricably bound up with each other. It has weakened the working class as a whole and at the same time emboldened the capitalist class.

Mimicking their counterparts worldwide, the capitalist class has mounted the most serious offensive against the working class in the form of neo-liberalism especially since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Emboldened by the fact that the working class has so far been unable to roll back the savage cuts in social spending, the capitalist class has stepped up the pressure on the ANC government to escalate the class war directly against the public sector workers. This situation demands

a re-armament of the working class with the weapons and tools tried and tested by their predecessors in 1973 because only it has the power, notwithstanding its weakened state, to reverse the descent into the failed state that impends.

Key amongst these tools was the use of workers education not in the formal sense of workshops and schools but through the day-to-day practices of building the union movement through struggle.

The most important characteristics of the labour movement of the 1980s were the yearning for unity that ultimately gave rise to Cosatu – a federation that at its height, represented the most powerful labour movement on the continent not only in its numerical strength but in its social and political influence and ideologically socialist character.

The power of the giant that was created in 1985 was demonstrated by the fact that the partial state of emergency imposed by the regime in May 1985 proved incapable of preventing the birth of Cosatu seven months later.

Furthermore, far from the repression of the second full state of emergency in 1986 reversing the rising tide of class struggle, it acted as the whip of the counter-revolution elevating Cosatu into the position of the vanguard of the struggle for national liberation itself.

From the fact that the organized working class' struggle brought it into direct collision with the same state machine in the workplace as on the political plane against white minority rule, the working class drew the most radical conclusions: that the struggle against capitalism could not be separated from the struggle against apartheid.

The words inscribed on the banner that draped the podium of the 1987 Cosatu congress: "socialism means freedom", represented arguably the high point of ideological clarity of the organized labour movement.

Cosatu in reality came to occupy the leading role in the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation drawing behind them the youth and working class communities in the townships.

The dominant outlook of the guiding layers of the workers and youth was that the struggle was simultaneously against white minority rule and capitalism – for a socialist South Africa.

The labour movement today is a pale reflection of the formidable force it represented in 1970s and 1980s. The influence it wielded then flowed from the ideas and practices forged in the furnace of the struggle which were based on socialism and solidarity and consolidated through a radical workers education.

Union democracy, worker control and accountability were essential building blocks that established the foundations of the organisations that united the working class which was essential in confronting one of the most repressive regimes on the planet.

Workers education was conducted mostly informally through rallies, meetings and the day-to-day practices of debates and discussions throughout the strikes and laid the foundation for the traditions that informed the character of workers education that shaped the movement of the time.

Therefore, the period following the 1973 strikes and the rebirth and growth of the labour movement in the 1970s and early 1980s was a particularly fertile period when workers took the lead as educators not only of their fellow union members, but also as 'teachers' of youth, women and student movements of what a democratic, accountable, radical adult education means in practice.

Much of the character of workers' education during these insurgent times has been lost with the decline of the union movement in the last two decades.

The labour movement now has reached a cross roads of either continuing on the path that has led to its weakening and loss of social and political influence, or of taking a

different road that could lead to re-establishing, on a much higher level the traditions, ideas and practices that built the movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

Taking the alternative path will require reclaiming the radical traditions of workers education that were forged in struggle passed on

through songs, plays, poetry, in siyalalas where workers learned how to effect the struggle and about ideas that could bring about a society free of exploitation and oppression, in other words a socialist world.

Across the world today, the working class is drawing a line of resistance and mounting a counter-offensive

in a strike wave now engulfing not just the neo-colonial world but the advanced capitalist countries as well.

A recognition is growing that the working class must reclaim its ideological and political independence and workers education has a critical role to play in

creating the platform for the debate, discussion, about the lessons of the past and tasks that is faced today.

Article written by Sheri Hamilton, a Lecturer at the University of Johannesburg

Reaching out TO LABOUR a necessary duty

by Dr Sipho Kabane



Our main primary existence as CMS is to always protect the interests of medical scheme beneficiaries. Just recently, our Policy Research and Monitoring Division published a report titled: 'A review of government funded medical schemes and medical schemes with less than 6000 members.'

In 2018, the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) drafted a framework for medical scheme consolidation outlining the approach to reducing risk-pool fragmentation whilst strengthening financial protection in the current medical scheme environment. This report reviewed state employees' medical schemes, and schemes with fewer than 6000 principal members and assessed how these compared to closed schemes and that of the industry.

The 2021 CMS Industry Report data showed that the 11 state employees'

medical schemes accounted for 1.1 million principal members and 2.9 million beneficiaries, making up about 33.1% of the medical scheme industry and 71% of restricted schemes in terms of beneficiaries.

In the same period of 2021, the state employees' medical schemes accounted for R69 billion in of medical scheme gross contribution income, accounting for 30% of the industry's contribution income. Gross contribution income per average beneficiary ranged between R976 and R5 554 per month.

More importantly, a large proportion of healthcare expenditure for government-funded schemes was paid towards hospital services, ranging from 24.85% to 40.88% of the total benefit paid.

Solvency ratio was above the minimum threshold of 25% as prescribed by the Medical Schemes Act (ten of the 11 schemes complied

with Regulation 29), and they were in good financial position with a yearend reserve position of just over R34 billion as of December 2021.

In terms of the governing structure, the board composition ranged between 7 and 25 trustees. The study also found varying remuneration practices, with some schemes remunerating more than others.

State-funded medical schemes had varying demographics and risk profiles, varied in terms of scheme size, were generally in good financial position with good reserves, which should be managed with care for the benefit of beneficiaries.

So why is it important to inform the labour union movement, you may ask? Simple reason, as a regulator of all the 74 medical schemes (open and restricted), ordinary members of medical schemes like you and myself, should be able to understand how we serve you thus making your participation crucial. In the discourse

of the medical scheme industry, CMS issues important Circulars pertaining to rulings, investigations and research findings that require public comments and or feedback.

The labour voice is often missing and with the type of audience catered under the Shop Steward Magazine we can only hope for a better communication between the regulator and union medical schemes members.

To further read the report; please visit: <https://www.medicalschemes.co.za/research-study-a-review-of-government-funded-medical-schemes-and-medical-schemes-with-less-than-6000-members/>

**Dr Sipho Kabane
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IndustriALL Global Union's approach to the Investing **IN AFRICA MINING INDABA**

by Glen Mpufane



As IndustriALL Global Union takes its rightful place at the Investing in Africa Mining Indaba 2023, with two panel discussions at the auditorium stage, this is a powerful recognition by the organizers of this hugely important event that mineworkers are part of the solution to Climate Change and not passive observers.

It is a recognition that mineworkers have agency to provide mitigation pathways to the crisis of Climate Change by virtue of being on the coalface of climate change impacts.

That mitigation pathway is a “Just Transition” which features prominently in the agenda and program of the Investing in Africa Mining Indaba and it is IndustriALL Global Union’s objective to contest and reclaim “Just Transition” and give it back its transformative capital or potential.

The message to drive at the Indabas is to bring home that underpinning IndustriALL Global Union’s approach to Climate Change and its extensive impacts, including disruptive technology impacts on the workplace and the future of work, is the principle

that at the heart of Just Transition policy must be the consideration that planning for the transition and for the possible impacts requires a plan on which plants will close and when, who can be redeployed, who is retained and who pays. Externalizing the cost of climate impacts to workers and society is not a policy option.

Explicit in a just transition approach to climate change and disruptive technological impacts is an approach to economic and environmental policy that aims to minimize the impact on workers and communities of this relatively rapid

transition to a low carbon economy, to identify and support economic opportunities for the future, and to involve affected workers and their communities in discussions that would affect their livelihoods.

With this approach, workers do not have to be placed in the uncompromising position of having to choose between policy responses to climate change that threaten their jobs and livelihood and the abrupt closure of heavy polluting extractives industries such as coal and climate justice.

“The real choice is not jobs or

environment. It is both or neither.”- Brian Kohler, IndustriALL Global Union’s former Director - Health, Safety and Sustainability.

The objective of a Just Transition is to provide a hopeful and optimistic future for all workers, their families and the communities they are part of, especially for those in industries that may be impacted by efforts to limit greenhouse gases or by the introduction of new technologies. A future that workers and communities can believe in, look forward to support and a commitment to create that future.

The response to climate change brings its own challenges arising out of technological innovations as a response, throwing a curve ball beyond climate change that determines the future world of work consistent with low carbon energy transition to which workers must adapt.

To mitigate these impacts, both the ILO Guidelines and the Paris Agreement highlight the imperatives of a just transition and the creation of decent work as essential dimensions of climate change.

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, adopted by the ILO Conference in June 2019 drives the point that “The ILO marks its Centenary at a time of transformative change in the world of work, driven by technological innovations, demographic shifts, environmental and climate change, and globalization, as well as at a time of persistent inequalities, which have profound impacts on the nature and future of work, and on the place and dignity of people in it. [...] It is imperative to act with urgency to seize

the opportunities.”

To mitigate these impacts, both the ILO Guidelines and the Paris Agreement highlight the imperatives of a just transition and the creation of decent work as essential dimensions of climate change.

While mining is at the centre of driving the low carbon energy through the

‘We have an opportunity to reverse African economies’ dependency through social dialogue on #JustTransition including education and upskilling. Environmental, social and governance strategies must, include unions.’

- Glen Mpufane

critical raw materials that it produces, attendant to that is the risk of the race to the bottom that will materially affect the mine workers in the following ways according to an E&Y 2020 report which states that;

(i) Direct employment will fall drastically.

(ii) Procurement of those items that are linked to employees, such as food and housing, is expected to decline significantly;

(iii) There will be fewer opportunities for local maintenance and servicing of capital, as highly specialized equipment will tend to be serviced by the original equipment manufacturer.

(iv) Lower employment at mines will also have major impacts on governments’ income tax receipts.

There may also be implications for mine-related corporate income tax receipts as well, although improved efficiency may drive up profits.

(v) The impact of job displacement will likely be higher in lesser developed or fragile economies, potentially leading to social unrest, political

instability, and exacerbated trends in urban migration as more remote job opportunities shrink.

IndustriALL Global Union is alive to these risks and thus calls for a risk based and integrated approach characterised by anticipation, mapping and planning. An energy skills road map is urgently required – a road map of those jobs likely to be impacted, how these jobs can be transitioned, potential for reskilling and or job redesign. This has to be done to avoid a stranded workforce.

The transition to a low carbon future has also brought to the fore the plight of Artisanal and Small Scale, putting their challenges of marginalisation, invisibility, informality and criminalisation into the Just Transition conversation. IndustriALL has taken the position that ASM is deserving of industrial citizenship and has championed the formalization agenda of this important sector whose contribution to the low carbon transition minerals is considerable making the sector an important part of the global supply value chain.

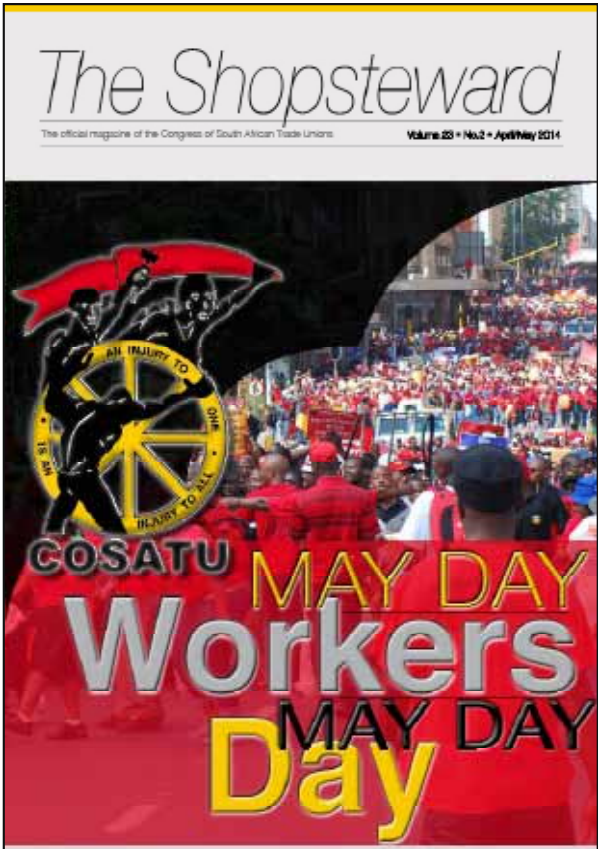
Our affiliates in the mining are actively organizing the sector in partnerships that seek to improve their working conditions, including occupational health and safety and the gender dimension.

Article submitted by Glen Mpufane, IndustriALL Global Union Mining, DGOJP Director and OHS lead, based in Geneva Switzerland

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