



The Shopsteward

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May Day Celebrations

Worker Issues 6

- 'Thank you workers'said
COSATU General Secretary
- COSATU remembers 51 workers who died
at Saulspoort dam in Bethlehem
- Provincial May Day Celebrations

Economy 17

- SANAC Chairperson and Deputy President
launch the 5th National Strategic Plan for
HIV, TB and STIs
- Trade union and collective bargaining
structures are essential in coordinating and
managing the transition towards a just low-
carbon future
- 'Eskom is redefining a better future with
zero loadshedding' - NUM's view on
the visits to ESKOM Power Stations
by the electricity Minister Kgosientsho
Ramokgopa
- Will localization be South Africa's
economy saving grace? ProudlySA
opened opportunities for SMEs during
the "Buy Local" Summit and Expo, which
encouraged South Africans to support local
businesses
- 'TB is curable', says Freda Oosthuysen at
the World TB Day

Alliance 25

- 'The SACP Augmented Central Committee
agreed to contest elections with an
effective and reconfigured alliance as our
preferred modality', says Mapaila
- Remembering Chris Hani - 30 Years since
Martin's assassination

Gender Agenda 31

- Celebrations for International Women's
Day reprioritizes gender equality, inclusion,
peace and democracy
- Nurses celebrate International Nurse's Day

International 45

- Workers of the world unite
- South African trade unions host the Railways, Road
and Urban Transport Conferences in Johannesburg

Affiliates 48

- A fight for job security and decent wages in
the retail sector ensues
- SATAWU rejects the 'revised' offer by
the employer
- Public servants settle for 7.5% wage increment

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Solly Phetoe
Editor in Chief

Editorial Note

Welcome back to the latest copy of Shopsteward Magazine, where we cover recent activities like the Public Service strike, and May Day celebrations. Firstly, we need to salute all those workers who came out to participate in our May Day celebrations and also joined the 1973 Durban strikes commemorations in KwaZulu Natal.

We are also starting the rollout of the four-year programme as mandated by the 14th National Congress which made it very clear that we need to focus on organisational renewal and development. The congress highlighted our dwindling numbers in the private sector and concluded that unless we consciously address the identified weaknesses, the Federation risks becoming increasingly less representative in the private sector.

Our 30-year history, since 1994, has demonstrated that unless workers are united and cooperate with each other they will never realise the objectives they set out for themselves. This is the reason why all of us need to embrace the

concept of unifying the working class as a way of building a giant, united, progressive COSATU that unites all workers. We expect all our affiliated unions to ceaselessly and fearlessly champion the rights and interests of workers by assisting them at the workplace to deal with wage bargaining, unfair dismissals, discrimination at the workplace, and other such matters.

The May Central Executive Committee meeting voiced its anger with the intensified and aggressive attacks against the working class which expresses itself in government policies, which include cuts in real wages, retrenchments, and an increase in unemployment rates.

The meeting also made it very clear that the government's failure to fight corruption, the energy crisis, and exorbitant interest rates amount to a dereliction of duty and failure of leadership.

To answer this crisis, the meeting committed the federation to embark on a National Day of Action on the 6th of July 2023 in defense of collective bargaining and pushing back against this offensive.

This is viewed as build-up towards the 07th of October International Decent Work Day, where the federation will also mobilise and organise another National Day of Action.

We also have the challenge of rising inflation with the price of fuel pushing the cost of living. The escalation in the price of fuel and the ever-present load-shedding have devastated poor households and lower-income earners the most. Poor families are struggling to afford necessities. We should demand that government consider increasing subsidies for public transport and work on investing in our public transport system.

The recently concluded public service wage negotiations have brought to the fore and focused attention on the ongoing class offensive directed at the working class by the political leadership that is pandering to capital. The current selective austerity measures, which the Treasury is currently voluntarily implementing, represent the capture of the state. This has proved true the theory by Karl Marx that the state is

a product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms.

The government has made it very clear over the last eight years that it wants to raise the funds it needs to balance its books on the back of low income for public servants.

They failed to introduce tax measures on companies and the richest 10% of income groups, who have benefited the most from the policy choices of the past 30 years. It is not an accident that we remain the most unequal society on earth.

The workers have neither received support nor sympathy from the political leadership, which has put its head in the sand to notice the growing poverty and inequalities between the citizens and their representatives. The Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers recently sent recommendations to President Ramaphosa, suggesting that public office bearers earning more than R1m should be given a {3%} three percent increase.

The independence of the same commission is undermined by the fact that it is dominated by

judges, who are in fact being asked to recommend their own salary increases.

What is disturbing is the silence from across the political spectrum on this matter. There has been no call for the rejection of this from political office bearers across the board. They have seen no need to offer solidarity with the unemployed and the poorly paid workers, who are struggling to make ends meet.

This is even though our Members of Parliament are already paid more than MPs of France, Switzerland, and Spain per capita, according to the Economist - countries that are relatively rich and without the same socio-economic challenges as our country.

Workers are paying a price for the mismanagement of the country's economy by the Treasury and the indifferent and overzealous Reserve Bank. The interest rate hikes of the last 5 quarters have wreaked havoc on the workers' lives.

The National Day of Action on the 6th of July should serve as a notice to the National Treasury that, we will fight these austerity measures using all the armoury and tools in our arsenal.

We want the government to acknowledge that it is unsustainable to preside over a public workforce that is overworked, poorly paid, and also a population that is hungry, and destitute. They have to start showing their commitment to

eroding the apartheid-engineered poverty and wage gap between the rich and the poor in this country or risk social instability.

More than two centuries since this Adam Smith called for "the liberal reward of labour", governments that have adhered to formulaic Neoliberal policies have been overrun by socioeconomic crises, of which the unfolding tragedies pertaining to riots and violent strikes are part of the symptoms.

The Neoliberal logic of treating public service as consumption expenditure is already proving its hollowness. The tragic spectacle of riots and violent strikes has rudely highlighted the incapacity of our poorly funded police force

to respond adequately to the instability in the country. This will only get worse because people are tired of the squalid conditions which are forever reproduced by this Neoliberal logic.

The battle continues and the real owners of the federation need to lead from the front. Let us strengthen our COSATU engines and unite with all workers across the board and get ready to fight back in defense of our rights. The rights we defend will survive but those we do not fight for will be taken away from us.

Aluta Continua!



Norman Mampane - Editor

Word from the Editor

Welcome to the 2nd Edition in 2023 as we celebrated the International Worker's Day across eight provinces on May 1. What a sombre mood in Bethlehem as the families of workers from Kimberley joined to participate in the bus trail which led to the fatal crash at the Saulspoort Dam, now known as Sol Plaatje dam in the east of Free State.

Plagues were unveiled and also trees were planted to remember them. May their souls rest in peace! The country is facing huge challenges in all fronts! Many workers do not feel prosperous or confident because the price of "essentials" continues to skyrocket: housing, food, gas, healthcare, transport, higher education, elder care and early childhood care.

Now higher interest rates!

With increasing wealth disparity, these price increases are pretty devastating to most South Africans. Student debt spiral is devastating for the future of young leaders who are studying! And parents cannot cope!

So, employment is at low record levels, so is job satisfaction, and concerns about job security, are worsening. And people believe that the economy is in terrible shape!

No amount of sound spin doctoring is satisfying for electricity consumers, with attempts by Government to reassure South Africans that the national electricity grid, is protected from collapsing.

Energy crisis in South Africa has reached a point of calamity!

The Reserve Bank Governor has confirmed that 'South Africa isn't benefiting from the fall in global inflation largely due to load-shedding and other factors specific to the country. As it is, the Bank expects load-shedding to add 0.5 of a percentage point (pp) to consumer inflation in 2023, as firms try to pass the cost of solar energy or diesel generators on to consumers'.

Many communities and business communities have not survived the adverse impact of Corona virus outbreak in the past two years!

Covid-19 pandemic has brought the issue of the Global South's debt back into the spotlight. With declining export earnings and tax revenues, many countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia have found themselves unable to service their foreign currency debt.

The constituency of precarious workers and communities at risk of poverty, are increasingly overlapping across the country and beyond the borders. The global economic system has failed communities, characterized by austerity budgets cuts and with resultant precariousness and uncertainty becoming the defining features of the labour markets.

There is high level of cases associated with depression, stress, mental health and associated anxiety amongst communities.

Homelessness and poverty are man-made tragic results of unfettered capitalism and raging inequality!

Workers have complained about

the high levels of crime when they go to work on a daily basis, with no consequences.

The SAPS Statistics [2022/2023] released has recorded 10.5% of cases of common robbery reported, 14.9% cases of rape, 12.6% cases of attempted sexual offenses, 25.1% cases of car hijacking and 24.6% of cases of truck hijacking which is a workplace for many transportation workers.

Everyone deserves a safe journey to and from work!

Migrant workers and informal workers have not enjoyed the protection of their labour rights from bosses. We still having thousands of employees not organized under trade unions. We must accelerate full implementation of programs and campaigns to reach out to these vulnerable workers in the labour markets. Migrant and informal workers are still largely denied the right to form their unions.

In this Edition, we covered the participation of civil society organizations in the fight against Tuberculosis [TB], Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV] and Sexually Transmitted Infections [STIs], how to continue strengthening collective bargaining structures towards a just, low-carbon future, promoting gender equality, enhancing local procurement to stimulate local jobs, and focusing of organizational development within the trade unions through campaigns.

We continue to remember struggle stalwarts and comrades who contributed to class struggle

in South Africa. Internationally, Neoliberal economics and attacks on multilateralism have created a difficult context for international solidarity work initiatives thus severely impacting on independent functioning of trade unions and negatively affecting their ability to address dire health needs, the jobs shedding and poverty wages across poor communities.

Trade Unions must invest in ideological training and political education to address some of the issues associated class struggles and political struggles and navigating the ideal future we aspire to eradicate all classes.

As the International Labour Organization holds its International Labour Conference in Geneva on June 2023, we hoping some of the challenges of austerity measures, union bashing, criminalization of trade union work, lack of social protection, poverty, unemployment, inequality, precarious working conditions and managing labour migration will be on the agenda.

We need all governments to ratify policies and implement actions to fight growing economic disparities, on enhancing social protection, on eradication of harassment in the world of work, on creating decent jobs and addressing challenges associated with climate change.

We will share on the outcomes once concluded. We wish all global federations holding World Congresses successful deliberations.

It is not yet Uhuru!

'Thank you workers'

said COSATU General Secretary

COSATU General Secretary, Solly Phetoe singing 'Solomon Song' in Barberton

The Congress of South African Trade Unions held ten [10] rallies in eight provinces during the International Workers' Day celebrations which marked 137 years since the first day was celebrated by workers across the globe. The General Secretary of the federation acknowledged the hard work executed by worker leaders of affiliated trade unions, organizers, shopstewards and the membership in general for enabling the rallies are well organized.

Solly Phetoe said "The Congress of South African Trade Unions salutes and congratulates the thousands of workers who participated in our nationwide May Day celebrations. We congratulate them for ensuring that our activities were characterized by supreme discipline, solidarity, and a festive atmosphere. We thank our affiliates for not just mobilising workers but for providing transportation for them. We again pay homage to the 51 victims of the Bethlehem bus crash who tragically died in the Saulspoort Dam accident en route to the Workers'

Day celebrations in 2003. We will never forget them, and the 1st of May will remain a sad reminder of that tragedy."

"The Federation remains committed to continuing with the tasks given to us by the 14th National Congress to build a COSATU, whose influence on society remains based on its organised power, ability to mobilise, socio-economic programmes and policies, and participation in political and social alliances. We are unapologetic in our belief that factory-based struggles cannot be divorced from politics.

Even from a pure working class and economic position, it is completely wrong to limit workers to factory-based issues. Politics determines who holds state power; who makes the laws; who controls the police, the courts, the army, and prisons. All these issues affect workers every day and cannot be ignored. Without addressing these questions, the factory gains made by workers will be in danger of being wiped out. We have learned from our common, painful experiences that we can win battles on wage increases at the workplace level, only to have

those eroded by increases in transport costs, municipal fee rates, increase in electricity tariffs, food, children's educational fees, tax, erosion of pension funds through rising costs of living, etc. It is for these reasons that from the onset, COSATU decided to participate in the political sphere. We are unshaken members of the Alliance because all our struggles are political in nature."

"This year we plan on building from the gains workers have achieved during 2022 and 2023, including raising the National Minimum Wage to R25.42 benefiting millions of poorly paid workers, strengthening the Employment Equity Act, as well as expanding the Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act to provide cover for 900 000 domestic workers.

We plan to work with other sister federations to deal with the 42% unemployment rate and rising levels of poverty. We intend to campaign for the end of load-shedding and the revival of State-Owned Enterprises and

municipalities. We call on everyone to support the buy local campaign and the campaign against crime and corruption. The introduction of the Basic Income Grant is long overdue. On the legislative front, our main priority is to push for Parliament to finalize key progressive Bills as we head toward the 2024 elections. The main one is the pension relief legislation that will allow struggling workers early access to their pension funds on 1 March 2024 through the new two (2) pot pension regime.

The National Health Insurance Bill and Expropriation Bill will ensure all workers have access to quality healthcare and help accelerate efforts to ensure all South Africans can own their own land. To achieve these goals, workers must be united, we cannot afford to be distracted by our sectarian differences." Phetoe concluded that "The Federation will continue to strive to achieve its historic mandate of building one Federation for the country and one Affiliate for each sector of the economy."



COSATU remembers 51 workers who died at Saulspoort dam in Bethlehem

As global capitalism is stumbling from crisis to crisis, working class assembled on May 1 across the world to celebrate International Worker's Day. It is almost twenty [20] years since fifty-one [51] workers lost their lives in the Saulspoort dam in Bethlehem, East of the Free State province.

Jim Malinga, Michael Manyetsa, Thapelo Bennet Motsage, Elizabeth Ngoato, James Pitso Moitse, Ronald Zolizile Manzana, Willie Oupa Malgas, Mtunzima Jeffrey Ncike, Leonard Ndlovu, Joseph Mzobantu Mrubata, Michael Manyetsa, Elizabeth Ngoato, David Pienaar, Jan Mononi, Sannah Meitjie Segami, Boitumelo Percival Senyatso, Elvis Sesedi, Gaolekwe Justice Thys, Michael Pogiso Tonyane, Kelepile Isaac Tshotelo, Koos Vaaltyn, Francis Vusi Zamba, Saul Boikanyo Sebeela, David Fikile Banda, Sarah Bloem, Joseph Davids, William Fortune, Johannes Gal, Raymond Jabetla, Ruben Jacobs, Andries Kelebogile, Man Keskabetse, Lindie Hobbert Kgatlani, Johnson Kgotsaetsile, Norman Obakeng Khakhane, Clement Tshepiso Koadi, Elizabeth Joseph Kombe, Kelesamaile

Daniel Kwenane, Moses Slanty Lecwidi, Cornelius Legobate, Daniel Modupe Letshabo, Jane Mpho Majosi, Prince Tshepiso Makoloi, Emmanuel Malebogo, Willie Oupa Malgas, Jim Malinga, Michael Manyetsa, Ronald Zolizile Manzana, Flip Meyer, Israel Buti Mosiane, Thapelo Bennet Motsage, Julius Otsile Nzuzza, Elizabeth Ngwato and Leonard Ndlovu were on their route from Kimberley to a Workers' Day rally at Charles Mopeli stadium, Phuthaditjaba in 2003.

Free State/Northern Cape-Bethlehem Show Grounds

In South Africa, May Day compelled workers to reflect and take stock of the plight of the working class. It reminds us of the journey we have travelled together over many decades in building working class unity, fighting for workplace democracy, and in consolidating the rights of millions of South African workers.

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi was flanked by the African National Congress President, Cyril Ramaphosa and the South African Communist Party General Secretary, Solly Mapaila at the Bethlehem Show Grounds to join the masses in the National May Day rally.

The event commenced with an unveiling ceremony and wreath laying function led by the families of the martyrs of the COSATU 2003 Bus Disaster which took place in Bethlehem. A moment of silence was observed to remember their life and times. Celebrating the 137 years ago of toiling classes fighting for social justice when workers fought for eight hours of work, eight hours of recreation, eight hours of rest and rejected slavery, COSATU President urged workers to be 'united to fight against unemployment, retrenchments, poor working conditions, labour brokers, insourcing, poverty, deteriorating public services, corruption, indebtedness amongst workers, high costs of living, price increases on electricity, petrol, food, neoliberal economic policies about budgets cuts and organize to fix weak State Owned Enterprises and defend collective bargaining.'

Addressing the masses COSATU President, Zingiswa Losi in the celebrations under the Theme, "Build Working Class Unity for Economic Liberation Towards Socialism" said "Today, we join workers across the world on the 137th anniversary of Workers

Day. Our history of the May (Workers') Day is synonymous with the swelling support for, and widespread mobilisation of organs of people's power, which saw May Day as well as other struggle commemorative days like March 21 and June 16 become for the entire Mass Democratic Movement, linking with struggles underground, which defeated apartheid oppression and exploitation. It is an indictment on all of us that many workers see this as another holiday to do shopping or engage in personal leisure. This is the reason why employers are emboldened these days and are on the offensive to erode our hard-won rights. Unions are the custodian of this day, and we need to do more to conscientize workers about its significance. Let us also honour and remember the victims of the Bethlehem bus crash, where 52 COSATU members perished when their bus drove into a dam near Bethlehem, Free State on the 1st of May 2003 after attending that year's May Day celebrations."

"The history of the International Worker's holiday {May Day} is a history of struggle, sacrifices, and victories. Workers are the unsung heroes that hold the world together and have built the

world economy with their blood and their sweat. This holiday can be traced back to the year 1886 and has its origins in the labour union movement. Workers at that time were nothing but glorified slaves, who were paid meager wages and worked long hours. They stood up and demanded eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest. In other words, they took a stand against slave working conditions and won their victories. We also need to take that baton and make a stand against slave wages and poor working conditions. Our fate is in our hands, and we are our own liberators." On the 14th National Congress Priorities, Losi said "This is the first May Day of the 14th National Congress which based on our organizational tradition, was robust, honest, and clear on what we need to do going forward. The Congress reminded us that we should prioritise organisational discipline and that the unity of our unions and workers in general is paramount and sacrosanct.

The famous revolutionary Karl Marx, implored workers of the world to unite, reminding them that they have nothing to lose but their chains. The aim is not only to build a strong organisation but to ensure maximum unity of the working class. We are dedicated to fostering a spirit of solidarity and cooperation amongst all unions, inside and outside of COSATU. We are pleased with the work being done by our Affiliates to build unity on the ground across unions and across Federations. We applaud the work being done by NUM, SATAWU and SACTWU for leading from the front. COSATU has been working hand in hand with our sister Federations at NEDLAC. Whilst we applaud these efforts at building unity, we are deeply concerned at the divisions affecting organised labour at the public service bargaining council. We are equally concerned by the divisions and internal in fighting bleeding some of our affiliates, especially some of our smaller unions. We cannot afford such distractions.

Workers cannot afford to be divided when we are under siege. When workers are divided, they will be defeated. When unions are distracted and weakened by divisions, the employers will be victorious. It is easy for us to deceive ourselves into thinking some of our unions are immune from divisions. None of them are immune from divisions. We must cherish, defend, and constantly invest in our unity. It is our key weapon as we wage working class struggles. The COSATU 2035 plan constitutes the long-term goals of the working class, so the tactical choices we make now in the federation and broad movement must be informed by our long-term goals. We cannot afford to be short-sighted. The Congress instructed us to ensure that we remember and honour our past revolutionary struggles like the 1973 Durban Strikes from both the trade union movement and other revolutionary organisations. This is important in the history and struggle of the working class as it reminds us of our role in building this

organisation of the people. We have a mandate to grow membership and continue to fight for a majority representation in all bargaining forums and sectors. We need to adjust our recruitment strategy and embark on an uninterrupted campaign to recruit workers both in the public and private sectors. We need to understand the total number of non-unionised workers in all economic sectors. We have a goal of attaining 50+1 majority in all councils and chambers. We have a political mandate to continue the fight to improve working-class conditions and working with the South African Communist Party, we must ensure that we defeat the capitalist system. We have the mandate to rebuild the Alliance and help the ANC with its process of renewal. We must remain cognisant of the current challenges in our judicial system and the role played by our courts as they continuously take decisions that favour employers. They blocked a Bank strike by COSATU/ SASBO.

They supported the government in abandoning Resolution 1 of 2018 in the public service. Our federation is expected to take an active part in mobilizing structures that share the common goal of changing the world. We have a responsibility to build the trade union movement in the continent of Africa. In playing our significant part in international solidarity we will step up our campaign in Swaziland to assist the Swazi people to obtain their freedom."

On Struggles and Victories. Losi said "As a Federation, we can all be proud of our achievements over the past couple of years as we set our sights on accomplishing some of the still outstanding tasks ahead. this federation of Elijah Barayi is alive and well. We have led strategic battles for the working class on issues such as the National Minimum Wage, including changes to the Unemployment Insurance Fund Act. We are busy fighting corruption and looting at UIF. We welcome the recent promulgation of the Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act which will extend coverage to 900 000 domestic workers and expand the rights and protections of all workers.

The Employment Equity Amendment Act has been signed into law by the President and requires that all companies wanting to do business with the state must be in full compliance with the Employment Equity Act and the National Minimum Wage Act. This will be a powerful incentive for employers to abide by our labour laws. We are pushing for workers to have Early Access to their pensions - Treasury has committed to fast-tracking and tabling the necessary legislative amendments that will address COSATU's proposals at Parliament in June and October 2023.

COSATU will continue to push Treasury and Parliament to ensure these bills are passed by Parliament by December 2023. This is critical to ensuring that we meet the implementation date of 1 March 2024

when workers can access a portion of their pension funds. We remain inspired by how many of our affiliates are busy asserting their presence all across the sectors of our economy since the last May Day.

We have seen Makro workers at Massmart under SACCAWU, Eskom and Sibanye workers under NUM, Transnet and Putco workers under SATAWU, and Public service workers under our various unions. It is this uncompromising attitude and fearless character by our affiliates that act to re-affirm the character of COSATU as a militant, radical, and class-oriented federation of trade unions. Let us support and salute SAMWU for fighting against the unconstitutional provisions in the Municipal Systems Amendment Act that undermine municipal workers' constitutional rights to freedom of political association.

The Federation urges all its members and workers, in general, to work together on the just transition. Let us unite in demanding a Just Transition that is based on ensuring adequate investment and financing of environmentally friendly activities that create decent jobs paid at living wages and meet standards of health and safety, promoting gender equity. It is important that we protect the most vulnerable we also demand the skilling, upskilling, and reskilling of workers to ensure that they can be part of the new low-carbon development model."

On Fighting Corruption, Losi said "All our victories will be easily undermined by corruption if we are not careful. COSATU wants all employed persons to join and support the fight against corruption in both the public and private sectors. The money they steal and mismanage is our taxpayer money. We formed part of the UDF that fought the criminal and exploitative regime in the 1980s. We need a new UDF that will bring all other social partners to champion the whistleblowing campaign across all sectors of the economy. We demand more action from the state to protect whistle-blowers and our motto is: "Every worker a whistle-blower!"

We must tackle Challenges!

Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, asked what is to be done? Our challenges are many. Workers are under siege on many fronts, here and across the world. Our number one task as COSATU is to build a strong, militant, and united Federation and Affiliates. If we are united and, on the ground, then we will be victorious in our battles. A strong trade union movement will not fall from the sky. It can only be built by us. It will not be handed to us on a silver platter. It means we must go to each factory, hospital and workplace and engage all workers on why they should join our Affiliates. We should not be content with only 1 out of 4 workers being unionised. We should not be complacent and only organise in sectors and workplaces where the employer does not block us from entering. We must go to the farms, the call centres, the labour

brokers and sign up all workers. We need to ensure that all workers, shop stewards and organisers are well trained defenders of the working class. We need to ensure that all our members and workers know their rights and are well trained in our labour laws. We must use our SETAs to ensure that we constantly invest in the skills and qualifications of workers. This is critical as the 4th industrial revolution gathers momentum and thousands of workers' jobs are at risk of being lost to automation. Yet we are witnessing millions of rands being wasted and lost to corruption in the SETAs."

"We need to ensure that when workers face disciplinary hearings, we are there with them, and that we represent and defend them. We need to ensure that we take their cases to the CCMA and win their cases based on logic and not emotions or slogans. Our state is under siege from criminality. Eskom is being crippled by corruption. Transnet and Metrorail are being destroyed by cable theft. Local government is collapsing due to mismanagement. We need to be on the ground, exposing corruption and criminality. We need the government to ensure that whistleblowers are protected and not at risk of being assassinated. We need to develop clear proposals on how we will rebuild our state, municipalities, and State-Owned Enterprises. Slogans are not enough. If we do not, then we risk seeing many municipalities and SOEs collapsing. We cannot sit by whilst workers at the Post Office are at risk to being retrenched, we cannot be quiet when workers at Denel are not being paid. We cannot be silent when workers in 27 municipalities are owed wages."

"Our number one threat as the working class is unemployment. We cannot sustain a nation with an unemployment rate of 42%. This is a ticking time bomb. If we are to defeat unemployment, then all of us as workers and unions must buy locally produced goods. We must ensure that the clothes, shoes, food, furniture and cars that we buy for our homes, unions, workplaces, bargaining councils and sectors are locally made. This is the fastest and most sustainable way to protect and create jobs. We must engage our pension funds to invest in the economy and to help create jobs and lessen the pressure on workers supporting relatives who cannot find work.

COSATU must intensify its campaigns on the ground. We must be a fighting Federation whose presence is felt in all corners of South Africa. We must wage our working-class struggles as we prepare for the 2024 national and provincial elections. These will be our most difficult elections since 1994 when the gains that we have achieved since 1994 as COSATU on behalf of the working class will be at risk. We must ensure the radical reconfiguration of the Alliance and work flat out as the Alliance with the ANC and the SACP to ensure a decisive victory for the Alliance and the working class in the 2024 elections," concluded Losi.



The African National Congress President, Cyril Ramaphosa on the podium in Bethlehem

The African National Congress President, Cyril Ramaphosa said “Let us take a minute to remember the 51 workers who tragically lost their lives on 1 May 2003. These compatriots were on their way to the 2003 Workers’ Day celebrations when their bus drove into the Sol Plaatje Dam (then the Saulspoort Dam) near Bethlehem. May their souls rest in peace. It remains, as always, a great honour and privilege to extend the revolutionary greetings of the African National Congress to you on this occasion. Workers in our country and across the world have fought over many years for the right to gather to celebrate the achievement of workers and to honour those who have championed the interests of the working class.

Workers Day is also the day on which workers demonstrate their determination to take forward the struggle against exploitation and oppression. This Workers Day is taking place at a difficult time for the country, and for the working class in particular. In addition to the legacy of apartheid – of poverty and inequality – we are also confronted by the effects of a worldwide pandemic and rising fuel and food costs as a result of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. We are still feeling the effects of a decade of state capture and under-investment in electricity, water and rail infrastructure. Our economy, like other economies across the globe, is not performing well. The cost of living is rising and unemployment remains stubbornly high. As a result, many of our people live in poverty and many people go to bed hungry. Such challenging times demand that we stretch every sinew, draw inspiration from those who came before us and walk surely in the knowledge that

we have overcome greater difficulties than what now confronts us.”

On Rebuilding the Alliance, President Ramaphosa said “Times of difficulty, almost inevitably, test the unity of our movement and it is up to us to build and preserve that unity. Our words and our deeds must strengthen the movement and the ANC commits to build and renew the Alliance, as mandated by our 55th National Conference. We know, all too well, how easy it would be to derail the National Democratic Revolution and the transformation of our nation without a strong, vibrant and functioning alliance, working as a progressive bulwark. We know that we cannot achieve progress if we do not build a broader democratic movement that is rooted in communities, and that drives programmes about the issues that most affect and concern them.

The Alliance must therefore accelerate and strengthen our work to ground its structures and cadres in the communities. In this regard, the ANC is intensifying our Letsema campaign and has continued the work of strengthening our branches, engaging the people and taking up issues affecting communities. The ANC will work with its alliance partners to develop and implement a common Alliance programme of action to address the challenges facing the people. Our common programme, based on the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution, will help to strengthen the alliance relationship and advance and defend the gains of democracy and freedom broadly.”

Addressing the Electricity Crisis, President Ramaphosa said “Last week, we celebrated Freedom Day. There is much to celebrate about our progress

over the last twenty-nine years. We have achieved much progress and bettered the lives of millions of people. However, much more remains to be done. The most pressing issue facing our country is loadshedding and ensuring security of energy supply. The electricity crisis affects the economy, safety and security, and our overall quality of life. As with most things, loadshedding has the greatest impact on the poor.

We are implementing several strategies to address the electricity crisis, which include improving performance at Eskom’s power stations, improving the quality of coal supplied to power stations and ensuring appropriate skills, adequate funding and effective planning are put in place for maintenance. Progress is also being made in adding new generation capacity to the grid, buying power from neighbouring countries, fast-tracking renewable projects and other measures to cover the deficit of about 6,000 MW. These measures are showing results, but as we have said before it will take some time before we end loadshedding in its entirety. Winter is almost upon us and Eskom is undertaking planned maintenance to deal with the increased demand during winter. The Alliance must support such measures by participating in a massive public awareness campaign to encourage industries and households to reduce electricity.”

President Ramaphosa said “Unemployment has decreased in the last four quarters, but this has not been nearly enough to address the scope and depth of the challenge before us. Figures from Statistics SA show that that nearly 7.8 million people were unemployed

at the end of last year. This excludes those people who had given up looking for work. We know that this is not the full picture of unemployment and that these numbers do not reflect the hardships brought on by being unable to provide for oneself or one’s family. Government will therefore continue our efforts to directly and indirectly contribute to creating more and sustainable employment. Last month, we held the 5th South Africa Investment Conference, which saw further investment commitments from South African and international companies. Over the last five years, investments have amounted to over R1.5 trillion. Much of this money has already been invested into the economy, establishing new factories, expanding production lines, building new infrastructure and creating new jobs.

This is real investment that is supporting emerging businesses, growing the capacity of our economy and contributing to people’s livelihoods. While we have made important progress, we need to significantly increase levels of investment. To do that, we need to make it easier to do business in South Africa and remove the obstacles to faster growth. While the unreliable electricity supply is the greatest threat to our economy at this moment, the inefficient operation of South Africa’s ports and railways is also holding us back. Government is working with all stakeholders, including organised labour, to improve the overall performance of the freight logistics sector. We are establishing a National Logistics Crisis Committee to implement a comprehensive roadmap to fix the freight logistics sector. We will proceed with other structural reforms aimed at making the economy more competitive, creating opportunities for

new entrants in various industries, encouraging investment and creating more jobs. We will also continue to build on the successes of the public and social employment programmes. Initiatives that form part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus enable unemployed people to gain skills, experience and an income and provide valuable social services. We must use such programmes to reinforce and support economic reform efforts. South Africa has a very big system of social assistance and our social grants reach over 18 million people today. It is estimated that more than two million households receive free basic water, basic electricity and solid waste removal services. Social grants not only help individuals and households in the greatest need. They also act as a stimulus for the economy as a whole, increase spending in townships and rural areas and improve employment outcomes. As per the mandate of the 55th National Conference, we are looking at options to provide basic income support for the unemployed within our fiscal constraints. One of the most crucial tasks before us is to conclude our work on ensuring access to quality health care. We therefore urge public representatives to pass the National Health Insurance Bill so that all South Africans have access to quality health care regardless of their ability to pay."

On Fighting Crime and Corruption, President Ramaphosa said "We have identified the fight against crime and corruption as one of the key priorities for 2023. This was done in recognition of the fact that a society is not really free if its citizens live in fear of crime and corruption or if its economic development is being held back by economic sabotage, organised crime and corruption. Progress is being made in training more police personnel and tackling violence and extortion at construction sites, illegal mining, infrastructure vandalism and cable theft. We have also strengthened the ability of the criminal justice system to tackle gender-based violence and femicide. These efforts will only be successful if communities, unions and civil society formations are involved in the fight against crime, working together with the police and other law enforcement agencies."

On Strengthening Local Government President Ramaphosa said "Local government remains both our greatest challenge and the site where we can do the most to transform the lives of the people. That is why the ANC is committed to improving the functioning of all municipalities as well as professionalising the public service across the board. The ANC commits to South Africans that our conduct will not contribute to the chaos and instability that loose and opportunistic coalitions have hitherto brought onto the people. Such chaos and instability undermine service

delivery and effective administrative management. We are therefore looking at a range of measures to bring certainty and stability to municipalities affected by coalitions. Some of these measures would ideally be enacted into legislation and apply to all coalitions regardless of the parties involved, whilst others would involve internal guidelines regulating the conduct of ANC representatives entering into coalition agreements. In regulating the ANC's approach to coalitions, we reiterate the four principles guiding our approach to coalitions as mandated by the 55th National Conference:

- Firstly that our primary objective is to achieve a decisive electoral victory. This means that the ANC, working with our partners in the Revolutionary Alliance, must unite and work to ensure an overwhelming victory.
- Secondly, where there are coalitions, we must ensure these put the interests of people first, which must of necessity include a stable government with a minimum programme that can improve service delivery and push forward the transformation agenda.
- Thirdly, the ANC cannot participate in a coalition which is simply about the "sharing of the spoils of office".
- Lastly, where we have performed badly in elections, we should be principled enough to go into opposition to build anew, rather than be part of a coalition government that undermines the foundational principles and values of both the ANC and the Constitution of the Republic."

On 2024 National and Provincial Elections, President Ramaphosa said "Comrades, we will be going to elections in about a year's time. We will be asking the people to once again put their trust in the ANC as the most effective and committed force for fundamental change. We know our strengths and weaknesses. We have shown that we are committed to fix the problems in our organisation and to improve governance throughout the country. We know that we still need to do much to restore confidence in our movement, and we will do so through dedicated and consistent service to the people. We do not seek political office for its own sake, but so that we can work together with all South Africans to effectively transform society. This will be an election unlike any other since the advent of democracy. It will require great effort, dedication and discipline. It will require unity within our movement and within the Alliance. This unity must be

based on respect, democratic practice and an agreed programme of action."

On building A better Africa and a Better World, President Ramaphosa said "We are undertaking this work of rebuilding and renewing our movement and our country in an increasingly complex global context. We remain committed to fostering peace and stability on our continent and are therefore greatly concerned by the eruption of conflict in

jobs. We will only succeed if we work together – as the Alliance, as workers, as communities and as South Africans. At all important moments in our history, workers have been at the forefront. Now, we once again look to the workers of South Africa to provide leadership, and to unite all our people in building a just society, an inclusive economy and a better life for all."

The SACP General Secretary, Solly



Alliance leadership at Bethlehem Show Grounds in the Free State

Sudan. We call on the African Union (AU) to urgently intervene and encourage the establishment of civilian transitional structures that must work towards establishing institutions of democratic civilian rule. South Africa calls for the resolution of all conflicts in a peaceful manner and in ways that mitigate damage and loss of life. South Africa and other countries in Africa and the Global South have come under pressure to take a particular view on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Like many other countries, we have taken a non-aligned position and have consistently called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue. South Africa will continue to assert its right to freely conduct our international relations according to our own principles and interests.

We should continue to seek cordial and constructive relations with all countries, and work to strengthen and transform institutions of global governance. Later this year, South Africa will be hosting the BRICS Summit. We will use this important platform to advance our developmental objectives as a country and a continent. As we mark Workers Day this year, we know that life is difficult for the workers of our country. We are faced with many challenges. But we also know what needs to be done to overcome these challenges and are taking the steps we must take to rebuild our economy, create jobs and reduce

Mapaila alluded that "On this May Day, the South African Communist Party (SACP) salutes the workers who stood up in the history of our country to organise themselves into progressive trade unions, to wage the historic struggle against the exploitative system of capitalist production, its racist and sexist articulations, and its forms of oppression and domination - notably colonialism, apartheid and imperialism. May Day originates from the general strikes by militant workers in Chicago, the United States of America, in 1886.

This month marks the 137th anniversary of that historic struggle, notably including the battle for the reduction of the ordinary working-day to eight hours. Today, we pay tribute to those workers, against whom the imperialist regime of the USA reacted violently and later by legislative means to cripple May Day. In the history of our country, the role played by the Communist Party in building the progressive trade union movement, in supporting and in taking part in the struggles the progressive trade union movement led, is unmatched. For example, African mineworkers embarked on a widespread strike in 1946, unseen in the history of our country, with the active involvement of communist cadres at the core. Nearly 100,000 workers took part in the strike, which brought down operations at 13 mines either completely or in part. We therefore



Families of martyrs of the COSATU 2003 Bus Disaster are receiving COSATU blankets

also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the countless communist leaders and grassroots activists who took part in worker organisation and just struggles in the history of our country. The apartheid oppressors reacted by imposing the Suppression of Communism Act, in 1950, to ban the Communist Party and any communist activity in our country. This made our Party to be the first political organisation to be banned in South Africa. The oppressors went further, widening the scope of their bloody enforcement of the draconian law. Armed with the support of the capitalist bosses who stood to benefit, the oppressors strengthened their decades-long prohibition of the organisation of black workers into trade unions continuing with racial segregation.

They also used the Suppression of Communism Act to suppress our wider liberation struggle. As a result, many worker activists and stalwarts of our liberation struggle found themselves arrested. Others were detained without trial. Others were sentenced to prison. Others were executed on the gallows. Others were assassinated inside and outside our country. To this day, we still have families who do not know what happened to their loved ones, whose whereabouts remain unknown because of the oppressors' deeds. Let us strengthen and broaden worker unity, defend our hard-won gains and deepen the emancipatory struggle. As the history of our country makes it clear, the recognition in our constitution and the elaboration in our labour law of workers' rights did not come as a favour.

The workers had to organise themselves into progressive trade unions, build their own power, wage the struggle for the recognition of the workers' rights on a non-racial and non-sexist basis, and form part of our broader political struggle for liberation and social emancipation."

Mapaila said "Today, perhaps more than in the past, we need the unity of organised workers and the working-class at large. This is the core of our message today. It is through organising the unorganised and forging maximum unity of organised workers, and the working-class at large, that we can successfully roll back the neoliberal agenda that undermines collective bargaining. The SACP takes this opportunity to reiterate its solidarity with the workers who were dismissed by MAKRO, with their union SACCAWU, and with all the workers who are engaged in collective bargaining and their trade unions across the economy, in both the public and private sectors.

We cannot overemphasise the importance of unity as the weapon of victory, comrades. As the SACP, we have committed ourselves to strengthen our efforts to deepen and widen working-class organisation, unity and power, including through forging a popular left front. This has become necessary to move the national democratic revolution into a second, more radical phase, and to advance, deepen and defend the revolution towards the desired outcomes. The working-class needs to strengthen and exercise its independence at all times, including in situations where it

finds itself having to enter into alliances or broad fronts with others."

On Reconfiguration of the Alliance, Mapaila said "A policy change is critical if South Africa is to overcome the high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality affecting the working-class, and if we are to build new public electric power generation capacity—to make the provision of electricity uninterruptedly available to the people on a developmental basis. Entering into alliances or fronts with others should not compromise but should serve as part of the means to achieve the aims of the working-class. Our effort to secure the reconfiguration of the Alliance therefore aims to re-assert the aspirations of the working-class. The change in policy direction that we seek to achieve, having no interests of our own apart from the interests of the working-class, is essential as part of the reconfiguration of the Alliance. In particular, just to highlight a few principles:

- The reconfiguration must make neoliberal policy prescripts, including austerity, as well as state capture and other forms of corruption, a thing of the past.
- There must be thoroughly democratic, consensus-seeking consultation on both policy and the selection of those who should be chosen to implement it in the state at all levels, with Alliance inclusivity a key criterion in both.
- Instead of accountability only to one Alliance component, there must be accountability to the Alliance under the principle of collective leadership,

with common discipline.

- The Alliance must truly function as a political centre of our shared strategy, the National Democratic Revolution, towards the attainment of all the goals of the Freedom Charter, and not least the economic goals.

"Gender-based violence and criminality in general are among the stubborn challenges that the working-class needs to confront through maximum unity. Women in the workplace and the economy still face different forms of gender discrimination and abuse, including gender-based violence, as it is still the case in other areas of societal activity.

This must come to an end through the common effort of women and men workers both as sisters and brothers and united as a class in pursuit of a non-sexist society. In the community and elsewhere across society, criminality in general has become the order of the day. This has reached a point where criminality destroys existing investment and discourages new investment, affecting employment creation for unemployed workers in a society ravaged by an unemployment crisis. We cannot overemphasise the importance of united action by the working-class to fight crime and for a decisive state action against criminality", concluded Mapaila.



Provincial | May Day | Celebrations

COSATU leaders joined by ANC Secretary General Fikile Mbalula in Barberton, Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga-Lily mine, Barberton

COSATU General Secretary, Solly Phetoe said “We are coming here to pledge our solidarity with the families of Yvonne Mnisi, Pretty Nkambule and Solomon Nyirenda who were trapped when part of the mine collapsed and caved into the old underground mine. The bereaved families and members of the public are still seeking answers to what happened on that fateful day. COSATU will stand head ad shoulder with them to ensure justice is delivered. During this May Day celebrations, the aim is not only to build a strong organisation but to ensure maximum unity of the working class. We are dedicated to fostering a spirit of solidarity and cooperation amongst all unions, inside and outside of COSATU.

We are pleased with the work being done by our Affiliates to build unity on the ground across unions and across Federations. We applaud the work being done by NUM, SATAWU and SACTWU for leading from the front. COSATU has been working hand in hand with our sister Federations at NEDLAC. Whilst

we applaud these efforts at building unity, we are deeply concerned at the divisions affecting organised labour at the public service bargaining council. We are equally concerned by the divisions and internal in fighting bleeding some of our affiliates, especially some of our smaller unions.”

The African National Congress Secretary General, Fikile Mbalula said ‘we offer our sympathises with the families of the three [3] miners who were victims of the collapse of a container in 2016, and it is our desire to see this painful matter being resolved. The accident was caused by the failure of a crown pillar at the mine. Mbalula said “The ANC salutes COSATU and millions of workers in our country on the occasion of the commemoration of May Day. We celebrate the role played by the labour movement in the global struggle against inequality. The ANC remains the political home for the overwhelming majority of workers.”

SACP 1st Deputy General Secretary, Madala Masuku said “Let us strengthen and broaden worker unity, defend

our hard-won gains and deepen the emancipatory struggle. As the history of our country makes it clear, the recognition in our constitution and the elaboration in our labour law of workers’ rights did not come as a favour. The workers had to

workers’ rights on a non-racial and non-sexist basis, and form part of our broader political struggle for liberation and social emancipation.

Eastern Cape-Orient Theatre, East London



COSATU leaders joined by ANC National Chairperson, Gwede Mantashe at the Orient Theatre, East London, Eastern Cape

organise themselves into progressive trade unions, build their own power, wage the struggle for the recognition of the

Today, perhaps more than in the past, we need the unity of organised workers and the working-class at large.

This is the core of our message today.” COSATU CEC member, SACCAWU 2nd Deputy President Mike Tau addressing workers at the Orient Theatre, in East London said “Comrades, our challenges are many, workers rights and human dignity in various spheres of society, the arrogance of capital and employers, with the Makro case as an example, where workers organised under our affiliate, SACCAWU is facing a titanic battle in defence of workers, and the federation has resolved to launch National Boycott of all Makro Stores until workers demands are met. The odds are great and the solutions lay in our hands. If we are united, we are on the ground, we are campaigning, we are recruiting and defending workers, then we will be victorious. We cannot afford to fail workers. Let us leave today, re-energized, and more determined than ever to unite workers, build COSATU, and wage relentless working-class battles.”

ANC National Chairperson, Gwede Mantashe said “Today, we will join organised workers under the banner of COSATU not only to celebrate and commemorate the Workers’ Day, but to pay homage to the struggles, sacrifices, and achievements of organised workers in our country and beyond borders. The choices we make today can either make the alliance succeed in its mission or collapse it. As we engage on the challenges facing the movement, including the reconfiguration of the alliance, we must appreciate that there will be disagreements. Ours is an Alliance of independent parties. Therefore, the proposed reconfiguration of the alliance must strengthen the independence of all alliance components. We must appreciate that a strong and united alliance is as important as the workers interests.

ANC will continue to work for strategic unity among all alliance components in pursuit of a national democratic society. We appeal to all alliance partners not to surrender this movement to those who want it fractured for their own nefarious reasons. We must urgently convene an alliance summit to develop a unified programme & strengthen cohesive messaging that will generate hope for a more inclusive, just, equitable, and sustainable future for our country.

Our determination to seek negotiated solutions will make us succeed. Government is working with the necessary speed to resolve loadshedding in the short-to-medium term through the improvement of EAF, emergency procurement of additional power, purchasing power beyond our borders, and improving skills capacity at Eskom.”

SACP Central Committee deployee, Comrade Phumzile Mnguni, said “We want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the countless communist leaders and grassroots activists who took part in

worker organisation and just struggles in the history of our country. The apartheid oppressors reacted by imposing the Suppression of Communism Act, in 1950, to ban the Communist Party and any communist activity in our country. This made our Party to be the first political organisation to be banned in South Africa. The oppressors went further, widening the scope of their bloody enforcement of the draconian law. Let us strengthen and broaden worker unity, defend our hard-won gains and deepen

this organisation of the people. We have a mandate to grow membership and continue to fight for a majority representation in all bargaining forums and sectors. We need to adjust our recruitment strategy and embark on an uninterrupted campaign to recruit workers both in the public and private sectors. We need to understand the total number of non-unionised workers in all economic sectors. We have a goal of attaining 50+1 majority in all councils and chambers.”

oriented federation of trade unions. Let us support and salute SAMWU for fighting against the unconstitutional provisions in the Municipal Systems Amendment Act that undermine municipal workers’ constitutional rights to freedom of political association.”

SACP Central Committee Member, Tinyiko Ntini said “Today, perhaps more than in the past, we need the unity of organised workers and the working-class at large. This is the core of our message today.

It is through organising the unorganised and forging maximum unity of organised workers, and the working-class at large, that we can successfully roll back the neoliberal agenda that undermines collective bargaining. The SACP takes this opportunity to reiterate its solidarity with the workers who were dismissed by MAKRO, with their union SACCAWU, and with all the workers who are engaged in collective bargaining and their trade unions across the economy, in both the

public and private sectors. We cannot overemphasise the importance of unity as the weapon of

Gauteng-Saulsville Arena, Tshwane



COSATU 1st Deputy President Mike Shingange leading the singing of Nkosi sikelele iAfrika at the Saulsville Arena in Tshwane

the emancipatory struggle.” The May Day celebrations commenced smoothly at the Saulsville Arena in Tshwane with messages of support from the ANC Deputy President Paul Mashatile and the SACP National Treasurer Joyce Moloi Moropa. Other speakers were Gauteng Premier, Mr. Panyaza Lesufi and the Embassy of Palestine. Addressing the masses, COSATU 1st Deputy President Mike Shingange reiterated that “We cannot afford such distractions. Workers cannot afford to be divided when we are under siege. When workers are divided, they will be defeated. When unions are distracted and weakened by divisions, the employers will be victorious.

It is easy for us to deceive ourselves into thinking some of our unions are immune from divisions. None of them are immune from divisions. We must cherish, defend, and constantly invest in our unity. It is our key weapon as we wage working class struggles. The COSATU 2035 plan constitutes the long-term goals of the working class, so the tactical choices we make now in the federation and broad movement must be informed by our long-term goals.

We cannot afford to be short-sighted. The Congress instructed us to ensure that we remember and honour our past revolutionary struggles like the 1973 Durban Strikes from both the trade union movement and other revolutionary organisations. This is important in the history and struggle of the working class as it reminds us of our role in building

COSATU CEC member, SADTU President Magope Maphila addressing

Limpopo-Mapodile Stadium, Steelport



COSATU Limpopo May Day celebrations at Mapodile Sports Ground in Tubatse

workers and communities around Mapodile areas said, “We remain inspired by how many of our affiliates are busy asserting their presence all across the sectors of our economy since the last May Day. We have seen Makro workers at Massmart under SACCAWU, Eskom and Sibanye workers under NUM, Transnet and Putco workers under SATAWU, and Public service workers under our various unions. It is this uncompromising attitude and fearless character by our affiliates that act to re-affirm the character of COSATU as a militant, radical, and class-

victory, comrades. As the SACP, we have committed ourselves to strengthen our efforts to deepen and widen working-class organisation, unity and power, including through forging a popular left front. This has become necessary to move the national democratic revolution into a second, more radical phase, and to advance, deepen and defend the revolution towards the desired outcomes.”

The African National Congress was represented by National Executive Member, David Mahlobo.



KwaZulu-Natal-Curries Fountain Stadium, Durban

COSATU Deputy General Secretary, Gerald Twala was deployed at the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial May Day at the Curries Fountain Stadium in Durban

Gerald Twala said “We have a political mandate to continue the fight to improve working-class conditions and working with the South African Communist Party, we must ensure that we defeat the capitalist system. We have the mandate to rebuild the Alliance and help the ANC with its process of renewal. We must remain cognisant of the current challenges in our judicial system and the role played by our courts as they continuously take decisions that favour employers.

They blocked a Bank strike by COSATU/ SASBO. They supported the government in abandoning Resolution 1 of 2018 in the public service. Our federation is expected to take an active part in mobilizing structures that share the common goal of changing the world.



The second Provincial May Day in KwaZulu-Natal was held at the Esikhaleni TVET College and was addressed by Alliance partners encouraging workers to be united to fight against exploitation and rising cost of living.

Western Cape-Bellville at the University of Western Cape



COSATU National Treasurer Freda Oosthuysen delivering a keynote address at the University of Western Cape at Bellville on May 1

We have a responsibility to build the trade union movement in the continent of Africa. In playing our significant part in international solidarity we will step up our campaign in Swaziland to assist the Swazi people to obtain their freedom." A message from the African National Congress [ANC] was delivered by the 1st Deputy General Secretary Nomvula Mokonyane and the SACP Deputy was represented by the National Chairperson, Thulas Nxesi.

COSATU 2nd Deputy President, Comrade Duncan Luvuno addressing the massive number of workers gathered at the Colridge stadium in Vryburg on May 1 said "We should prioritize organizational discipline emanating from the 14th National Congress. The issue of unity is sacrosanct and as workers we have two weapons at our disposal; and the first one is unity. If we are not united, employers will exploit that gap to our disadvantage, and we need to avoid distractions as the working class. When

unions are weak, the federation will be weak. We must never think it is going to be an easy ride. We must eradicate arrogance within our ranks and listen to workers at every workplace."

SACP Central Committee Member, Slovo Majola said "We need to build a left from to push back against neoliberal regimes to scale down the cost of food, eradicate violent crimes. We must work together with other Federations and launch a campaign in defense of our rights and also collective bargaining. We must ensure we end loadshedding in South Africa as it slows down economic growth. Happy May Day, COSATU Happy May Day." The ANC was represented by the National Executive Member, Comrade Soviet Lekganyane.

COSATU National Treasurer Freda Oosthuysen delivered the keynote message at the May Day in the Western Cape held at Bellville at the University of Western Cape. Freda Oosthuysen said "As a Federation, we

can all be proud of our achievements over the past couple of years as we set our sights on accomplishing some of the still outstanding tasks ahead. this federation of Elijah Barayi is alive and well. We have led strategic battles for the working class on issues such as the National Minimum Wage, including changes to the Unemployment Insurance Fund Act. We are busy fighting corruption and looting at UIF. We welcome the recent promulgation of the Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act which will extend coverage to 900 000 domestic workers and expand the rights and protections of all workers.

The Employment Equity Amendment Act has been signed into law by the President and requires that all companies wanting to do business with the state must be in full compliance with the Employment Equity Act and the National Minimum Wage Act. This will be a powerful incentive for employers to abide by our labour laws. We are pushing for workers to have Early

Access to their pensions - Treasury has committed to fast-tracking and tabling the necessary legislative amendments that will address COSATU's proposals at Parliament in June and October 2023. COSATU will continue to push Treasury and Parliament to ensure these bills are passed by Parliament by December 2023. This is critical to ensuring that we meet the implementation date of 1 March 2024 when workers can access a portion of their pension funds."

The African National Congress was represented by the National Executive Member, Barbara Creecy and the SACP was represented by the 2nd Deputy General Secretary David Masondo. Various artists performed for the masses as part of celebrating the revolutionary contributions of the creative arts during the liberation struggle.

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SANAC Chairperson and Deputy President launch the 5th National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs

Deputy President Paul Mashatile, in his capacity as Chairperson of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), led the official commemoration of World TB Day

"Yes, we can conquer TB,"
"Yes, TB is curable! And"
"Yes! You and I (Together) Can End TB."

With the World Tuberculosis Day commemorative events held across the globe, the National Department of Health in South Africa together with the People Living with HIV [PLHIV] sector took to the streets of Yizo-Yizo, an informal settlement in Tlhabane, for a door to door and service delivery operation and most importantly health education and TB screening led by Deputy President Paul Mashatile, in his capacity as Chairperson of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) before the TB Day commemoration at the Tlhabane Stadium on the 24th of March 2023.

Delivering a Keynote address, SANAC Chairperson, Deputy President Paul

Mashatile during the launch of the National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs, at Tlhabane Stadium, in Rustenburg elaborated alluded that 'we can defeat TB by 2030.' Efforts to end the global epidemic warrants collaborative efforts by citizens!

Mashatile appearing on his first official event after being appointed as the Deputy President said "We are pleased to launch today the fifth National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs for the period 2023 to 2028 as adopted by Cabinet. The new NSP is a blueprint and roadmap for a multi-sectoral, people-centred approach to eliminate HIV, TB and STIs as public health threats by 2030. It

emphasises the need to break down barriers and maximise equitable and equal access to services, through resilient and integrated health systems, to guarantee the health and social protection of all South Africans."

"The successful implementation of this NSP will require strong governance and leadership, and the involvement of all sectors of society including government, business, organised labour, civil society, development partners, research institutions and communities in general."

- Goal 1: To break down barriers to achieving HIV, TB and STIs solutions.
- Goal 2: To maximise equitable and equal access to HIV, TB and STIs services and solutions.
- Goal 3: To build resilient systems for HIV, TB and STIs that are integrated into systems for health, social protection, and pandemic response.
- Goal 4: To fully resource and sustain an efficient NSP led by revitalised, inclusive, and accountable institutions

Mashatile said "Work has already begun to give effect to these goals. the South African National AIDS Council, SANAC is leading several activities as part of the NSP rollout."

"One of them is the year-long Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Campaign – aimed at sustained and impactful messaging and demand creation for reproductive health services, information about STI transmission, condom use, availability of family planning services and availability of ground-breaking

HIV prevention tools such as the newer Dapivirine Ring as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). Another project in the pipeline is the Treatment Literacy Framework aimed at improving treatment adherence, eliminating stigma & discrimination, promoting health seeking behaviour and enhancing treatment uptake. This is important to ensure that individuals on antiretroviral therapy remain virally suppressed so that they can enjoy a good quality of life. Most importantly, when the viral load is undetectable, HIV cannot be passed onto one's sexual partner."

"SANAC is also preparing for the launch of the "Situation Room" – a cutting-edge data visualisation and analytics platform that provides up-to-date multi-sectoral data in an easy-to-use format to support evidence-based decision making and planning. Another critical signature initiative by SANAC is the continued effort to strengthen the Provincial AIDS Councils. The core objective of all this work, is to pave the way for the successful implementation of the NSP. The NSP 2023-2028 calls upon all of us to build consensus and drive a well-coordinated, unified response to the three epidemics over a five-year period. We must also be cognisant of the fact that this is the last NSP ahead of the 2030 target of ending HIV and TB as a public health threat, and we dare not fail."

Mashatile concluded that "Drawing lessons from previous NSPs, the COVID-19 pandemic and current epidemiological trends, the new NSP is considerably more radical in

its own right. It is pandemic-ready to guard against unknown future disruptions similar to those caused by COVID-19. It recognises the need to strengthen health systems, it has an expanded scope for the management of sexually transmitted infections. It recognises the need to scale up mental health services and social support based on interlinkages between HIV, TB, and STIs with other social challenges such as gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), human rights violations and inequalities.

It was drafted through an extensive public consultation in all nine provinces by bringing together multiple stakeholders, key populations, vulnerable groups, academics and ordinary people from all walks of life. Every input was carefully considered and integrated into the final product, the NSP 2023-2028 that we are launching today."

"SANAC will coordinate the implementation of the NSP as mandated by Cabinet; however, its successful implementation lies with all of us. It is about our lives, how we protect it, how we prolong it, how we value it and how we improve it. Let us work together to ensure that this NSP is one of the last in our times."

Other prominent dignitaries attending the launch were the US Consul General in South Africa, Mr Vincent Spera, UNAIDS South Africa Country Director, Ms Eva Kiwango; WHO Country Director, Dr. Owen Kahlua, and leaders of Inter-Faith Communities. ■

Trade union and collective bargaining structures are essential in coordinating and managing the transition **TOWARDS A JUST LOW-CARBON FUTURE**

Climate change is no longer perceived as a peripheral environmental issue in domestic and global policy discussions. The adverse socioeconomic and ecological impacts of climate shocks are well documented, especially in the Global South. Governments, private sector organisations, trade unions and other civil society groups acknowledge that climate change should feature prominently in political economy policy negotiations. Deliberations on economy-wide structural reforms thus include climate change-related mitigation and adaptation strategies. A prominent policy proposition in these discussions is expanding the use of technologies supporting climate change mitigation policies in countries. The technologies will produce positive socioeconomic and ecological policy outcomes in the long run.

However, it is equally important to acknowledge that increased uptake of AI-driven digital and low-carbon technologies will exacerbate the long-standing structural challenges facing worker organisations and collective bargaining structures used to represent employee interests. We aim to explore this theme in just transition public policy debates and develop some policy insights for worker organisations, government regulators and business stakeholders. Two core questions inform our interests in this area: What worker organising strategies are required to adapt to low-carbon economic restructuring? How will the just transition impact worker representation and collective bargaining structures? These questions are inherently linked because trade union organising strategies have a significant impact on collective bargaining institutions. They determine the categories of worker representation and which socioeconomic issues are prioritised when engaging employers. A prominent policy proposition in these discussions is expanding the

use of technologies supporting climate change mitigation policies in countries. The technologies will produce positive socioeconomic and ecological policy outcomes in the long run. However, it is equally important to acknowledge that increased uptake of AI-driven digital and low-carbon technologies will exacerbate the long-standing structural challenges facing worker organisations and collective bargaining structures used to represent employee interests. We aim to explore this theme in just transition public policy debates and develop some policy insights for worker organisations, government regulators and business stakeholders.

Two core questions inform our interests in this area: What worker organising strategies are required to adapt to low-carbon economic restructuring? How will the just transition impact worker representation and collective bargaining structures? These questions are inherently linked because trade union organising strategies have a significant impact on collective bargaining institutions. They determine the categories of worker representation and which socioeconomic issues are prioritised when engaging employers. The first part of the essay addresses worker organising and advocacy strategies, while the second focuses on collective bargaining and its connections to industrial relations. Our aim is to provide a generic framework covering these two areas in the context of labour market and industrial relations shifts in a just transition. We primarily aim to set out some essential just transition guidelines and not a detailed prescriptive list of policy recommendations.

These guidelines focus on workers and the labour movement, yet government authorities and employer organisations need to deliberate on the guidelines because collective bargaining affects all three social partners. The proposed guidelines highlight the centrality of managing disruptive labour market shifts and subsequent

impacts on collective bargaining equitably, with an emphasis on inclusive worker organising and collective bargaining practices.

Worker organising

Khwezi Mabasa and Crispin Chinguno argue that worker organising strategies cannot be separated from fundamental structural changes in sectors across the economy. These structural shifts impact wages, social security benefits, employment contracts and overall industrial relations. Thus – as outlined in Cosatu's 2012 policy document, *A Just Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Economy: A Call to Action* – trade union organising in the context of just transition economic restructuring requires evidence-based analysis of the intersecting relationship linking sector production changes, trade union recruitment, organising practices and worker representation. A practical starting point is using case-study literature and policy evidence on emerging technologies shaping South Africa's low-carbon economy to understand employment patterns across value chains. Several reports discuss data on existing and future labour dynamics in the country's renewable energy sector.

Other sources highlight employment trends in a hydrogen economy driven by platinum group metals, an economy early in its production and innovation life cycle. For example, the independent power producers note that South Africa's Renewable Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme created 59,071 employment opportunities by 2021 (measured in job years).

Mistra reports on the implementation of several hydrogen economy pilot projects in the mining, energy, construction and automotive sectors. These projects illustrate that employment creation and skills development can expand rapidly in a low-carbon economy transition if supported by adequate policy measures aimed at producing socioeconomic

multiplier effects. In addition, the findings identify building local value chains, increasing low-carbon energy demand and domestic manufacturing as critical to job creation in a just transition. What is missing in these accounts are the lived experiences of South Africans who have accessed employment opportunities in these emerging sectors, especially workers in low-skill occupations and targeted community beneficiaries. Worker organisers need support in developing training, negotiation and policy education capabilities to map employment dynamics in these nascent sectors holistically. This includes examining wage trends, the nature of employment contracts, working conditions and union density.

Trade union education, sector-specific policy training and learning from workers' experiential narratives are crucial factors in this process. The combination of researched evidence and learning from workers' lived experiences lays a solid basis for developing adaptive organising strategies that are anchored in "decent work" labour market policy frameworks.

The groundwork has been established in South Africa's trade union movement advocacy through worker-affiliated policy training and research institutes, such as the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (Naledi). It needs to be developed further by using sector-specific worker surveys, experiential learning and dedicated support programmes for worker organisers. An additional dimension of worker organising in a just transition context is linking labour market and social policy interventions. Changes in the production structure of economies always produce positive and adverse socioeconomic externalities. One of the major concerns in the South African context is the potential loss of employment and livelihoods as a result of various low-carbon and digital economy policy interventions. The trade union movement is currently deliberating on several policy propositions that can ameliorate negative

labour market and livelihood impacts.

Several policy solutions connecting labour market and social policy advocacy in a just transition deserve attention. A universal basic income grant is one example, since it can provide transitional social security for displaced workers and create a “safety net for communities hard hit by the varied and cumulative effects of climate shocks”. This social transfer can be complemented by other social policy interventions, such as improved access to skills training suited to future wage employment or alternative livelihood pathways in a low-carbon economy. The latter includes non-wage alternatives, such as worker cooperatives and community-owned enterprises.

Last, trade union organising and worker representation in a just transition must protect the socioeconomic rights of different categories of workers. The transition towards a low-carbon economy will deepen existing labour market disparities if not managed equitably. Several sources illuminate the extensive labour fragmentation produced by structural changes in labour markets over the past three decades. A significant trend is the expansion of atypical employment, which is markedly different from standard employment relationships. Atypical work undermines decent-work labour frameworks because it leads to decreased employment security, low incomes and minimal access to social security and collective bargaining. Naledi’s 2015 report, *Cosatu Workers’ Surveys of 2006 and 2012: What Do They Tell Us?*, highlights that workers in non-standard employment have significantly less access to trade union representation and contend with more exploitation than their counterparts.

An additional area overlooked in just transition labour market policy debates is the role of informal workers, who play a significant role in waste management, recycling and other sectors which contribute to the low-carbon economy. Yet their socioeconomic rights and roles in the emerging low-carbon economy are marginalised. Recent conservative estimates suggest that South Africa’s informal sector employs close to three million people, mainly in retail, construction, social services and transport. It is essential to include this category of workers when deliberating on future labour market policies in a low-carbon economy.

The points on inclusive labour market structures illuminate the overall proposition for adaptive changes in worker organising strategies and collective bargaining, which protect different categories of workers in pursuit of decent work.

Rethinking collective bargaining

Collective bargaining and social dialogue are essential for decent work, industrial relations stability, labour protection and enhanced welfare benefits for workers. The transition of workers to a low-carbon economy will require strengthened collective bargaining institutions and social dialogue to ensure at-risk workers materially benefit from a just transition.

Labour market shifts in a just transition towards a low-carbon economy necessitate coordination and integration between environmental legislation (which prioritises

decarbonisation – the Climate Change Bill) and employment legislation (which prioritises labour standards and wages – the Labour Relations Act and Basic Conditions of Employment Act).

Industrial relations institutions have the institutional capacity to deconstruct the trade-offs between workers and the environment, empowering workers’ capacity to respond to long-standing environmental standards.

The Italian experience provides a case study in which industrial relations institutions such as trade unions and employer associations have prioritised a decarbonisation agenda, with the incorporation of environmental sustainability in industrialisation observed for the past two decades. The results have been mixed across sectors, regions and firms because of regional variables and other constraints over and above the policy positions of unions or employer associations. Since the early 2000s many firms in Italy have undergone structural transformation to convert from fossil fuel energy to renewable energy production. In some cases this has been successful, with limited negative socioeconomic impacts on workers and communities, while in others the negative impact on jobs and the communities has been significant.

Substantive trade union and community organisation participation in decarbonisation processes has been identified as a key component in reducing the adverse socioeconomic impacts of decarbonisation. Participation has been driven by convergent forces – the escalation of the climate crises and the adoption of binding climate agreements at UN and EU level, as well as the need to respond to Italy’s National Energy Strategy, which will result in a transition from coal by many companies. Labour market shifts produced in the low-carbon economy transition could cause industrial relations conflict. South Africa’s labour market responses to previous economic structural shifts have not been favourable to workers, with a rise in atypical employment and other forms of short-time work in the past three decades. Paul Benjamin laments strategies adopted by South African employers to limit workers’ labour law protections through the adoption of short-time contracts, independent contracting and labour broking.

These strategies create indirect, non-conventional employee-employer relationships that subvert labour legislation and minimise access to trade union representation. Several sector case studies illustrate how industrial relations conflict increases when trade union organising and collective bargaining structures fail to adapt to structural changes in the economy. Platinum belt mining and the South African Post Office are key examples.

A consensus position on the centrality of collective bargaining in managing economic restructuring equitably is beginning to emerge. However, declining union density has the potential to weaken collective bargaining. In the context of declining trade union density, John Kelly calls for an alternative collective bargaining practice, one that shifts from the conventional thinking of institutionalised bargaining towards inclusive worker mobilisation that builds capacity to strengthen

diverse employee representation. The mobilisation theory holds that for workers to act collectively they must believe that their current working conditions are unjust, share a similar grievance with fellow workers, agree that the employer is responsible for addressing the grievance and pursue collective agency to address the collective grievance. With the impact of climate crises on water supply, food prices and workers’ purchasing power, workers are more likely to organise and create the needed agency to mobilise collectively, as Kelly suggests. The principle of extending collective bargaining agreements to non-unionised workers is beginning to gain traction in industrial relations. The European Union has been able to extend collective agreements to non-unionised workers and informal sector workers. Thorsten Schulten and colleagues identify two approaches to extending collective agreements to non-parties.

The first involves the extension of collective bargaining agreements to non-unionised workers in companies affiliated with the employers association negotiating an agreement, with the aim of preventing companies from discriminating between organised and non-organised workers. The second approach would extend collective bargaining to non-affiliated companies; this is usually done through declarations of general application and amendment to legislation which will apply to all firms. The second approach is desirable to address the labour rights of informal and formal atypical workers in the just transition. Workers in non-standard employment are unlikely to benefit from standard collective bargaining, even in its extended form. Françoise Carré and colleagues articulate the barriers to entry for informal workers and highlight the importance of legal frameworks to provide a sense of bargaining power.

The best example of such a legal framework is the promulgation of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) Act after considering proposals from Cosatu and other trade union federations in the National Economic Development and Labour Council. The NMW legislation was particularly important for reducing the poverty levels and vulnerability of farm and domestic workers. The promulgation of the NMW illustrates how inclusive approaches to worker representation and rights advocacy can reduce the exploitation of workers who are not parties to a collective bargaining structure.

This principle should be equally applied in a just transition context, emphasising a transition legal framework which connects labour and environmental laws aimed at creating decent jobs, environmental sustainability and stable industrial relations. A just transition to a low-carbon economy hinges on the ability to develop adequate regulatory measures that address market failures and externalities that accompany economic restructuring processes.

Collective bargaining has secured decent work and a healthy working environment for employees over the years. The just transition will only be realised through the explicit integration of labour and environmental protection through collective bargaining and

social partnerships. The extension of collective bargaining will ensure greater coverage of workers regardless of their type of employment or worker organisation affiliation. However, collective bargaining in a just transition will only ensure the needs of the employer (or capital) and labour; other mechanisms must be explored to ensure a just transition for communities affected by a transition to a low-carbon economy. Trade unions must adopt proactive just transition strategies for the future. As Béla Galgóczi observes, this can be achieved through strategies developed by trade unions to drive the just transition agenda. Labour market transitions, social and labour plans and pathway management to decent jobs are essential components of the strategies that trade unions must develop.

This essay has developed some primary guidelines for managing low-carbon economy structural changes equitably, focusing specifically on inclusive trade union and worker organising and collective bargaining strategies. Historic economic restructuring experiences in South Africa have produced industrial relations conflict, labour market disparities and socioeconomic exclusion. We have posited interventions to avoid this path dependency in the emerging low-carbon economy, drawing from literature and surveys on worker experiences. Trade union organising and collective bargaining structures are essential factors in coordinating and managing the transition towards a just low-carbon future.

Both these practices must be inclusive to lessen socioeconomic exclusion and long-standing labour market disparities.

This necessitates interventions that emphasise coordination of the labour market with social and environmental policy. Additionally, it is imperative to obtain and study labour market lessons from the existing low-carbon technologies being introduced in South Africa. An active labour market response cannot be developed without learning from worker experience in emerging sectors.

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This essay series has been produced by the Presidential Climate Commission Secretariat and New Climate Economy, with support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The interpretations and findings set forth in the essays are the authors’ alone. This essay is part of a series exploring the challenges and opportunities relating to a just transition in South Africa, with a focus on enhancing resilience in ways that improve lives and livelihoods. It is being published in the lead-up to the Presidential Climate Commission’s multi-stakeholder just transition conference on 5 and 6 May 2022.

'Eskom is redefining a better future with zero loadshedding'

-NUM's view on the visits to ESKOM Power Stations by the electricity Minister Kgosientsho

Medupi Power Station is a green-fields coal-fired power plant located West of Lephalale, Limpopo Province

Loadshedding is implemented to protect the national electricity network by balancing supply and demand. Failure to maintain this balance means that the national grid will shut down completely leaving the entire country will be blacked out indefinitely. The government declared its commitment to improving the capacity at power stations in order to increase availability of electricity. The newly appointed Minister of Electricity, Dr. Kgosientsho Ramogopha in South Africa went about visiting power stations such as Kusile, Tutuka, Camden, Lethabo, Ankeling OCGT, Koeberg and Medupi. Medupi Power Station currently has a Energy Availability Factor (EAF) of 70% and as it stands, is one of the best performing power stations currently on the electricity grid.

Malekutu Bizzah Motubatse, NUM Highveld Regional Chairperson, wrote that 'The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) Highveld Region regards the visits to power stations by the Electricity Minister Kgosientsho Ramogopha as long overdue and necessary.'

'As the NUM, we are hopeful that the visits are part of the Minister introducing himself to the workers. It is important that the Minister should spend time at those power stations because that is where the loadshedding problems are happening. Loadshedding is implemented as a result of the Power

Stations that are not performing due to trips and half loads.'

'But as the NUM Highveld Region we are categorically and emphatically disagreeing with the Minister's version that corruption in Eskom does not play any role towards the persisting loadshedding. The reasons behind the tripping of Units is because of the sub-standards spares that are being bought with prices that are colluded and ballooned. Most of the service providers in Eskom use more than one companies to bid for a contract, those companies are belonging to one individual, they are called cover quotes, that is where real corruption is happening in cahoots with some Eskom employees.'

'Some of the spares are paid and never arrive at the Power Stations or are immediately removed from sites through corrupt activities. We were of the view that before the Minister could speak about corruption he would have dedicate his time by engaging with the NUM so that we can assist him in curbing naked corruption that is happening on a daily basis. The NUM want to equally applaud its members that are working tirelessly to try curb the loadshedding challenges. No citizen of this country must be subjected to continuous loadshedding.'

'Lastly, we applaud the Eskom management for finally listening to us by removing the former General Manager of

Tutuka power station. The General Manager was one of the many reasons the country was subjected to persistent loadshedding. The General Manager's focus was on his personal safety as he was always obsessed with wearing bullet proof as opposed to generating electricity.'

Meanwhile, the South African Cabinet welcomed the launch of the Resource Mobilisation Fund (RMF) by the Minister of Electricity in The Presidency, Dr Kgosientsho Ramogopha.

This collaboration between government and Business Unity South Africa seeks to provide resources and expertise to enable government to effectively implement the Energy Action Plan announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in July 2022 and the 2023 State of the Nation Address (SoNA) as an example of effective social compacting and continued confidence in South Africa. The RMF will boost the work of the National Energy Crisis Committee to achieve its goal of ending load-shedding in South Africa. Cabinet appealed to all stakeholders to contribute towards the implementation of the Energy Action Plan in order to tackle the heavy toll of load-shedding on the economy.

Cabinet noted the concerns raised recently by S&P Global Ratings that South Africa's economic growth was facing increasing pressure from infrastructure constraints,

particularly severe electricity shortages. To address this challenge, government has since embarked on a series of decisive actions, which include fiscal consolidation, rapid economic reforms and urgent actions aimed at reducing load-shedding in the short term and transforming the sector through market reforms to achieve long-term energy security.

Cabinet also welcomed the opening of a bid window for a 513 megawatts (MW) of battery storage capacity as part of strengthening our response to the energy challenge. The closing date for the bid submissions is 5 July 2023 at 17:00 and all interested parties can complete the online electronic registration form available at: [www.ipp-storage.co.za\(link is external\)](http://www.ipp-storage.co.za(link%20is%20external)). Cabinet also welcomed the decision by Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms Barbara Creecy, to grant Eskom an exemption from the lengthy process required to amend its Atmospheric Emission Licence.

According to Eskom, this exemption will enable it to implement a temporary solution to the damage at Kusile Power Station by November 2023 and thus allow the power station to resume generation capacity of 2 100 megawatts (MW) which will reduce South Africa's exposure to load-shedding by two levels.

Will localization be South Africa's economy saving grace?

ProudlySA opened opportunities for SMEs during the "Buy Local" Summit and Expo, which encouraged South Africans to support local businesses

Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams emphasized the critical importance of the regulatory environment, market access, financial inclusion and entrepreneurship development whilst engaging exhibitors

In the recent years, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) has emphasised the need to build on initiatives of economic reconstruction and recovery, and to improve the business environment for all companies by reducing red-tape across all spheres of government. The key priorities for the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), was to contribute to growing the economy, consequently creating jobs, and reducing poverty and inequality. The Department argued that this will be done by (i) attracting and retaining investment; (ii) facilitating increased localisation; (iii) increasing exports; and (iv) supporting regional integration, particularly capitalising on opportunities brought by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The sectoral master plans, localisation and beneficiation, spatial industrial development, regional integration, promotion of global trade, and the creation of a

conducive business environment are some of the mechanisms that the DTIC plans to implement to achieve this. The Proudly South Africa hosted the Buy Local Summit and Expo at the Sandton Convention Center on the 27-28 March 2023 under the Theme, "Growing the Economy and Creating Jobs through Localisation".

In her address, under the theme 'SMME Development through Localisation', the Minister of Small Business Development in South Africa, Hon Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams said "Our job as Government, working together with organizations like Proudly South Africa, is to enable their success. This Annual Buy Local Summit and Expo which is now in its 11th year, is a big step in the right direction. We are deeply proud of all the South African corporates and retailers that have taken a conscious decision to procure locally. We are also deeply proud of the small manufacturers and SMMEs exhibiting their world class

products. I firmly believe that our future prosperity as a country lies in the hands of our entrepreneurs".

"This 11th Annual Buy Local Summit and Expo is one of those critical events that showcases and celebrates our creativity and excellence. The Summit also creates awareness and educates citizens on the benefits of supporting and buying locally manufactured products. This campaign must be scaled up and sustained".

"Working together, we must ensure that government across the spheres procures consumables and services from local suppliers. We must encourage corporate South Africa to rethink their supply chains to accommodate local procurement. We must also intensify our work with corporates and state-owned companies to increase Enterprise Supplier Development opportunities for under-served SMMEs and co-operatives. We must ensure that more enterprises from townships and rural areas access supplier opportunities.

We must also ensure that more ESD funding goes to productive investment (in other words working capital and infrastructure) rather than just training".

"The partnership between the Department of Small Business Development and Proudly SA is very strategic. Proudly SA plays directly in the space of market creation, and in shifting consumer behaviour towards locally produced goods and services. This aligns directly with the Cabinet approved SMME and Co-operatives-focused "Localisation Policy Framework" that the Department is currently implementing".

Closing the Buy Local Summit at a Gala Dinner, the Deputy President, Hon Mashatile Paul said "You may recall that in 1998, President Nelson Mandela called a Presidential Jobs Summit under the auspices of NEDLAC to bring together all social partners and determine how jobs could be created within the

PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN BUY LOCAL SUMMIT AND EXPO



Thomas Mlambo, a Proudly South African contributor at ProudlySAflagship event, with fellow speakers Phathu Makwarela, Sibule Mabena, Mphile Shabala and Ntando Zikala at Sandton

South African economy. One of the interventions resulting from the 1998 Summit was the establishment of a 'Buy Local Campaign', a targeted initiative to encourage all sectors of society to support locally produced goods when making procurement decisions. This is what gave birth to Proudly South African, whose role and mandate is to lobby and advocate for increased procurement and consumption of locally made products and services. This campaign will help contribute to the companies that manufacture these products and provide services, while remaining operational, retaining the jobs they have created, potentially creating new opportunities, and ensuring meaningful economic growth."

"Additionally, we are pleased that the Proudly South African Buy Local Conference and Expo has successfully carried that baton by striving to teach, educate, and empower business owners to help them rebuild our economy. As South Africans, we must be proud of our locally produced goods and take the initiative to support the small businesses who produce them. We must make our products the first choice. Every local transaction has a ripple effect that extends beyond our comprehension. By purchasing locally produced food and other goods, consumers support their local economy, families,

communities, and promote the culture of entrepreneurship. Moreover, supporting local businesses can stimulate the local economy, since it redirects funds back into the community rather than into the coffers of ambiguous national chains and corporations. We have also observed that money circulated throughout a community has the potential to finance public infrastructure such as schools, libraries, roads, and parks. For this reason, as Government, during the 2018 Presidential Summit, together with our social partners, reaffirmed the commitment to localisation. We need to ensure that we support the investments being made in the country by improving the uptake of those products and services that will flow from these investments in new and existing production plants. This coincided with the investment drive that has been introduced at the time, including through the commitments made at the newly introduced SA Investment Conference."

"On the other hand, localisation can play a crucial role in achieving Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals of promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. By encouraging the use of local products in government contracts, we can create jobs in areas critical to economic growth, such as

manufacturing and agriculture, which have historically been vital to economic progress. We support local businesses because they offer the most significant untapped potential for growth, and economic transformation. Localisation can play a crucial role in achieving Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals of promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. By encouraging the use of local products in government contracts, we can create jobs in areas critical to economic growth, such as manufacturing and agriculture, which have historically been vital to economic progress.

We support local businesses because they offer the most significant untapped potential for growth, and economic transformation. Studies have shown that local businesses recirculate a more significant share of every Rand as they create locally owned supply chains and invest in their employees, something that needs our collective encouragement. We therefore call on businesses and other sectors of society that do procurement to support government policies that encourage and promote the localisation of supply chains. Organisations should change their inclusiveness and localisation delivery models to increase partnership

with the local market."

"We are pleased that the ProudlySA #BuyLocalSummit2023 has successfully carried that baton by striving to teach, educate, and empower business owners to help them rebuild our economy," concluded the Deputy President of South African, Hon Mashatile.

Enabling the country to attain the realization of the imperatives to address high unemployment, poverty and inequality; and the urgent need to improve economic performance, and achieve inclusive growth, rests with the formalization of all informal economic participants through Summits such the Buy Local Summit.

Reindustrialization in South Africa surely will deliver sustainable jobs and enhance sustainable livelihoods of ordinary masses towards building an inclusive economy and a capable state.

The event was addressed by various speakers such as Gauteng Premier Honourable Panyaza Lesufi; Proudly South African CEO, Mr. Eustace Mashimbye; SAREM representative, Mr. Gaylor Montmasson-Clair; a Comedian, TollAssMOthegamer; Dr Thomas Funke, CEO of SA Canegrowers; Mr Eddy Mokobodi, Director Solar PV Projects at Sakisa Energy & Technology Group and FEDUSA representative, Ms. Riefdah Ajam.



‘TB is curable’, says Freda Oosthuysen at the World TB Day

The Aurum Institute Exhibitors at the National Commemoration of #WorldTBDAY2023
at Tlhabane Stadium, Rustenberg, Bojanala District

Tuberculosis remains one of the leading causes of ill health and death globally. In 2020, 1.6 million people lost their lives to the disease. And it is concerning that South Africa is among the top 30 countries still burdened with the scourge of TB. In responding to decisive interventions, thousands of commuters around Tlhabane community in the North West gathered to commemorate the World Tuberculosis Day at the Tlhabane Stadium in Rustenberg, at Bojanala District on the 24th March 2023. Government reaffirmed its commitment to increasing awareness of TB in order to recover the lost ground during COVID-19 by fast-tracking the TB Recovery Plan implementation.

Throughout the week, under the Theme, “Yes! We Can End TB”, various activities were launched as part and parcel of the TB month with various government departments, private sector and civil society organizations to create a TB free world for future generations.

Other government-led outreach initiatives included dialogue with disabled community, LGBTQI+ community, young people, students, learners about their rights to healthcare services in

communities such as Yizoyizo, schools and workplaces at Impala mine.

At all the venues, TB screening, HIV testing, testing for diabetes, checking of blood pressure, eye testing, cancer screening and Covid-19 vaccinations were conducted.

The event was graced by, amongst others, Honourable Kaobitsa Maape, Premier of the North West Province, Minister of Health Dr Joe Phaahla, MEC of Health in North West Hon Madoda Sambatha, WHO Country Director, Dr. Owen Kahlua, House of Traditional leaders, Ms. Steve Letsike, the South African National AIDS Council, [SANAC] constituencies Chairperson, and Dr Tshegofatso Gopane, Private Sector Forum Chairperson.

According to exhibitors attached to The Aurum Institute, an organization dedicated to researching, supporting and implementing innovative, integrated and high impact programmes, to eradicate TB and HIV, shared that ‘every day, 4 100 people die from TB, and to prevent this disease, the #3HP regimen continues to stop latent TB infection with its higher rate of completion due to its 3-month duration. #YesWeCanEndTB through early tuberculosis identification

and increasing preventative methods to eliminate the disease.’ “Young children are the most vulnerable to develop severe disease and die from TB, yet the report shows that they are still by far the most likely to be misdiagnosed or missed entirely. They are dependent on us as adults- caregivers, healthcare workers, scientists, policy makers and funders- to protect them, to find them and to cure them.”

The Aurum Institute working with communities argued that ‘implementing the #IMPAACT4TB project in 12 countries has impacted health organizations and patients around the globe in combating TB.’

Many patients, amongst them, mineworkers have been using medication monitors and with research based differentiated care approach yielding results to improve TB treatment adherence in the country.

“This TB Month, let the world know that we can #EndTB. Yes, We Can End TB by identifying and overcoming stigma, discrimination and other gender and human rights barriers to ensure everyone can access the TB services they need. Yes, we can end TB by scaling up TB Preventative Therapy [TPT] to all TB

contacts and involve the community in advocacy for TB prevention,’ said Dr. Mamotho Makgabo, Senior Technical Specialist at The Aurum Institute in North West. “We urgently need newer effective diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and other tools to combat tuberculosis. And we must invest in TB research and innovation like Covid-19 to eradicate the virus.” Dr Makgabo said “despite the high numbers of undiagnosed TB cases within communities- countries, scaling up of TPT in contacts above the age of 5 has not increased much, at 0.6mil from 0.32mil in the 2021 TB global report.”

“A move to monitor TPT completion globally and within countries would benefit us in knowing whether our strategies work. Adoption and scaling up shorter regimen would increase TB prevention drastically.”

World TB Day raises awareness about the virus

A TB Survivor and an Ambassador, Mr David Macana rose confidently on the podium to share his testimony on surviving TB. He called ‘for more advocacy and joining of hands towards ending TB around the world.’ “I was hospitalized for more than 9 months and had to take around twenty-one pills



TB is curable says Freda Oosthuysen at the World TB Day, declares Freda Oosthuysen



The Deputy President of South Africa and SANAC Chairperson, Deputy President Mr Paul Mashatile greeting the crowds on his arrival at Tlhabane Stadium, North West

daily as part of my treatment.” “TB is curable and we must avoid stigmatizing any other person infected in our families.” Macana reiterated that “Public education and counseling individuals, partners, colleagues and our families must be a priority to eradicate the stigma associated with TB infection.”

Addressing the thousands of jubilant crowds, the SANAC Chairperson, Deputy President Mr Paul Mashatile said, “...tuberculosis remains one of the leading causes of ill health and death in South Africa. This is exacerbated by the fact that some TB patients do not complete their treatment while others remain “missing;” which means that they are either undiagnosed or are unreported even as they are diagnosed. Today, our country joins the rest of the world in observing World TB Day under the country theme: “Yes! You and I Can End TB!” The theme is aimed at encouraging individual action to strengthen the national strategy against Tuberculosis.

It underlines the significance of taking personal responsibility and joining forces to eradicate Tuberculosis as a public health threat by 2030. We must recommit ourselves to raising greater levels of awareness about the disease alongside its terrible health, social, economic implications and strengthen other efforts to prevent the further spread of the disease in our communities. This province faces specific challenges in the fight against Tuberculosis due to mining activities and a high number of informal settlements which result in overcrowding and unfavourable living conditions which expose people to health hazards.

However, the province has made noteworthy progress in the reconstitution of its Provincial Council on Aids with the involvement of all stakeholders. Other provinces can learn valuable lessons from this positive step. The Government is determined to build a world free from the devastation of preventable and curable diseases such as TB. We must continue to embark on Tuberculosis catch-up programmes as we continue to pursue shortened treatment after infectious diseases took a backseat due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Mashatile reiterated that “...regardless of the setback, we have made conscious efforts to rebuild and intensify TB interventions across the country. Through the ‘You and I’ statement of intent, we seek to encourage individuals to take charge of their health in line with the objectives of the “Cheka Impilo” National Wellness Campaign, as well as the country’s endeavour towards finding the Missing TB Patients. It is critical that everyone infected with TB is aware of the infection, is introduced to treatment and goes on to complete their treatment. Finishing the course is important in order to avoid developing Multidrug-resistant TB and Extensively drug-resistant TB which are both very difficult to treat, life-threatening and fatal. We must promote awareness for personal responsibility in the eradication of TB. This will undoubtedly deliver better progress in the fight against TB. Together, we can recover the ground lost by the TB response as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We should bear in mind that our country is mostly off-track in terms of attaining the set TB targets, including those related to the 2018 United Nations

High-Level Meeting on TB. It concerning that the last SA TB Prevalence Survey positioned our country as one of the 30 high TB burden countries accounting for 87% of the burden.

It is one of 10 countries with a triple burden of TB, TB/HIV and MDR-TB. We shall accelerate interventions to eliminate TB by fast-tracking the implementation of the TB Recovery Plan launched in 2022. We have already started finding undiagnosed people with TB through interventions that scale up community screening, introduce Targeted Universal TB Testing, and the use of other technologies. One of the useful approaches to mobilising political will for TB response, is the strengthening of the South African TB Caucuses in all our Provincial Legislatures.

The Caucuses provide a platform for elected public representatives to champion the TB response in their provinces and constituencies, led by the Speakers of the Provincial Legislatures. We are pleased to report that five out of the nine provinces have successfully launched their TB Caucuses. These are the North West, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape Provinces. The National TB Caucus in Parliament is due to be relaunched this year. We congratulate all these provinces and urge the remaining others to follow suit.”

Deputy President Mashatile conveyed his sincere gratitude to former Deputy President David Mabuza for the leadership he provided as Chairperson of the South African National AIDS Council

as well as leading the process towards the National Strategic Plan 2023-2028 that they were launching.

COSATU’s proposals to curb TB infection

Oosthuysen said “we welcome the National Department of Health’s efforts to increase screening, testing and diagnosis through its TB Recovery programme.”

Key steps that must be taken to end TB:

- Implement the National Health Insurance (NHI)
- Improve health systems and infrastructure
- Employ more health workers, especially community health workers for increased community-based screening, testing and treatment of TB and HIV
- Raise awareness about the symptoms and causes of TB and the importance of seeking health care treatment
- Address the stigma surrounding TB – anyone can get TB because it is an airborne disease, and it is curable
- Compensate mineworkers and ensure access to treatment and prevention of further TB infections
- Address the growing poverty, unemployment and hunger as a human rights crisis

World Tuberculosis Day is commemorated each year on the 24th March to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

'The SACP Augmented Central Committee agreed

to contest elections with an effective and reconfigured alliance as our preferred modality', says Mapaila

The Augmented Central Committee convened in the context of deepening crises of the system of capitalism in this country and the world on many fronts, argued delegates

The South African Communist Party (SACP) held its Annual Augmented Central Committee meeting over the weekend of 31 March to 2 April 2023 in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The session included its youth wing, the YCLSA, provinces, districts and elected members of the Central Committee from the 15th National Congress recently held in 2022 July at Boksburg. The Augmented Central Committee was convened in the context of deepening crises of the system of capitalism in this country and the world on many fronts.

The Party argued that 'the objective crises of capitalism in our country have been made possible by the neo-liberal restructuring of the economy, failure to discipline capital, as well as privatisation and corporatisation of state-owned enterprises. We have seen the rising cost-of-living crisis hitting hard on the workers and poor. The recent increases of the electricity tariffs by NERSA and the repo rate by the South African Reserve Bank leading to interest rates have further increased the cost of living of the working-class.'

Solly Mapaila, SACP General Secretary said "The Augmented Central Committee was convened to finalise the outstanding task of the Central Committee given

by the resolution from the SACP 15th National Congress on State and Popular Power and Electoral Considerations. The meeting was preceded by intensive and robust discussions by the provincial and district structures of the SACP over the last two weeks. Assessment of the developments in the country and the world was presented by the General Secretary, Comrade Solly Mapaila, followed by a Central Committee discussion paper titled State, Popular and Electoral Considerations: Contesting Elections, more effectively, with or without a Reconfigured Alliance."

The decision on the SACP and elections

"The SACP Augmented Central Committee welcomed and accepted the general thrust of the Augmented Central Committee's internal discussion document. The Augmented Central Committee agreed to contest elections with an effective and reconfigured alliance as our preferred modality as our posture toward the 2024 elections and beyond."

The Party said "by a reconfiguration, we mean a common alliance commitment to defend and advance the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), based on the vision of the Freedom Charter. In addition, we will engage Alliance partners

for a consensus around the following:

- A common analysis of the socio-economic conditions facing the working-class and poor, followed by a common socio-economic approach programme; manifesto development; and its joint implementation by an adequately inclusive Alliance leadership in parliament, provincial legislatures, Cabinet, provincial executive councils, municipal councils, and mayoral committees.
- Conduct of Alliance candidates based on common Alliance discipline during the campaign, as well as Alliance public representatives and office bearers afterward.
- Provisions enabling elected SACP representatives to articulate independent perspectives in parliament, provincial legislatures, and municipal councils within the framework of a reconfigured alliance.
- Accountability of elected Alliance representatives, as well as of SACP members to the Party, just as ANC members are expected to be accountable to the ANC, and our people,
- A common approach and binding democratic consensus-seeking consultation to coalitions when it becomes necessary to seek coalition partners post-elections based on the results of the election."

"This is the position of the SACP as we approach the 2024 elections or any by-election. The meeting also agreed that should a satisfactory reconfigured alliance not materialise, the SACP will move towards a popular Left front as an electoral modality. Furthermore, on a case-by-case basis, the lower structures of the Party will make motivations for the Party to stand independently for the by-elections."

"Building a left-popular front remains essential, even for purposes not related to contesting elections, for building a powerful socialist movement of workers and poor on the ground as well as defending and ensuring that our national democratic revolution takes the socialist direction."

In the next few weeks and months, our position on contesting elections will be the focus of our engagements within the Alliance, with the ANC and COSATU, and by extension to mass organisations of youth, women, civics, religious, and so on. We will also engage our communities and the broader organised workers", reiterated Mapaila. SACP concluded that Party structures must focus on building the new cadre for the socialist movement of the workers and the poor in South Africa.

Remembering Chris Hani

- 30 Years since Martin's assassination

“Lala Ngoxolo Tshonyane no Mamtshonyane-Your family will always treasure the special memories of you and we will never forget the wonderful time we spent together”

The Communist Party in South Africa have called for the opening of an inquest on the circumstances surrounding the atrocious assassination of Chris Hani thirty years ago. This call was declared by the Party's leadership at a gathering of Alliance supporters at Thomas Nkobi graveside in Boksburg to remember the life and times of the son of the soil, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party [SACP], and former MK Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Martin Thembisile Chris Hani who was brutally assassinated on the 10th April in 1993 at his home in Dawn Park, Boksburg. Hani was assassinated by Januzs Walus, an anti-Communist Polish refugee. Also implicated in the assassination was Derby-Lewis, who both served their sentence in a maximum-security prison near Pretoria.

In 1997 Walus and Derby-Lewis applied for amnesty through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings. Despite claims that they were working for the Conservative Party, and therefore the assassination had been a political act, the TRC effectively ruled that Hani had been assassinated by right-wing extremists who were apparently acting independently. Chris Hani was remembered as a Communist, an Anti-Apartheid Activist and an Internationalist.

Early life in Transkei. Comrade Chris stood for the aspirations of the workers and peasants and argued at all material times that the Party must derive its mandate from the downtrodden and the poor working class. He argued that the continued exploitation of the working class and the weakening of the African communities can no longer be tolerated.

Many recall that Comrade Hani believed that liberation should free the poor from hunger and landlessness. He cherished non racialism and rejected personal power. Many will recall Thembesile Martin Hani emerged from a misty rural ancestral area known as Cofimvaba village, in the Transkei, with his parents Mary and Gilbert, raising him to become a future leader. He grew up in a rondavel, and grew up smelling mqomboti which was mostly used for traditional ceremonies by his elders.

Growing being called by Martin or Thembisile and never as Chris by villagers, a former Fort Hare graduate, studied classical literature and socialist materials from a young age, and was encouraged to lead a class struggle against injustice of the apartheid era and thought of the possibilities of overthrowing the brutal regime.

Hani was enrolled at a Catholic school where he soon developed a love for

Latin. At this stage of his life, Hani's desire was to enter the priesthood, but his father disapproved and moved him to a non-denominational school, Matanzima Secondary School at Cala, in the Transkei.

In 1954, a number of Hani's school teachers who were active in the Unity Movement lost their jobs after they protested against the introduction of Bantu education. This played a further role in developing Hani's political ideas. Hani later moved again to the Lovadale Institute in the Eastern Cape, where he matriculated in 1958.

Hani was exposed to Marxist ideology while a student at University of Fort Hare, where he also explored his childhood passion for the classics and for literature. Hani attended Fort Hare from 1959-1961 and graduated in 1962 from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, with a BA degree in Latin and English. He then moved to Cape Town and worked as an article clerk with the Schaeffer and Schaeffer legal firm from 1962-1963, but did not complete his articles.

Hani was exposed to political thought from a very young age through his father, Gilbert Hani, who was active in the ANC and eventually left South Africa and sought asylum in Lesotho. However, Hani's political involvement really began

in 1957 when he became a member of the African National Congress' Youth League (ANCYL). He cites the conviction of the ANC's leaders in the Treason Trial (1956) as his main motivation to begin participating in the struggle for freedom.

Later, he vanished to Lesotho to venture in military training against the brutal apartheid regime.

The Extension of University Education Act (1959) had put an end to black students attending White universities (mainly the universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand) and created separate tertiary institutions for Whites, Coloured, Blacks, and Asians. Hani was active in campus protests over the takeover of Fort Hare by the Department of Bantu Education. During his years in the Western Cape Hani participated in protests against the takeover of the university by the Department of Bantu Education and came into contact with the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). This increased his awareness of the workers' struggle.

Hani's uncle had been active in the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), an organisation founded in 1921 but which had dissolved itself in response to the Suppression of Communism Act (1950). Ex-Communist Party members had to operate in secret,

and re-emerged as the underground South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1953. Hani's frustration with the Apartheid system and the influence of leaders such as Govan Mbeki, Bram Fischer, JB Marks, Moses Kotane and Ray Simons, led him to join the underground South African Communist Party in 1961 and Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK, military wing of the ANC) in 1962. Hani went on to become a member of the MK's Western Cape leadership dubbed the "Committee of Seven."

His encounters with the law began with his arrest at a police roadblock in 1962. He was found to be in possession of pamphlets containing objections to the government's notorious policy of detention without trial. He was subsequently charged under the Suppression of Communism Act and held in jail.

He was granted bail of R500.00, and during this period entered Botswana to attend the 1962 ANC Conference in Lobatsi. On his return to South Africa, he was arrested at the border. He was tried and given an 18-month jail sentence. In 1963, while out on bail pending an appeal, Hani went underground on the advice of the ANC leadership. He remained underground in Cape Town for about four months and in May proceeded to Johannesburg where he was instructed to leave South Africa to undergo military training.

His parents were left to a peculiar suffering, sporadically harassed by the police, demanding to know the whereabouts of their son. His villagers remained illiterate during those days, women still walking five kilometers to fetch water, carrying it on their heads back to their meagre homes. Villagers walking fifteen kilometers to the nearest store to buy soap and sugar.

A few had radio to listen to news, no one had television and many relied on the elderly to tell stories from the past and practicing their cultural customs to the latter. The villagers in Sabalele loved Martin. His teachers at Sabalele primary described him as a person of books. Martin had to look after cattle and sheep like any other and also rode on donkeys. He played plastic soccer games with his peers and he played stick games too. Martin topped Standard Five's in the whole circuit during those days and was always in the company of boys in the village.

Roman Catholic church priests would ride across the village on horseback because most of the areas were inaccessible, preaching the word of God. Most of villagers were migrant labourers in Cape Town, at sugar plantations in Natal the most.

Later in the years, Hani left South Africa for the Soviet Union, and returned in 1967 to take an active role in the Rhodesian bush war, acting as a Political Commissar in the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). ZIPRA, under the command of Joshua Nkomo, operated out of Zambia. Hani was present for three battles during the "Wankie Campaign" (fought in the Wankie Game Reserve against Rhodesian forces) as part of the Luthuli Detachment of combined ANC and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) forces. Although the campaign provided much-needed propaganda for the struggle in Rhodesia and South Africa, in military terms it was a failure. Far too often the local population informed on guerrilla groups to the police.

In early 1967 Hani narrowly escaped into Botswana, only to be arrested and detained in prison for two years for weapons possession. Hani returned to Zambia at the end of 1968 to continue his work with ZIPRA. His imprisonment left him critical of the failure of the ANC leadership to assist him whilst he was in prison and he demanded a conference of all ANC members in exile. The Morogoro Conference took place in 1969. The decision was made to allow White and other "non-Africans" to become members of the ANC, and to ensure that political policy should guide military action, and not vice versa. As a result, The Revolutionary Council, which included Whites and Coloureds, was set up.

In 1974 Hani re-entered South Africa to establish an underground infrastructure for the ANC in the Western Cape. He entered the country from Botswana on foot and spent four months in the country, based in Johannesburg. He helped set-up underground units and a communications system. In addition, various routes through the country were established.

Hani then moved to Lesotho where he remained for about seven years. Here he organised units of the MK for guerrilla operations in South Africa. By 1982, Hani had become prominent enough in the ANC to be the focus of several assassination attempts, including at least one car bomb. He was transferred from the Lesotho capital, Maseru, to the centre of the ANC political leadership in Lusaka, Zambia. That year he was elected to the membership of the ANC National Executive Committee, and by 1983 he had been promoted to Political Commissar of the MK, working with student recruits who joined the ANC in exile after the 1976 Soweto uprising.

When dissident ANC members, who were being held in detention camps in

Angola, mutinied against their harsh treatment in 1983–4, Hani played a key role in the uprisings' suppression – although he denied any involvement in the subsequent torture and murders. Hani continued his rise through the ANC ranks and in 1987 he became the Chief of Staff of the MK. During the same period he rose to senior membership of the SACP.

After the unbanning of ANC and SACP on 2 February 1990 Hani returned to South Africa and became a charismatic and popular speaker in townships. By 1990 he was known to be a close associate of Joe Slovo, the General-Secretary of the SACP. Both Slovo and Hani were considered fearful figures in the eyes of South Africa's extreme right: the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB, Afrikaner Resistance Movement) and the Conservative Party (CP). When Slovo announced that he had cancer in 1991, Hani took over as General-Secretary.

In 1992 Hani stepped down as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe to devote more time to the organisation of the SACP. Communists were prominent in the ANC and the Council of South African Trade Unions, but were under threat – the collapse of Marxism in Europe had discredited the movement around the world, and the policy of infiltrating other anti-Apartheid groups rather than making an independent stand was being questioned. Hani campaigned for the SACP in townships around South Africa, seeking to redefine its place as a national political party. It was soon doing well – better than the ANC in fact – especially amongst the young who had no real experiences of the pre-Apartheid era and no commitment to the democratic ideals of the more moderate Mandela.

Hani was described as charming, passionate and charismatic, and soon attracted a cult-like following. He was the only political leader who seemed to have influence over the radical township self-defence groups that had parted from the authority of the ANC. Hani's SACP would have proved a serious match for the ANC in the 1994 elections. On 10 April 1993, as he returned home to the racially mixed suburb of Dawn Park, Boksberg.

Chris Hani may be remembered with his powerful quotes!

Chris Hani embodied and personified some of the best values of the Congress Movement

"Socialism is not about big concepts and heavy theory. Socialism is about decent shelter for those who are homeless. It is about water for those who have no safe drinking water. It is about

health care, it is about a life of dignity for the old. It is about overcoming the huge divide between urban and rural areas. It is about a decent education for all our people. Socialism is about rolling back the tyranny of the market. As long as the economy is dominated by an unelected, privileged few, the case for socialism will exist."

"What we need in South Africa is for egos to be suppressed in favour of peace. We need to create a new breed of South Africans who love their country and love everybody, irrespective of their colour."

"The perks of a new government are not really appealing to me. Everybody would like to have a good job, a good salary....but for me that is not the all of struggle. What is important is the continuation of the struggle... the real problems of the country are not whether one is in Cabinet ...but what we do for social upliftment of the working masses of our country."

As a leader of a leftist party, Comrade Hani based his beliefs and practices on the Marxist-Leninist ideological premise as the scientific approach towards Socialism. He fought for a socialist and people driven government as a means to solve the many political, economic, social and cultural challenges facing the country then. Inquest Now, Nothing but the Truth and Justice for apartheid victims!

Majority of citizens have a view that the post-apartheid era has not addressed the many challenges faced by communities such as access to productive land, clean water and sanitation, decent jobs, quality municipal services, social protection and safety. The democratic era has dismally failed to correct the economic injustice caused by colonialism and the apartheid regime. Addressing the crowd, Limpho Hani, the widow of the Central Committee member of the Party said "We need a leadership that takes decisions and looks after its people".

"No more promises, we want delivery and delivery now."

"A discovery was made that a second person was involved in the scene, hiding in the neighbours yard and this confirmed by pickings of cigarette butts and a Fanta drink can. But such lead was not followed. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] was a waste of taxpayer's money. And the investigation was not followed because of lack of budget. There is a perception in the country that Judges cannot be criticized and I beg to differ."

Limpho reiterated her arguments by quoting from a Judgment from Chief



"I had the honor to participate in the Chris Hani 30th Annual Commemoration where we paid tribute to this giant comrade, a tireless fighter in the struggle against apartheid and one of the greatest revolutionary men in Africa," said Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to the Republic of South Africa, Enrique Orta González

Justice and said, "Courts must accept to be criticized. Judiciary must be criticized. We are all subject to scrutiny like judges. Criticism should be based on fair analysis." ***"I reject the granting of parole to Januzs Walus by Chief Justice Zondo"***, said Limpho.

"We still live in pain because of the diabolical act by the assassins. We were treated disdainfully in the manner the courts handled this matter. Walus was released out of prison in secret by my democratic government and may be following me to the shops, I do not know. Who amongst us is going to be the next victim?" "Our trauma and loss should have a constitutional validity when parole cases are considered."

SACP demands opening of an inquest in his death!

The South African Communist Party [SACP] General Secretary, Solly Mapaila said "We have gathered around 20 000 signatures on the Party's Online Petition. We say inquest, no inquest, inquest, no inquest. We want this inquest, and we will present the petition to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Services to decide upon this matter. And we must put a referendum on modalities of the Alliance and allow the people

decide what they want. We must never betray the ideals of Chris Hani. We are together as allies to transform the living conditions of our people."

Mapaila said 'he hoped the list would grow to 30,000 to mark the 30th-anniversary commemoration.' "The living conditions of our military veterans deserves attention from the Military Veteran Department. Such issues are betrayed at the execution level. We must sort out such issues such as poverty in communities. I call upon all our working class communities back into the trenches to fight against drug abuse", concluded Mapaila.

Messages from Alliance partners

The Congress of South African Trade Unions joined South Africans to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the assassination of late South African Communist Party (SACP) leader and Alliance stalwart Comrade Chris Hani.

"He remains a symbol of resistance, determination, and hope for a better world. We are commemorating Cde Chris Hani amid an economic crisis that confirms and validates his belief and conviction that capitalism is not the solution. Unemployment is at an unbearable 43% and workers are battling

to afford necessities and take care of their families because of galloping fuel prices, interest rates, and inflation.

The capitalist crisis has persisted over most of the last decade with the harshest impact located in areas of deep concern to the people's livelihoods. While many capitalist economists continue to disseminate false theories regarding the economic crisis, the reality is that this crisis is borne out of the irreconcilable contradiction between the social character of production and private appropriation by a few individuals of all the wealth. History has taught us one thing capitalism is an enemy that can never be appeased. The Czech-Austrian philosopher and Marxist Theoretician Karl Kautsky captured this better when he said, "As things stand today capitalist civilization cannot continue; we must either move forward into socialism or fall back into barbarism. Capitalism can only continue to maintain itself only by lowering the standard of living of the working class. Unless we have a Basic Income grant pitched at the food poverty level; unless the country has access to universal health care, unless the crippling debts that are draining the bank accounts of South African families are reduced or

forgiven; unless there is an unassailable moratorium on retrenchments; and unless companies in this country are forced to pay decent wages, abide by strict labour laws, the dream and aspirations of Cde Chris Hani and other martyrs will not be realised.

To realise these aspirations, we should demand the rebuilding of a capable developmental state and State Owned Enterprises and a budget that is biased towards the working class and rural poor. COSATU reaffirms its commitment to strive to unite all workers in the struggle against poverty and exploitation, for safe working conditions, decent and quality jobs, comprehensive social security, and comprehensive social services. It is important that we ensure that the life of Cde Chris Hani is honoured in deeds and not words. We should work to transform our economy and uproot institutional racism as part of history lessons about his life. We also remain deeply committed to strengthening ties and cooperation between COSATU and the SACP and ensuring that the two organisations implement joint programs and campaigns which include calling for the inquest into Chris Hani's assassination, Financial Sector Coalition Campaign,

and confronting the continued retrenchments. We equally recommit ourselves to the radical reconfiguration of the Alliance to ensure that it once again becomes the centre of progressive change and a beacon of hope for the dispossessed. All attempt to revitalise the capitalist economy, within the neoliberal framework of cutbacks has only induced new and bigger rounds of crisis. Since the dissipation of COVID-19, predictably, the capitalist class has been scrambling to claw back its rate of profitability at the expense of the working class. We witness cuts in social spending and increasing privatisation of basic services such as health, education, water, and electricity.

This is why in this unpredictable and uncertain period; we need to summon from the grave the spirit of Cde Chris Hani as we mobilise workers and poor communities to fight against the cost-of-living crisis. It is necessary to revive the global internationalist working-class movement and push for leading cadres of progressive political formations to establish and solidify a socialist theory of an alternative world economy to stand up to the free market. The real challenge facing South Africa is how to dismantle the unchecked corporate power and greed that has seen massive wealth being funnelled upwards into the hands of a tiny minority. We need to confront

and undo policies that abolished the regulations that once protected the citizenry from the worst forms of monopoly exploitation.

demolishing of proper regulations made possible the largest upwards transference of wealth in this country's history. Removing capital controls under the government of National Unity led to the situation where today R80 billion is taken out of the country every year by the private sector."

The African National Congress [ANC] said "the 10th of April 1993 will be remembered as one of the most tragic moments in the history of our struggle for liberation and building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society free from all forms of discrimination. It was on the 10th April that Comrade Martin Thembisile Chris Hani, one of the most fearless and principled cadres of our movement was gunned down in cold blood.

The ANC pays homage to this outstanding son of the soil. The assassination of Comrade Chris Hani was a huge blow and a tragic loss to the democratic movement as a whole. It was calculated to plunge the country into anarchy as part of a desperate rightwing strategy to perpetuate the status quo of apartheid oppression and derail the nation's inevitable march towards freedom. President Nelson Mandela described Hani's assassination as a 'heinous

crime against not only his person and his family, but also against the people of our country as a whole. Those responsible for this terrible deed are deemed enemies of justice, democracy and peace in our country. The sad reality is that 30 years down the line there still has not been full disclosure by Comrade Chris Hani's killers to allow for clarity about whose responsible for his untimely death.

This barbaric and merciless omission of truth continues to deny the Hani family and people of South Africa much needed closure. From a young age, Comrade Chris chose to dedicate his entire life to the liberation of his people. He knew then that by doing so he was placing his own life at risk. At the time of his assassination, Comrade Chris was the General Secretary of the SACP and member of the ANC National Executive Committee. For many decades, he served within the ranks of uMkhonto weSizwe [MK] in various capacities as part of his revolutionary activism. He succeeded Comrade Joe Slovo as MK Chief of Staff.

Up to this day, Comrade Chris Hani remains the benchmark and yardstick of what constitutes a true cadre and a revolutionary. He is a personification of cadreship. He displayed traits of revolutionary morality, discipline and loyalty. Comrade Chris Hani understood

what democratic centralism meant. He was at all times willing to subject his personal views and preferences to the majority view. He embodied and personified some of the best values of the congress movement. As we seek to renew our movement, we are inspired by Comrade Chris Hani and his selflessness, sacrifice, humility and revolutionary conduct.

In honour of Comrade Chris Hani, we must make a solemn pledge to never abandon his revolutionary legacy. Instead, we must remain true to the ideals for which he laid down his life. In the name of Comrade Chris Hani, we must work tirelessly towards the unity of the Alliance and accelerate efforts towards building a non-sexist, non-racial, democratic and prosperous society. We must confront all forms of corruption, inequality, and economic exploitation with every available weapon at our disposal. All cadres of the mass democratic movement and broader society must commit and genuinely walk on Chris Hani's footsteps and emulate his exemplary conduct. In doing so, we will be justified to assert boldly that Chris Hani did not die. He multiplied"

Lala Kahle Comrade Chris Hani!
Forward with the struggle for economic emancipation.
Aluta Continua!



Alliance leaders toyi-toying at the 30th Anniversary event to remember Chris Hani

Celebrations for International Women's Day

reprioritizes gender equality, inclusion,
peace and democracy



KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Hon Nomusa Dube-Ncube
gracing the International Women's Day celebrations in Durban

This year International Women's Day, saw thousands of workers around the world joining the festivities on the streets to celebrate remarkable milestones to eradicate gender discrimination, harassment in the world of work and tackle the erosion of economic opportunities for women workers.

Global federations called for peace in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Ukraine, Syria, Tigray, Yemen, Myanmar, Greece, France and other countries suffering ongoing conflict and state violence. In many countries, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination targeting women, migrant workers, LGBTQI+ people, indigenous people and people of colour is on the rise.

Majority of the global federations argued that "Peace and democracy cannot be achieved without full equality and inclusion of women. The trade union movement will redouble efforts to ensure the inclusive nature of their own structures, agendas and processes to achieve equal and equitable representation of women in their leadership."

The United Nations Women led the celebrations under the theme, "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", calling on governments, activists and the private sector to "power on" in their efforts to shape a safer, more inclusive, and more equitable digital world for all. A paradigm shift is needed to harness the potential of technology and innovation to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to recent data, women's exclusion from the digital world comes with massive costs for all, having already shaved USD 1 trillion from the gross domestic product of low- and middle-income countries in the last decade—a loss that, without an intended plan of action and suitable investment, is expected to increase to USD 1.5 trillion by 2025. International Women's Day spotlights massive costs to Gross Domestic Product [GDP] and innovation caused by the exclusion of women from the digital world. "Women today make up under a third of the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and maths. And when

women are under-represented in developing new technologies, discrimination may be baked in from the start". He also issued a call to close the gender digital divide, adding that "investing in women uplifts all people, communities, and countries".-UN Secretary-General António Guterres

The disparity between women and men and girls and boys in relation to digital adoption and their relative opportunities to access, use, and benefit from digital technology remain a major barrier to equal participation in tech design and governance. Women and girls remain underrepresented across the creation, use, and regulation of technology. They are less likely to use digital services or enter tech-related careers, and significantly more likely to face online harassment and

Sustainable Development Goals. "Our vision of equality, of what our world could be, for all of us, can and will include the equal enjoyment of the fruits of technology and innovation without fear of violence or abuse of any sort. Women and girls must be able to engage, create, learn and work, safely and productively either online or offline, making the most of all the opportunities in every sphere of life and at every stage of it, in education, in the economy, in society and in politics."- UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahou.

In South Africa, the President of the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council [SATUCC] and of the Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU] Zingiswa Losi led

their contribution and sacrifice — this includes their courage to participate in the strikes, but even more importantly, their role in building an independent trade union movement that fought to overthrow apartheid. It is critical that we challenge and address the erasure of women workers in the histories of the Durban strikes and in all labour history. As part of the commemoration of the Durban strikes, COSATU identified International Women's Day, 8th March, as an important date for celebrating the role of women workers in the Durban strikes. This day is important because it honours women workers bold struggles worldwide, and also highlights the critical importance of international solidarity for the working class."

Commemorating the Role of Women in the 1973 Durban Strikes

"On the 9th of January 1973 and for weeks after this, tens of thousands of black workers went on strike in Durban in a movement that would alter the course of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The 1973 Durban Strikes are often characterised as representing the birth of the democratic, workplace-based worker-controlled trade union movement, leading to the launch of COSATU in 1985. During this strike wave, which started in Durban, workers took control of their futures and stood up for their dignity, their right to organise and their right to a living wage. These acts of courage and power rippled throughout our land, inspiring and sparking political activism and bold action in the face of severe political repression."

David Hemson, a trade unionist with the Garment Workers Union

and organiser at the time of the 1973 strikes, reflected back on the significance of the Durban strikes as follows:

The mass strikes had changed South Africa, specific gravity had shifted in society. Those at the base producing textiles, blankets, fine fabrics for suits and dresses; the dockers shifting exports of sugar, coal, ores and mielies; the machinists and those in company overalls now carried ideas.

While not swaggering, they knew they had agency, the mass strike, and an instrument being honed: the trade union. There were new leaders emerging from the factories.



Freda Oosthuysen, COSATU National Treasurer presenting gifts to the stalwarts of the 1973 Durban Strikes on the 8th March 2023, International Women's Day in Durban

violence. This limits not only their own digital empowerment but also the transformative potential of technology and innovation as a whole.

"Women and girls have just as much right to access the digital world and prosper in it as men and boys. Their creativity, knowledge and perspectives can shape a future where technology contributes to transforming social norms, amplifying women's voices, pushing forward against online harassment, preventing the perpetuation of algorithmic biases, and distributing the benefits of digitalization as the great equalizer to achieve the

the International Women's Day at Royal hotel in Durban by Honouring the Role of Women Workers in the Durban 1973 Strikes in particular and leading campaigns which paved the way for the formation of democratic, non-racial worker-controlled trade unions during the 1980s.

Addressing the celebrations, President Losi said "The 14th COSATU Congress resolved to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 1973 Durban strikes in 2023. As we observe the 50th anniversary of the Durban strikes, it is important to remember the role women workers played during this turning point in our history. We pay tribute to

Women workers such as the fiery former weaver June-Rose Nala took their places directing the unions. The ideas of democratic, worker-controlled trade unions for the struggle were firmly implanted.[1]

“The history of the Durban strikes, like much of labour history is largely silent on the role of women workers. Most historical accounts do not analyse the working conditions and low pay of black women workers, the oppression and violence they faced, and their heroic organising efforts, despite significant sexism even within union ranks.”

Women clothing and textile workers played a key role in these strikes, and much of this history is still to be documented.[2]

The Durban strikes were significant because they took place in a period of demobilisation, where state repression had forced the liberation movement underground. They also took place at a time when it was against the Apartheid laws for African workers to organise trade unions. The strikes were also significant because they were worker led and worker driven.

The Durban strikes are often characterised as spontaneous, but this should not be mistaken as meaning that the strikes were unorganised and unplanned. These strikes resulted from ongoing organising of workers. They were driven by workers:

While the mass strikes were undoubtedly spontaneous, in the sense of not being planned from a political centre, they were not unorganised... [But were] collective action by workers guided by working class leadership.[3]

Significant numbers of clothing workers had already engaged in strike action in the years leading to 1973. On 23 February 1971, more than 24,000 workers walked out of clothing factories in and around Durban, and many participated in a mass meeting held at the Curries Fountain sports ground, a storied site in the history of popular organisation. Employers, unable to resort to disciplinary action due to the scale of the walk out, quickly agreed to the workers' demand for a 20 per cent wage increase. [4]

Textile and metal workers were particularly active in the Durban strikes. Between January and the end of March 1973, there were more than 160 strikes involving over 61 410 workers, with 26 strikes in textiles.

June Rose Nala, a leading trade unionist, worked as a textile worker and became active during the wave of strikes in 1973. She recalls: “In the rural areas, on the farms, everywhere, there was the same euphoria. It was like freedom was here... even though we knew there was

no freedom yet as such.”

Andrew Mndeni Joyisa was a textile worker in Durban who participated in the Durban strikes. He served as a shop steward and later became Deputy President of the union. His story is recorded in SACTWU's history, *Weaving Our Stories Together*[5]:

I have been involved with the union since the 'Living Wage' strikes of 1973 in Durban ... They started in January, 1973, when workers from Coronation Brick and Tile Works marched and began demanding higher wages. In a few days, workers from many other companies all over Durban joined them and put tools down. In the end there were about 30 000 workers who went on strike in Durban! 30 000 workers is a lot of workers. To get 30 000 workers out of the factories was not like it is today. In 1973 there were not many unions for African workers because they were illegal. Instead 30 000 workers went on the streets by ourselves – without the union organising us!

Kudala sisebenza mahala
Basebenzi masihlangane
Lelizwe ngelethu
Basebenzi masihlangane

It's been a long time working for nothing
Workers must come together
The country is ours
Workers come together

Siyaya noma kunzima
Siyaya noma kunzima
We are going forward even if it is difficult

It was a big thing for us workers to go on strike in those days. Me and the other workers, we took the apartheid bull by its horns. We put our strength together and started the action that we believed would liberate us as workers. We wanted the right to belong to unions and we knew we had to push and push until the bull fell down.



Former workers who participated in the 1973 Durban Strikes in attendance

I was working as an operator at the time. I was loading, running, monitoring and off-loading fabric at the winches and Jet machines. It was very hard work, but my wages were only R8,33 per week. At my factory, we heard that the Coronation workers were striking so we followed their example. Our wages were terrible. Our conditions of work were terrible. We had had enough. We wanted change. Every day we met at the gate of SA Fabric. We would ask other workers to join us. Then we would toyi-toyi and shout slogans. We would also sing.

I remember we sang:

After the 1973 strike, workers felt much stronger. We knew we had power and we were motivated to belong to unions. ...Eventually the apartheid bull that we had pushed in the 1973 Durban strikes fell down – it became legal for Africans to join a trade union. It was our victory!

By the end of January 1973, 8,000 textile workers were on strike, involving significant numbers of Indian and African women. The largest number of strikes, and those of the longest duration, took place in the textile industry, which was dominated by the Frame group of companies.[6]

June Rose Nala worked at the Frame Group textile plant. She described her first day on the job as follows:

We were taken into our departments... and told that you will be a weaver... I am told that my minimum pay was going to be a about R6 to R8... The next thing is you are... on the loom with piece rates. The normal pay becomes something you never ever come across... The thing which struck me ... was the noise; as you entered the factory you could hear this noise from a distance and as you get closer and closer it actually begins to thump in a very frightening way, and you think: “Oh my god! What is this, why am I doing this, why should I put myself through this? ...I realised nobody talked normally in the factory you had to shout wah wah to be heard... Whilst you are being trained the guy has to slow down his production and yet he is paid on the piece-rate and the company does not accommodate him.

So that sets those relationships on a bad footing right in the beginning... The company provides absolutely no proper training... I had a 1 month old baby while I was working and I work shifts, and that was pretty tough because half the time you get home and find that the baby was not too good. In and out of doctor's rooms and waiting the whole day and ... there is not enough time you to sleep, you just have to hit the road for work ... The hours of work were from 6:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. but because of the piece-rate system nobody went in at 6:45 a.m. Even when we were knocking off ... night shift people were beginning to arrive. That's how crazy the situation was... They would start sorting their yarn, packing it and doing everything, so by the time when the machines are put on they are ready to go. That was the only way in which they could make more money...

During this time African women were extremely exploited and precarious due to the intersection of racism, patriarchy and capitalism:

The oppression of African women workers was effected through a complex web of laws that were devised to maintain the migrant labour system at the heart of South Africa's racial capitalism.

A key element in maintaining this system was the restriction of women, children, the sick and elderly to the Bantustan reserves and strict controls via the migrant labour system on movement of Africans to the towns.

Conditions of employment were appalling. Wages paid for African women were at least 20% lower than those paid to African men. At the time of the Durban strikes, African women in the textile industry were paid as little as R3.50 a week. Many were heads of single-parent families with children

and elders to support. There was no provision for maternity leave and women who became pregnant were dismissed. Sexual harassment by male workers was a constant threat.

As well as the pressures of factory work, those women able to live with their children carried the additional burden of housework and childcare, balancing the demands of overtime and shift work with domestic responsibilities.[7]

African women textile workers faced extreme economic exploitation, restriction of movement, discrimination in the workplace, as well as patriarchal systems of male domination in their communities.

Thembi Zungu, a textile worker who worked at Smith & Nephew and later became a shop steward there, recalls how they came out on strike:

The males in the weaving department who worked 6:00am to 2:00pm switched off everything on Friday. On Monday those who arrived at 5:50am didn't work... I came late on that Monday and I saw the Managing Director Mr Lund was having a discussion with the workers of the weaving department outside but I entered the factory and I clocked my card. I switched on my machine and the supervisor asked why I'm late. I said it's the transport and went to collect cotton yarn from that department and I was told the males said they would hit us because we are working while they are not working.

We left the room one by one... to where they were and our departmental manager ... came and didn't even shout at us when he saw us near dispatch... so we joined them in the outside where we started singing... I am the first person who went inside the factory while the men were out and told the ladies: 'What are you doing here? The people are outside so let's go!' ... That was about 7:15am. We came out without the departmental manager seeing us. By the time he came we were in despatch to see what was going on. That is when Mr. Lund told the workers to come inside as there were police dogs out there.

"As more and more workers came out on strike in 1973, workers began to unionise rapidly in the chemical, garment, metal and textile unions. Unionisation was met with extreme violence and repression at this time."

One account describes how one of the women workers who was mobilising other workers was brutally attacked:

...there was a terrible incident at Prilla Mills in Pietermaritzburg, where the brutal labour regime was rooted in systemic sexual abuse as well as child labour.... Princess Osman, the leading organiser at the mills, was attacked on her way home and her face disfigured with acid.[8]

"It is critical to remember these brave pioneering women, who contributed towards building the trade union movement under oppressive conditions of life, work and struggle. June Rose Nala was a textile worker who became active during the 1973 strikes. She was elected to the executive of the National Union of Textile Workers in September 1973. She was dismissed from her job at Afritex (Frame Group) three months later. She volunteered for the union as an organiser and took over as acting NUTW secretary after the bannings that took place in 1974. She was hailed as "one of the boldest leaders who emerged after the 1973 strikes" and she headed the struggle for the recognition agreement at Smith & Nephew.[9] June Rose Nala was detained in May 1976. After her release from detention in December 1976, she became general secretary of MAWU. Harriet Bolton was a trade unionist in the garment industry who actively sought to organise African workers into trade unions and worked tirelessly to keep the spark of trade union activism alive even during times of demobilisation and severe repression. She was described as "a fiery spirit" who helped lay the foundations for COSATU."

One of the tributes to her at the time of her death described her as follows:

She was fearless: when Bureau of State Security (Boss) agents came to her office she promptly threw them out. Bolton drew her ideas from international labour history. The benefit fund based in Bolton Hall, which drew in thousands of workers in the early 1970s, was inspired by her. She understood that mass unionisation had to rest on a bedrock of benefits and concrete achievements.

When the 1973 strikes roared through Durban and beyond, the nuclear structures she had encouraged flourished into large formations and eventually mass unions. At this time and for some time beyond, union regrowth was synonymous with Bolton Hall. It gathered stalwarts from the South African Congress of Trade Unions, young university radicals, seasoned factory-floor leaders, lawyers and academics.

Bolton saw that unions could be centres for mass resistance, prompting her sustained opposition to the conservative leadership of the Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tucsa).

"There are many other women workers and worker leaders whose stories need to be documented and made available for generations to come. The women workers who have spoken here today have shared powerful experiences, and their stories and life histories must be documented for posterity."

The link to International Women's Day

"International Working Women's Day has its origins in the labour movement, and the socialist and communist movement. This day has been observed since the 1900s. Women were becoming more vocal and mobilized to fight against oppression and inequality. March 8th was identified in honour of working women's struggles worldwide, which took place on this date. On March 8, 1857, women garment workers in New York City demonstrated against inhumane working conditions and low wages. They were attacked by the police and dispersed. Two years later, the first female labour union was formed by these women to try to protect themselves, demanding basic rights in the workplace. In 1908, 15 000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights. The Socialist Party of America declared a national women's day to mark these struggles and continue to mobilise for change. In 1910 at the second International Conference of Working Women, Clara Zetkin first proposed the idea of an International Women's Day – where women in every country would celebrate this day every year in honour of working women worldwide and mobilise for their demands.

In 1917, Russian women began a strike for bread and peace, in response to the death of over 2 million Russian soldiers in WWI. This women's strike on International Women's Day 1917, sparked the Russian Revolution. The mobilization of ordinary workers continued for four days with over 150 thousand people taking to the streets. This led to the overthrow of the Russian Tsar which resulted in the first socialist state. This day is significant because of the power of international solidarity. One of the most potent catalysts for working class action is solidarity from other workers, and the inspiration of international workers struggles. Eighteen months before the Durban strikes there was a massive strike wave across Namibia. More than 10 000 workers went on strike against the contract labour system."

According to Omar Badsha,

the Durban dockworkers were impressed by the workers in the Namibian harbour of Walvis Bay, especially the refusal of the Namibian workers to name individuals as representatives to speak with the bosses. They insisted that everyone was present during negotiations, where the workers shouted their demands collectively. This strategy was then also adopted by the Durban strikes in January 1973.[10]

"At the time of the Durban strikes, dock workers in San Francisco United States took solidarity action in support for the South African workers struggles. The power of working class women

to mobilise and press for change has been seen in struggles worldwide, but there remains an erasure of women's struggles in history due to patriarchy and male domination. This erasure of women's struggles is a deliberate attempt to portray women as passive and silent."

The COSATU Women's History Project

"Today, we are celebrating the bravery of ordinary women workers who took great risks to come out on strike and to demand the right to organise. Workers faced severe repression and violence as they took up struggles for: amongst others, a living wage; the right to strike; against sexual exploitation; and for maternity rights. Black women workers refused to be silenced. This event today is part of an ongoing process and project of honouring and recording the stories and experiences of women worker leaders and of women's activism in the history of COSATU. We see this as a critical task for our current generation of activists to recognise the contributions of those who have gone before us, and to learn from their experiences. We believe it is important to honour women worker activists and leaders because we are aware that the many brave struggles of women have been erased from our history.

Women's struggles are made invisible, in the same way that women have been silenced and continue to be silenced when they raise their voices against patriarchy, capitalism and racism today. COSATU has initiated a women's history project to document women worker leaders' life histories and to make visible the contribution of women's activism in COSATU's history. The Federation is working with NALEDI and Wits History Workshop to train young women workers to conduct life history interviews with women worker leaders. We have trained a group of young women worker researchers from COSATU affiliates and will continue training more young women workers to participate in this project. We believe it is critical that working class women contribute to writing their own histories.

This project brings history to life through the young women conducting interviews, who take these lessons directly into their own union work and experiences. Furthermore, it ensures that we capture the untold stories of brave women workers who have contributed enormously to the worker's struggle with little or no acknowledgement. What has come out of the interviews young worker researchers have started doing, is the richness of women workers' lives. This is the power of life history interviews, that we are able to witness some of the

daily details of life that women, even as a younger generation understand - this depth, this richness, this wealth of experience, of knowledge, of struggle in the home and in school, in areas where people grew up, at work, in the workplace.

COSATU, the labour movement and the liberation movement as a whole will benefit from this project through greater attention to the role and contribution of women workers in liberation struggles, workers' struggles and women's emancipation struggles. We hope that the reflections made today contribute in some way to addressing the invisibility of women in our trade union history, given that they played such significant roles under such difficult conditions. COSATU will continue to gather the histories of the role and contribution of women workers in the Durban strikes and in COSATU's history as a whole. The COSATU Women's History Project will ensure that we highlight the voices and stories of women workers, and for our trade union history to be told in women workers own words and through their own experiences."

What can we learn from the Durban strikes of 1973?

"The bourgeois idea of history misleads us. It tells us that history is created by "Great Men" and big events like

wars that change the course of history. But as the working class we understand that history is made through class struggles. A working class perspective of history teaches us that history is not solely made by kings, politicians or rich and powerful individuals, history is made by ordinary people who take small but powerful everyday actions in resistance to capitalism, racism and sexism. The day-to-day struggles of ordinary people make history.

The strike wave of 1973 resulted in resurgence of union activism in South African and led to rapid unionisation of black workers. A key lesson from the strikes is that even against the most severe repression, workers can stand together, stand up and demand to be heard. What made the strikes of 1973 possible was worker unity. Under capitalism bosses try to drive wedges between workers, on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and various other divisions. These divisions are deadly to workers, to the working class and the working class movement. Workers can only defeat capitalist exploitation by organising and standing together."

The Durban strikes taught us about the power of workers!

"Together workers stood up against the apartheid regime and they struggled

together to build non-racial trade unions. As mentioned earlier, Durban dockworkers were inspired by Nambian workers, as well as by the solidarity action from workers in San Francisco and elsewhere. Radical action is inspired by hope, and it is inspired by stories and examples of workers standing together against exploitation and degradation.

This is why the stories we have heard today are so important and must be preserved and shared. We must continue to gather these stories and lessons because activism requires a sense of hope, a sense that change is possible even under the most difficult conditions. Another important learning is that working class struggles need community support and mobilisation.

They also need publicity and mass communication. The Durban strikes were strengthened by the involvement of progressive students and academics in support and solidarity with workers. One of the reasons that women are often invisible in history is because they are often not in leadership positions, because of sexism and because of their primary responsibility for child care and household labour. This must be challenged. This is important, yet formal leadership positions are not the only way of giving leadership. Women are active

in organising and mobilising at the factory or workplace level.

Women were often involved in grassroots struggles around daily survival, wages and localised socio-economic issues – the issues that most affect their lives. This contribution is absolutely key to any revolution but it is often overlooked. We must pay closer attention to the building of worker organisation at grassroots level, listening to workers, talking with workers and allowing worker leadership to flourish.

A key dimension of worker control is accountability of worker leaders to workers. Accountability driven from below essential for a movement built on integrity, transparency and democracy. We must hold leaders accountable in this way, in the state, state institutions, trade unions and society as a whole. Let us rebuild the strength and vibrance of the workers movement, with women workers at the centre, to change the course of history. We dare not fail the future generations of young workers, nor the veterans who have sacrificed so much to build a strong trade union movement."

Malibongwe! Amandla!

Messages from Affiliates



SADTU holding Beauty Pageant for its members during the Women's Month at Welkom Theatre, Free State

Education sector union, SADTU said "the union joins the billions of voices across the globe in honouring and commemorating women's struggles on

International Women's Day. Women's Rights are Human Rights. The theme for 2023 is aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 67th session of the

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), "Innovation and Technological Change and Education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls."

On this day we raise our collective voices to call for equality and justice for women in the face of discrimination, harassment, and their oppression in our societies and workplaces. The digital divide that affects women disproportionately is man-made and must be ended now. Women are creators, innovators, entrepreneurs and we must celebrate them. The barriers that are put on the way of women to emerge as champions of the future must be overcome.

We can only address the socio-economic challenges causing unemployment, poverty and inequality by focusing on innovation and technology in education. This will also open up opportunities and liberate women who want to start their businesses to do. We want to reiterate our commitment to use education and technology as the answer to eliminate obstacles that hold

women's progress in the workplace. We need to attend to subject offerings and choice for the girl child and fight against any attempt to push them to the periphery by denying them access to technical subjects. For the 2023 International Women's Day theme to be realised, we call for the finalisation of the three-stream model in our schools which will allow learners wider choices to pursue technical, vocational and academic pathways. We call on the department of education to work with businesses to build more laboratories and all other technical sites to assist our learners with practical experiences. In South Africa only 13% of graduates leaving tertiary institutions with qualifications in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are women.

Our country and Africa as a region are still lagging behind in terms technological skills for the young in particular the girl child. While we have the department of science, technology and innovation under the department of higher education women still experience hurdles to access such skills and opportunities. Even with the qualifications in relevant

fields, women bear the brunt of these brutal economic systems that continue to exclude, oppress and exploit them. The colonial and apartheid legacies are stubborn to eradicate especially when the neoliberal policies are geared towards entrenching discrimination.

As we celebrate this day, we stand in solidarity with all women educators in our schools who fight against oppression and sexual harassment by their colleagues. We need to end gender-based discrimination against women in our institutions of learning and business. The multinational corporations operating in our country do not take the laws of this country seriously and this must stop. Women are capable and must be included in the executive structures and boards in order to create an inclusive economy. We frown upon the denial of technology to women because it is the perpetuation of patriarchal dominance.

We assert that education is the answer; opportunities must be extended to women because they are not a favour but a human right. We know that no power can change the direction of the world women's movement for liberation. We stand with the women in Afghanistan who are waging the struggle for access to education and all human rights. As the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) is taking place, remember the women and girls in Afghanistan. Remember the Palestinian people and in particular women and girls who live in fear from the brutality of the Israeli regime. We urge the session to unite against the killing of women and girl children in the world."

NEHAWU wished all working-class women, in South Africa, all over the world, in the class-oriented trade union organisations of workers, a militant International Working Women's Day.

"We specifically wish to single out women in our union who continue to occupy the picket line, on the occasion of our public service strike. We salute all the women leaders in our union, the shop-stewards, the organisers, the strike committees, the storm troopers of our

public service strike, for their militancy and exemplary role in confronting the employer and fighting to defend the rights of our members.

We greet women all over the world who live in regions, in which imperialism has fostered severe under-development, inequality and patriarchy, as instruments of capitalist rule, exploiting massively, the existing gender, race and class differences, within and amongst the same communities and people. Everywhere, bosses are responding by limiting the rights of working people, attacking trade unions and collective bargaining, retrenching workers, closing down factories, wiping out pensions and incomes and by negating all of our achievements. They restructure, casualise and privatise and in the process, they worsen problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality and place more of the burden of their own crisis, on working families.

In South Africa and Africa as a whole, we see growth in capitulation of the social sector, growing faith in the privatisation of valuable assets of public sector with reductions in public investment and

services. The workforce has faced huge reductions in wages and exploitation has intensified. The employers have no prohibitions to do as they wish. They disregard labour laws and preserve terrible working conditions. We have seen enormous misappropriation of workers savings, pensions and social security benefits.

Working women remain a great inspiration to our common struggle in the fight to end patriarchy and capitalist exploitation. The October revolution of 1917 in Russia enlightened us that it is possible for the right to work, the right to free education and health services to be guaranteed. It is possible to secure the reduction of working hours, to construct places of rest and leisure, to construct facilities for the stimulation of cultural creativity, to build theatres and cinemas, to stimulate artistic, sports and cultural organizations, to establish libraries even in the most remote rural areas.

The trade union movement has a duty to fight relentlessly for the victory of the struggle for socialism, to guarantee pensions, to liberate women from household responsibilities, for their

mass introduction in education, into sophisticated production, to promote their literacy so they pursue any career of their choice, so that they are found in charge of the running affairs of the state, responsible for production in factories, with absolute equality with men, in all every field. We have to fight for these rights now. The right to a 6-months maternity leave, to a minimum wage, to salaries and pensions, for collective bargaining; for dignified employment.

Women workers should lead social struggles against child labour, food security and proper nutrition. It has been 161 years, since the strike on 8th March 1857 of the female workers in the textile industries of New York. But those managing production on behalf of employers, continue to deny women their right to fair remuneration and promotion; equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. Working women are victimised sexual harassed; they are denied parental rights and childcare facilities and responded to with violence in the workplace.

The trade union movement should place more effort to ensure the equality between women and men decision making, to shape political, environment, social and cultural development. The trade union movement has a crucial role to play in fighting for justice for women in the workplace, the labour market and society as a whole. The trade unions gained a marginal right to paid paternity leave of 10 paid working days. The struggle for our demand for 6 months of paid maternity leave continues.

The trade union has to develop specific actions for working class women, to promote their organisation, targeting the most marginalised sections including women in remote areas, using ideological training and trade union education. It must be conscientised and schooled in the politics and theory of the working class in order to understand the class content of women's oppression and wage struggles together with other popular forces to rid society of capitalist exploitation as the basis for all forms of patriarchy."



SADTU holding Beauty Pageant for its members during the Women's Month at Welkom Theatre, Free State

Nurses celebrate International Nurse's Day

in South Africa



Nurses in Mpumalanga celebrated Nurses Day at Elshaddai International Church in Ermelo under the theme *"Our Nurses, Our Future"*

T Nurses across the globe celebrated the International Nurses Day on the 12th of May and many questions are emerging as a result of the demands tabled by healthcare workers such as eradicating outsourcing, privatization, investment in development of nursing personnel, safer shifts, tackling patient-nurse ratios, increased health and safety regulations and provision of universal public healthcare as a human right.

The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] led massive campaigns in the workplace to raise issues affecting the nursing profession in the country. DENOSA President, Simon Hlungwani, addressed the nurses of North West during commemoration of the International Nurses Day at Sun City in the Bojanala District on 12 May 2023, where 900 nurses were in attendance from various districts of the province.

Hlungwani said "DENOSA urged government and employers to adopt the International Council of Nurses [ICN's] 10 policy actions to salvage SA's fast ailing healthcare system this International Nurses Day."

"Stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder and hopelessness are what many healthcare professionals still suffer from in most countries' healthcare systems as the harsh effects and the mounting backlogs of work post- the COVID-19 pandemic still face them, the recent report by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) on global nursing workforce."

"The Report was released to coincide with the marking of International Nurses Day, which is celebrated under the theme: Our Nurses. Our Future. The theme calls for the governments and employers to Value, Protect, Respect and Invest in nurses for a sustainable nursing and health care. As a result, the shortage of nurses globally is reaching alarming levels as many nurses suffer from the severe effects of COVID-19, with many of them opting to resign,

retire early or migrate to developed countries which offer both better working conditions and low nurse:patient ratios. As today, 12 May 2023, marks International Nurses Day, which is the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale as the pioneer of modern nursing, the ICN has set its sights firmly on the future to turn around the world's healthcare systems and get them ready for Universal Health Coverage, where all people get equal access to quality healthcare based on their need and not their financial standing."

"In South Africa, the dire conditions in the country's healthcare system have made it increasingly impossible for many patients to access quality healthcare services at the time of need. This is due to overcrowding, gross

on serious violation of human right and dignity of the patients and communities. South Africa is experiencing a shortage of more than 26 000 nurses currently, and this is foreseen to worsen and be around 62 000 by year 2030 if it is not addressed. Meanwhile, DENOSA in provinces has collected the data of unemployed nurses who are sitting at home due to the lapsing of contracts in different times and non-absorption of both community service and post-community services nurses.

The data shows a total of 20 000 nurses are unemployed and are readily available in at least eight provinces, except for the Northern Cape (the province has not had the intake of student nurses at its nursing college in three years, and thus the only province

in improving the health status of our people. We recognise their invaluable contribution in keeping our countries' collapsing healthcare system afloat. This year the International Nurses Day is commemorated under the theme: Our Nurses. Our Future. Indeed, the theme succinctly captures the critical role of nurses as the backbone of the healthcare system and the important role they play in promoting health and wellbeing of our people. The theme also amplifies the critical need to investment more resources in the nursing fraternity to improve patient-centred quality of care and to prepare for full implementation of National Health Insurance. As the adage goes "A country that does not value the health of its citizen deserves no future", but most importantly a country that does not invest in nurses deserves no future."

"The World Health Organisation [WHO] State of the world's nursing 2020 report identified key critical areas that governments across the world should prioritise in investing on nurses, these included amongst investing on nursing education, creation of nursing jobs and nursing leadership. The investment in these areas cannot be over-emphasised for the future of nurses and ultimately the future of society. We are still recovering from the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic which exposed the failures of the capitalist system in providing universal health care for humanity around the world. In the South African context, due to government neoliberal policies centred on austerity measures have weakened the capacity of the state to deliver services on health, education and

social security. Indeed our government has not invested adequately in the healthcare system more especially on the health workforce as per the Human Resources for Health Strategy."

Saphetha alluded that "As we celebrate this day, it is imperative for government to invest in the nursing fraternity to address major challenges encountering our healthcare system. This investment would contribute in improving and strengthening the healthcare system ensuring that it



Nurses participating in various celebrations across the country

shortage of staff, low pay, and constant reduction in health budgets which leads to procurement of less medicals, resources and equipment. As a result, many healthcare facilities at the primary healthcare level, which should be rendering services for 24 hours, are still not able to avail this service to millions of vulnerable citizens. For many citizens and patients to receive the services at clinics that operate for 8 hours, they have to sleep over at the entrance of the clinics, waiting for the clinics to open at 07h00. This borders

with a real shortage of nurses)," concluded Hlungwani.

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] conveyed its militant salute to millions of nurses across the globe celebrating International Nurses Day.

NEHAWU General Secretary, Zola Saphetha said "we salute the courageous and compassionate caregivers who play a tremendous role in providing healthcare to humanity. We appreciate the role that nurses play

provides access to quality health services for all in line with the principles of universal health coverage. The government must invest in the nursing fraternity through the employment of more nurses in order to have an effective and functional health system that provides qualitative health outcomes for the population as per the vision of HRH Strategy. Equally, in order to achieve a well-developed and sustainable healthcare system it's crucial to have nurses that are skilled, knowledgeable and have expertise to provide healthcare services. This has been a major challenge confronting our health system in that the government has not prioritised skilling, capacitating, educating and training nurses to ensure that adequate and efficient nursing services are delivered to meet the health needs of our people and to support the health sector."

"The government must put resources for nursing education and training and this must be linked to transforming South African Nursing Council [SANC] so as to radically improve the nursing fraternity as one of the terrain of struggles in the health sector. The council should be playing a leading role in the regulation of the nursing profession, this include ensuring that the working conditions are conducive, nursing practice standards, career development and advancement, and maintain nursing education and training as well as practice standards.

The government must invest in creating conducive working environments. Nurses can only render quality services if the work environment provides conditions that support them, positive work environments are important in achieving patient and employee safety, quality care and favourable patient outcomes. A conducive work environments involves all practices implemented to attain the highest

level of nurse health and well-being, quality patient care outcomes, high institutional performance and positive social outcomes. We call on the government to invest on nurses for the realisation of providing quality healthcare services for our people. Our Nurses. Our Future. Forward to International Nurses Day."

So, what can be done to improve working conditions and help nurses and midwives deliver the best quality care to patients?

According to ILO estimates, nurses and midwives represent an average of only 1.3 per cent of the workforce in countries with available data, yet they are the backbone of any healthcare system, usually accounting for about half of the workers in human health and social work. Their role becomes even more crucial during times of crisis. ILO's most recent World Employment and Social Outlook on essential workers identified nurses and midwives as key workers who faced elevated health risks and job strain while working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The nursing and midwifery profession is often perceived as a predominantly female field, and for good reason: four in five nurses and midwives are women. However, this varies across countries, with some regional and income-group patterns. The dominance of female employment is particularly pronounced in high and upper-middle income countries. Among all countries with available data, for every 1000 people, there are 5 nurses and midwives in scrubs ready to tend to their health needs. The comparable figure is 10 per 1000 people in high-income countries but drops down to around 3 per 1000 people in low and lower-middle-income countries.

While high-income countries boast

the most robust healthcare systems, they also have ageing populations, which increases demands on these systems. Meanwhile, despite having fewer resources overall, low-income countries have the highest number of nurses per 1000 elderly people (aged 65 and over), mainly due to their young demographic structure. Interestingly, they also have the most midwives per woman of childbearing age (aged 15 to 44).

As the world grapples with labour shortages and capacity constraints in healthcare and long-term care, the statistics presented above may soon worsen. The global shortage of healthcare workers is a ticking time bomb, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only made it worse. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of a growing exodus of healthcare workers from poor to wealthier countries, a trend that was already underway before the pandemic. Fifty-five countries with some of the world's most fragile health systems do not have enough healthcare workers (density below the global median of 49 medical doctors, nursing and midwifery personnel per 10'000 people), and many are losing them to international migration.

In addition to the small islands and countries with predominantly foreign workforces, high-income countries top the list of the share of foreign (or non-citizen) nurses and midwives. This trend is not unique to this healthcare profession, as more favourable working conditions and opportunities have historically driven migration to wealthier nations. To better understand this phenomenon, it is important to take a closer look at two vital components of working conditions: earnings and working hours.

Nurses and midwives tend to have long working hours. This issue

contributes to burnout and shortages, not to mention lower quality of care. Excessive work hours (defined as working more than 48 hours per week) are especially common among nurses and midwives in low and lower-middle-income countries, with many African countries topping the list. These long working hours are not necessarily the norm in these countries.

Long working time does not translate into better wages for nurses and midwives. In fact, low pay has been a growing concern among at least one third of essential workers worldwide, including nurses and midwives. ILO calculations from 31 countries reveal that low pay remains considerable in some countries, affecting many of these healthcare professionals in low- and high-income countries alike.

As for monthly earnings, we find that nurses and midwives are paid less than the average among high-skilled workers in 34 out of 49 countries. They also earn less than the average among health sector workers in almost half of the countries with available data.

The gender pay gap in the health and care sector is also concerning, with greater disparities than in many other industries. An analysis of hourly wages shows that female nurses and midwives earn less compared to their male counterparts in approximately half of the countries examined.

Nurses across the globe are calling for:

- An increased investment in public healthcare institutions
- An end to outsourcing of public healthcare services
- Decent salaries for all nursing staff
- Employment of the unemployed nurses across all countries

My country People

by Thobile Maso

Capitalists never look further than the end of their noises,
They forgot soon that they've been digging their own graves.
Now they want workers to rescue them from falling,

We have no crisis to protect, but war against exploitation to fight.
Sorry! We are not capitalist gate keepers,
We've been fasting too long and so much,
Malibe linye qha! One goal!

We have no mercy with capitalism.
Its either we live in a modern slavery or we fight for decent life and freedom
Qualitative compromise is equal to death,
We refuse to be pigs, sacrificing life for sausages,
We are neither lamb to be slaughtered.

Take your mouth out of the kitchen of your enemy,
Whether they are Kicking and screaming,
We demand our daily bread.
Land is a basis of all economic independence,
One goal!

All power to the people!
All power to the working class!
We will rest in peace,
When the capital - imperialism is in pieces and no more.

Ladies and gentlemen,
señoras y señores!
Manene nani manenekazi,
Bomme le boNtate,
Comrades and friends,
This is from me to you!

Poem submitted by Thobile Maso

Tribute

RAMARU
TALELANI
ENOS

★ 28-12-1977

† 29-04-2023

☞ 06-05-2023

HE SURVIVED BY TWO CHILDREN
AND LOVING FAMILY

KHA VHA EDELE NGA MULO RANGAI
JEREMIAH 29:11

Talelani Enos Ramaru
must not be forgotten!

Tribute

Dear comrades, it is with a heavy heart to inform you about the passing on of my friend, my comrade, my confidante, my force, Talelani Ramaru. Many messages of condolences read and obituaries shared since his passing, comrades and friends said 'It was a privilege to have known Talelani Enos Ramaru.'

When Comrade Talelani died at the age of 46 last month in April 2023, it became a notable loss, not because that it took place on the eve of May Day but because he was very instrumental to making Workers' Day successful through allocation of resources for provinces to finalize their provincial plans for workers to celebrate the International Workers' Day like any other country.

Mourners turned out to show their support and sympathies in such numbers in Dzwerani, Vuwani, Magengane and further afield during the funeral service of the National Accountant at COSATU.

COSATU National Accountant, Comrade Talelane Enos Ramaru was employed by the federation in February 2009 as the Head of the Department of Finance, which equates to a period of fourteen [14] years leading the accounting and audit functions of the organization.

At the time of his passing Talelani was serving in various Boards of various companies or organizations such as the Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa, the Chris Hani Institute, the National Labour and Economic Development Institute and the pension, provident and retirement fund administration company, NBS. Former COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntshalintshali shared insights about the life and times of Talelani Enos Ramaru.

"Comrade Talelani was a smart person and always introduced me to new things. At my family, they knew him well and we had our own room where we used to dine until we all spoke softly. We travelled to many places such as Lesotho talking throughout the trips. He was a true professional and make no mistake, on a Monday, he will be on his suit or a white shirt all the time", said Ntshalintshali.

His family described him as a 'loving uncle, a considerate brother, a General Secretary of Ramaru Social Club, an Advisor on many aspects of life' and lived his love to the fullest. His neighbours described him as a 'generous human being who shared contacts of carpenters, electricians and plumbers during a time of need. He knew everyone in the neighborhood in Tshwane.

His personality and professional conduct must inspire hope in the coming generations who aspire to serve in the trade union movement.

Hamba Kahle Talelani!

Ramaru and Mabotha families acknowledged all mourners who turned out to show their support and sympathies in such numbers in Dzwerani, Vuwani, Magengane and further afield during the funeral service of the National Accountant at COSATU.

COSATU General Secretary, Solly Phetoe was thankful to the worker leaders, officials and provinces who attended the funeral in such a short of time after the May Day celebrations. Edela nga mulalo Mukolokolo-Rambau, Muila mutshila wa Mbudzi.

***We will miss you Talelani Enos Ramaru!
Muya wavho u edele nga mulalo Talelani Enos Ramaru must not be forgotten!***



COSATU comrades and colleagues paying their last respect at the funeral of Comrade Talelani Ramaru





Memorial Service of Comrade Talelani Enos Ramaru at COSATU House, Braamfontein

‘Comrade Talelani Enos Ramaru was financially conscious

to utilize worker's resources for organizational development’, said COSATU President

On the 30th of April 2023, a lightning struck the federation in South Africa on the eve of celebrating the International Worker's Day when the National Accountant, Comrade Talelani Enos Ramaru met a fatal accident which cost his life along the R21 highway.

During the memorial service at Braamfontein, Comrade Talelani was described by every speaker as a 'humble human being, a dependable comrade, a financially conscious Accountant of note and a jolly person to many.'

Addressing mourners, COSATU President Zingisa Losi said "Comrade Ta as I occasionally called him, he was an experienced trade union movement financial person, a prolific accountant, always ahead of the curve to provide financial solutions we encountered as a federation. He steered the ship during tough times and for that we are very thankful. He spent his active hours with us at COSATU serving the working class and valued his contributions.

Losi said "Long Live the undying spirit of Comrade Talelani, we are hard broken inside by the early departure by one of us. No one can say death found me in a willing comrade. No one grants death any permission to take one of us. We are short of words to describe the loss. It hurts indeed that on this day, 3rd of May, we will be bidding you goodbye. You were very fundamental to allocate May Day funds, and we are standing with disbelief you're gone. A

loss through death is not easily replaced by human version of that soul. We will not forget you. It needed a sober mind to steer the federation from financial challenges. We shall not forget you. We remember how you engaged our affiliates to honour their obligations and we thank you for ensuring our financial policies are followed to the later. You managed to deal with complex issues on trade union politics. But your vehement commitment to keep sound financial records was outstanding. We have how you become unpopular on demanding

proper documents and accounting receipts. That kept the federation kept the federation alive. Comrade Enos, we shall not forget the sleepless nights doing the work of the federation. You have set a bar too high for anyone to fill. Thank you to your family. We will never forget you, Comrade Ta."

Mr. Ramaru was employed at the Congress of South African Trade Unions in February 2009 until he met his death on the 30th April 2023 as a National Accountant and Head of the Finance Department, responsible for the overall financial management responsibilities of the organisation and act as a leader of a support team for the elected National Treasurer, Comrade Freda Oosthuysen.

Just like his peers in the accounting profession, Mr. Ramaru believed that 'A journey that will worth everything tomorrow because of knowledge gathering today.'

Mr. Ramaru as an optimistic human being held a view that 'We become

leaders the day we decide to help people grow, not numbers.' Before being employed at COSATU, he was a general accountant at the Council for GeoScience from the years March 2007 until January 2009, and responsible for budgeting and forecasting, project analysis, variance reporting, projects performance reports, income and expenditure reports, procurement processes, projects time sheet recording, returns completion and submissions, responsible for eight business units finance budget. He was employed at Landbank South in Polokwane area as a Branch Accountant from the years January 2005 until January 2007 responsible for the budget and forecasting, Bank reconciliation, Asset management, Procurement of goods services, Financial analysis of clients' accounts allocation and queries and also overall Branch finance responsibility.

Mr. Ramaru once worked as a financial accountant at the South African Revenue Services from the years June 2002 until December 2003 responsible

Tribute

for budget planning, internal control compliance, policy and procedures adherence, procurement of goods, asset management, monthly income and expenditure reports, internal audit, budget, variance report, finance analysis.

He cut his teeth as a bank teller at ABSA in Louis Trichardt in Limpopo as a teller during the years February 2002 and May 2002 executing bank teller responsibilities in the bank.

Mr. Ramaru held a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) Accounting and Audit from the University of Venda (Univen), a Financial Forensics and Fraud Investigation from the University of South Africa, a Postgraduate qualification on Strategic Management and Corporate Governance from the University of South Africa, a Professional Advance Certificate on Public Development Management from the University of Witwatersrand and a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration and Management General from Regent Business School.

During an interview around November 24, 2014 on his career path in Chief Financial Officer, South Africa platform, Mr. Ramaru said "a platform like CFO South Africa is very useful."

"There is a lot of innovation happening and as a CFO you have to know about it," said Ramaru, who is proud of the work he has done to bring stability to the trade union federation's finance team. When I joined COSATU financial system controls were lacking," says Ramaru, who joined the federation five years ago. The other challenge was a backlog of 6 months of work, he recalls. There was no proper handover of all financial affairs. "As result I had work it out and make things happen considering that it was end of the financial year. I needed to work around clock."

Ramaru said 'he needed to be creative to get to grips with the situation and

develop a properly working finance team. He doesn't lament the challenge though.'

On the contrary: "I am very proud of the fact that most things that are now in place I have developed myself. The directors of the organization have given me that space. I am independent-minded so this has suited me very well."

Not being a Chartered Accountant, Ramaru had to work himself up from the 'bottom' of the finance world. "I believe that ability is not based on the highest qualification, but on determination, hard work and understanding of things like finance controls and compliance. What I do know is that I have proven myself by turning things around at COSATU," he said, adding that his ambition was to gain a qualification in forensic accounting.

After working as a teller at Absa, Ramaru worked as a financial accountant at SARS and as a branch accountant at the Landbank. He further paved his career as accountant at Council for Geoscience, where he learned a lot about business processes.

"I am proud to have had the opportunity of working in different big organizations where I have acquired experience on business process and financial system process flow."

His move to COSATU was unexpected, Ramaru said. "It was not something I was looking for, but I was head-hunted by audit firm Deloitte. The CFO role is something that I have always wanted to fulfil and because of the opportunity I got at COSATU it came earlier than I expected," he said.

"I like making decisions and have confidence. I am completely in charge of all controls, compliance, processes and financials. For me, this was preparation for the next step in my life."

For Ramaru "personality, ethics, self-discipline, loyalty and honesty" came

with the territory as CFO. He felt his practical, hands-on approach will stand him in good stead.

"You can have all the qualifications, but a lot of finance work is about background experience and knowledge acquired; knowing what to do in a particular situation. You can always refer to a book, but it is about understanding what is happening and what to achieve. Finance is the backbone of the organization and plays a crucial role."

The COSATU CFO felt that attending the CFO South Africa events stimulated his career, exposing him to people and ideas that will help him to "grow and soar." "There is always a lot to learn and it is a privilege to be learning from people of calibre, like the one's presenting and attending the CFO South Africa functions. We're all facing similar issues, whether at a large corporate or any organization. Whether you are working towards making a profit or are a NPO like us, at the end of the day it is all about your business processes and serving your organization to the best of your ability by implementing good financial controls."

Mr. Ramaru has served as an Interim Board member at USAASA which is a public body as confirmed by Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999, with its existence, functions, duties and mandate of the Agency governed by sections 80 – 91 of the Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005 ("the ECA") which came into operation on 19 July 2006.

Amongst their legislative mandate as a Board member was 'to strive to promote the goal of universal access and universal service, encourage, facilitate and offer guidance in respect of any scheme to provide universal and access, universal services or telecommunication services in terms of the Reconstruction

and development Plan (RDP), foster the adoption and use of new methods of attaining universal access and universal service, make recommendations to enable the Minister to determine what constitutes universal access, universal service and under serviced areas, conduct research into and keep abreast of developments in the Republic and elsewhere on information communication technology, electronic communications services and electronic communications facilities, continually survey and evaluate the extent to which universal access and service have been achieved, make recommendations to the Minister in relation to policy on any matter relating to universal access and universal service, advise the Authority (ICASA) on any matter relating to universal access and universal service, continually evaluate the effectiveness of this Act and things done in terms thereof towards the achievement of the goal of universal access and universal service, manage the Universal Service and Access Fund (USAF) in accordance with the provisions of the Act, submit annual reports in its operations, budget and expenses to the Minister and to provide incentives to network licensees to construct operate and maintain networks in areas declared under-served by ICASA.

The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) is a State Owned Entity of government established through the Electronic Communications Act, No 36 of 2005, to ensure that "every man, woman and child whether living in the remote areas of the Kalahari or in urban areas of Gauteng can be able to connect, speak, explore and study using ICT's.

Hamba Kahle Comrade Talelani Enos Ramaru!



Family members of Comrade Talelani Enos Ramaru at the memorial service



Former COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntshalintshali shared insights about the life and times of Talelani Enos Ramaru



Workers — of the — World Unite!

Workers in Madrid celebrating International Workers Day

International federations marked the celebrations of May Day across the globe by restating the critical importance of class struggles waged by working people demanding social justice, gender equality, decent work, peace and social protection.

On May 1, workers challenged governments unleashing austerity measures against the poor masses through budget cuts and the resultant growing cost of living which has forced many communities into poverty, destitution and suffering and to

a worst case scenario offering workers below inflation wage increases in various sectors of the economy.

Many trade unionists are facing union bashing at the shopfloor level as governments and bosses target them as an attempt to erode labour rights in workplaces. Companies such as Walmart are becoming a monster in the labour markets.

The right to strike is a fundamental human right that allows workers to peacefully express their grievances and demand fair treatment and just

compensation.

Workers in the United Kingdom for example have expressed themselves on the streets that without this labour right, working people are left with limited options to address workplace issues and many may suffer from unfair labour practices, erosion of wages, discrimination and unsafe working conditions.

Working people are suffering from the adverse effects of climate change which has forced many into food insecurity and are frustrated by governments who are renewing

to implement the COP27 commitments to reduce carbon emissions and fund projects to create sustainable livelihoods through new forms of new energy. Working people and their communities demand that the global energy crisis led by capitalists must be resolved.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) General Secretary, Pambis Kyritsis said "The World Federation of Trade Unions, the militant, class-oriented voice, representing 105 million workers who live, work, and struggle in 133 countries

of the 5 continents, honors the 137th anniversary of the struggle of workers in Chicago in 1886 that constituted a lasting milestone of the working class and a bright beacon for the struggles of today and tomorrow for stable work with rights, social security, free public, and universal health and education, dignified life. Nowadays the crisis of capitalism is deepening in the length and breadth of the globe, resulting in the open violation of democratic and trade union rights, the deterioration of working and living conditions, and the dramatic widening of

social inequalities, poverty, and exploitation. The big capital and its political representatives were using the pretext of the capitalist crisis of all kinds to attack even the most fundamental democratic and trade union rights, like the right to strike, to demonstrate, and to organize.

They do whatever they can to transfer the consequences of the crisis to the shoulders of the working class, the pensioners, the farmers, and to the poorer part of the self-employed people. The uncontrollable increase of the prices; especially

labour policies, we stand by the side of the struggling female worker, the one who suffers from double exploitation fighting for equal rights to work, society and life. In the same direction, we continue our fight in favor of the youngsters who always are the first victims of the capitalist crisis and the migrants who are exploited as cheap workforce.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with the vulnerable parts of the workers' class, demanding dignified income for the under-employed workers, proper jobs for the unemployed,

elimination of all the imperialist wars, the disengagement and dismantling of NATO and all military coalitions, and the abolition of nuclear weapons. We intensify our struggle to ensure the right of peoples to live in peace and determine freely and independently their present and future. We fight to stop the economic wars and sanctions as a means of promotion of foreign imperialist interests in sovereign and independent countries. We demand an immediate end to the criminal embargos against socialist Cuba and the continuous crime

every human being, a society free of the capitalist barbarity and man-by-man exploitation. We call upon all the affiliates and friends of WFTU to honor the International Workers Day under the slogans and banners of the WFTU:

- Internationalist solidarity: the weapon of the working class
- We refuse to pay for their crisis
- Stop imperialist blockades and economic wars

The Acting General Secretary of the International Trade Unions Confederation, Luc Triangle said "On the first of May, working people across the world celebrate more than 150 years of collective action through their trade unions building secure, sustainable lives and delivering social justice. It is also a moment to reflect on the enormous challenges to people and the planet, challenges that can only be overcome with a vibrant trade union movement at the heart of the economy and society, and a new social contract to build a just and sustainable future for all.

However, tens of millions of people are directly confronted by the brutal realities of armed conflict, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Multilateralism and the vital instruments and processes that aim to ensure peace and common security are under existential threat. The world faces the converging crises of massive inequality, climate change, erosion of democracy, threats to public health and the prospect of unregulated technologies exacerbating division and exclusion.

As the largest organised democratic force in the world, the global trade union movement is indispensable in overcoming these challenges and working for peace. Strengthening solidarity in times of crisis is essential for creating a fairer and more humane world. The pathway to that world, and a fundamental foundation for peace, is the new social contract.

There is no lack of resources, but a lack of political will to overcome oligarchy, to reform taxation and to invest in public services and a sustainable future. It is through trade union action that we can create

the necessary democratic accountability to re-shape the global economy. This means action on:

- Jobs, to reach full employment by creating 575 million new jobs worldwide through investment in care, green jobs and infrastructure and formalising informal sector employment.
- Wage rises, with living minimum wages to reverse the decades-long decline in the share of prosperity going to working people and to ensure a dignified life for all and revitalise economies.
- Rights, to guarantee workers' organising and bargaining rights, ensure safe and healthy work, safeguard against discrimination and forced and child labour and build a sustainable world through just transition.
- Equality, to guarantee equal pay for women and men and challenge racism and homophobia.
- Social Protection, to invest in coverage for the three-quarters of the world's people who are fully or partly denied this basic human right starting with a global social protection fund.
- Inclusion, to remove the colonial structural framework of the world's financial and trade systems that deny prosperity to billions of people.
- Unions across the world are taking action to address the cost-of-living crisis. In response, rather than engage positively in social dialogue, many governments are further restricting the fundamental right to strike. We will continue to defend the right to withdraw our labour to ensure decent work and to secure justice and freedom.

"As we recall the great struggles fought and won by working women and men over so many decades, we recommit to building workers' power through organising and exercising that power to build a world founded on equity, solidarity, democracy and mutual respect. The dreams and aspirations of trade unions in the past became reality through collective action and it is time for the current generation to turn the aspiration for a world that puts people first into a reality."



Workers demonstrated on the streets demanding greater protection of workers' rights. Workers in countries such as France, Ghana, Greece, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and South Africa are refusing to stand idle in the face of injustice.

the prices of essential goods, as well the "energy poverty", is another way to cut salaries and to protect and increase profits resulting in even more poverty and deterioration of the workers living standards. They once again want the peoples and the workers to pay for their crisis. But the workers are not willing to be shouldered the bill.

This message is loudly and clearly heard from more and more workplaces, from more and more countries. The WFTU affiliates, in the militant spirit of the recent 18th congress we had in Rome one year ago, are at the forefront of these struggles, demanding the satisfaction of the contemporary needs of the workers at all levels: salary, employment, social security, health care, education, culture. We are strengthening our opposition against privatization and anti-

and decent pensions for the retired workers. We strengthen our militant actions to ensure all labor rights and freedoms, and the conventions to be implemented in practice instead of being empty words in papers. These struggles are relentlessly and unwaveringly given despite the sharpening of state repression and authoritarianism, unfortunately with the tolerance or even the cooperation of surrendered trade union leaders together with yellow unions who are aligned with the orders of the capital. In addition to the aftermaths of the pandemic and the economic crisis, the bourgeoisie wants the working class to pay also the price of the imperialist war of the US, NATO, EU with Russia in Ukraine.

We reiterate our firm internationalist solidarity with the suffering peoples. We demand the end of the war in Ukraine, the

against the Palestinian people. Our most powerful weapons are INTERNATIONALISM and SOLIDARITY. No worker must feel alone.

The WFTU on the occasion of 2023 International Workers Day conveys its warm, internationalist, militant, and class greetings to all struggling workers and to all militant trade unions that tirelessly and decisively conduct the daily fight for dignity, for the satisfaction of the contemporary need of the working class and the popular strata. We intensify our common actions in every sector, in every country, in every continent, for the emancipation of the working class, to meet our own class interests and needs; against the root cause of poverty, misery, wars, and refugees; to build a just human-centered society with dignified living and working conditions for

South African trade unions

host the Railways, Road and Urban Transport Conferences in Johannesburg, South Africa

Simon Weller from the UK Train Drivers' Union at the Railway Workers Conference moved a motion calling for disability equality to be an organising priority for the ITF

Over 500 delegates from Unions organizing workers across the globe from 90 countries in the transport sector held their Railways, Road and Urban Transport Conference at the Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre in Johannesburg from the 13th until the 18th March 2023, representing members from 185 national trade unions. Key amongst the resolutions were about condemning xenophobia on migrant drivers and eradication of inter-ethnic conflicts in the sector.

Stephen Cotton, the General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation said "we discussed and debated about strategies to deal with the challenges facing the railway, road and urban transport industries, including chronic underinvestment, cuts to services, privatisation and decarbonisation, and developed strategies to strengthen workers' voices in decision-making about the future of these vital industries."

In a joint statement Cotton

elaborated that 'Unions are tackling key issues impacting transport workers globally, from solidarity-based strategies to eliminate xenophobia in Southern African road transport, through to developing socially-just trade union approaches to combat the underlying causes of the industries current crisis: chronic underinvestment, cuts to services, deregulation and privatisation.'

"The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the democratic, global union federation of 670 transport unions in 147 countries, representing over 18 million transport workers across the globe, is holding its Railways, Road and Urban Transport Conferences in Johannesburg, South Africa, hosted by ITF's South African affiliates SATAWU, NUMSA and DETAWU. Unions at the three conferences are developing transformative policies and programmes to shift the balance of power from capital to workers in each sector. These are based on a common recognition that we must take responsibility for transforming our sectors, making

them socially and environmentally sustainable." "Building cooperation and unity between unions in road, rail and urban transport gives us the capacity and strength needed to lead the industrial and political changes that transport workers and our society need. Worldwide, our societies were ravaged by Covid-19, which led not only to a continuing health crisis but also increased wealth inequality in and between countries, and now, in a post-pandemic phase where cost of living is spiraling out of control in many countries, workers and their unions are demanding that governments put workers' and society's demands first."

"Transport workers are being asked to shoulder the burdens of the pandemic and its aftermath, from rising fuel prices to cuts in public spending and services, to the deepening climate crisis. Despite this, transport workers and their unions are putting forward solutions for the collective crises we face and fighting back against the increasingly aggressive assaults on fundamental labour rights by governments and employers,"

said Cotton. ITF's 2022 Global Poll, titled 'In a World on the Brink of Recession, Transport can be a Driver of Economic Progress', showed that the public overwhelmingly supports union demands on transport, with a larger percentage believing governments are failing their citizens in handling transport issues generally.

The Report articulated that "As the world shutdown, transport workers were more visible than they ever have been. They transported medical supplies and kept supply chains connected, they kept cities moving so doctors, nurses and other key workers could continue to work, and they delivered food and essential goods to our doorsteps so we could survive and stay safe. Transport workers did what they always do for countries, for economies and for our societies. The 2022 ITF Global Poll provides clear evidence of people's recognition of the critical role that transport, and transport workers, play to the global economy. 81% of people surveyed believe the world's economy relies on transport workers for the movements of goods and people. People across

the world rely heavily on transport. Nine in ten people identify it as an important public service. But right now, people are worried about transport— from the rising costs of getting to work, to the travel chaos experienced when trying to visit family and friends, to concerns about failing supply chains causing shortages of food, medicine and other essential goods they depend on. One in two people think their government is handling transport badly in their country.

Governments are failing the people who elect them, and they are failing the transport workers who power their economies. Across the world, governments have allowed businesses to compete unchecked, with little protection in place for workers across their supply chains. Governments have ripped up labour safeguards to encourage and increase competition. Labour standards across the transport industry have been eroded as businesses have sought cheaper ways to move people and goods. For decades, transport workers have seen their jobs worsen. Their workplaces

are increasingly unsafe, their employment is increasingly precarious, and their standards of living have fallen. It is time now to act. With a convergence of crises from the pandemic, climate change and cost of living, government investment in transport and the rights of transport workers can be a driver of social, political and economic change. Transport workers and their unions are calling for action on six demands: corporate accountability in supply chains, sustainability, safety, the future of work, rights and equality. The findings of the ITF Global Poll prove that people support the demands of transport workers and their unions."

The International Transport Workers' Federation tabled six demands which are;

- Safety for Transport Workers
- Making Transport Sustainable
- Corporate Accountability in Global Supply Chains
- A Say in the Future of Work
- Equality for Transport
- Workers Rights for Transport Workers

"There is overwhelming public support in all countries surveyed in the ITF Global Poll for governments, companies and investors to act in support of ITF's six demands for change." Public transport affects everyone.

It's an integral and essential part of the modern world. Yet not everyone has a say in how it's run, and for whose benefit. Too often decision making on public transport services and infrastructure does not include the views of the real experts—workers and passengers.

Action plan for governments and investors

"People around the world are calling for greater government investment in transport and for more attention to be given to protecting transport workers. The call for greater investment in transport policies is clear, and none is louder than for those policies which protect transport workers themselves. Almost nine in every ten people support their government implementing policies to protect transport workers from violence and harassment (87%) and laws which improve health and safety (85%).

A further 80% would like to see their government implement policies that end abuse of transport workers in supply chains, while 83% want their government to protect transport workers' employment rights. While

improving the workplace safety of transport workers is paramount to the people in this poll, they also want their governments to invest in job creation for the transport sector (81%). In addition to calling for policies that protect transport workers, people globally also want to see greater investment in the transport sector itself, with 75% calling for increased investment in all transport and 83% calling for increased access to transport. Rail links (49% for both local/commuter rail and long distance) and expanding the capacity of public transport (48%) are considered to be high priorities for this investment. Almost one in three (31%) also consider increased airport capacity to be a high priority. The global climate crisis is also at the forefront of people's minds. 79% of people are calling for their governments to put in place plans to lower emissions in the transport sector while also calling for increased investment in sustainable transport (80%). Half (50%) of people consider the rollout of electric buses (as they are zero emissions) to be a high priority for governments. There is also a demand for greater investment in public transport, with 40% of people saying they consider making public transport free to be a high priority for their government. When asked directly, 70% of people thought that public transport should be paid for mostly (49%) or entirely (21%) by government. Many also believe that allowing access to public transport within a 10-minute walk (45%) should be a high priority for government. Two-thirds (66%), a strong majority of people, would like to see their government nationalize transport infrastructure and operations."

In South Africa, the Poll shows that almost 2 in 3 people believe that their government is handling transport badly in an economic system that 76% of people say favours the wealthy, despite 78% of South Africans saying they're worried about access and affordability of public transport (more than any other country in the survey). However, the South African public recognises the importance of transport in their country, with 96% believing transport is important to the country's economy, 94% saying transport is important for improving life in cities, 96% saying transport is important for reducing economic inequality and 90% believing transport is important for uniting people.

Jack Mazibuko, General Secretary, SATAWU said: "It

is important to have this ITF conference on our soil. It represents a critical point in which we as organised labour should practise the values of international solidarity and consolidate our collective efforts to end the continued fragmentation and exploitation of workers in the sector."

Irvin Jim, General Secretary, NUMSA said: "In South Africa, there is a meagre subsidy where a household that does not have someone who works, is treated as an indigent who can have access to free or subsidised municipal services, which may vary depending on means-testing criteria in different municipalities. 'Indigent households' can have access to at least 50 kWh per month of electricity; 6000 litres of water and a R50 subsidy for basic sewerage and sanitation. However, there is no mechanism that ensures such households can have access to free transport services as happens in parts of the developed world."

"If you do not work, you are not expected in town. Which resembles our Apartheid past where black people were treated with contempt and racial prejudice. That is why in our country, race is a class issue. The urban transport crisis we are seeing, where the majority of the working class are unable to access safe, affordable reliable transport, is the tip of the iceberg. There is a broader, deeper crisis that can no longer be postponed if we are to find a permanent solution. Where the liberation movement won political power without economic power."

The ITF Road Transport Conference passed an emergency motions focused on particular challenges for transport workers in Africa, including: A motion on eliminating xenophobia from Southern African road transport, committing to 'organising, campaigning and advocacy activities against racial capitalism in all its forms, which has been used to exploit and oppress the working class both in southern Africa and across the world'.

A motion on decent road safety on African road in light of several recent dramatic road accidents (in Senegal, Ivory Coast, Benin and other countries) and attacks by armed groups (in Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, DRC, Mozambican buses in South Africa and Cameroonian trucks in the Central African Republic).

The participating Unions have passed important motions on:

- Defending transport workers' jobs pay and conditions
- Improving long-distance passenger transport
- Winning greater investment in public transport and the need for public ownership
- Strengthening safety and health in public transport workplaces
- Ensuring the transport workers 'get home safely'
- Expanding and investing in metro organizing
- Demanding the electrification public transport workers want
- Driving LGBT+ equality in the public transport sector worldwide
- Disability equality in the railway sector worldwide

The conference achieved to highlight solutions for issues facing the transport industry and transport workers in South Africa, Africa and globally, including the LGBTQ+ community in the sector and promotion of gender equality for all.

Other thoughts in plenary emerged!

Many delegates argued that responsible road transport employers must recognize that safe access to decent sanitation facilities

working conditions for workers. The youth is the future, and we're here to discuss and decide on the future. I think we all need a stronger investment plan that allows us a better security level for our workers. The health of our workers & passengers depends on it. We need to insist that in every country there must be a big chapter dealing with safety."

"Women shouldn't have to adapt to the workplace, the workplace should adapt to women. "Every transport workplace, every workplace, should be gender-responsive," said Sabrina Cortez, Railway Worker, from the Fédération CGT des Cheminots.

Elizabeth Cocks, from ASLEF in the UK representing women railway workers joined contributions by calling an international panel of women railway workers to launch the International Transport Workers' Federation Gender Equality Action Plan. Cocks spoke on the benefits of diversity in our workplaces—both in terms of reflecting the communities we serve but also the resulting improvements in terms and conditions that new perspectives can bring.



Albina Akhmetbayeva from KAZPROFTRANS Kazakhstan says they have ensured that their collective agreements cover the issues faced by their women members - who make up more than 30% of their membership

is an issue impacting worker health, safety and dignity, as part of decent working conditions for transport workers. Kamogelo Seitireng, from SATAWU, seconded the motion on promoting public transportation: "In South Africa, we are in the eye of the storm of privatisation... These neoliberal policies have been violently imposed globally."

Sergio Luciano Sasia, UF: "Politicians need to understand that it is essential to invest in rail. The need to invest more in health and safety, in sustainability, better

Amongst the other key speakers were Jack Mazibuko, SATAWU General Secretary, Irvin Jim, NUMSA General Secretary, Vusi Ntshangase, DETAWU General Secretary, Seddik Berrama ITF Arab World Vice President, Meryem Halouani, from Morocco's UM, Nancy Eloisa, from Bogotá, Colombia, Paula Rivas Villarroel from Fesimetro, Lall Dewnath, AGWU Mauritius, Andreas Schackert, from Ver.di, and Gora Khouma from URS Senegal.

A fight for job security and decent wages in the retail sector ensues



SACCAWU members at Silverlakes picketing against job insecurity at Makro SA

SACCAWU intensified the struggle against retrenchments of workers at the Makro South Africa. The retail union issued a notice to resume the 10-days strike action at Makro to pressurize the company to accede to the demands for an improvement in wages and working conditions.

SACCAWU Deputy General Secretary, Mduzuzi Mongwe alluded that “the strike action at all Makro stores will resume from 24 March 2023 and will continue up until 02 April 2023. On Friday 24 March 2024, SACCAWU will be holding nationwide marches to various Makro stores to hand over memorandum of demands. The main march will be held in Pretoria where the memorandum will be handed over to Makro store at Woonderboom. Civil society organisations in South Africa and International Trade Union Federations have been galvanized to rally behind SACCAWU and boycott all Walmart/Makro products during this period.”

The demands placed on Makro by SACCAWU are as follows:

1. Across the board increase of R900.00 or 12% whichever is the greater
2. Minimum Wage R8000.00
3. An improvement of Commission from 10% on margin to 20% margin for Sales Person
4. Increase in Category 3 working hours from 160 to 195 per month
5. 13 Cheque to be made separate from the December salary

6. Uniform Allowance R100.00
7. Moratorium on Retrenchments for the duration of the agreement

Mongwe said “...the members of SACCAWU, supported by other progressive Civil Society formations is demonstrating its displeasure against the Company’s brutal attacks on collective bargaining, coupled with growing acts of Unilateralism and union bashing and unleashing of a regime of fear on workers, through mass dismissal of workers and other forms of bully-boy tactics and intimidation. Whilst the Company purports to be committed to the developmental objectives of our country aimed at eradicating the ugly legacy of Apartheid, it continues to drive programmes that can only condemn thousands of workers to poverty whilst exacerbating the already high levels on unemployment and inequality, leading to social ills, like poverty, that are bi-products of unemployment and inequality.”

The Union and the anti-Walmart coalition were opposed to the Walmart take-over of Massmart for the following reasons:

- a) Massmart is a significant local asset that should not be placed in foreign hands;
- b) The deal will have a devastating impact on local jobs, including the nature, the quality and, importantly, the quantity of jobs, in a country that already has unacceptably high levels of unemployment;
- c) The deal will significantly affect the

local market, including by having a negative impact on upstream suppliers, manufacturers and service providers, including small businesses;

- d) It will lead to a smaller supply base as Walmart imports more than 70% of its products;
- e) International research which is corroborated by Unions in the US and Canada, quoted in the New York Daily News last week suggests that for every two jobs created by a Walmart store, three other jobs are destroyed;
- f) Walmart has a terrible industrial relations history and poor reputation as it seeks to maintain a Union free environment in countries where it operates. The Company has a dossier that guides its managers on how to maintain a Union free environment.

Memorandum of Demands

SACCAWU heightened campaign from the 24th March 2023 across the country by issuing an ultimatum that worker’s demands must be answered within 48 hours. Mbongwe argued that ‘Employers have waged a serious offensive on trade unions and workers since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. We waged struggles against growing trends of unilateralism in 2021.

Whilst the 2019/20, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 agreement was concluded on the 13th of April 2019 we are already a few days away from the implementation date of the new agreement. The total takeover

by Walmart has led to deterioration in industrial relations. Draconian measures have replaced cordial industrial relations. The grossly unfair dismissal of almost five hundred workers clearly proves that Walmart is on a warpath and will possibly not stop until it has throttled the daylight out of freedom of association and the duty to bargain with organized workers.’

SACCAWU demanded the following:

- a) That the employer should meet the following fair and reasonable demands:
 - i. An across the board increase of R900-00 or 12% whichever is the greater;
 - ii. A minimum wage of R 8 0000-00 per month;
 - iii. Improved commission from 10% to 20% margin for sales persons;
 - iv. Increase in Category 3 working hours from 160 to 195 per month;
 - v. 13th cheque to be made separate from the December salary;
 - vi. Uniform allowance of R100-00 and;
 - vii. A moratorium on Retrenchments for the duration of the agreement.
- b) That they should reinstate all dismissed workers;
- c) That they should desist from their draconian measures and practice cordial industrial relations, firmly rooted on mutual respect.

Mongwe concluded by articulating that ‘Makro SA has a chance to respond within 48 hours upon receipt of the worker’s memorandum.’

SATAWU rejects the 'revised' offer by the employer



SATAWU members picketing against employers in 2023

The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) rejected the new offer tabled by the employer in the Passenger Sector. The negotiations started in January 2023 and the parties reached the deadlock after the employer could not meet the demands of the workers.

The Union was demanding 9% increment across the board and other allowances in for the 2023-2024 and 8% increment across the board and other allowances in the 2024-2025 financial year, and for the employer to contribute on primary health care.

Jack Mazibuko, SATAWU General Secretary said "The employer has

tabled a 'revised' offer of 6% increment for 2023-2024 financial year and nothing on primary health care. There is nothing revised here, the employer keeps on insulting the workers. We are not even going to consider it.

The 30-day period to cool, will expire tomorrow, the 28th of March 2023. We will then on the 1st Of April 2023 give the employer a 48-hour notice that we will be embarking on a strike as the certificate of non-resolution was issued by the commissioner. The strike is legal and protected.

If they are not coming back to the table with a meaning offer. The employer is being greedy and selfish.

When we were negotiating last year, we ended up signing a year agreement because the employer could not meet our demands claiming that the business isn't doing so good, they are still trying to pick up from the lockdown and covid 19.

Now there is no excuse at all. We are of the view that the business is doing so well and there is money, hence we are morning willing to go on strike, is the only language they hear."

Mazibuko reiterated that "The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union wishes to emphasize that going on strike is not our priority as we know what is at stake, and that it will affect our struggling economy. The

Passenger Sector is bringing millions of rands to our economy. However, the employer leaves us with no choice but to go on strike, and we will do that until they give us a reasonable offer not this insult."

Meanwhile, SATAWU members marched to various security companies who were not duly handing over worker's monies to third parties after monthly deductions. Members went to Mafoko security head office in Pretoria to hand over its memorandum.

Members said "Mafoko must bring back the money. They must stop being greedy and stealing from the underpaid security officers." A response was awaited from the employer.

Public servants settle for 7.5% wage increment



DENOSA President and Convener of COSATU JMC, Simon Hlungwani, briefing the media



Public servants demanding decent salaries and conducive working conditions

Trade unions representing the public servants in South Africa have accepted the government's offer to increase pay by 7.5% during the 2023/24 fiscal year, followed in 2024/25 by pay adjustments linked to the consumer inflation rate. This comes after hectic bargaining session which included some of the public service unions opting to down tools in the essential services to raise their plight about rising costs of living and the intransigence of the employer on implementing the Collective Agreement 1 of 2018. Unions such as NEHAWU, POPCRU, DENOSA and SAMATU embarked on massive pickets to put pressure on the employer until a halt on the strike declaration was interdicted by the Labour Court and later appealed to the Labour Appeal Court.

At one stage the Public Service Collective Bargaining Council, General Secretary, Mr. Frikkie de Bruin issued a calling to the parties to have confidence in dispute resolution mechanisms.

Frikkie de Bruin said "PSCBC is calling on striking workers and the state as employer to engage in dispute resolution process to resolve their differences. We call on parties not to resolve disputes in courts and on the streets but to return to negotiations. The solution to the impasse amongst the employer and striking trade unions is collective bargaining."

All these developments coincided with the appointment of a new Public Service and Administration Minister, Hon Noxolo Kiviet who was expected to sweep clean as a new broom in the department.

The Labour Court Judges Waglay JP, Savage and Gqamana AJJA heard the Labour Appeal Court matter on the 10th March 2023 and

delivered a judgment on the 13th March 2023, with NEHAWU as the Applicant, represented by Scholtz Attorneys and the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Department of Public Service and Administration, Minister of Finance, National Treasury, and PSCBC as respondents, represented by TJ Bruiders SC, N Lewis and J Thobela-Mkhulisi and instructed by CN Phatudi Inc. Attorneys.

The Labour Court Judges issued a Court Order on the morning of the 13th March 2023 directing NEHAWU to inform its members about the content of the order before 13h00 that day through publication on social media, by email and by all other appropriate means available to it. The Labour Court Judges said "NEHAWU and its members in the DPSA are interdicted and restrained from commencing with or participating in a strike or strike action. The order we make carries with it a duty upon NEHAWU to publicise this order widely, including to its members, at the pain of being found guilty of contempt in the event that the union's members are found to have flouted this order or deny any knowledge of it, it will fall to NEHAWU to explain this failure. The strike action, picket or any form of industrial action by NEHAWU, its members and employees employed by SASSA, SIU and SAMBI which commenced on the 6th March 2023, is interdicted with immediate effect and therefore restrained and prevented from continuing with or participating in any such strike, picket or any other form of industrial action." NEHAWU issued a communique to its members informing them about the judgment and urging its members and structures to comply with the order and act within the framework of the Court Order. To resolve the 2022/23 wage dispute involving NEHAWU, DENOSA, POPCRU and

SAPU with the employer, that led to the strike, government signed a Settlement Agreement on the 14th March 2023. Public service unions elaborated that "This was characterized by complications of a Labour Court Order which declared the strike unlawful.

- On the augmentation of 2022/23 increment, the agreement says that: "The employer commits that residual and substantive matters emanating from the 2022/23 wage dispute related to the COLA shall be tabled, positively dealt with and concluded as part of the 2023/24 wage negotiations". In other words, in signing this Settlement Agreement the employer accepted the fact that the 2022/23 wage dispute was not resolved and that in order to negotiate with labour for 2023/24, the employer commits to "positively" negotiate an increase on top of the 3% that was unilaterally implemented for the 2022/23 financial year.
- On the implementation, the last clause of this Settlement Agreement states very clearly that "this agreement is binding to all parties mentioned above".
- We are now updating our collective membership and the public servants as a whole that when a special council was convened on the 16- 17 March 2023, once again the employer has now shamelessly refused to negotiate an increment for 2022/23 in line with this binding Settlement Agreement that it has signed.
- We must also inform the public servants the fact that the other unions that make up the 53% majority in the bargaining council that are happy with the 3% that was imposed for 2022/23 collaborated and supported the employer in refusing to negotiate for an

additional increment for 2022/23."

Public servant's demands on the 2023/2024 Wage Negotiations

On the 22nd February 2023 the Minister of Finance, Enoch Godongwana, tabled the budget in Parliament.

In the budget, the Treasury allocated only an additional R70.2 billion to the public service wage bill - from R690.4 billion in 2022/23 to R760.6 billion in 2025/26. This means that the public service wage bill would only grow at an average of 3.3% from 2022/23 to 2025/26. Therefore, for 2023/24 the Treasury allocated only about R14.973 billion. This is the amount of money that was already set aside as part of the continuation of the cash-gratuity. However, for 2023/24 the employer does not want to continue with the payment of cash-gratuity and the other 53% unions agree with the employer in this regard. Instead, the R14.973 billion cash-gratuity is now converted into an offer for salary adjustment in the baseline for 2023/24. Hence, originally the employer tabled an offer of about 4.7% for the 2023/24 baseline increment.

As the strike intensified into the second week and the Settlement Agreement was being discussed with the President and Cabinet Mandating Committee, to save the face of the unions that were cooperating and supporting the employer, the employer's negotiators quickly tabled to these unions an apparent offer of about 7.5%. However, we want to inform our collective membership and the public servants as a whole that actually there is no 7.5% real increase that is offered by the employer at the PSCBC. It is a shameless lie that is sold to the workers by the employer in collaboration with its sweetheart unions. This 7.5% comes

from the 4.7% (R14.973 billion) that was already allocated as cash-gratuity but this time converted into the salary baseline – together with an additional 2.8% adjustment for 2023/24. In other words, for 2023/24 the employer is basically making an offer of about 2.8% to the public service unions at the PSCBC!

Taking into account the government's own forecast of inflation for 2023 at 5.4%, this 2.8% offer actually amounts to a brutal 2.6% wage-cut in the average salaries of public servants for 2023/24. Now that the employer, which is supported by the other 53% unions at the bargaining council is refusing to negotiate a top-up on the 3% imposed in 2022/23, this 2.6% for 2023/24 wage-cut comes on top of the 4% wage-cut that the public servants suffered in 2022/23 given the fact that the average inflation rate was nearly 7% during that financial year. Therefore, we are saying that the talk about the 7.5% is a blatant lie by the employer and its unions. We are resolute in rejecting the 2.8% or the 2.6% wage-cut for 2023/24!

On the other hand, SADTU and FEDUSA said "the unions are driven by the mandate from its members to engage in negotiations for the 2023/2024 wage negotiations. It is deeply concerning that unions in the public sector seem to be at odds with each other. This should not be the case. We are mindful that negotiations are a give-and-take. We urge our members to engage in the mandate seeking process in their numbers so that we can secure what we have gained so far and more. The Pay Progression of 1.5% shall be paid with effect from the 1st of July 2023 in accordance with sectoral collective agreements. This will further improve the notch by 1.5% for all those who shall have qualified. We regard the reinstatement of the pay progression as an achievement we have scored in 2023."

Employer's offer

The last and final salary increase offer tabled by the government at the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) entails a pensionable salary increase of 7.5% for consideration by trade unions, says the Department of Public Service and Administration.

The employer's last and final offer tabled on March 17, 2023, at the PSCBC entailed the following provisions:

- A two-year multi-term agreement for the financial year 2023/24 and financial year 2024/25.
- Pensionable salary increases of 7.5% for employees on levels 1 – 12 packaged as follows: translation of the current non-pensionable cash gratuity at the value of 4.2% on the baseline, a nominal increase of 3.3% across the board and pay progression of 1.5% for all qualifying public servants shall continue as per the existing dispensation across all departments.

Departmental Communications Director: Mr Moses Mushi said the non-pensionable cash allowance will be translated into the pensionable increase on the baseline with effect from 1 April

2023, without disadvantaging any employee in terms of the cash net effect into the pocket.

"This translation will benefit the employees in that it contributes towards the growth of the pension of employees; improves the notches of employees; increases the base for any future increases and is also sustainable and permanent. "It should be clarified that there is no agreement with the Public Sector Unions that the cash gratuity will continue indefinitely," he said.

- Clause 3.2 of Resolution 1 of 2021 states that "the non-pensionable cash allowance will be paid backdated from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022."
- Clause 3.3 of the same Resolution 1 of 2021 states that "If no new agreement is reached by 31 March 2022 on the 2022/2023 salary adjustment, this non-pensionable cash allowance shall remain in force until a new agreement is entered into by the parties."

This position by the employer was communicated in advance to the trade unions through DPSA Circular 50 of 2022 that the cash allowance shall be paid until 31 March 2023.

According to Mr Mushi, parties at the PSCBC have now reached an agreement, therefore clause 3.3 of Resolution 1 of 2021 shall be complied with fully without disadvantaging any employee. He further said the DPSA wanted to clarify the matter of public service wage negotiations currently underway at the PSCBC. In keeping with the resolution of the 2022 Public Service Summit of aligning the budget process of the government with the wage negotiations, the employer took initiated wage negotiations with organised labour mobilising within the public service.

Negotiations at the PSCBC

Negotiations commenced at the PSCBC on February 17 earlier this year with the majority of trade unions (SADTU, PSA, NAPTOSA and HOSPERSA) who constitute 53.9% in the public service being part of the first meeting. Mr Mushi said the initial offer tabled on February 17, 2023, by the employer was informed by the following principles:

- The quest for a multi-term agreement, to bring stability to the public service and allow for proper planning and implementation of service delivery programs by the government.
- Translation of the non-pensionable cash gratuity into the baseline, to allow the pensions of public servants to grow significantly and improve their notches.
- Conclusion of negotiations by the end of March 2023, as this will allow for the smooth transition from a non-pensionable gratuity to a pensionable increase that will be implemented with effect from the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2023.

In responding to the employer, trade unions participating in the negotiations presented their demands for the financial year 2023/24 and continued with the process of negotiations. On 09 March 2023, the PSCBC initiated a process of facilitation between the Employer and the trade unions that were not participating

in the negotiations within the PSCBC formal process. The purpose of the facilitation was to end the strike in the public service and bring back all the parties to participate in the negotiations process for the financial year 2023/24. The facilitation process concluded on 14 March 2023, with the Employer and trade unions that were not participating in the negotiations, signing a settlement agreement that sought to end the strike and to have all parties to the PSCBC participate in the 2023/24 wage negotiations. On 14 – 17 March 2023, the negotiations continued at the PSCBC with all parties to the PSCBC participating in the process as per the settlement agreement.

Final Settlement

The employer and the majority of trade unions in the Council agreed on a multi-term agreement for the financial years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 which included; An average increase of 7.5% salary adjustment was signed for public servants for the year 2023/2024; A capped projected CPI salary increase for the financial year 2024/2025; Expediting the decisions on the implementation of the Government Employee Housing Scheme [GEHS] as agreed to during the Public Service Summit.

The employer duly represented by the Public Service and Administration warrants that it has the requisite authority and approval of the National Treasury to conclude this agreement, in particular, the employer warrants that, in concluding this agreement, it has complied with the Public Service Act of 103 of 1994 [as amended] and the Regulations 78 and 79 of the Public Service Regulations, 2016. If there is a dispute about the interpretation or application of this agreement any party may refer the matter to the Council for resolution in terms of the dispute procedure of the Council. The implantation shall come into effect on the date it enjoys the majority support and shall remain in force unless terminated or amended by agreement in writing. In the interpretation and application, words used in the agreement and defined within the Constitution of Council will have the meaning as defined in the Constitution. The Council will monitor and enforce the implementation of this agreement."

The employer signed with the majority trade unions such as HOSPERSA, NAPTOSA, PSA and SADTU. NEHAWU, POPCRU, DENOSA and SAPU opted not to sign the agreement as per the mandate given by their members.

The PSCBC Special council was convened on the 30 March 2023 at the PSCBC to finalise salary negotiations for 2023/2024 Financial Year. Labour remained divided as the group consisting of 53.9% was adamant that the agenda was to accept the feedback from members on the offer that the employer tabled while the other group (which is in dispute on the 2022/23 salary increase) wanted an inclusion of augmentation of the 3% that was unilaterally implemented by the employer.

The employer has outrightly rejected any

intention to augment the 2022/23 and continued to affirm the present offer of 7.5% for 2023/24.

The council concluded on the notion that the 53.9% consisting of SADTU and FEDUSA unions expressed their intention to accept the offer while the 46.1% group consisting of DENOSA, NEHAWU, POPCRU, SAMATU, SAEPU, PAWUSA, SAPU and NUPSAW rejected the offer. The Department of Public Service and Administration said the signed wage offer for 2023/24 was binding on all government employees represented by unions in the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). Despite pushback from four unions who refused to sign the offer, it still received majority support from other unions in the labour council.

Other trade unions argued that "the 2023/24 financial year wage offer is not a 7.5% wage increment as is presented. It is instead, a 3.3% real wage increase. The 4.2% is merely a carry-over of the cash gratuity which has been paid to workers since 2021. The only difference now is that it is being converted from a non-pensionable cash-gratuity into a pensionable salary on the baseline. The cash-gratuity stalled the real wage growth, which in turn impaired the growth of pension contributions in the past two years. The buying power may have been uplifted temporarily in 2021/22 when the cash-gratuity was first introduced, but it certainly suffered in 2020/21, 2022/23 and now, 2023/24. Counterposed to the inflation in the period (including the MPC's new average inflation forecast yesterday), the real wage declined by 8.2%. This means, today workers cannot afford what they used to afford three years ago. The buying power of their wages has taken a cumulative knock for the past three years."

Trade unions argued that "the employer is not willing to engage the augmentation, albeit having agreed to do so in the facilitation agreement. The purported 7.5% increase is misleading as it includes the already cash gratuity that is enjoyed by workers. The actual increase is 3.3%, which is below CPI. Employer is misleading workers by even starting that those in lower notches (level 1-5) will get an increase close to 14%. As matters stand now, the offer is officially accepted and will be drafted into a resolution for parties to sign within 21 days. If it enjoys a majority signature, then it will be binding, and the employer will implement. The aggrieved 46.1% of the unions were seeking legal advice on the conduct of the employer for reneging from a facilitation agreement. Those unions intend to proceed with dispute as the only existing recourse."

The PSCBC General Secretary, Friekkie de Bruin "applauded parties for their commitment to the wage negotiation process which resulted in the signing of the agreement before the commencement of the new financial year. The signing of the multi-term agreement allows for some stability to focus on implementing various PSCBC agreements, including the Public Sector Summit agreement.

Black woman, you're on your own. THE STATS TELL YOU SO!

by Gugu Ndima

Nokuthula was killed on her way to work. Her story, like that of many other women, leads us to ask: What is a woman's life worth in the mainstream economy?

Her shirt embroidered with the logo of fast-moving consumer goods company, Nokuthula's violated body and neck marked with strangle imprints was discovered in the veld by a passer-by, not long after she was killed. Nokuthula was on her usual 7km walk from home to the main taxi rank in Katlehong, heading to her place of employment.

She made her trip about two weeks ago, but never reached her place of work. Nokuthula belongs to the most economically vulnerable group in South Africa. Her tragic collision with death comes just two weeks prior to the release of bleak figures by Statistics South Africa on unemployment.

These were preceded by the release of crime stats by the South African Police Service, confirming an increase in contact crimes by 11.6%, including murder and sexual offences. Nokuthula is a glaring illustration of how institutional failures harm millions of black women.

"Unemployment among African women remains over 50%". This headline could never attract readers and listeners in the mainstream media, because society has normalised the plight of black women being poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence and other grinding socio-economic conditions.

The bland headlines from Stats SA data show that the unemployment rate dropped to 32.7% in quarter four of 2022. The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition of unemployment, which includes those who have given up looking for work, decreased by 0.5 of a percentage point to 42.6% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

We have become accustomed to

the "quarter to quarter numbers game" without disaggregating the statistics and understanding the people who make up these numbers. These cosmetic truths by economists and statisticians blind us to the genesis of the deep dysfunction characterising the state of the nation. The tragic murder of Nokuthula was a stark reminder of the people robbed by the reality behind these statistical facades. Let's disaggregate these statistics using Nokuthula's untimely death.

The first failure was that of local government. This sphere is the most perverse demonstration of how a hollowed-out state affects the daily lives of people. The route Nokuthula walked and where she met her fate is home to one of the failed legacies of the 2010 World Cup. It's a skeleton of what was once a soccer field. Now overgrown with weeds and bushes, it has become a danger hazard which the residents have been complaining about to the municipality for years. It is an eroded parasitic state.

Local government is expected to deliver services but could not cut grass because the supply chain process is marred with corruption and hindered by the internal politics of outsourcing.

The chairperson of the South African Communist party, Blade Nzimande, coined the term tenderpreneurship to describe this practice. This simple service would have ensured visibility on Nokuthula's route. The second failure is the power outages that have become an abnormal norm. Eskom's failures have had a severe effect on crime in people. Risking her life, Nokuthula started her journey on foot in the early hours of the morning and relied on streetlights. Her murder coincided with load-shedding at a time that disregards workers who start their day before 6am.

The third failure has to be that of rail infrastructure. Nokuthula walked

from home to the taxi rank, whereas in the not-so-distant past a train passed through the area. This allowed many like her to catch a train, which was far more affordable than taxis, to commute to industrial areas such as Wadeville, Isando, Germiston and Cleveland. Evidently an underpaid worker, as many are in the fast-moving goods sector, working class people risk their lives to mitigate the cost of transport. Catching a local taxi to the main taxi rank will eat from an already stretched wage. Another failure is the government's inability to contain inflation. Wages in South Africa do not meet the cost of living. Many like Nokuthula must find cost mitigating ways to survive the tide of capitalism.

While the Competition Commission has been hard at work exposing corporate cartels responsible for price fixing and overcharging in the food sector, this has not reflected in the price of food. It becomes a compliance exercise where corporations who can afford it, pay fines and subsequently recover the cost from the pocket of the consumer.

The Eskom reality has also exacerbated inflation. With the cost of food and transport on the rise, Nokuthula ended up taking this risky route to work. Then again, what is the value of Nokuthula's life in the mainstream economy? Millions like her are scavenging for subsistence in the second economy, as former president Thabo Mbeki once alluded.

An economy of survivalists, feeding off the scattered morsels of the first economy. Nokuthula's preventable death illustrates the impudence of politicians, tenderpreneurs and corporations who use the corruption template of the previous regime. It shows how infrastructural and institutional failure harms the lives of millions of people, now passively normalised.

Nokuthula's death is a reflection of the ramifications of a failed state, a parasitic government drowning in a whirlwind of governance morass and ethical erosion. Her story demonstrates that most black women who find employment also find themselves in precarious conditions.

This makes a mockery of what the ANC theorises in its strategy and tactics. — that black working-class women should form the primary motive for change as those triple oppressed on the basis of race, class and gender.

Yet here we are on the eve of commemorating 30 years of the democratic dispensation with "no longer alarming figures" showing that more than 50% of black women remain unemployed.

Sara Smit, in her 22 February 2023 column in the Mail & Guardian, headlined "Jobs, dreams and why we should care", affirms the survivalist conundrum caused by our economic crisis which robs us of the ethos of humanity. She states: "South Africa's economic crisis has robbed us of so much more than just jobs. It has also limited the breadth of our dreams and deprived us of our capacity for care."

These are two underestimated elements of a healthy economy, which ought to influence labour-related reforms." Who cares about Nokuthula's suffering and inhumane conditions endured? She is replaceable, and a new shirt with an embroidered logo awaits another new worker to continue with production.

By Gugu Ndima is an author of All In A Galz Life, Writer, ANC member, and youth activist and former YCLSA National Spokesperson.

“Chris Hani was a man of peace, who hated unnecessary violence and cruelty but when conflict, perforce, became the position, he fought like a Tiger”

It is now three decades full to the day that our most dearly beloved leader was killed in cold blood on his driveway in Dawn Park.

On that fateful Easter Saturday morning, we, who are old enough to remember woke up to that dreadful news of the death of comrade Chris Hani.

One can neither quantify nor put into words the level of shock and anger that we felt on that day of death and danger. Indeed, for some of us it was for the first time that we came to grasp and fully understand the meaning of death and what it entailed as we processed and internalized in our young minds of ten years the ghastly reality of what had happened in our country.

It took Nelson Mandela's messianic intervention to save the day when he bravely went on national television to coax us to still our justified rage.

As we listened, somewhat unintelligibly, to the unscripted English words that flowed out of Nelson Mandela's mouth, we understood, perhaps, only by instinct why he had chosen peace over war.

It was a representation of comrade Chris Hani's character and make-up. Hani was a man of peace, who hated unnecessary violence and cruelty but when conflict, perforce, became the position, he fought like a Tiger!!

In the words of another of our beloved leaders, comrade Joe Slovo: "Hani was not a demagogue, Hani did not say things just to get a cheer, he was always sensitive to popular feeling but he never pandered to it and by nature, Chris was the most peaceful, the most humane person."

However, it was the nefarious work of the state-sponsored propagandists, mainly in the racist media outlets, who sought, unsuccessfully, to present our comrade chief-of-staff as a man of violence. But Hani was a soldier who displayed, in the bush, let it be said: Uncommon Valour and in the boardroom, again let it be said: Rear Intellectual Capability. And, so, the racists occupying the Union Buildings were always nervous, no, fearful of our perfectly disciplined cadre. Having no answers for the "troubles" he gave them, libel and slander became their weapon of choice. This was designed, of course, to sully his name and to besmirch his character. But they failed!

They were afraid of the message of truth that Hani carried with him and missed no opportunity to sound - that the bullet kills a white man too! He debunked the false claim and myth of whitened superiority. For truly, superiority had been colour-coded by the racist supremacists. Yet, Hani knew, deep in his entrails what Aime Cesaire had said so long ago: "No race holds a monopoly of beauty; of intelligence; of strength, and there is room for all us at the rendezvous of victory."

Above all, the Pretoria regime feared comrade Chris as a Communist, for he was a true communist who stood for democratic, humane socialism. For them, Chris Hani was the very reincarnation of Joseph Stalin and his red army. But Chris Hani was no Stalin, and perhaps, the best description of this man was given by Slovo once again on the occasion of his funeral:

"Comrades, Who was Chris Hani? Who was this man that stirred such fears in the ranks of the apartheid regime? Who was this man, so greatly loved, so greatly admired here in our country and not only in our country but all over the world?! Who was he?! He was born in poverty in Cofimvaba, in the Transkei.

His father was a migrant worker in the mines, his mother, a simple peasant who had never been to school. These were comrade Hani's roots. For comrade Hani the struggle was not about his personal career, the struggle was for the poorest of the poor. He struggled for the workers; for the shack-dwellers; for the peasants without land; for the children without shoes. It was for the cause of the workers and the poor that comrade Chris took up arms, it is for them that he crossed the Zambezi with Umkhonto Wesizwe to fight in the Wankie campaign in 1967.

It was for this cause of the poor that he was the first member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress in the 1970's to return to South Africa and operate in the underground. Comrades, Chris Hani always led from the front, he led from the front in Umkhonto Wesizwe; led from the front in the underground, and he led from the front at Bisho last year. Chris was not a headquarters leader, he was a field-commander, not in the military sense.

He never expected anyone to do anything that he himself was not prepared to do. And he was a most wonderful combination. Chris was an intellectual but he could speak the language of the poor. Chris knew how

to lead but he also knew how to follow the mood of the people. Chris was a revolutionary who did not confuse revolution with noise!"

This is what the regime did not understand about this simple man of truth because they were always allergic to the truth.

Even after these thirty years, we continue to honour the memory of our leader; even after these thirty years, we will pay a continuing tribute to our General Secretary; even after these thirty years, we will continue and indeed strengthen our resolve to get to the bottom of who exactly killed our comrade leader.

For we believe, it wasn't just the brute who came from Poland and his accomplice, Clive Derby-Lewis. It was surely an internal nexus from within the ANC and possibly the SACP as well that needs to be uncovered and uncover it we will!

Siyak'khumbula, Mgqunukhwebel
Siyak'khumbula comrade Nobhala!

Ilizwe lakowethu limoshe! Nali ilizwe lakowethu lijikelezwa nguNongqauwuse wesibini!

Viva the memory of Chris Hani Viva!
Viva the memory of the greatest fighter for the workers and the poor Viva! Viva South African Communist Party Viva!

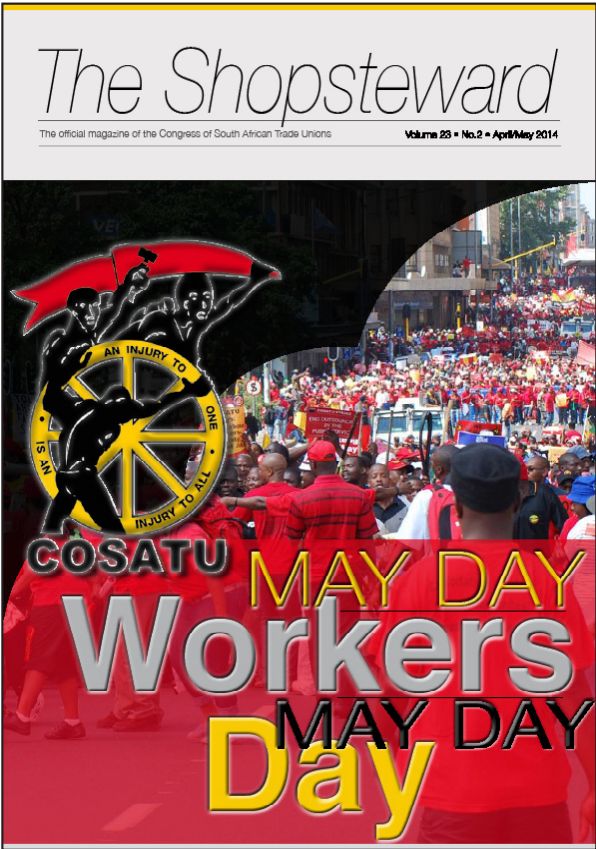
Faithful, Intrepid and the Most Noble Protagonist of the Proletariat!

**Long Live the Spirit of
Chris Hani!**

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