



**DISCUSSION DOCUMENT**

# **GENDER POLICY**

**27 – 29 MARCH 2012**



# COSATU Gender Policy

## Introduction

The Gender policy draws together existing COSATU resolutions into a coherent document, while further enriching these resolutions. This document aims to combine the vision and principles that we aspire towards, with practical relations in the working workplace and economy, in trade unions and in broader society.

The issue of gender equality has been on our agenda since the formation of COSATU. However, we require a policy framework to guide our struggles to transform gender relations in the current period. It is therefore important that we reflect on progress in taking forward the vision and programmes adopted on several Congresses since COSATU inception. In broad terms, progress to realise these resolutions has been uneven and varies between affiliates.

COSATU and its affiliates are guided by a vision of a society free of sexism, racism, class exploitation, and other forms of oppression. We envisage a future where women participate equally in the economy and society without barriers, and where women are emancipated from all forms of oppression in the household, the workplace and in broader society. We have a vision of a trade union movement as a home for women workers.

This policy document was debated and adopted at the National Gender Conference (held on 5-7 July 2000). It is tabled at Congress for discussion and adoption. Once it has been adopted by the Congress all affiliates will have to give expression to this broad framework in their own policies.

## Understanding Gender

“Woman’s fate is bound up with that of the exploited male. This is a fact. However, this solidarity, arising from the exploitation that both men and women suffer and that binds them together historically, must not cause us to lose sight of the specific reality of the woman’s situation. The conditions of her life are determined by more than economic factors, and they that she is a victim of the a specific oppression... It is true that both she and the male worker are condemned to silence by their exploitation. But under the current economic system, the worker’s wife is also condemned to silence by her workerhusband.

In other words, in addition to the class exploitation common to both of them, women must confront a particular set of relations that exist between them and men”

Thomas Sankara.

It is important that we clarify our understanding of gender relations. This is imperative in order to understand gender oppression and develop strategies to eradicate this form of oppression. Too, often, the concept of gender and sex are used interchangeably while in essence they are quite different. The most common misunderstanding of concept of gender is that it simply means addressing men and women’s concerns equally.

This effectively ignores unequal power gender power relations, and undermines the central objective, which is the emancipation of women. Sex refers to biological difference between men and women. Gender on the other hand refers to socially constructed and culturally defined differences between men and women. It is therefore not natural but created through socialisation using institutions such as the family, the church, religion education and schools, the state and the economy. In addition gender relations refers to the unequal power relationship between men and women.

Gender roles exist in all spheres of society with the gender division of labour in the family. Gender roles are expectations of how men and women should behave in particular socially defined ways. For example men are supposed to be natural leaders, decision makers and providers; women are expected to be caregivers, supporters and followers of men. While gender relations are defined at particular moments in the history of human kind, we are concerned with gender relations under capitalist-patriarchy. We use the concept of capitalist –patriarchy deliberately to underline the mutually reinforcing relationship between capitalism and patriarchy. Although patriarchy predates capitalism – in the current context the two systems reinforce each other, which means patriarchy cannot be resolved without also addressing capitalist relations.

Patriarchy refers to the system of male domination and control at all levels of society. Capitalist-patriarchy has a material basis in the sexual division of labour, exploitation of women's unpaid labour and their subordination in the household. It is supported by the patriarchal ideology that sees women as inferior to men. In terms of this sexual hierarchy men and women are accorded different roles. For instance, women's role is conceived as being a nurturer and caregiver, while men are entrusted with decision-making. Patriarchy manifests itself in all aspects of society including the economy, political institutions and ideologies, the legal system, religion, social and cultural institutions, such as the family, the media, education systems and so forth. The nature of patriarchal relations varies from society to society. At the same time women's oppression takes various forms depending on race, class, religion, marital status and age.

Capitalism is a mode of production based on private property where one class – the bourgeoisie – own and control the means of production and the working class own nothing but its labour power. Capitalism benefits from the oppression of women under patriarchy, by virtue of the fact that employers pay low wages to women because of patriarchal ideology, which sees men as the breadwinner.

Capitalists benefit through the separation of unpaid labour in the home from waged work, as it means that the labour force is reproduced at no cost to the employers, but at a tremendous cost to women.

Furthermore, the capitalist state also avoids its responsibility of providing for the reproduction of society (through infrastructure and child care) because of the patriarchal system, which makes this a private responsibility. Against this background the gender division of labour and patriarchal ideology are the focal issues in combating women's subordination under capitalism. For this reason a clear understanding needs to be developed of the oppressive nature of the gender division of labour, and the associating ideology and concepts perpetuating its, such as the concepts of work and skill.

Under apartheid, race, gender and class oppression were combined intricate system of oppression. The racial and gender form of colonial domination masks its underlying economic logic – the exploitation of the black working class. Race and gender oppression are not about mere prejudice, but ultimately about using power and control in the interest of capital. Apartheid capitalism also benefited from women's oppression in that large numbers of African women worked as domestic workers and cleaners under extremely exploitative conditions.

Furthermore, women's unpaid labour in the rural areas enabled bosses to pay extremely low wages to migrant workers. Apartheid laws set out limited and impoverished roles for African women. In particular, as they enforced migrant labour, they defined the role of African women in society and the economy. At the same time, the colonial system in South Africa, as throughout the continent, intensified the gender oppression found in pre-colonial systems. The combination of colonial and customary oppression denied women basic social and economic rights in the family and the community. Many women were barred from living in cities, owning land, family planning, inheriting, borrowing money or participating in political and social struggles.

The system led to widespread abuse of women, both inside and outside the family. African women were confronted by triple oppression – oppression on the basis of their, race, gender and class. Black working class women bore the brunt of apartheid, capitalist and patriarchal oppression. Women’s emancipation is therefore a central feature of the struggle against apartheid and capitalism. As Samora Machel stated that women’s emancipation.

Is “not an act of charity but a precondition for the liberation of society”. Our society cannot be free if half the population is still oppressed. Therefore the NDR seeks to address gender, race and class oppression not sequentially, but simultaneously. It is important that this struggle be led by the bulk of the oppressed – women. Women should be empowered to challenge the system of patriarchy. While it is important to recognise that men have an important role in the struggle for gender equality, the leading role of women should always be emphasised – this however, should not be confused with making gender issues a ‘women’s issue’.

In order to consciously combat sexism and gender oppression in our organisational policies and strategies and in broader society these must be infused with a gender consciousness. A ‘gendered perspective’ aims to mainstream and integrate gender struggles, rather than seeing these struggles as women issue that are treated in a separate and isolated way. A gendered perspective has the strategic objective of the fundamental transformation of society and unequal power relations. It also means a gender analysis is applied at all levels with regard to policies, programmes, planning strategy and evaluation. However, a gendered perspective still recognise the central role of women’s leadership.

It is also important to emphasise the fact that the struggle to transform gender relations will benefit both men and women by creating an enabling environment for all to realise their full human potential. Gender equality will also bring visible benefits to society by drawing in half of the population into productive activity. Gender equality however, cannot be realised without conscious strategies to redress unequal power relations

between men and women in organisations and in the broader society. As emphasised above, the NDR aims to bring an end to this form of oppression.

## **Assessing the Current Situation**

The ushering in of a new democratic dispensation and the adoption of a progressive Constitution, have brought visible changes for the majority of the formerly oppressed. The Constitution outlaws discrimination of women and calls for measures to redress past imbalances in terms of race, sex and disability and other prohibited grounds of discrimination.

The adoption of the Employment Equity Act will go a long way in overcoming discrimination and inequality within the workplace. In addition, the Promotion of Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination Act will also contribute towards gender equity in all spheres of society. Thus legislative measures are now in place to address all forms of discrimination and inequality. Linked to this, the provision of basic service such as water and health care has brought visible relief for millions of people, especially women in the rural areas. Yet despite, these advances gender inequality remains entrenched in our society.

To understand this, it is important to analyse gender relations in the labour market and within the organisation. It is also important to analyse the impact of economic and social policies on gender relations in contemporary South Africa. In general, access to basic service is still skewed in racial, gender and geographic terms. Further, the majority of the poor are women particularly African women. Women tend to be vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and job losses. The unpaid labour continues unabated.

## **State of Gender Relations in the Labour Market**

The labour market is still segmented in terms of race and gender. It is

characterised by a sexual division of labour in which women are largely associated with domesticity and servicing, while men are associated with machinery and technology. Women, particularly black women are concentrated in low paid-jobs, the service sector and face wage discrimination. They tend to be concentrated in vulnerable sectors such as domestic work and the farms as well as in survivalist activities in the informal sector.

Males particularly white males dominate the upper echelons of the labour market. As a result of inherited wage inequities and the fact that women are concentrated in low paid jobs, women's share of income is substantially lower than men. Discrimination also takes the form of differences in the valuing of men and women's jobs translating in wage disparity. The majority of the unemployed are women particularly black women. Women also face hardship in accessing and sustaining their participation in the labour market. The majority of women have to juggle careers and domestic responsibility such as cooking and taking care of children. The shortage of childcare facilities and the sexual division of labour in the home impose serious burdens on women. Maternity leave and pay provision are also inadequate, and in some cases even the legislated minimum is not complied with.

### **Gender Relations within the Union Movement**

While women constitute about 37% of COSATU members, leadership structure are predominantly male from shop floor to national levels. In addition, employment patterns in the unions reproduce the sexual division of labour in society. As shown in the table below most influential positions, such as *Draft COSATU Gender Policy 7* educators, organisers and regional/general secretaries are overwhelmingly maledominated, while the majority of women employed in unions are in administrative positions.

## Position Male Female

Administration	6%	94%
Organisers	78%	12%
Branch & Regional Secretaries	89%	11%
General Secretary	100%	0%
Research/legal/media officers	75%	25%
Education officers	90%	10%

Sakhela Buhlungu, 1997.

Women are confronted by barriers, which impact on their participation in the union, which partly explain the lower representation of women in union leadership structures. The sexual division of labour in the home impose a double burden on women. Shop steward and union meetings are often held after working hours making difficult for women to participate. The language and jargon used in meetings are often alienating to women. Union members and leadership (and broader society) often have fixed attitudes about women's roles.

Stereotypes about "a woman's place" often contribute to discouragement and discrimination directed at women in unions. Male-dominated image and culture of trade unions sometimes take the form of women not being taken seriously, and translate into a glib, lip service commitment to gender issues, and a general lack of sensitivity to women's particular organisational needs. Further, women are confronted with resistance at home and experience discouragement and abuse from their partners who feel threatened by the fact that their wives\partners are activist and becoming more assertive, and would like to see them remaining in the home. Some of these attitudes are perpetuated by males in the unions.

The role of sexual harassment in discouraging participation cannot be discounted. Many women are completely discouraged from union activity since they are immediately "approached" by male comrades and feel that they are not treated as comrades but as sex objects.

Other organisational problems are expressed in the lack of progress to organise the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors dominated by women. A common concern is that collective bargaining demands are often not gender-sensitive. Where demands are taken up as they easily compromised in negotiations. The lack of women organisers and the lack of gender sensitivity on the part of male organisers contribute to these problems. Nevertheless, some affiliates have made good progress in taking up collective bargaining campaigns, particularly on parental rights. The appointment of gender co-ordinators and structures is uneven between affiliates. Only 8 affiliates have full-time co-ordinators currently. The role of gender co-ordinators is limited if they are not represented on constitutional structures of the union and if no separate budget has been allocated. Some affiliates do not have structures. NALEDI research on assessing gender structures highlighted the fact that gender structures often do not have a clear programme or vision of their role and objectives. Overall, not sufficient resources to implement programmes are allocated. Further gender education on its own has not led to an increase in the number of women leaders in the federation and affiliates.

## **Policy Statement**

This Gender Policy moves from the premise that gender inequality will not disappear on its own accord. There is a need for conscious strategies to eliminate gender inequality within the organisation and broader society. This will take the form of specific measures to promote women leadership and plans to address inequality in the workplace. The development and empowerment of women workers and the elimination of discrimination and stereotyping are central goals in building gender equality. The measure of gender equality is women's full and equal participation at all levels of trade union organisation.

## **Promoting Gender Equality in union structures and staffing**

### **Building Women Leadership**

To increase women's representation in leadership structures, unions should use the following guidelines:

- Additional ex-officio position on constitutional structures.
- Portfolio positions.
- Reserved seat for women.
- Quota system including fixed and proportional representation.
- Representation of sector co-ordinators on constitutional structures.

All unions should strive to achieve the following targets. These targets aims to take forward the 7th Congress Resolutions on measurable targets to improve

women's representation within the union movement. Table 1 below make use of Statistics South Africa October Household Survey 1998 data of the gender breakdown of industries and trade union membership (COSATU and non-COSATU) in order to develop targets for affiliates, in the absence of a gender breakdown of COSATU affiliated union membership. While this cannot be substituted for accurate membership figures it still gives a broad picture gender breakdown. In future affiliates must keep a proper record of their membership profile including in terms of gender. The election of shop stewards should be done through constitutional provisions of the affiliates.

*Table 1: Proposed Targets for COSATU Affiliates based on a Gender Breakdown of Industries and Leadership Figures for 1998/1999.*

SECTOR %

women by sector

% women union members (includes non-COSATU) 1998/9

9 % ROB's COSATU Affiliate 1998/9

9 % NOB's COSATU Affiliate

Target for shopstewards

Target for LOB's

Target for ROB's

Target for NOB's

Construction 9% 11% 13% 0% 15% 15% 15% 15%

Chemical, paper, printing & wood 26% 16% 14% 0% 30% 30% 30% 30%

Communication 36% 34% 3% 0% 30% 30% 30% 30%

Food and Fishing 27% 22% 24% 0% 30% 30% 30% 30%

Government (Admin, Health, etc) 65% 58% 34% 33% 50% 50% 50% 50%

Educators 64% 64% 7% 0% 50% 50% 50% 50%

Mining and Energy 6% 4% 2% 0% 5% 5% 5% 5%

Metal and Auto 18% 16% 6% 0% 20% 20% 20% 20%

Police & Correctional Services 24% 18% 0% 0% 20% 20% 20% 20%

Agriculture 28% 31% 28% 17% 30% 30% 30% 30%

Retail, Catering and Hotels 49% 47% 16% 33% 60% 60% 60% 60%

Clothing and Textile 72% 74% 30% 33% 65% 65% 65% 65%

Local Authority 23% 21% 14% 17% 30% 30% 30% 30%

Banking 61% 55% 71% 14% 65% 65% 65% 65%

Transport 15% 10% 17% 0% 20% 20% 20% 20%

TOTAL (COSATU) 34% 30% 25% 33% 30% 30% 30% 30%

**Please Note:**

(1) The leadership figures will be updated

(2) Statistics were not available for cleaning and security, therefore only the transport sector of SATAWU's constituency is covered.

These mechanisms must be combined with mentorship and empowerment programmes as well as conscious strategies to eliminate barriers to women's participation in unions. A supportive environment is crucial to avoid frustration and to sustain participation. As part of the way forward all unions should identify particular barriers in their own structures and contexts. Historically, a number of resolutions were adopted by the federation and affiliates to systematically remove barriers to women's participation. It is now time to vigorously implement these resolutions. Among others the mechanisms include:

- Childcare, transport at meetings and timing of meetings.
- Challenging stereotypes about women as leaders.
- Developing mentorship programmes.
- Creating a supportive and encouraging environment.
- Implementing a Sexual Harassment Policy.
- Education on gender issues.
- Leadership training.
- Promoting the sharing of home and family responsibility between men and women.

## **Electing women as shop stewards**

The federation and affiliates should ensure that conditions under which shop steward elections take place are conducive to electing women shop stewards. Unions should draw up a list of women available for election as shop stewards to assist in a campaign for women leaders at the workplace. Union organisers should be at the forefront in encouraging workers to elect women shop stewards. Where women are not elected as shop stewards, they should be elected as alternates with a mentoring programme in place. Unions should raise awareness around gender stereotyping as part of their annual shop steward elections campaigns.

Unions should be vigilant in preventing employers from undermining women shop stewards. Unions should ensure that they actively

discourage and discipline organisers and other leaders or members who sexually harass women shop stewards. Linked to this, workplace gender activities and campaign programmes should be developed both to empower women and to challenges gender inequality in the workplace. Unions, in their programmes should design such programmes and the gender co-ordinators must monitor these programmes consistently as well as providing overall support to workplace gender structures.

### **Building Gender Structures**

Affiliates must establish gender structures simultaneously with constitutional structures at all levels, inclusive of the workplace. Local gender committees and regional gender forums must also be strengthened as resolved by the 1997 Resolution. Gender structures and gender co-ordinators should be represented

in all constitutional structures. These structures should be built up as dynamic forums for gender activism, women's empowerment and consciousness-raising. There is still a need to create space for women to strategise in separate forums – this is not in contradiction with the gender perspective, but forms an important part of women's empowerment and unity. In addition the appointment of Gender Co-ordinators should be accelerated.

The NGC will take overall responsibility to ensure that this actually happens. Gender departments should be accorded the same status as other departments. All departments must integrate gender issues in their work and the gender department will monitor the extent to which this is taking place. There must be a separate budget allocation specifically for gender activities. The NGC should develop a clear programme with guidelines, time frames and a budget allocation. There should be a focused and co-ordinated campaign around gender issues that relate to the workplace and collective bargaining and can be integrated in education and other union activities (for example, child care or sexual harassment).

## **Eliminating the Gender Division of Labour in Trade Unions**

COSATU and affiliates must implement employment equity legislation, conducting audits and developing and implementing employment equity plans with full consultation of staff. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value should be applied in the union context. This must be driven by the NGC and the National Office Bearers of COSATU and the affiliates. Administrators must be seen as part of the organisation – we should promote the valuing of their work and contribution and ensure that they are drawn into the activities of the trade unions and federation. They should attend constitutional meetings. Administrators should have access to political education and capacity building training – the impact and effectiveness of this should be continuously evaluated.

## **Education and Empowerment**

Gender education and training programmes run by COSATU and affiliates should be carefully monitored and evaluated to assess their impact and make improvements where necessary. Gender education programmes must be adequately financed and resourced to be effective. COSATU should ensure that local and shop steward levels are also targeted. Education run by COSATU and affiliates should focus on the following issues:

- supporting and deepening a gender agenda for the workplace and collective bargaining.
- supporting a programme of affirmative action for the workplace and unions.
- deepening the understanding of women's oppression in society, and the struggle to challenge this, with a view to building a broader women's movement.
- drawing upon women's struggles against oppression internationally.
- encouraging debate and analysis on the barriers and obstacles



women face in the labour movement and how these may be overcome.

- popularising COSATU gender policies, in particular the sexual harassment code.

COSATU and affiliates must implement a proportional quota system for education programmes to ensure that increasing numbers of women have access to mainstream union education, not only gender education.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The COSATU Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment must be popularised and implemented throughout the federation. This includes education and awareness raising, training of sexual harassment officers and the development of proper procedures. A strategy and campaign should be developed to implement the NEDLAC Code of Good Practice on Sexual Harassment. Unions should ensure that shop stewards are being trained in the workplace and that organisers are also informed and able to support members in taking up cases of sexual harassment.

Unions should place sexual harassment on the collective bargaining agenda and negotiate agreements. The NEDLAC Code provides the space and framework to negotiate agreements in the workplace.

### **Organising Women Workers**

COSATU has committed itself to the strategic objective of organising vulnerable sectors and vulnerable layers of workers, which are predominantly women. This requires a shift in mindset, organising style and approach, and has implications for changing the culture of the federation. There will be a need to develop new organising strategies, to employ more women as organisers and to train existing organisers.

Organising strategies will need to take into account the specific conditions of women workers, and particularly women workers in vulnerable sectors. Important target groups include domestic workers, informal sector workers, casual workers and farm workers. The framework paper on organising the informal sector and other forms of workers should be used as a basis to elaborate a clear strategy in this regard.

## **Building the National Women's Movement**

While there have been significant legislative and constitutional victories in the struggle for gender equality, there is increasing fragmentation of women's organisations and activism, despite the tremendous poverty and abuse faced by women in our country. Building the women's movement requires the building of issue-based and campaign-linked networks of women in political organisations, trade unions, NGO's and other civil society formations. COSATU should be in the forefront in ensuring a working class-led national women's movement.

Potential campaigns include violence against women, basic needs and infrastructure, eradication of poverty, parental rights and employment creation for women. The important step is to resuscitate the alliance initiative to build the women's movement.

## **Gender Equality in the Labour Market**

In the main, policy proposals in this regard seek to ensure that we take up women struggles in collective bargaining strategies and issues. The following issues need to be vigorously taken up in collective bargaining: parental rights, equity in the workplace including payment, sexual harassment, health and safety and participation of women in collective bargaining, and fighting all forms of discrimination including on the basis of sexual orientation.

## Parental Rights and Childcare

COSATU and affiliates should negotiate and establish parental rights in all sectors of the economy. Parental rights must entail a full package of provisions, and should not be seen as only negotiating some maternity and paternity leave. The aim of the parental rights campaign is to enable women and men in waged work to combine a career with a full family life, while infants are given all the care and attention required. The benefits of such a campaign are that it will deliver concrete benefits for working women, it will play an important role in challenging and addressing women's oppression, it will contribute towards the proper care and early childhood development of infants and children, and it will enable women to be more active as unionists. Such a campaign should be linked to broader issues of social services such as the child maintenance grant.

The objectives of the campaign include highlighting the responsibility of both employers and the state in the provision of childcare.

The following are the core demands:

- Paid maternity leave.
- Paid and unpaid parental leave.
- Childcare leave.
- Flexible working time.
- Provision of childcare.
- Breaks and facilities for breastfeeding mothers.
- Job security and health and safety for pregnant women.

Adequate support must be given to negotiators and organisers in conducting this campaign. This includes education programmes, research backup and a parental rights negotiators manual. The campaign should be conducted at a political and ideological level.

## **Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value**

COSATU and affiliates, together with the NGC should continue to press for more progress in securing equal pay for work of equal value. Emphasis should be placed on the following:

- Skills acquired by women on the job and within the family must be more highly valued and reflected in remuneration.
- Promoting and securing legislation on equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.
- Incorporating equal pay principle in collective bargaining for all full-time workers and for part-time workers (proportional to their employment).
- All casual workers, whatever their employment contract, to be covered by collective bargaining so that the above principle is respected.
- Upgrading of low wages and salary categories where women traditionally work.
- Eliminating barriers that prohibit women from entering jobs traditionally held by men.
- Deepening the understanding of this issue amongst membership and leadership.
- Developing specific campaigns to promote equal pay.

## **Employment Equity Agreements**

Employment Equity legislation can contribute to transforming occupational segregation in the workplace if effectively implemented. The gender dimension to employment equity needs to be integrated in the approach of unions and the promotion of black women should be emphasised. Furthermore, trade unions can exploit the provisions for the elimination of barriers to women's employment as a space to push for advances for women workers. Plans should be developed with specific reference to women in the following key areas:

- Remuneration and promotion.
- Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.
- Sexual harassment.
- Parental rights and childcare facilities.
- Violence against women.

## **Health and Safety**

There is a need to address reproductive health demands of women in the workplace. For example, access to pap smears, providing safe working conditions that do not affect the reproductive health of women, and conducive working conditions for women that are pregnant and breastfeeding. In order for these issues to be addressed, women should be part of health and safety committees at the workplace.

## **Participation of women in collective bargaining**

The following are key to ensuring the participation of women in collective bargaining:

- Inclusion of women in bargaining teams.
- Developing the role of gender co-ordinators and structures in collective bargaining.
- Developing a strategy to ensure the involvement of women in collecting collective bargaining demands.

## **Fighting Discrimination on the Basis Sexual Orientation**

The Constitution, the Employment Equity and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Acts prohibit unfair discrimination on several grounds including on sexual orientation. Yet gay and lesbians workers and others face discrimination in law and in fact. For this reason, COSATU must add its weight and voice to combat this form of unfair discrimination. In addition, the environment within the organisation

should also be made conducive for the participation of gay and lesbian workers. Congress must discuss concrete measures to realise both objectives.

## **Gender Equity in Broader Society**

Fighting gender inequality within the workplace must be linked to fighting inequality in broader society. Pre-labour market inequalities reinforce intra labour market inequality. For instance, unequal access to education reinforces labour market inequality in terms of skill. Access to basic services such as transport, health care, childcare, and water are critical both for quality of life and productivity.

For this reason it is important it is important to ensure that economic and social policies are gender sensitive and gender biased. It is within this context that we should place campaigns for a social wage and social security including a basic income grant.

## **Implementation Framework**

It is important to clearly delineate responsibility between all constitutional structures and the gender structures. In developing strategies and institutional mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the gender policy in COSATU and affiliates, our starting point is that gender equality is a trade union issue. Secondly, trade unions are agents of change in society and should be in the forefront of the struggle for gender equality. COSATU and its affiliates are thus important agents of change for the rest of society.

COSATU's strategies for implementation are informed by the overall goal and vision to mainstream gender. Mainstreaming of gender is to develop systematic methods for the integration and implementation of a gender perspective. Given the importance of COSATU and its affiliates the successful implementation of policies is not only a success for the

organisation (women members) but also for the entire society (women workers). Successful implementation requires systematic monitoring and evaluation.

## **Institutional Mechanisms**

Institutional mechanisms refer to the structures that are responsible directly or indirectly for the development and implementation of a plan of action that would lead to the promotion and attainment of gender equality.

## **Constitutional Structures**

The structures that are overall responsible (supervise or co-ordinate) for the implementation and monitoring are the constitutional structures of COSATU, from National to local level. The role of the National structures such as Central Executive Committee and Executive Committee should be one of giving political direction on implementation of resolutions through the plan of action. The role of constitutional structures should be to:

- supervise the implementation of the gender policy.
- monitor the implementation of resolutions and the gender policy, through detailed reports provided by affiliates (by General Secretaries).
- ensure the affiliates abide by the policy and implement the plan of action, by providing the following support where required; advice, setting of targets, provision of financial and human assistance including deployment of staff.
- integrate the Gender Plan of Action into the (main) COSATU Plan of Action.
- ensure an adequate budget for Gender activities is allocated that would lead to the successful implementation of the gender plan of action according to the priorities and targets determined by the National Gender Committee.

- encourage the mainstreaming of gender into the work of all COSATU Departments.
- incorporate the gender report into the secretariat report.
- encourage the participation leadership in male gender sensitive training through leading by example.

## **Designated Office Bearers**

The Deputy President and Deputy General Secretary as part of their portfolios have the task of supervising/co-coordinating gender issues. The two National Office Bearers (and regional/local office bearers) shall:

- play a leading and strategic role in the planning of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies.
- ensure that adequate funding is available for the implementation of policies and programmes.
- represent the Federation on gender issues at a public level.
- assist affiliates with the implementation of policies by attending and participating in affiliates gender/women forums and other activities.
- play an interventionist role in affiliates that require assistance.
- ensuring when planning Federation activities inclusive of meetings that gender is a component part of the agenda of such activity.
- play an advisory role to the COSATU NGC and the constitutional structures.

## **COSATU National Gender Committee (NGC)**

The National Gender Committee is a sub-committee of the CEC and is the catalyst for change. The National Gender Committee should be regarded as the driving force in developing strategies for implementation. The NGC should take a hands-on approach, and should therefore:

- have the power to take initiatives and should have a direct input into decision-making.
- co-ordinate the development of further policies (where there are gaps).
- co-ordinate the implementation of policies through a gender analysis approach.
- monitor and evaluate progress with regard to the implementation of plan of action in the promotion of gender equality.
- serve as a political educational forum.
- develop priorities and targets which are to be incorporated into the Gender Plan of Action.
- ensure that the Plan of Action should also incorporate a monitoring and evaluation component.
- serve as an advocacy group for the successful implementation of policies.
- submit through the National Gender Co-ordinator reports on progress to constitutional structures, NOB's designate and affiliates to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation.
- assess plan of action and take corrective measures.

## **Other Structures**

Other structures linked to the NGC that play a key role in the development of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, are the Co-ordinating Committee of the NGC and the Strategizing Committee (which consists of all affiliate gender co-ordinators and COSATU regional co-ordinators).

Their responsibilities are to:

- further develop a detailed implementation of the plan of action for implementation.
- develop the practical strategies for implementation.
- allocate human resources to implement various activities.

- deal with urgent issues.
- do routine monitoring and evaluation.

These structures should be convened strategically as part of the Year Planner and should be budgeted for.

### **COSATU National Gender Co-ordinator**

The Co-ordinator plays a central role in implementation of policy and plan of action. The role of the National Gender Co-ordinator is to:

- Ensure the implementation of COSATU Women/Gender Resolutions through a day-to-day process.
- Liase with other COSATU Departments and Structures to ensure that Gender is mainstreamed.
- Ensure that adequate funding is secured that would ensure the implementation of the Plan of Action.
- Monitoring through continuous follow up of the operational activities of the priority areas.
- Develop the Gender Plan of Action by using a gender planning and analysis.
- Framework.
- Set realistic targets for practical and strategic gender needs.
- Ensure that gender training is provided for staff members as a means of ensuring that a gender perspective develops in the work of the Federation.
- Establish and maintain links with Labour Service Organisations and Women's Organisations as a strategy to accomplish practical and strategic gender needs.
- Develop evaluation reports with the Naledi Woman and Work Researcher on the implementation of the plan of action.
- Ensuring that continuous research is done about the position of women. In developing a Plan of Action for the implementation for gender policies, the following could be used as framework or guideline.

## **Priorities and Setting of Targets**

A Plan of Action should be developed after the Policy Document has been approved by Congress with clear priorities, timeframes and budgets. This should then be integrated into the overall organisation three-year plan and budget. It is important that we priorities activities and allocate adequate resources to achieve our broad aims. The plan must also determine capacity building mechanisms including partnerships with Labour Service Organisations and/or Women's Organisations to achieve targets.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation are measures that are very often forgotten in terms of implementing plans of actions. Effective monitoring and evaluation serves as the basis for assessing progress or lack of progress and as such could determine corrective measures in time. Monitoring consists of continuous follow up through setting gender sensitive indicators. Gender Sensitive indicators will depend on the context and the plan of action. This role of monitoring should be the task of the National Gender Co-ordinator and the Co-ordinating Committee.

Evaluation can take the form of questionnaires, survey, verbal, or written reports and should be tabled at the NGC and constitutional structures. A comprehensive evaluation report should be tabled at the National Congress. For purposes of evaluation, the following play an important component:

- Naledi Women and work researcher should play a leading role in compiling gender specific data. This data should be continuously updated.
- All Federation reports should have a disaggregated gender data. This will enable the Federation to keep scientific track of progress or lack of progress.

- Regular routine reports must be compiled by affiliates. In measuring progress it is important that the following should be considered when doing evaluation:
- Whether sufficient human and financial resources were allocated to the specific gender activity.
- Whether specific targets/quotas were set.
- Did the implementation plan include a gender analysis
- Were the time limits sufficient?
- What were the internal and external constraints?

## **Conclusion**

It is hoped that this gender policy will assist COSATU and affiliates to achieve gender equality in the trade unions, workplace, home and the rest of society in the pursuit of socialism. COSATU and its affiliates shall adhere to this policy and ensure effective implementation.





