



14th COSATU NATIONAL CONGRESS

26 – 29 September 2022

Socio-Economic Report and International Report.

Book 3

*“Build working-class unity for economic liberation
towards socialism”*

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica

Nkosi Sikelel iAfrica
Maluphakanyisw uphondo lwayo
Yizwa imithandazo yethu
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo

Woza moya, woza moya woza
Woza moya, woza moya woza
moya o oyinqhwele

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso
O fedise dintwa le matshwenyego
O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba
sa heso, Setjhaba sa Africa

The Internationale

Arise ye prisoners of starvation
Arise ye toilers of the earth
For reason thunders new creation
have'Tis a better world in birth

Never more traditions; chains shall bind
Arise ye toilers no more in thral
The earth shall rise on new foundations
We are but naught we shall be all

Chorus

Then comrades, come rally
And the last fight let us face
Unites the human race
The Internationale

Solidarity Forever

Solidarity Forever
Solidarity Forever
Solidarity Forever
For the union makes us strong

When the union's inspiration through the workers blood shall run
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun Woza
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one
But the union makes us strong (chorus)

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his
might
Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight
For the union makes us strong (chorus)

It is we who ploughed the prairies, built the cities where they
trade
Dud the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad
laid
Now we stand outcast and starving, 'midst the wonders we
made
But the union makes us strong (chorus)

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone
We have laid the wide foundation, built it skyward, stone by stone
It is ours, not to slave in but to master and own
But the union makes us strong (chorus)

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn
And
But without our brain and muscles not single wheel can turn
We can break the haughty power gain our freedom when we learn
But the union makes us strong (chorus)

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold
We can bring to birth a new world from ashes of the old
But the union makes us strong (chorus)



COSATU

Socio-Economic Report 14th National Congress

The national democratic revolution – the present stage of struggle in our country is a revolution of the whole oppressed people. This does not mean that the oppressed ‘people’ can be regarded as a single or homogeneous entity. The main revolutionary camp in the immediate struggle is made up of different classes and strata (overwhelmingly black) which suffer varying forms and degrees of national oppression and economic exploitation. The camp of those who benefit from, and support, national domination is also divided into classes [1].

1. Introduction

Trade union’s historical role is to ensure better wages, better working conditions, adherence to labour laws, occupational health, and safety as well as the freedom of association. Post 1994 many unions have had to re-define themselves as the most organized section of civil society. However, there are huge imbalances in terms of economic power between labour and capital, with the government playing the role of a neutral referee and the creator of a favorable environment for collective bargaining.

The biggest challenge facing the unions is their ability to influence broader socio-economic policies in favour of the working-class base. This process is increasingly difficult because of the onslaught of neoliberal ideology as well as a neoliberal macroeconomic framework.

The introduction of the Growth, Employment and redistribution (GEAR) strategy came with great social costs. Inequality, poverty and unemployment soared almost immediately after the adoption of the plan. Even though the target for economic growth was 6% under the plan, growth never went above 5% and it was accompanied by levels of unemployment of above 30% and the title of the most unequal country in the world.

The ANC has committed itself to neoliberal macroeconomic policies which have failed to improve the material conditions of the working class. Inequality, unemployment, and poverty are at an all-time high. Despite the high levels of growth in 1996 to the early 2000s, the adoption of economic liberalization has sought to co-opt monopoly capital instead of dismantling it.

Those that are opposed to the trade union movement's influence often question the social base of the trade union movement as a result of the high levels of unemployment and low levels of trade union density in South Africa. Industrial workers are viewed as very privileged as they have been able to achieve higher wages as compared to other sectors through militant action on the shopfloor. However, these gains are under threat because of industrial restructuring and global competitiveness that seeks to lower labour costs. A particular threat to industrial workers is the rise of retrenchments as a result of automation and mechanization.

Nonetheless, trade unions do not represent the majority of the population and are weak in terms of organizing casual and informal sector employees. While it is very important for the trade unions to articulate the needs of their membership and wage battles to win workplace related issues, they have to articulate the interests of the working class and broader population. The trade unions must articulate the interest of formal sector workers, more work must go towards groups of workers that are not organized, particularly workers in small businesses as well as the informal sector workers.

2. Socio- Economic Report

2.1. Global socio-economic analysis

In the two years since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic there have been terrible losses to both lives and livelihoods globally. With the pandemic slowing down, the post pandemic recovery path remains highly uncertain. As a result of the ingenuity of the scientific community to develop multiple vaccines that have helped reduce the frequency of infections, severe illness and death which has enabled the global economy to return to economic activity.

There is a divergence in terms of recovery across countries as well as within countries. Within the country income inequality is likely to increase because young workers and particularly low wage workers are still heavily impacted by the economic impacts of the pandemic.

The initial green shoots of recovery post the COVID pandemic are under threat given the worsening global economic outlook. Global output has contracted as a result of economic downturns in China and Russia. A number of economic shocks have hit the world economy which have resulted in higher-than-expected inflation worldwide, which has triggered tighter financial conditions worsened by the economic lockdowns in China and the negative spillovers from the war in the Ukraine. Baseline forecasts show that global economic growth declined from 6.2% to 3.2% in 2022. Lower growth has resulted in reduced household expenditure, reduced purchasing power and tighter monetary policy.

Global inflation has risen sharply due to food and energy prices owing to the ongoing Russia and Ukraine conflict. The situation is expected to persist, increasing prices continue to squeeze living standards worldwide. The biggest priority for all countries is the taming of inflation. Tighter monetary policy will only lead to real economic costs. Targeted fiscal policy can help to cushion and support the most vulnerable groups. Government budgets that have been stretched by the pandemic may

be left with the choice of either increasing taxes or lowering government spending in order to maintain fiscal stability.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) global wage report 2020-2021 has found that in the four years prior to the global pandemic, global wage growth fluctuated between 1.6% and 2.2%. In the first half of 2020 there was downward pressure on the level of growth in terms of real wages, this was primarily because of the impacts of the pandemic and the loss of jobs. The impact of the crises on total wages have fallen differently on men and women, with women being disproportionately affected. The pandemic also disproportionately affected lower-paid workers, which had the result of raising wage inequality. With the objective to support low paid workers, many countries with regular minimum wage adjustments continued with planned increases in the first half of 2020.

The economic downturn has seen the rise of political unrest in different parts of the world, most notably in Sri Lanka. In July 2022, thousands of protesters in Sri Lanka stormed key government buildings, including the residence of the President. Sri Lanka has faced a balance of payments crisis since the 1950s and has bridged the gap between imports and exports through dollars earned from borrowing, tourism and remittances from foreign workers. The country has faced harsh ratings downgrades as a result of the government's decisions to slash taxes which deprived the state from much needed income. Inflation in the beginning of 2022 rose to 55% and is expected to rise to 70% in the coming months. Following the resignation by the President following violent protests the speaker of parliament is meant to lead the political transition to a new administration.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that was launched in February 2018 is an opportunity for the African continent to rebuild together and to set an agenda for regional industrialization. The AfCFTA offers many opportunities for sustainable development and economic growth in the African economies. However, not all countries will benefit to the same extent, and the gain of welfare benefits also implicates relevant costs and commitments.

This, however, is dependent on the continent building its industrial capacity. If this is not addressed, the entire continent will become a huge warehouse of cheap goods from Asia.

Strengthening the trade union movement in Africa is critical if the workers are to see any benefits from the African Continental Free Trade Area.

In terms of the World Order

The Biden administration marked a shift in the strategic orientation of American imperialism away from the reckless and confrontational Trump approach. There is a lot of continuity especially in the Middle East on Palestine and in South America on Venezuela and Cuba. On the other hand, the growing strength of the BRICS (Brazil, India, Russia, China, and South Africa) that appeared to be gradually upsetting the established world order, seemed to have flattered to deceive. Brazil, India, and Russia have recently adopted narrow nationalist politics. The tensions between India and China have spilled over to violence in the Himalayans and the economies of South Africa, Brazil and Russia have waned significantly to challenge the established order, (the Global North Countries) in any meaningful way.

There is particularly strong interdependence between China and the US, where China needs access to the huge American market for its massive volume of exports and the US requires Chinese

investments to finance its bubble economy. The tensions between the two countries have worsened, especially over the South China Sea, Trade Wars, and the outbreak of COVID-19. America remains the hegemonic imperial power, not only militarily but also economically but China is making strides with its share of the global economy having grown to 18,34 % of the global GDP compared to the 25% of the US.

2.2. Domestic Socio-Economic Analysis

On The unemployment crisis, Rising Poverty, and Inequality

South Africa's economy is in a desperate position. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy had experienced two quarters of recession, where the economy did not grow. Thereafter, the COVID-19 pandemic and strict lockdowns plunged the economy further into crisis. The economy contracted by 7% and 1.4 million jobs were lost in 2020. In the second quarter of 2021, the unemployment rate reached the record level of 34.4% (expanded definition is 44.4%)[2]. Since the onset of the pandemic, levels of hunger have increased and remain high despite positive economic growth in the first quarter of 2021. The implementation of lockdown Level 4 in July 2021 once again restricted economic activity and is impacting the economic recovery. Political unrest, which spread throughout Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng in mid-July 2021, has also affected food supply chains. These issues are caused by, and contribute to, the severity of the economic and social crises in South Africa.

In the workplace, job insecurity is among the key issues high on the agenda of workers, caused by retrenchments and contracts which are not understood and pay too little. In addition to the lack of opportunities for skills development, working long hours, lack of benefits, poor leadership, low wages, poor health and safety, mistreatment by managers, and increased outsourcing. These working conditions are not conducive to the quality of life and show that the struggle for decent work is as important as ever. Furthermore, issues faced in communities where workers live include high levels of unemployment which leads to crime, violence, and substance-abuse. A lack of basic services, infrastructure, and sufficient power supply due to load shedding makes life harder for workers.

Segregation and Spatial Development

The history of colonialism and apartheid has resulted in a particular form of racialized capitalism that, as discussed above, centered around a) mining, energy, and related sectors, b) capital-intensive production reducing opportunity for employment and c) a highly concentrated industrial structure. Crucially, this racialized capitalism, through segregation policies, transformed the spatial location of economic activity. This has had a negative impact on mostly Black people's access to resources to meet their basic needs. These impacts have played out in South Africa's urban and rural development.

Over 80% of South Africa's output takes place in 20% of its geographical location. This highly unequal and spatially fragmented economy is dominated by five metropolitan cities that contribute 50% to the country's GDP [i.e., Johannesburg (City of Johannesburg), Cape Town (City of Cape Town), Durban (eThekweni), Pretoria (City of Tshwane) and East Rand region (Ekurhuleni)]. The development of the MEC is argued to have shaped colonial and apartheid spatial planning as many

of these industrial towns and urban centers that emerged developed in support of the growth of the MEC. Spatial economic inequality can be explained by analyzing the sources of trade, extraction, and apartheid social planning linked to the development of the MEC.

The combination of segregation policies and geographical location of economic activity shaped by the MEC has had a number of impacts on the urban working class and the performance of economic activity. It has contributed to inefficient land use associated with urban sprawl and excessive transport costs, because a) workers and the unemployed live far from work opportunities, and b) industrial activity is located in the hinterland [3] instead of coastal cities. This has been exacerbated by the post-apartheid policy of acquiring cheap land on the outskirts of towns for housing development. The country's spatial inequalities have also played out in its rural areas through the failures of a key instrument, the country's land reform policy.

Land Redistribution

Land reform programs were planned to address the historic injustices of colonization and forced removals, as well as promote development. Various iterations of land reform policy have focused on land redistribution (from white owners to Black owners), land restitution (restoration of land rights to those whose land was taken), and land tenure reform (securing and upgrading land rights). In terms of redistribution, the ANC government agreed as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to redistribute 30% of agricultural land to the poor and landless over five years [4]. However, it soon became clear that this target would not be met, and by 2017, just 5.5% of agricultural land had been redistributed [5].

Land restitution and tenure reform policies have also failed. Over 79 000 claims were lodged initially for restitution, and they have been finalized at a rate of 560 claims per year. This means it would take hundreds of years to settle all these claims. The process has been too slow and there has been inequality in terms of gender in that only 7.7% of land claim beneficiaries were women [6]. In terms of tenure reform, evictions of vulnerable groups such as labour tenants, farmworkers, and women have increased since 1994.

The failure to meaningfully address land reform since 1994 has meant that the dualistic structure of the economy has been maintained. The dualistic structure refers to two separate but related economies, the first being the capital-intensive commercial farming sector which is prevalent in the former white-only rural areas and is still mostly white-owned. The second is the areas of the former 'homelands' where agriculture is labour-intensive and low-input (does not use costly resource inputs such as fertilizer) but is an important form of subsistence for these communities [7].

Segregation and consolidation of land ownership has affected agriculture by perpetuating the dual nature of the sector. It has also increased the costs of public transport development because of urban sprawl. The lack of land redistribution also makes the acquisition of land for the mining industry problematic. This is particularly the case because proper processes are not followed to access land and this results in the continuation of land dispossession [8].

This unequal spatial development has meant that workers continue to migrate to work and are often separated from their families to access work in economic hubs, whether it be long daily commutes or working and living in a different location. Failed land redistribution has meant that the majority of poor households still live far away from economic opportunity and also don't have access to their

own land as land ownership has become more centralized. This has implications for food security as few people can grow their own food with agriculture production concentrated in the hands of a few commercial farmers. This can contribute to food insecurity when drought or flooding disrupts commercial farming.

The failure of land reform policies can be linked to economic policy in post-apartheid South Africa. The market-centric approach is emblematic of market-centric economic policy more generally, captured infamously in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy, which set the trajectory of South Africa's macroeconomic framework since it was adopted in 1996. The policy aimed to reduce social spending and to reduce state intervention in the economy in preference of greater private sector involvement and free markets through privatization and trade and capital account liberalization, amongst other things. This undermined state capacity. At the same time, the market-led land reform policies in South Africa required significant funding and subsidization, as well as institutional capacity from the state, which has been limited due to fiscal constraints. Similarly, the liberalization of South Africa's economy has led to consolidation of landholding, an outcome which contradicts the aims of land reform [9].

Transport

The primary modes of transport include road, rail, maritime and air. In South Africa, the majority of transport occurs on roads. There are two largely distinct services operating across these modes – the transport of goods (freight) and the transport of people (passenger). In this sense, the transport sector plays a fundamental role across society and the economy – by transporting goods required for life and work, and ensuring people have access to places of work, school, religious institutions, clinics, community, and recreation.

As mentioned above, apartheid spatial planning and labour policies relegated the working class to the peripheries of most cities far from work, with poorly integrated transport networks resulting in most people spending between one and two hours travelling to work in the mornings [10]. The nature of most transport systems, pricing structures, and distances impact on the cost of transport provision, with the poorest households spending more than 20% of their incomes on transport. Rural communities, particularly in the former homelands, remain isolated from rail and bus networks. In urban areas, the pervasive, low-density sprawl in municipalities makes it more expensive to support an effective public transport system and makes non-motorized transport for example through walking or cycling, more difficult and time-consuming [11]. Therefore, rethinking these spatial realities is fundamental to addressing the problems facing users of the transport system.

Passengers in South Africa make use of minibus taxis, private vehicles as either passenger or driver, bus, and rail. Walking is an often overlooked form of transport despite the fact that the majority of South Africans (an estimated 17.4 million people) reported that walking was their main mode of transport in the seven days prior to the survey to get all the way to their destination [12]. This is largely due to the fact that the majority of children in all provinces walk to school. In addition, all public transport users rely on walking for the beginning and end of their journeys. In the case of learners going to school and workers going to work, 92% and 88% respectively walked for 15 minutes or less to get to their first public transport. Private vehicles (not including buses, taxis, or rail, but rather individually owned cars and trucks) are the main form of transport used to get workers to their workplaces, either as drivers or as passengers, with 43.5% of workers using them.

Public transport remains an essential part of travel in South Africa. Each component of public transport is structured differently. Minibus taxis are a fragmented sector but play the largest role in mass-commuter transport. Taxi owners are divided into associations who are responsible for managing the routes. The minibus taxi industry is one of the only sectors in the South African economy which is largely Black owned. Train services are largely run through a state-owned entity, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA). PRASA was formed in 2009 and consolidated Metrorail, Shosholoza Meyl, and Autopax. The Gautrain, the commuter rail in Gauteng linking Johannesburg and Pretoria, is implemented as a public-private partnership with the Gauteng Provincial Government and Bombela Concession Company.

The South African auto manufacturing industry employs 100 000 people directly, with another 400 000 people working in auto retail and repairs. South Africa only produces petroleum-based vehicles, though several companies plan to introduce electric cars soon. The sector depends on imported inputs. 40% of auto inputs are local products, with most being structural rather than technological components. Employment will be affected by efforts to reduce petroleum use, including electrification.

The state of public transport in South Africa is steadily declining due to mismanagement, corruption and vandalism and looting. The following modes of transport are reflected on in the report with a reflection of the challenges and the possible areas of intervention.

The Trains System

Public Transport – Prasa

This mode of transport has seen an underinvestment in infrastructure over the last 30 years, which has led to frequent breakdowns and delays in the service. The Management has reduced the inventory, and this has led to an inability to repair breakdowns, due to long parts order lead times. This reduction in reliability has led to many commuters deserting Prasa in favour of other modes of transport. This has in turn led to a reduction in the number of commuters using trains and the loss of income from commuter fees, which caused a funding crisis. The vandalism and looting of the train system has seen the cabling, trains and infrastructure functioning, significantly negatively impacted upon. The levels of overcrowding on the trains were at close to 80% in the last census that was done in 2010. Management and the Board has been implicated in the corruption taking place in Prasa. The Industrial relations and Human resource challenges has led to the service being dysfunctional and the workers reduced to tenuous insecure employment conditions.

SATAWU needs to coordinate their interventions in the SOC more effectively, to ensure that the restructuring of the service deals with both service delivery and conditions of employment.

Freight Rail

This has been one of the few areas that the Department of Transport has been able to keep the services functional. This is mainly in respect of the iron ore and mining sector, where minerals are transported to the coast for export. The rest of the Freight services are also in decline which has seen a move of freight onto the roads, with the resultant economic cost. The Government has now embarked on a road to rail strategy, to reduce the impact of truck transport on the road infrastructure. This programme is however struggling to advance due to the infrastructure collapse and resultant unreliability in the rail service.

Long distance trains and Busses

The cross-country travel has devolved to mainly TAXI travel and there is an urgent need to ensure that long distance Bus and Trains are restored, to ensure safe travel across the Country. This would mean significant investment in the infrastructure is required to provide the services safely and effectively.

Bus services

The historical subsidized Bus services has been complemented by the introduction of the new bus services modeled on the Bogota. These services have led to an improvement of the Bus services to workers, but the routes targeted for new services have not always prioritized the working-class communities where the transport needs are greatest. There continues to be a constant tension between buses and taxis, due to competition for commuters, which has manifested in violence and killings.

SATAWU is well organized in many of the companies, but there are many smaller Unions that are making inroads into the sector, and undermining SATAWU historical hegemony in the Sector.

Taxi services

The Taxi services have historically emerged to fill a lack of public transport for workers from new community areas. This service was not subsidized and means that workers had to cover the entire cost of the Apartheid geographic divide, which put them far from workplaces. The Taxi Industry is largely untaxed, and the regulations are akin to voluntary measures, which are often not complied with. This has led to lots of tensions and violence in the industry, which manifest in intra taxi violence over routes and control of the Industry. The conflict between Taxi and Bus and Train services, has seen a sabotaging of train services and damaging of buses. The present situation related to Covid-19 has seen the occupancy levels of 100% posing a significant risk to workers traveling to and from work. The rights of workers are routinely disregarded and there is an urgent need to organize these workers into SATAWU.

Plane travel

The national carrier has partially been sold to a consortium, with the State retaining a 49% stake in the SAA. This has seen significant threats to the viability of the SAA in the long run, with the impact on tourism and the trade regime of inputs into our economy and Industrial sectors. Whilst it is not central to working class transport, it is a significant employer and status symbol of South Africa and an important means with which to link to the rest of the continent, with Continental trade agreement unfolding. SATAWU had historically been the majority Union and a concerted effort should be made to restore the membership in SAA, so we are able to play a more active role in the restructuring of the SOC.

General reflections on public transport

The role of public transport is to provide a reliable efficient transport mode to support economic and social transport. This system must be subsidized by the State, so it is able to mitigate the Apartheid

geographical spatial planning that put workers far away from economic opportunities. The present transport cost to most workers is as high as 17% of their income in certain instances. In addition to the financial cost, there is also a time cost to workers traveling those long distances, with many workers traveling for 2 hours from work to home. This effectively reduces the time that working class parents can spend with families to reinforce parenting lessons that guide kids. This is a moment that society can use to develop a peak spreading policy, that ensures that transport modes are not overcrowded, as the peak is reduced by spreading it over a longer period. The spreading of the peak and its reduction in overcrowding will lead to time traveling efficiencies across all modes, with reduction in cost.

The big focus for COSATU going forward is for the responsible Union to develop a detailed set of proposals to fix the transport system. This must ensure that the transport system prioritises the provision of services to working class communities, as opposed to profitability of operators in the private sector.

The SATAWU must lead a coordinated campaign addressing the transport policy and roll out in South Africa that expands the public transport service.

Labour Reform

Labour market and employment policy must achieve the following set of goals [13]:

- Full employment: all those of working age who are willing and able to work must have access to decent and sustainable employment
- Redress the legacy of labour market segmentation and discrimination based on gender, race and age, with the aim of improved quality and security of present jobs, and equal access to new jobs.
- Facilitate workplace democracy through enhanced worker control over decision-making.
- Close the apartheid wage gap
- Train and develop the workforce
- What do we mean by full employment? By full employment we mean a situation where everyone of working age who is willing and able to work is employed. Such a situation cannot be delivered by the operation of market forces, and current macro and micro-policies are very inadequate because they rely on the same market forces to ultimately deliver employment. The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) could be significantly improved to deliver full and decent employment. This programme offers an excellent opportunity to implement a full employment policy. The programme offers temporary poverty relief and is not adequate to guarantee income security.

Energy security and Energy democracy

Under the apartheid regime, Eskom played a key role in providing low-cost electricity inputs into mining and manufacturing processes. The expansive operations of Eskom facilitated tremendous wealth extraction off the backs of the Black working-class operating in conjunction with policies of separate development which entrenched unequal access to infrastructure, including limited access to electricity [14]. The early post-apartheid period, primarily through the Reconstruction and

Development Programme (RDP), saw Eskom shift towards a developmental role, utilising capital reserves to finance urban and rural electrification programmes. The extensive rights framework articulated in the South African constitution, facilitated the shift towards the State assuming responsibility for ‘free basic services’, which in the electricity component of the energy sector resulted in the Free Basic Electricity (FBE) allocations (50kWh) for indigent households.

Eskom faces a deeply rooted and multi-layered crisis which has limited its developmental impact in the country. The State utility has experienced waves of stifled market reforms including the enabling of private participation in generation (Energy White Paper, 1998), and corporatization[15] (Electricity Act, 2006). The implementation of GEAR, created an enabling framework for reforms in electricity tariff collection mechanisms, resulting in the widespread rollout of prepaid electricity meters, despite large-scale resistance from labour and civil society [16].

Eskom’s electrical generation base load has historically been supplied by coal-fired power stations, making the utility’s coal purchases the primary source of local demand for coal. In response to global and state level commitments to mitigate the impacts of climate change, global demand for coal has slowed, and aggressive medium- to long-term GHG emissions targets have been established. Despite the slowing export demand, and dropping global coal prices, coal-based electricity generation costs delivered by Eskom have risen sharply. The cost drivers of this collapse derive from high levels of financial mismanagement and excessive profiteering of private coal contracts [17]. In order to compensate for Eskom’s declining profitability, electricity tariffs have risen (up to 168% in real terms from 2008 to 2016[18]) and faced stagnating demand from residential and industrial users.

The runaway escalation in Eskom tariffs, particularly for residential users, has become an entrenched feature of the sector. The drivers of the price increases notably include the following:

- Inflated coal prices as feedstock into coal-based generation have proven a lucrative site of accumulation for local elites.
- Pressure to recover odious debt from extensive cost overruns and corruption in the construction and development of Medupi and Kusile power stations.
- Entry of highly profitable Independent Power Producers (IPPs) as a means to cover the shortfall of generation capacity stemming from Eskom’s poor technical availability performance due to chronic mismanagement and inadequate maintenance.
- Flawed Municipal financing mechanisms which have primary revenue streams tied to the collection of rates from electricity, water, and waste management. Historically, under-resourced municipalities battled to cover bulk payments to Eskom and failed to collect sufficient revenue to finance the necessary infrastructure upgrades to enable basic service delivery. Corruption at municipal level has also become entrenched causing further strain on the limited available resources. These factors drive municipalities to continuously drive residential tariffs for electricity up deepening energy poverty.

By 2020, Eskom’s debt levels reached R484bn, tied to entrenched patterns of public-private corruption, further compounded by defaulting payments from under-resourced municipalities, and cost overruns on large-scale infrastructure projects – particularly Kusile and Medupi coal power plants. In response to the crisis facing the utility, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed an Eskom

sustainability task team which proposed the unbundling of the utility among its key recommendations. This was proposed despite the failure of the unbundling attempt in the early 2000s. Government is in the process of initiating the restructuring efforts in an attempt to create mechanisms for greater private sector involvement in the sector. The calls to unbundle Eskom have met with resistance from the labour movement in opposition to the creep of privatization in the sector. Instead, calls have increased to explore socializing the ownership of renewable energy systems going forward to improve accountability and public access to energy.

Among the key symptoms of Eskom's institutional decay has been a consistent feature of load shedding as a by-product of poor planning and inadequate maintenance. The available Electrical Power Generation capacity has dropped, with the availability factor standing at 61% of the installed 47GW generation fleet for the first half of 2021[19]. The rate of unplanned outages has climbed to up to 28% of installed capacity over the same period. This means that South Africa does not have a shortage of generation capacity but has a governance and operational crisis of the public utility which undermines the potential for public provision of power, irrespective of technology.

The National Development Plan (NDP) identifies a transition in the energy sector as the principal driver of the path to a low-carbon economy. The trajectory of this path in the electrical generation sector is prescribed by the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP2019). The mechanism through which utility-scale renewable energy has thus far been integrated into the grid is through the state-backed Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement (REIPPP) programme and through Small-Scale Embedded Generation (SSEG) managed at the municipal level. The Independent Power Producers (IPP) office is housed under the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) and is responsible for handling the competitive bid process of the REIPPP and additional IPP procurement, which has thus far included private gas and coal plants.

In 2019/20, Eskom responded to the calls to shift away from fossil fuel use by establishing a Just Energy Transition (JET) roadmap and desk inside the utility and committed to, in partnership with the government, attempt to raise the necessary funds for the just transition. The plans reaffirmed the place of the REIPPP programme as central to the desired shifts and linked the move to unbundle the utility into transmission, distribution, and generation. In 2020, an emergency procurement round of Independent Power Producers (RMIPPPP) [20] was launched alongside a request for proposals for private renewable energy procurement under the fifth REIPPP bid window process.

The South African government's market-based mechanisms have included levies on electricity from non-renewable resources which is administered by SARS and paid by electricity producers. Carbon taxes were supposed to be implemented from 2015 but were delayed until 2019. However, the carbon tax implemented under the 2019 Carbon Tax Act is not high enough to encourage a shift to alternative energy sources [21]. The tax includes exemptions, making the impact even weaker and insufficient to transform the energy economy. While the National Development Plan outlines progressive ideals on shifting to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy which also aims to address differentiated responsibility and uplift the poor and vulnerable, this has not been implemented in policy.

The impacts of deepening energy poverty exacerbated existing inequalities in South Africa which are most harshly felt by women. Declining delivery of free basic electricity allocations by municipalities [22] and rising electricity costs result in wider use of paraffin and wood, particularly in rural contexts, as energy sources for lighting and cooking. The negative health impacts, which include fire damage

to homes, disproportionately impact women who shoulder the bulk of the care work responsibilities in households across the nation.

In addition to the historical marginalization of Black workers in the early development of the electricity sector in South Africa, women across the board have been largely excluded and side-lined from the bulk of decent work opportunities in the sector. These persisting trends are mirrored internationally with women accounting for an estimated 32% of workers in renewable energy and only 22% across oil and gas global employment [23]. Women are overrepresented in administrative and non-technical roles in the sector, and target incentives and opportunities must be made available to encourage the training, recruitment, and employment of women in decent work opportunities created in the energy transition.

The IRP remains a key site of contestation by labour, environmental organizations, and industry lobbies proposing various scenarios of energy transitions towards a low-carbon economy. It sets out a path to 25% renewable energy generation by 2030 – 6GW of solar energy, 14.4GW of wind, alongside smaller amounts of hydroelectric (water powered), nuclear, storage/battery, gas/diesel, and biomass, landfill, and cogeneration technologies [24].

Eskom is currently highly reliant on coal-powered generation with an installed capacity of 47GW by 2020/21 which serves as the base load supply for the national electrical grid. Coal has served as a cheap, plentiful resource offering use in dispatchable generation plants well suited for powering large scale electrical grids for industrial and residential use. Highly favorable coal contracts to supply inputs to Eskom have historically been awarded to small, select groups of companies and remain a source of controversy and profiteering. New elite entrants face corruption allegations in ongoing legal proceedings while the overall structure of the sector remains intact. The environmental impacts of coal-based generation are most harshly felt in the Mpumalanga province where the dire health impacts of harmful emissions are being challenged by community and civil society organizations [25]. Complicating the apparent need to transition away from coal dependence in South Africa are the pressing concerns of workers and communities currently tied to the coal value chain development and operation, who face an uncertain future in the wake of the imperative of the response to climate demands.

3. COSATU Interventions

3.1. UIF and Compensation Fund

Ensuring that the Unemployment Insurance Fund's systems (UIF) are upgraded is important to manage the massive increase in applications. By the end of the August 2022 period, it is likely to have released over R53 billion to more than 7 million workers. This has helped to ensure workers have money to buy their essential goods to take care of their families and to prevent retrenchments.

It is critical for trade unions to make sure that all workers are registered for the UIF, and employers are paying their dues.

The UIF COVID-19 relief reached over 4 million workers. It is likely to exceed R60 billion in payments. This has taken the UIF from R154 billion before the lockdown to R110 billion. R60 billion of the R110 billion is liquid and accessible.

Challenges facing the UIF which need urgent attention include:

- A Dysfunctional system which under pays workers when they claim or not pay them at all, with instances where millions were paid to undeserving individuals. Outstanding COVID-19 TERS payments of 2020, including outstanding normal UIF payments.
- Unless UIF is put under Administration, preferably under SARS with strict conditionalities, to work with not more than four board members with executive powers, the situation will remain the same. There is an urgent need for a clean-up.
- The System is easily manipulated both by internal and externalities alike. Unintended beneficiaries are still rampant as reported in different engagements and media houses.
- Non-contributors are on the board of UIF deciding on workers' money which should not be allowed to continue. Only workers and employers are contributing on behalf of workers to the UI. Therefore, there is no reason why non-contributors should be on the boards of the UIF.

On investment

UIF and Compensation Fund must do the following :

- create not just jobs as required by UI Act but decent and sustainable jobs to also contribute to other social security nets.
- the PIC mandates must ensure that the boards of its clients have a direct link with investee companies to avoid the continuous loss of billions which get wasted, disappear without “any trace” with no consequence management. Bounty Brands' loss of R1,7 billion is just but one example. There is just too much wastage of workers' money in these investments and consequence management is very little.

On Governance

Notwithstanding our call to put UIF under Administration, it is long overdue that UIF and Compensation Fund should have Executive Boards independent from Advising any Minister or any entity with a clear focus on ensuring maximum benefits for workers and be in a better position to hold all officials and PIC to account given how monies are lost in these funds with little power enacted in the legislation. Currently Boards of these two funds only advise the Minister and the Director General respectively through the Commissioner. Their advice is either considered or rejected however, it is not binding.

3.2. Health and Safety and workplace Safety

The onset of the covid pandemic highlighted the need for occupational safety as a fundamental principle and right at work. The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993) (OHSA), read with its regulations and incorporated standards, requires the employer to provide and maintain as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of workers and to take such steps as may be reasonably practicable to limit or mitigate potential hazards. The current Act has no specific reference to covid-19 infection control at the workplace, COSATU was instrumental in the development of the Code of Good Practice on

managing covid-19 in the workplace post the lifting of the National State of Disaster. The purpose of this Code is to guide employers and employees in managing exposure to covid-19 in the workplace by providing guidance to employers and employees in:

- conducting or updating a risk assessment in terms of the OHS Act and the HBA (Hazardous biological agent) in respect of covid-19 exposure.
- developing a plan to limit infection, transmission and mitigate the risks of serious illness or death on the basis of that risk assessment.
- implementing the plan.
- managing absence from work due to infection, isolation and adverse effects of vaccination, and.
- seeking to accommodate employees who refuse or fail to vaccinate against covid-19
- Another purpose of this Code is to require any person interpreting employment law to take this Code into account in respect of any matter arising from its application. This includes employees, trade unions, employers, employers' organizations, inspectors, conciliators, arbitrators, and judges.

The COVID Pandemic has also highlighted how inadequate the Department of Labour is in terms of inspection. With 2200 workplace inspectors employed by the Department of Labour nationally, there is an evident capacity gap in terms of enforcing workplace laws. COSATU has historically recommended to the government to capacitate Shop Stewards to conduct inspections in the workplace in order to fill the capacity gaps. This would ensure that duly authorized representatives of the trade union may investigate or inspect the operations of the Company, which are covered by this Agreement at reasonable hours and in such manner so as not to disturb normal operations of the Company. This is except at any places where the Company reasonably deems secrecy essential; in such latter places, trade union representatives shall consist only of Employees regularly working at such places.

The right to refuse dangerous work is a key tool in the implementation of OHS. The right is explicit in the Mining Health and Safety Act 29 of 1996 (MHSA), this fundamental right is missing in the OHS Act. COSATU was instrumental in ensuring that it is included in the Code of Good Practice for Managing COVID-19 in the workplace.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has recognized the fundamental importance of Occupational Health and safety and over the years has adopted a number of labour standards on occupational health and safety. The ILO set forth the principle that workers must be protected from sickness, disease, and injury during the course of their employment. Even with the ILO principles firmly in place, the reality is that this basic occupational principle is unfortunately not being adhered to. According to the ILO global estimates, 2.78 million workplace related deaths are recorded every year, and of these deaths 2.4 million are as a result of occupational diseases. The negative externalities of non-adherence to occupational health and safety are not only apportioned to the family members of workers but is a heavy cost on businesses too. These losses are associated with compensation, absenteeism, health care expenditure as well as an additional cost of retraining replacement staff.

Even though many companies face costs associated with early retirement, health costs, absenteeism, and high insurance premiums etc., many of the workplace related tragedies are preventable through

the establishment of occupational health and safety committees, strengthening of reporting and inspection practices.

In 2022, the ILO proposed the inclusion of safe and healthy working conditions in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work. At the time of the adoption of the 1998 International Labour Conference (ILC) Declaration on the fundamental principles and rights at work OHS was not included, however going calls have been made for its inclusion. The celebration of 20 years of the Declaration has provided the ILO with the opportunity to initiate the process of inclusion of occupational health and safety as a fundamental right.

3.3. Vaccine roll out

The initial vaccination programme was marred by endless delays in the first quarter of 2021. This put the lives of millions of workers at risk. COSATU raised this sharply with government. Since then, there has been a massive improvement. South Africa now has sufficient supplies in stock, including locally produced supplies. Daily vaccination rates increased from 15 000 to 200 000. 4000 sites were opened.

COSATU ensured that heavily exposed sectors of the economy e.g., healthcare, mining, teachers, police and correctional services etc. were amongst the first to be vaccinated. Some Affiliates did excellent work. This includes SACTWU which organized vaccine units through the Bargaining Council to go to each factory. Family members are provided for through the Bargaining Council Clinics.

The membership of NEHAWU, DENOSA, SAEPU and SAMATU played heroic roles in carrying the nation on their shoulders. Their members paid a heavy price with many tragically passing away. SADTU and NUM led the vaccination drives in their workplaces.

Vaccine rates have increased but they did not reach the 400 000 daily target. Vaccination rates tend to decline in each population once the willing are vaccinated. We underestimated the numbers of people who do not want to vaccinate for a variety of reasons. We did not manage to reach the 70% population immunity target by December 2021 despite massive efforts across sectors. Though we managed to vaccinate more than 50% of the adult population. This helped ensure that the 4th and 5th waves were mild in terms of severe illness and death rates.

As the state of disaster lifted, vaccination rates have plummeted. However, Covid-19 remains and has seen increases in some parts of the world. It is critical we continue to encourage workers, especially those with comorbidities, to vaccinate and to receive their booster shots.

The challenge for all Affiliates is to educate and engage all members and their families on why vaccination is critical to ensuring their safety and for the economy to re-emerge safely.

Affiliates and the Federation need to have ongoing active workplace to workplace campaigns to mobilize all workers and their families to vaccinate. To date we have been too slow in this regard.

Engagements are taking place on how we can incentivize and reward people to vaccinate. These range from companies offering rewards to those who vaccinate to allowing events, entertainment, sports, and music sectors to reopen on condition that they put in place the necessary health and safety provisions and for these to be opened to audiences on condition that they have vaccinated.

This will help to save the jobs that will otherwise die in these sectors and to reward and incentivize people to vaccinate. This is far better to do than to punish or penalize people for not vaccinating.

COSATU has opposed dismissing workers for failing to vaccinate. The Federation felt it is better to educate and persuade than to victimize and that threatening workers with dismissals will only poison the debate and distract us from the need to persuade society to support the campaign.

COSATU ensured that the health and safety guidelines for workplaces on Covid-19 did not provide for dismissals. A few workers were dismissed however, Unions need to take on such cases. With the lifting of the state of disaster, such incidents are declining.

SASBO won a historic battle at Standard Bank by forcing it to abandon its compulsory vaccination policy and agreeing to employ those workers it had dismissed.

3.4. Alcohol

COSATU has supported the need to tackle the abuse of alcohol and the massive burden it has placed on healthcare institutions. It is critical that such measures are ramped up. Industry must play its part in reducing the abuse of alcohol. But equally consumers must accept responsibility as adults.

Engagements are taking place at NEDLAC on what measures industry and government can put in place to reduce the widespread abuse of alcohol. A draft social compact has been developed. It included a ban on drinking and driving, reductions in when alcohol can be sold and how much consumers can buy, consumer education, restrictions in advertising and the industry contributing towards the government's healthcare infrastructure. Additional support is needed from government and the private sector to help sectors badly affected by the liquor bans e.g., agriculture, alcohol, bottlers, retailers, restaurants etc. This includes tax deferrals, credit access and loan holidays.

Business has however repeatedly dragged its feet on signing the Social Compact. This led to its eventual collapse.

Liquor Amendment Bill

South Africa faces massive social problems due to the extensive abuse of alcohol, e.g. fetal alcohol syndrome, high road fatalities, high levels of violent crimes, various diseases etc. All have high levels of alcohol abuse as a key cause.

- To reduce the excessive consumption of alcohol the bill proposes to: Raise the drinking age to 21 years of age.
- Require identity documents to be produced when selling or buying alcohol to prevent underage persons doing so.
- Ban the sale of alcohol to visibly drunk persons.
- Reduce widespread advertising of the sale of alcohol along similar restrictions as applied to tobacco.
- Empower the minister to set regulations to prevent the consumption of alcohol by pregnant women.

Government agreed to COSATU's proposals that 18-year-olds still be allowed to work in places selling alcohol e.g., waiters as this would have caused job losses for many young people. Government agreed to COSATU's request that wine and similar festivals continue to be allowed as they provide an important economic, marketing, tourism and jobs boost for rural towns that are dependent upon producing wine or Amarula etc. e.g., Stellenbosch, Paarl, Franschhoek etc.

Government also agreed on further engagement with labour and business on proposals to prevent selling alcohol near schools, colleges, and universities. Government also agreed to table a plan to promote and increase our exports of wine, Amarula etc. to help create jobs in the sector. Business agreed to some aspects of the bill and opposed others that they felt will reduce their profit margins. COSATU supported the progressive aspects of the bill and welcomed government's agreements to its proposals to amend it to protect jobs and pregnant women.

The NEDLAC engagements concluded in 2018. It has since been delayed in the Department. It is hoped to be tabled in Parliament by the end of 2022. COSATU is engaging DTIC to ensure it is urgently tabled at Parliament as it will play a key role in ensuring that South Africa begins to move towards a culture of responsible drinking and lowering the unsustainable levels of alcohol abuse.

3.5. Presidential Job Summit

The President Jobs' Summit's implementation was overseen by the Presidential Working Committee met on the first Monday of each month. It was chaired by the President and included Ministers, the leadership of business and labour. It was a strategic and critical venue to push key interventions with regards to the implementation of the Jobs Summit Agreement.

COSATU was able to fast track interventions in such key areas as the Eskom Social Compact, Scrap Metal Export Levy, Public Procurement Bill, water licensing, the UIF's Temporary Employment Relief Scheme amongst others. Other areas needing further pressure include digital spectrum, the scarce skills regime of the Immigration Act, the pledged but to be seen R100 billion commitment by business for new companies etc.

Since the implementation of the lockdown, it has not met. Its set meetings were repeatedly postponed by government. It has now been integrated into the 4 Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) working streams. These were meetings with the President every other month and his relevant ministers, in particular the economic cluster with the leadership of social partners. These were then replaced by monthly meetings of the 7 a side ERRP Leadership Team. The practical work was done by the 4 working streams focused on energy security and the Eskom Social Compact, the transport sector, SMMEs and state capacitation.

COSATU engaged extensively with social partners at NEDLAC on what elements are needed in the economic recovery strategy. Significant areas of consensus were achieved.

- These include on the need for:
- Impact investments.
- A massive infrastructure programme that targets ports, rail, energy, agriculture, water, housing etc.;
- Fixing Eskom and other key SOEs.

- A mass employment programme.
- Fast tracking the roll out of the digital economy.
- Fixing the ports and Transnet so exports can reach their destinations; and
- Fixing Metro Rail so workers can get to work on time.

Business tried to raise labour market reforms. Whilst business denies this is an attempt to undermine workers' rights, it was intended to weaken the labour laws. COSATU was able to block this and instead raise the need to strengthen the labour market institutions and address the existing gaps in the legislation.

The Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan (ERRP) was adopted by Cabinet and tabled at Parliament in October 2020. Further engagements need to be held on medium- and long-term interventions with government and business at NEDLAC.

These are currently taking place through the engagements at NEDLAC and with the Presidency and Cabinet on a Social Compact. The Social Compact will be anchored upon the ERRP and rolled out in Phases.

3.6. Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan

COSATU drove the development of the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan at NEDLAC. It was based upon proposals developed by the 2020 Alliance Political Council and COSATU's Eskom Social Compact.

- The ERRP focusses on the commitments in the following four critical areas for the recovery of the economy:
 - Freight and public transport.
 - Energy security.
 - Localization; and
 - Enabling a supportive ecosystem for SMMEs.

Additional work streams may need to be added.

Energy Security Work Stream

The overall objective of this work stream is to ensure energy security for economic recovery and growth through policy coherence, collaboration between all social partners and increased accountability. Its work is based upon the Eskom Social Compact and Implementation Plan tabled by COSATU and endorsed by government and social partners.

The work stream has agreed to focus on:

- a) Fit for purpose energy institutions and infrastructure centered upon Eskom.
- b) financial sustainability including in respect of:
 - i. Tariff management.

- ii. Addressing corruption and illegal and illicit activity.
 - iii. Debt recovery/payment for services (a revived Masakhane campaign); and
 - iv. A balance sheet solution.
- c) Increasing electrical generation capacity including through:
- v. Self-generation e.g., for mining industry to protect mining sector jobs; and
 - vi. Enabling the production of alternative sources of energy, e.g., ensuring that Eskom enters renewable energy as an owner and generator of renewable energy capacity and not merely as a procurer.
- d) Developing a just transition road map in terms of energy with all relevant parties, .e.g. to extend the life span of power stations and coal mines where possible, where it is not possible to extend then to convert to other energy generation or alternative economic activities e.g. production of renewable energy technology.

Localization work stream

The localization work stream agreed on seven focus areas in respect of setting and achieving localization targets

The following areas are being prioritized:

- a) Report backs on business targets, e.g., large procurers such as the mining sector and key sectoral targets e.g. cooking oil for the fast food industry, cement for construction etc;
- b) Labour and Community will develop an implementation framework detailing their localization commitments; investment vehicles; identified champions and targets.
- c) social partners will consider how best to expand capacity with having due regard to the lack of industrial capacity, value chains, deepening aggregate localization and small business development support.
- d) SARS will participate in the localization work stream in the context of curbing of the illicit economy through resource mobilization.
- e) The fast-tracking of the Public Procurement Bill which is on the medium-term agenda; and
- f) Proudly SA will engage with social partners in relation to additional efforts to bolster the buy local marketing campaign.

Enabling a supportive ecosystem for SMMEs work stream

The SMME work stream has prioritized two short term interventions:

- a) The identification and warring of unnecessarily stringent license and permit requirements; and
- b) Mechanisms to assist SMMEs negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Freight and public transport

The freight and public transport workstream agreed to prioritize the following for short term interventions:

- a) Reducing congestions at wet and dry ports and improving freight efficiency.
- b) Addressing vandalism of transport infrastructure especially Metro Rail.
- c) Passenger rail modernization.
- d) Road infrastructure investment and delivery including job creation; and
- e) Minibus taxi transformation, e.g., formalization of the sector, ensuring taxi drivers enjoy their legal rights, protections, and benefits.

Economic Recovery Action Plan Commitments for Reporting

Energy Security (Including the Social Compact to support Eskom)

Area	Commitments from the ERAP		Responsible Constituency
Energy security	1(a)	Implementation of Eskom Social Compact	All
	1(b)	Self-generation projects	All

Localization

Area	Commitments from the ERAP		Responsible Constituency
Localization (to integrate work from Job Summit and TIC Chamber	4 (e)	Organised labour commitments to buy local & invest in local manufacturing	Labour

Enabling Reforms and employment

Area	ERAP commitments		Responsible Constituency
Corruption and efficient govt spending	9 (f) & (g)	Business organisations, civil society and trade unions actions	Business Labour Community

Mobilization of Financial and human resources

Areas	Commitments		Responsible Constituency
Mobilisation of financial resources	11 (a)	Joint initiative to mobilise financial resources	All Social Partners
	11 (b)	Input into MTBS	All Social Partners
Social partners compliance and will	11 (e)	Tax compliance	All Social Partners
	11 (f)	Statutory and contractual obligations	All Social Partners
	14 (g)	Reinforce ethical culture	All Social Partners
Mobilisation of technical & human resources	11 (i)	Mobilise technical and human resources in areas of govt weakness	Business Labour Community

KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Violence Disaster Relief Fund

In the immediate aftermath COSATU tabled the below package at NEDLAC to form the basis for a national disaster relief fund to assist workers, their families, communities, and the economy to begin the processes of rebuilding:

- Food parcels for affected communities who now have no money or place to buy food.
- Reinstatement of the R350 Covid-19 Grant for all unemployed persons across the country.
- Insurance relief from insurance companies and SASRIA for destroyed businesses and property.
- Relief from government for those not covered by insurance.
- Unemployment Insurance Fund's Covid-19 TERS relief for workers from KZN and GP who will lose wages and jobs as their workplaces have been destroyed.
- Pension withdrawal relief for workers who have lost wages or are struggling.
- Tax and municipal rates relief for affected businesses.
- A revamped Loan Guarantee Scheme to assist companies to rebuild.
- Bank loan and insurance policy payment holidays for affected workers and businesses.
- Tripling the Presidential Employment Programme's budget from R11 billion to R33 billion so that it can create at least 2 million jobs.
- A moratorium on retrenchments by employers in both the private and private sector.
- Mobilization of donations to the Solidarity Fund to provide help to the indigent.
- Practical actions by government and businesses to ramp up local procurement to help save countless companies and jobs.
- A massive ramping up of the vaccine roll out programme so that the economy can emerge safely as soon as possible.

3.7. Localization

The Industrial Policy Sector Masterplans is an outcome of the Jobs Summit that was held in 2018. They are products of the working class struggles against deindustrialization, poverty, and deepening social inequality. The South African Government approved the Re-invigorated Industrial Strategy (RIS) for South Africa (SA) in June 2019. A cornerstone of the Industrial Strategy is the development of sector-focused Master Plans in 15 priority sectors. The Master Plan approach has been implemented in the Autos Sector over the last decade and has proven to be a highly effective tool of social compacting between Labour, Business and Government.

A Master Plan is a comprehensive plan of action developed by Government, Business and Labour which seeks to achieve a common policy objective e.g. protect jobs, create jobs, deepen capabilities in the sector, expand exports, and/or prepare for the impact of a policy change. The Master Plan is typically time-bound and incorporates various actions across the 3 main stakeholders, sequenced to achieve maximum socio-economic impact.

The Reinvigorated Industrial Strategy for South Africa which was adopted in 2019 identified the following priority sectors:

- a) Aerospace and Defense Economy
- b) Agriculture and Argo -processing
- c) Cannabis
- d) Creative Sector
- e) Digital Economy
- f) Health Economy
- g) ICT and Software Production
- h) Minerals and Beneficiation,
- i) Oceans Economy
- j) Renewables/Green Economy,
- k) Tourism
- l) Auto sector, Clothing textile, leather and footwear, chemicals and plastics, Energy– Renewables and Gas, Steel and Metal Fabrication.

Objectives

The primary objective of the Master Plan process is to develop an agreed-upon set of actions, with time frames, that all stakeholders in a sector or value-chain commit to implementing for the benefit of the sector or value-chain.al successes.

Progress in the development of Sectoral Masterplans

- Our assessment is that in sectors wherein the social partners, labour, business and government have a history of social compacting for industrial development like the Automotive components sector, Clothing and textile, Leather and footwear sector, Steel sector, and Agro-processing, there has been progress, this is due to the fact that these are sectors who have been able to build industrial policy capacity making with pointed results overtime. Also, these are sectors which have strong trade unions with the capacity of industrial policy making.
- Flowing from the above we can report that most Masterplans are still at infant stages of development, social partners are still engaging with no registered progress, others need to be unlocked, whilst other Master Plans are at final stages awaiting social partners to sign on off them meaning that they are at final stages.
- The weaknesses in the form of Labour movement fragmentation, weak industrial trade unions and lack of policy capacity coordination and participation in most of the COSATU industrial unions, the austerity measures that Treasury has been employing has led to DTI lack of funding which has weakened its intervention, and support to most of these priority sectors.

The State of Sector industrial Master Plans in summary

- 20 Master Plans in varying stages of development.
- Some adopted with initial successes e.g., clothing & textiles, agriculture, automotive, poultry, sugar & steel.
- Others are being developed e.g., renewable energy, forestry, creatives, oceans & fishing, tourism & hospitality, cannabis & hemp, health, water, mining & beneficiation, & furniture.
- Others need urgent interventions e.g., digital & ICT, aerospace & defense, & gas.
- Clarity needed on global business services, & chemicals & plastics.
- COSATU & FEDUSA & some Affiliates are active but most master plans lack consistent union participation.

3.8. Collective Bargaining

By design, the Joint Mandating Committee (JMC) was created as a platform that will ensure the hegemony of workers organizing within the government entities including Organs of the State through centralization of working-class power. The primary mandate was to ensure that workers and employers in the State confront all challenges as a collective. This mandate remains the cornerstone upon which the importance and the relevance of the JMC is defined. The membership of JMC is mainly informed by the scope of affiliates who have membership within the State but in particular by definition of the scope of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). The scope covers all unions that organizes workers employed under the Public Service Act, 103 of 1994 as amended.

The National Congress is engaged to deliberate on the membership of the JMC primarily given the changing work environment and the eminent discussion on the single public service. This discussion will pull together the state entities under one collective bargaining council. At the core of unifying public service as a single entity, the National Congress is implored to revisit and implement the long-standing resolution on cartels and super unions

Collective bargaining has been dealt a huge blow by the Constitutional Court which upheld the judgment that found that the 2018 public sector wage agreement was invalid. The refusal by the government to honour the 2018 public sector wage agreement sets a bad precedent for collective bargaining and will encourage other employers to attack and nullify Collective Bargaining Agreements in both the public and private sector.

The decision by the government not to honor the public sector wage agreement must be treated with the content that it deserves as this serves as an attempt to limit the right of workers to collectively bargain, which is protected by the International Labour Organization.

COSATU in 2020 resolved to lodge an official complaint with the ILO against the South African government. The recent attempts by the government not to honor the wage agreement is in breach of the ILO's convention 98 and 154, *the right to organize and collective bargaining convention*. In addition, it is a violation of workers fundamental right to the freedom of association. These are rights enshrined in South Africa's much lauded Constitution.

The JMC has experienced great challenges during this past 2 years in the face of Treasury's attempt to impose a 4-year wage freeze. Our Affiliates were divided on the 2021 wage agreement. We may be divided in the next round of engagements. This is a highly sensitive matter that requires urgent attention and delicate handling. We cannot afford to be divided.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) has been the worst affected labour market institution with regards to budget cuts as the CCMA grapples with the overwhelming caseloads. Since the 1st of December 2020, the CCMA has reduced the services of the part-time commissioners and has only been functioning with full time commissioners.

Even though the CCMA is currently doing everything possible to function under these crippling conditions, it is workers who will suffer the most as employers make use of the CCMA's weaknesses to exploit and unfairly dismiss workers. Financial resources are vital for the success of the CCMA to satisfactorily provide conciliation, mediation, and arbitration. The budget cuts on the CCMA must be seen as a new wave of attacks on worker's rights to labour protection.

COSATU has submitted a cabinet memo calling for the reversal of budget cuts following an engagement with the Minister of Employment and Labour. COSATU through the Labour Law Reform task team and the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) is committing government to the greater resourcing for the CCMA.

Wage Negotiation Trends 2018/2019 – 2021/2022

Despite, the many attempts to freeze wage increases led by the State many of our unions in different sectors managed to get an average increase above the inflation. The CCMA has provided us with the information listed below:

2018/2019

Sectors	Average Wage Increases 2018/2019	
	Minimum Wage	Wage Increase
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	R3 988	7.0%
Community, Social & Personal Services	R6 015	7.0%
Construction	R4 967	8.0%
Electricity, Gas & Water	R12 073	8.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	R3 986	7.0%
Manufacturing	R4 002	7.0%
Mining & Quarrying	R8 177	8.0%
Transport, Storage & Communication	R9 687	7.0%
Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation	R3 467	8.0%
MINIMUM	R 3 467	7.0%
MAXIMUM	R 12 073	8.0%
AVERAGE	R 6 262	7.4%

The 2018/2019 financial period recorded an average wage increase of 7.4% across sectors. The Construction sector, Electricity, Gas & Water sector, Mining & Quarrying sector, as well as the Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation sector led with the highest increase of 8% in the respective sectors.

As compared to other sectors, the Electricity, Gas and Water sector paid the highest minimum wage of R12 073 on average. On the other hand, the Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation sector paid the lowest minimum wage as compared to other sectors, but parties managed to negotiate an impressive 8% increase. All other sectors recorded wage increases of 7% respectively.

2019/2020

Sectors	Average Wage Increases 2019/2020	
	Minimum Wage	Wage Increase
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	R3 897	8.0%
Community, Social & Personal Services	R7 839	7.0%
Construction	R5 810	7.0%
Electricity, Gas & Water	R12 934	8.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	R6 176	7.0%
Manufacturing	R6 179	8.0%
Mining & Quarrying	R8 972	9.0%
Transport, Storage & Communication	R8 026	8.0%
Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation	R3 899	7.0%
MINIMUM	R 3 810	7.0%
MAXIMUM	R 12 934	9.0%
AVERAGE	R 6 859	7.7%

The 2019/2020 financial period maintained the same trend recording an overall average increase of 7.7% across the sectors. This period recorded a minimal improvement on the overall average increase as compared to the previous period. The Mining and Quarrying sector led with the highest increase of 9%. This showed a slight improvement as compared to the highest increase recorded in the previous period. The Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing as well as the Electricity, Gas & Water sectors remained consistent and recorded the same increase of 8% as in the previous period. The Transport sector, Storage & Communication and Manufacturing sectors improved their wage increases to 8% as compared to the previous period.

The Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation as well as the Construction sectors dropped to an average increase of 7% as compared to the previous period. The Community, Social & Personal Services sector as well as the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services sector remained consistent at a 7% wage increase on average.

Sectors	Average Wage Increases 2020/2021	
	Minimum Wage	Wage Increase
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	R3 896	7.3%
Community, Social & Personal Services	R8 632	6.0%
Construction	R3 956	4.0%
Electricity, Gas & Water	R12 073	7.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	R4 257	4.0%
Manufacturing	R6 331	7.0%
Mining & Quarrying	R12 542	9.0%
Transport, Storage & Communication	R6 627	8.0%
Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation	R5 260	7.0%
MINIMUM	R 3 896	4.0%
MAXIMUM	R 12 542	9.0%
AVERAGE	R 7 063	6.6%

2020/2021

The 2020/2021 financial period recorded an overall average wage increase 6.6%. The 1% drop in the overall average showed commendable negotiation outcomes taking into account that this was the period most businesses experienced severe distress due to the Covid 19 pandemic. It should be noted that the Mining and Quarrying sector seemed unaffected and maintained the same 9% increase as in the previous period.

However, the Construction sector and the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services sector recorded the lowest average increase of 4.0%. This reflected that these sectors bore the brunt of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic as compared to other sectors.

It is worth noting that the Transport, Storage & Communication sector managed to remain consistent at an average 8% increase despite the turbulence experienced in the labour market due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation sector also maintained the 7% increase despite a portion of the sector falling under the Tourism Industry which was among the worst affected industries due to the pandemic. The other sectors hovered between increases of 6% and 7.3%. Overall, the average increase was not as bleak as one would have expected considering the challenges that affected the 2020/2021 financial period.

Sectors	Average Wage Increases 2021/2022	
	Minimum Wage	Wage Increase
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	R3 896	7.5%
Community, Social & Personal Services	R8 632	5.0%
Construction	R3 956	6.0%
Electricity, Gas & Water	R12 073	5.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	R4 257	6.0%
Manufacturing	R6 331	6.0%
Mining & Quarrying	R12 542	8.0%
Transport, Storage & Communication	R6 627	6.0%
Wholesale & Retail Trade Catering & Accommodation	R5 260	5.4%
MINIMUM	R 3 896	5.0%
MAXIMUM	R 12 542	8.0%
AVERAGE	R 7 063	6.1%

2021/2022

The average increase in this period, which was recorded at 6.1%, reflected the long-term impact of the pandemic. The lowest average increase was recorded at 5.0% in the Community, Social & Personal Services sector, whereas the highest average was recorded at 8.0% in the Mining and Quarrying sector. Increases in other sectors hovered between 5.4% and 7.5%. Overall, this period reflected a decline in negotiation outcomes.

All in all, the wage negotiation trends in the financial periods spanning from 2018/19 to 2021/2022 showed relative stability in the earlier periods with a decline noted in the later periods due to macro issues that affected the labour market. It is anticipated that the current period will record even worse wage negotiation trends due to companies and the government struggling to shrug off the Covid 19 pandemic effects. It is anticipated that the situation will be exacerbated by a further decline in economic performance due to unstable electricity supply as well as rising fuel prices which have a knock-on effect on the overall value chain.

3.9. Pension Fund Law Amendment Bill Two

The National Treasury proposed a *Two Pot Retirement System* where the first Pot would be one third (1/3) and two third 2/3 annuitized until retirement. This was contained in its draft laws amendment Bill with a proposed effective date 01 March 2023 provided that:

- a. Any amount contributed or transferred to any retirement fund before or on 01 March 2023 must not be taken into account. In other words, the vested rights or contributions including any transfers from other funds accumulated prior to the implementation date (01 March 2023) as proposed in the Two Pot System Retirement System will be subject to the current rules of the fund. No immediate relief to workers in need of income replacement or serious debts according to this draft. Only contributions from March 2023 and moving forward will be applicable to the Two Pot Retirement System and accessible by workers.
- b. Any charges and risk premiums.
- c. It is going back to compulsory preservation until retirement regardless of job losses which may occur in the process during one's employment.

What this means is that this Two Pot Retirement System will only apply and be effective to new contributions as from 01 March 2023 with a compulsory preservation rider as a condition but only for the future.

This poses serious challenges in that:

- It is not what we proposed and clearly articulated to government through National Treasury officials since mid 2020 and they have accepted during our latest engagements that they insist on access only from 01 March 2023 contributions only.
- It does not solve the debt crises faced and engulfing members of retirement funds in the country across all sectors.
- It is the opposite to a carrot and stick approach with which clearly it was meant to incentivize workers to preserve their retirement funds benefits while they are allowed some portion for immediate access.
- Even the two third portion should be paid to a worker in the event of the job losses/resignation before retirement as per our proposal.
- If we are to sustain and preserve this industry, the above points should be taken seriously by government, however they did not agree with COSATU's proposals during our last meeting. However, the more the government delays implementation (as per our position) the more workers are resigning in great numbers to replace reduced incomes and also as a short gap measure to settle their unsustainable immediate debts. This is happening albeit not coordinated for now. As these resignations are taking place, unfortunately 100% of the benefit is paid out with nothing left for their retirement despite workers requiring only a portion for immediate financial relief, this ends with workers taking the full benefit.

The second major problem is that the incentive for workers to preserve a bigger portion for days of retirement will not be achieved. As this Bill in its current form encourages mass resignation for workers to access their funds. Nothing can stop or discourage workers from doing that. COSATU has explained this potential crisis during our engagements with government officials; however, there has been no consensus.

At the time of writing this report COSATU had met with National Treasury officials, and they are not promising nor committing to reviewing their stance.

Sanlam Survey on the Two Pot Retirement System

Sanlam did research on the Covid-pandemic with the following findings:

- a. 55% Experienced reduced income
- b. 58% started living and cut out all luxury items
- c. 18% had accessed some sort of long-term investment

On the is Two Pot Retirement System and their findings were:

1. 56% disagree with National Treasury proposal
2. 29% still “definitely not” access the savings pot
3. 20% probably not going to touch the savings pot
4. 31% would take the money if this was to become law

3.10. Labour Law Reform

The 13th Congress emphasized the need for Labour Law Reform. COSATU’s view is that the current labour law regime has not caught up to the present day labour market dynamics. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the inefficiencies of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) to provide income guarantee for workers that are outside of formal employment. There is a need to update the Labour Relations Act (LRA), Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and other labour related legislation to update and expand the definition of the word “worker” to cover a broad range of workers such as uber drivers, actors and musicians as contributors to the UIF.

The current labour laws have made it very easy for companies to retrench workers as the first option when a business is in the slightest bit of distress. COSATU through engagements at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) Labour Law Reform task team has tabled amendments to Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act so that employers who wish to retrench have to negotiate with workers and if sufficient consultation and negotiation does not take place then employers are not yet allowed to retrench as the retrenchment process is said to be incomplete.

Furthermore, the severance package of one week for each year of completed service should be increased to one month for each year. COSATU has called for the tightening of insolvency laws to alleviate the effects of liquidations on workers and their financial security. Government’s responses to COSATU’s proposals have been very concerning as they seek to reverse the gains that have

been made in terms of the protections of the labour rights of workers. Government is seeking to exempt small employers from the provisions of the labour relations act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the weakening of Bargaining Councils by giving veto power to the Minister of Labour and Employment to by-pass the Bargaining Council in terms of blanket exceptions for small businesses.

COSATU must remain resolute in the protection of labour laws. Government has adopted a pro-business position that reverts to the age-old anti labour law agenda that labour laws are an impediment to job creation and economic growth. COSATU and its affiliates have maintained a tough stance in negotiations to protect worker's hard won labour rights, affiliates must continue to support these efforts with planned actions to protect the rights of workers.

Government's New Social Compact

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his state of the nation address announced a new social compact that will introduce structural reforms to boost the economy. The rational is to introduce fundamental change to the economy towards an inclusive growth trajectory. The social compact is said to extend beyond the ERRP. However social compacts previously have not yielded the results. Since the onset of democracy South Africa has engaged in a number of social compacts. At the national level, these include the 1999 jobs summit, the 2003 growth and development summit, the 2008/9 framework agreement, a series of five social accords on specific themes adopted between 2011 and 2013, the 2018 Jobs Summit Agreement, the 2019 Eskom social compact and more recently the 2020 Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (ERRP). Government has proposed a number of problematic interventions for labour as tradeoffs for the new social compact. If introduced these interventions could weaken labour laws and de-stabilize the labour market in favour of the employers. Government's proposals include:

A multi-year bargaining agreement that enables a sustainable public sector wage path along with government commitment to filling of vacant posts and expanding the cohort of frontline workers

- Moderating entry-level wages towards the global average
- Support specific regulatory changes for small businesses that support their growth through a review of the labour market

COSATU is engaged at NEDLAC to protect workers' hard won labour rights.

3.11. NEDLAC

COSATU actively participates in NEDLAC and its four chambers. Participation by Affiliates is varied with some providing critical support and others rarely attending. It is critical that this be attended to, and all Affiliates actively participate, in particular in areas affecting their sectors.

COSATU works closely with Affiliates on sectors of strategic importance to them to ensure that their views are heard at NEDLAC. The Federation has worked closely with the JMC and PSCBC on matters affecting the public service and at times intervened to pause NEDLAC engagements and give space for matters to be engaged first at the PSCBC. This has helped ensure synergy between the work done in both spheres.

COSATU has been able to revive NEDLAC, defend it from attempts to weaken it and restore it as the preeminent center for social dialogue in South Africa. A few years ago, many wrote off NEDLAC as a place where policies went to die. Today, the media, business, workers, political parties, unions, and society recognize NEDLAC is where social dialogue takes place and where key decisions on the labour market, socio-economic matters, the economy, governance and society occur. Such examples include the Presidential Jobs Summit, the National Minimum Wage, the Eskom Social Compact, rapid response management of Covid-19 on both the health and the socio-economic front, the ERRP and now the Social Compact.

COSATU has been to score major victories benefiting millions of workers at NEDLAC, often against massive resistance inside and outside NEDLAC. The National Minimum Wage has increased the wages of 6 million workers, in particular farm and domestic. R64 billion was released credit free from the UIF to help 5.5 million workers feed their families during the 2020 to 2021 lockdown. Millions were released from the UIF to help workers affected by the July 2021 violence. Over 36 million South Africans were vaccinated against Covid-19. The roll out of the SRD Grant helped 10 million unemployed persons and laid the foundation for a Basic Income Grant.

COSATU has been able to drive numerous progressive labour and other socio-economic bills through NEDLAC, further entrenching workers' rights and advancing working class struggles. These include paid parental leave, expanded maternity leave, increased UIF benefits, injury on duty cover for domestic workers and defending the right to strike. Whilst COSATU has won these victories, revived NEDLAC and placed workers' struggles at the heart of its agenda, we cannot afford to become complacent.

We need to reinforce our participation at NEDLAC and to further capacitate the Federation and Affiliates to elevate their participation and impact there. If the 2024 elections results in an ANC led coalition or an ANC out of power, a new administration may seek to weaken NEDLAC and other social dialogue institutions. COSATU will need to prepare to defend NEDLAC from such a scenario.

Key Bills that have been engaged upon at NEDLAC include the following key Bills, Acts and other legal instruments. More detailed reports on these and other legal instruments are provided for in the COSATU Parliamentary Office report.

- **Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act** significantly increasing UIF retrenchments benefits and maternity leave cover.
- **Labour Laws Amendment Act** providing for paid parental leave for fathers, mothers of a surrogacy pregnancy and same sex parents as well as paid adoption leave.
- **National Minimum Wage Act and Basic Conditions of Employment Act** providing for a legally binding minimum wage for all workers, including farm and domestic workers. Engagements are taking place to ensure EPWP and CWP workers reach the full NMW.
- **Labour Relations Amendment Act** updating strike balloting provisions, where COSATU defeated attempts to weaken workers' right to strike.
- **Employment Equity Amendment Bill** strengthening employment equity requirements and allowing for regional variations depending on a region's demographics. It also requires companies applying for state tenders to be in good standing with the Employment Equity and National Minimum Wage Acts.

- **Compensation of Injury on Duty Amendment Bill** that provides cover for domestic workers and expands occupational injury cover for workers exposed to dangerous and unhealthy conditions.
- **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Bill** strengthening workplace health and safety requirements.
- **ILO Convention 190** seeking to tackle workplace sexual harassment and violence. Work needs to be done to ensure its full implementation at the workplace.
- **Scarce Skills Policy** where COSATU helped remove some of the professions which local labour can supply. More needs to be done to help upskill local workers to fill such professions.
- **Companies Amendment Act** empowering the Competition Commission to tackle monopolistic behavior in the public interest.
- **Companies Amendment Bill** that requires listed companies to disclose their wage gaps in their annual reports and to disclose their financial reports to unions and workers.
- **National Credit Amendment Act** providing for debt relief for the poor and protection for repossession of workers' essential belongings.
- **Liquor Amendment Bill** seeking to reduce alcohol abuse by restricting advertising and increasing the drink age and holding retailers accountable when selling alcohol to inebriated persons.
- **Copyright Amendment Bill** seeking to ensure access to educational materials to learners and students and to ensure protection for artists and musicians.
- **Performers Protection Bill** seeking to protect actors and other performers from abusive labour practices.
- **Export Levy on Scrap Metal** to incentivize local beneficiation of scrap metals.
- **Temporary Ban on Scrap Metal Exports** to help curb the flood of copper cable and steel theft crippling rail and public infrastructure.
- **Carbon Tax Act** to move industries towards less pollutive practices and ensure South African exports avoid punitive tariffs in the EU and key markets.
- **Health Promotion Levy** to encourage less consumption of sugar in beverages to combat obesity, diabetes, and other health crises.
- **Public Procurement Bill** to overhaul and modernize public procurement systems across the state, to support local procurement and reduce corruption and wasteful expenditure.
- **Conduct of Financial Institutions Bill** to strengthen protections for consumers against abusive lending practices by financial institutions.
- **Extension of Security of Tenure Amendment Act** strengthening protections from evictions and rights of farm workers and their families.
- **Communal Property Association Act** providing for minimum governance requirements to address infighting in many CPAs.
- **Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Amendment Act** providing for title deeds and land tenure rights to millions of townships and rural residents.
- **Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Bill** seeking to preserve arable land for agriculture to ensure food security and protect jobs.

- **Regulation of Land Holdings Bill** seeking to support land reform and restrict foreign land ownership of agricultural land in future.
- **Aquaculture Development Bill** providing a framework to grow this nascent sector.
- **Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill** updating school governance regulations and powers.
- **Climate Change Bill** requiring all spheres of government to have climate change plans and be held accountable for them and to establish the Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Council which includes organised labour.
- **National Health Insurance Bill** providing the establishment of a comprehensive public health insurance for all South Africans.
- **Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes Bill** seeking to discourage smoking, protect the rights of non-smokers and to regulate electronic cigarettes.
- **Central Application Service Bill** to provide for a single application platform for all universities to help ensure students are helped to find places at universities.
- **Border Management Authority Act** providing for a single government organ to secure borders. COSATU managed to address most of organised labour’s concerns. However, we were not able to ensure it remained a public service department as government insisted it be established as a public sector entity.
- **Mine Health and Safety Amendment Bill** to increase protections for mine workers.
- **Gas Bill** to help grow this strategic sector.
- **Critical Infrastructure Protection Act** replacing the National Key Points Act. COSATU ensured that it did not interfere with our labour relations regime.
- **Firearm Amendment Bill** seeking to reduce the flood of legal to illegal firearms in society by significantly tightening firearms licensing requirements.
- **National Youth Development Agency Amendment Bill** tightening oversight mechanisms to address governance challenges.
- **Public Service Amendment Bills** where COSATU and the PSCBC have been working to protect public servants from possible abuses of transfer policies.
- **Expropriation Bill** providing a single legal regime for expropriation, tightening loopholes that have been used to block land reform, provide protections for workers and measures to accelerate land restitution and land reform including expropriation without compensation.
- **National Traffic Amendment Bill** tightening standards for driving schools to tackle corruption.
- **Railway Safety Bill** to provide a comprehensive legal regime to ensure safety on our railway lines for workers, passengers, and goods.
- **Road Accident Fund and Road Accident Benefits Scheme Bills** seeking to tackle profiteering by road accident lawyers and ensure that RAF monies go to claimants, to replace the RAF with the RABS and ensure it is placed on a sustainable financial path.

3.12. Labour Migration Policy

Migration is an ongoing reality. People migrate internally and across borders, in order to escape persecution and/or insecurity and in search of a better life and greater opportunities. It is likely that climate change will exacerbate the already existing pressures to migrate given the increasing frequency of extreme weather events as well as slow onset disasters (drought and desertification)

Migrant workers are workers that are entitled to all labour law protections. COSATU recognizes that an injury to one is an injury to all is the basis of working- class unity, solidarity and struggle and therefore rejects dividing workers entitlement to protection on any basis, including nationality. While case law ensures that workplace rights and protections extend to all migrants, regardless of status, a strengthening of such protections through legislative amendments (in the LRA for example) would make it more difficult for employers to exploit vulnerable workers.

Migrant workers must be organised by trade unions within their sectors. Migrant workers have specific vulnerabilities and needs, and as a result are often wary of joining trade unions. More knowledge and understanding of these fears is needed on the part of organizing, in order to allay workers fears.

Workplace based social protection must cover labour migrants. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fact that too many employers deduct UIF from workers but do not register their employees and this is especially common when it comes to migrant workers. In addition, the difficulties with accessing pension and provident funds due to inaccessibility in home countries or because documentation (e.g. Passport Number) has changed must be addressed.

Information must be made accessible for labour migrants. Migrant workers are often ignorant of their rights, and this allows employers to exploit them with impunity. In addition, for irregular migrant workers, the process to regularize their status can be overwhelming, and ensuring that there is support provided to them in this process would ensure that one of the biggest sources of vulnerability is removed.

Quotas are a possible mechanism to regulate labour migration that must be implemented responsibly. Restrictions on the employment of non-nationals is a common policy tool, and one that can be effectively utilized to ensure that migration is seen as a win-win situation both for citizens and migrant workers. It is important though that it is implemented in a responsible way, that is informed by labour market needs, that takes into account other policy measures, and that does not cause undue harm.

Women migrant workers must be protected. Women are often placed in a vulnerable position in their workplaces that is often exacerbated when they are also migrant workers. The spaces in which many women migrant workers work are particular sources of insecurity, be it private households, farms or the streets.

3.14. Umbrella Funds

- Big firms in the financial sector, in particular the retirement funds industry have established Commercial Umbrella Funds (CUF) as part of consolidating stand-alone funds through encouraging sometimes even taking trustees who rest to court as part compelling to transfer their funds into these big CUF. This takes the right of workers from electing representatives of their in the board of funds as per law. It is a barrier to transformation as the CUF ensures that one-stop shop is used where most services are provided in-house by one firm. Black firms are cut out from participating in the financial sector as one-stop shops are used by big monopolies in this sector to block them through subsidization of one business unit by another.

Retirement Funds are deferred wages of workers and COSATU is opposed to commercial umbrella funds in its current form and cannot be used by big monopolies firms and perpetuate white privileges at the expense of workers who are the real owners of these monies. This is not only happening at the expense of workers but also transformation of the sector itself.

COSATU have raised this matter in the public domain to and continues to engage government as part defending hard won victories including the right of workers to have control on their funds by electing their representatives as allowed in law among other factors.

- Oppose the CUF and have called on the regulator, the FCSA to regulate all transfers in the best interest of members but most importantly to act in the interest of workers and members of retirement funds against a new form of capturing deferred wages of workers.

Any continuation of these commercial umbrella funds in the current form should not only not be supported but fought against to protect these deferred wages of workers in the form of retirement funds.

3.15. Skills and Training

Education and Training

This Department is responsible for the implementation of these following Congress Resolutions. These capacity building sessions are done in conjunction with the Affiliates and Provinces.

- Building Local Leadership.
- Information on the right to strike and the obligations of employers.
- Training mandate of the SETA's and the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- The Second Phase of the National Democratic Revolution.
- The Reconfigured Alliance.
- Implementation of the Freedom Charter.
- Free post schooling.
- Transformation and the effect of gender equity.

Building Local Leadership

The constant processes of shop steward elections and the revival of Locals as the basic structures that are closer to the workplace, demand that we equip all the newly elected provincial Office Bearers with a clear understanding of their roles in the Federation. We have done these sessions in All provinces and the need is still very high. These sessions since they involve forging Teams, solidarity and cadreship can be extremely challenging. We constantly deliver them but realize with each and every other intervention that the capacitation needs to be cascaded to the shop floor as well. Our reporting records show that we have trained in excess of 3000 Shopstewards Annually, the numbers covered are never enough as there is a very high turnover of such shop stewards.

At the very beginning we should mention that this task is proving much more difficult than before. This is because many Affiliates do not provide for their sector specific training. We end with many engagements being derailed by the shop stewards who seek more understanding and facilitations on areas like their Union Collective Agreements, Sector Bargaining issues, union constitutions, shopfloor related other areas. However, these challenges vary from Province to province as is the issue of the public vs private vs service sector divide We also encounter many more public sector Unions. Other challenges are issues of distances between our provincial centers and these locals where we end up not reaching needy areas to the sessions. The following Provinces are more susceptible to these distance challenges being the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape

We recommend that Unions spend more on basic shop steward training, consider employing Regional or Provincial Educators or rotate the Head Office based ones. We also feel that more resources need to be spent on funding locals training or the payment of claims when the Federation conducts such in these areas. We have found the Online Programmes being more effective albeit their equally resource-based challenges as many workers cannot afford the smart or Online enabled gadgets to engage in such programmes. The challenge of the departure from direct human engagement also still pertains

Information on the Right to Strike and the Obligations of Employers

We have also trained on this provision largely for Leadership and Affiliates on the new provisions of the labour law. This was to ensure the proper understanding of the changes in the law on these areas. This also happens on the backdrop of employers' drive to curtail the right to strike through various means, largely the fuzzy explanations of the essential service concept. In 2020 we conducted 3 Provincial sessions covering over 700 Provincial Shopstewards in Limpopo, Free State and Mpumalanga covering the critical area of the right to strike. This was done in conjunction with the Organizing Department that led in the material development and technical training

We have also relied on the Online sessions with the Chris Hani Institute but the overall engagement was not even above 120 participants. We need to much more here including our commitment to popularize the 2019 Strike demands and the propagation of our own anti-establishment narrative

Training mandate of the SETA's and the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

We have had 6 workshops on this front with the Fourth IR Presidential Commission and NALEDI and only 2 directly with the Federation. These are very high-level workshops and expose the different sectoral experiences and encounters with this phenomenon. Also, such workshops tend to be more for Leadership rather than Plant based Shopstewards who need such engagements more dearly. We have also realized that Sector Education and Training Authorities relate differently to the Union training demands on the matter. Many still regard it as a pure Collective Bargaining matter whilst it talks directly to how they anticipate new technologies and plan their Sector Skills Plans to relate to such Scarce or Critical skills.

What came quite clear from the many workshops was that only when Unions negotiate and are in control of the introduction of new technologies, can they be able to save existing jobs or rather create any new ones.

Whilst many jobs are being lost with the introduction of new technology, we think that many Unions do not relate such with this new production trend. This is because bosses are never open and transparent when they decide on production changes. These are therefore not affected in the Training plans even with the Senior and Top Management as well. In other experiences new technologies are introduced to curb work stoppages or after strikes which make such changes difficult to fight

With the induction of the newly Affiliated Unions, we have committed to embark especially for Agriculture, Arts and Transport on these workshops to get into details about the new work methods and equip our Unions on how to respond to these enforced changes

The second Phase socio-economic Radical Economic Development of the National Democratic Revolution, the Reconfigured Alliance, Land Question, and implementation of the Freedom Charter

These were covered in the Political Education workshops in the form of the Socialist Forums, Political Schools and the Chris Hani Brigade. They involve largely trying to ensure the left understanding of these concepts in the Federation. Since many of our shop stewards come from the ANC where some varying interpretations are formulated this was to dispel all such notions. The political workshops tend to elicit high levels of participation and even input from shop stewards wherein the major concern is around the form and shape of the Alliance, what the experiences like Metsimaholo inform us and how best we need to shape for the possible SACP contestation of state power. Whilst our recent Special Central Executive Committee took a firm ANC Local Government support, the recent neoliberal stance of the ANC government especially the failure to implement the 2018 Public Sector wage Agreement and its ramifications have made the facilitation of such discussions quite enormous.

Our political education philosophies have also been thwarted by the continued poor macro-economic performance. Coupled with the inherent backward views on gender, regressive views and attacks on foreign nationals, regionalism and all other capitalistic ills including the dominant conservative media views, we find that many of our shop stewards find it difficult to relate to the progressive COSATU resolutions.

These we continue to strive against. We however need to be frank to this Central Committee that many of our Provinces and Affiliates either do not find time to engage thoroughly in political economic matters and therefore leave such to the conservative whims. In the main the lack of Political Schools, the poor funding of shop steward Education and the continued and never ending chase of accredited and self-oriented programmes are the key reasons for this practice.

Transformation

We have trained all Provinces in the areas of transformation. These programmes were of great assistance in the setting up of the Provincial Gender structures. As we prepared for the 2021 Provincial Gender Conferences, we found a far better environment for transformation. However, our companies and sectors have not followed suit. We still fare quite dismally on gender transformation especially insofar as the representation of women in the overall participation rates of Women and especially African and Coloured women in the labour market generally. These categories of women have an average 10% deficit between their levels in the population versus the employment active population. We also have very few Women in Top echelons of companies

When we launch such capital attacks, we are forever reminded that even the Non-Government Organizations where we reside are equally fair dismally. This is despite COSATU being the only Woman led Workers Federation. This measurement is done largely at the level of the lack of Women Presidents and General Secretaries that lead Unions. We get reminded at every interval that we ourselves need to have the necessary drastic improvements. This is worsened by the failure to submit, observe, and report on transformation by our Unions.

The failure to effect workplace transformation stems from the fact that employment equity committees at the workplace are driven largely by bosses. These pay a lip service to transformation and rather prefer to promote White women as opposed to those from the Black groups. We need to foster changes as the legislation allows majority unions to compose such Committees only with management as opposed to the current formulation of workplace forums where the voice of the union gets easily sweetened by the other non-unionised groupings pushing their self-interests.

The Commission of Employment Equity has since recognized the problem of slow movement in many sectors. To that end it has now embarked on deriving sector targets that all companies in these sectors need to abide by in order to now obtain the license to do business with the State. This has placed serious jitters in the Boardrooms of many companies who either like Mining Houses need Government licenses to exist or those that have interests in the public purse for survival. The arrival at such targets has however been a very tedious and laborious process as the Department of Employment and Labour seeks to rather be accommodative to these capitalists who for the life of the legislation has dismally failed to abide by its prescripts. We need a very strong company-based voice on these matters to ensure that such jitters yield us the very good outcomes in that many nationals and Africans can not only be absorbed in the labour market but also rise in the Boardrooms and maybe we can have more fruitful engagements on such matters.

Free Post Schooling and the Social Dialogue

We have also worked on the matter of the Free Post Schooling at the NEDLAC level using the social dialogue instrument. In 2019 after finalizing the National Skills Development Strategy for 2020-2025 we had agreed with the Department of Higher Education and Training that next in our engagement would be the legislation and the funding mechanisms. We had long made it clear that we were gunning for a Levy increase with a cross-subsidization of the Free Post Schooling system. This seems to have sent shivers down the Departmental spine as the negotiations have since been stalled until recently with the introduction of the Skills Strategy.

With the current Treasury austerity measures, the message from the Government is quite confusing and not clear. There is the peddling of the economic recovery programme alongside the fiscal discipline of apex programmes needed for such a recovery like education and training. We as the Federation have opposed this. We see the levy as one of the many avenues that can ensure that capital not only enjoys the public education system products but pay for their ultimate cultivation. Other mechanisms include amongst others the centralization of all public bursary funds under the National Financial Aid Scheme. We have also called for the increase of the funding threshold to accommodate the missing middle who are largely our public sector workers who are quite unable to fund post school education but are currently calculated out of the R300 000 odd threshold. We also have mooted the possible graduate taxation which we still need to be one with the student body.

Whilst the State has over the last 7 years or so utilized Skills levy as a public fund to subsidize the increasing need to fund free Post Schooling system but on the other hand they are refusing to formally engage on such an exercise. This is as a result of business having taken them to Court and won the case on their failure to adequately consult on the Skills levy regulations or rather the manner of the utilization of the skills fund. Their counter argument is that levies are being lowly utilized and companies have a very low uptake of the related mandatory and discretionary grants.

However, the more pressing need of the current post schooling is the failure of the State to implement our decisions on no application and registration fee, a moratorium on fee increase and the scrapping of the current student debt. We then experience every year and more so in this austerity year many protests due to the different University behaviors and the fact that academia and administrative policies are viewed as independent of the State's intervention. The irony is that these public post schooling institutions (including the private sector ones) enjoy Government subsidies. Essentially institutions that rely on the State don't have to adhere to its policies.

Working with Unions

We have worked with the Unions identified before. Some of these unions have had challenges in implementing education and training programmes but some have been the advanced ones who carry high level political education programmes. We have also overseen the dissolution of LIMUSA as a Union and its incorporation into the NUM.

We have equally worked well with the other Unions and Federations like Solidariteit, NUMSA, NACTU and FEDUSA on matters like Worker Education, Social Dialogue and Skills Development and Artisan Development Committees.

- [1] Slovo, J., 1988. *The South African working class and the national democratic revolution*. South African Communist Party.
- [2] Stats SA. *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2: 2021*
- [3] The remote areas of a country away from the coast or the banks of major rivers.
- [4] Ruth Hall. “A Political Economy of Land Reform In South Africa”. *Review of African Political Economy* 31, no. 100 (2004): 213-227.
- [5] Zamchiya, *Elite capture and Land Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, unpublished
- [6] Ibid
- [7] Hall. “A Political Economy of Land Reform In South Africa”. *Review of African Political Economy* 31, no. 100 (2004): 213-227.
- [8] Zamchiya, *Elite capture and Land Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, unpublished
- [9] Ibid
- [10] STATS SA, *The National Household Travel Survey in South Africa (NHTS)*, 2021. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14063>
- [11] STATS SA, *Measuring household expenditure on public transport*, 2015. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=5943>; Tracy McKay. “South Africa’s Key Urban Transport Challenges” in R. Massey and A. Gunter (eds.) *Urban Geography in South Africa*, GeoJournal Library, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25369-1_12
- [12] STATS SA, *The National Household Travel Survey in South Africa (NHTS)*, 2021. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14063>
- [13] Draft Resolutions to the COSATU Central Executive Committee, 22—25 June 1998.
- [14] Harold Wolpe, “Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to Apartheid”, 1972.
- [15] Corporatisation is the conversion of a state-owned entity to a public company with 100% of share capital held by the state.
- [16] Phalatse, Sonia. *Eskom: The Roots of a Crisis and Avenues Forward*. Institute for Economic Justice, 2018. <https://www.iej.org.za/eskom-the-roots-of-a-crisis-and-avenues-forward/>
- [17] Ibid.
- [18] Mnguni, G., Amra, R., & Mohamed, S. *Analysis of Eskom Finances*. Parliamentary Budgetary Office, 2018.
- [19] Eskom, Eskom Weekly System Status Reports, 2021. <https://www.eskom.co.za/Whatwaredoing/SupplyStatus/Pages/AdequacyReports2018.aspx>

[20] IPP Office, IPP Risk Mitigation, 2021. ipp-rm.co.za.

[21] Carmen Klausbruckner, “A Policy Review of Synergies and Trade-Offs in South African Climate Change Mitigation and Air Pollution Control Strategies,” *Environmental Science*, 2016, 9.

[22] PARI, Short Report on Access to basic service delivery <https://pari.org.za/short-report-access-to-basic-services/>

[23] IRENA, Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective <https://www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective>

[24] DMRE, Integrated Resource Plan 2019, 2019. <http://www.energy.gov.za/IRP/2019/IRP-2019.pdf>

[25] CER, *The struggle to breathe clean air in Mpumalanga goes to court*, 17 May 2021. <https://cer.org.za/news/the-struggle-to-breathe-clean-air-in-mpumalanga-goes-to-court>



COSATU

International Report 14th National Congress

PART ONE:

1. Executive Summary
2. Trade Union Internationalism as a primary terrain of class struggle for workers power,
 - Context of our internationalism
 - Structure and form of our internationalism
 - Reference Materials
 - Building Working Class internationalism (global and continental)

PART TWO: Progress since 2018 13th National Congress

a. Pronounced and focused activities/reporting areas

- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
- African Regional Organisation of The ITUC (ITUC-AFRICA)
- World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)
- Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)
- International Labour Organisation/International Labour Conference/ ILO Director General/ 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour
- COSATU-Ghana TUC- NLC Nigeria Trilateral Engagements
- Discussion of inclusion of COTU-K (Quadrilateral)

- Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC)
- SADC Employment Labour and Social Partners (ELS) Meeting
- COSATU China Exchange
- BRICS – SA Trade Union Forum Presidency in 2018, Brazil (2019), Russia (2020), India (2021) and China (2022)
- ACFTA
- Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR)
- COSATU Labour Migration Policy Position Paper
- MIS Programme (2017 – 2021) and (2022 – 2026)

b. International Solidarity

- Swaziland
- Zimbabwe
- Palestine
- Cuba
- Western Sahara
- Venezuela
- Mozambique
- Lesotho
- Black Lives Matter

INTERNATIONAL

Executive Summary

This 14th National Congress Meeting is taking place at a time that no one could have predicted. The COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded, as a trigger event that has both revealed and accelerated the crisis of global capitalism. The world and the labour movement are faced with significant challenges: a raging pandemic amid an economic recession. Workers across the globe are faced with unprecedented retrenchments, vulnerability to the virus in the workplace because of a lack of adequate protective gear, increased socio-economic challenges, and employers who are using the pandemic as an excuse to illtreat and exploit them. The world today is in a crisis generated by the greed that drives capitalism, and proletarians is being made to pay the price to bail out the system just as it has happened with previous economic slumps. Since the 13th National Congress in 2018, the principal trends that define the world today are mainly:

- A rise of right-wing majoritarian governments who exploit the insecurities of their citizens, with no respect for jobs, benefits, security, crime, etc, and shift the entire blame on to the working class/poor.
- A more integrated, but multipolar and heterogeneous global economy, as a result of increased globalisation

- The changes in global production are reflected in changing global trade patterns. Overall trade has grown at rates much faster than those of world domestic product, and not only did developing countries expand their share in world trade, but they were able to diversify and increasingly export manufactured products. However, these patterns are far from uniform—diversification is largely limited to developing and emerging economies in Asia, whereas traditional trade patterns based on commodity exports and imports of manufactures and capital goods prevail in Africa and, to a lesser extent, in Latin America. The rise of China in particular has contributed to this trend, both directly owing to China’s large demand for commodities and the traditional sectoral patterns exhibited by rising South-South trade, and indirectly by contributing to high commodity prices, particularly for oil and minerals.
- Age of agitation: In the past few years the frequency of mass demonstration across the globe have increased more than seven-fold. Protests against entrenched authoritarian governments, stagnating economies, corruption, human rights violations, and for meaningful wages/salaries, enhanced livelihoods, and conducive conditions for development. On the continent alone, countries such as Sudan, Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa. We have seen youth-led protests push unpopular governments out of office.
- While Covid-19 as epidemiology threatens all sections of society, the accompanying social crisis deepens existing social differentiation.
- A dramatic rise in technological innovations, which have facilitated more efficient and accurate processes than those that were available 20 years ago. This advancement of artificial intelligence tools however has affected widespread job losses in different sectors of work, with the potential of causing further job losses, if the process is not managed through reskilling of workforces.

With the economic crisis becoming more pronounced in both the advanced capitalist states and developing countries, this presents a special opportunity for more international working-class solidarity, deeper coordination of global struggles and the sharpening of a strategic focus. Instead of offering measures to address this crisis, the ruling class and its political representatives are using the economic disaster they created as an opportunity to escalate the attack on the working class.

The 21st century has already experienced a profound crisis for the capitalist system, and indeed has seen its fair share of significant mass mobilisations of workers, poor and young people around the world. These movements resemble movements of the past in many ways, but in many other ways are completely novel, which brings with it new challenges for Marxists.

Today we are seeing significant and militant strike action by teachers in the US and lecturers in Britain, reflecting a widespread process of ‘proletarianisation’ in which professions that were once considered to be in some way privileged, have been ground down by neo-liberal assaults on conditions and forced to organise. Strikes by teachers and lecturers would have been unheard-of in Marx’s day, as would the ‘feminist strike’ of five million workers in Spain on International Women’s Day in 2018, which followed the example of women in Poland defending abortion rights in 2016. These examples, and many more just like them around the globe, show that the working-class methods and traditions of organisation and struggle will redevelop, in new forms and on a higher level, as working-class people clash with the same unequal, violent, oppressive system that led them to struggle in the first place.

Nothing is surer than that the greatest (and most trying) events in the history of the class struggle lay ahead of us, not behind. But it's worth remembering that the aim of the socialist movement for Marx and Engels was to engage in the class struggle on the side of and as part of the proletariat, which they sought to make "conscious of the conditions of its emancipation" – to finally bring the class struggle to an end by sweeping away "the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally... [and] In place of the old bourgeois society... we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. This is the socialist world the workers have to win.

It is in this context that this report seeks to highlight the work and progress the federation has made since the 13th National Congress, and what it means to the efforts towards the active consolidation and deepening of the class struggle on a global scale, to both fight the attack on the working class, and at the same time defend the gains workers have made over the years through their collaborative efforts. As we engage in the content of the report – we cannot shy away from the fact that particular emphasis and priority must be given to the urgency of the African situation. We must develop a collective response to the crisis of poverty, underdevelopment, patriarchy, wars, increased worker exploitation by Multinational Companies, political oppression, massive landlessness, extreme inequalities and the spreading trends of hopelessness and marginalisation.

For COSATU, the task of building the African trade union movement, and the progressive movement on the African continent, now forms a matter of absolute priority. Workers on the African continent need to take an active role in all struggles that affirm human dignity and contribute to the creation of a new and just world order. We will never succeed in changing society unless we base our activities on the mass of the global working class.

In this report, we shall confine ourselves to only the international resolutions and programmes of the federation since September 2018, and not the analysis of the global power dynamics or the global balance of forces in detail.

The year 2019, brought with it, one of the biggest public health challenges of our generation – the Coronavirus. It may also be described as the greatest societal challenge since the Second World War. The impact of COVID-19 is usually measured in rates of infection, deaths, jobs lost and the hit on national economies. But there's another metric – the surge in extreme poverty – that describes the most severe effect of the pandemic on people in Africa. While recession, infections and hospitals dominate the current daily headlines, the personal economic consequences of the virus are what will linger.

Africa's development trajectory has suffered a severe setback. The headline goal of the SDGs is the elimination of poverty, but extreme poverty rises in all of the report's COVID-19 scenarios, and African growth rates are significantly below what is required to alleviate it.

With the economic crisis becoming more pronounced in both the advanced capitalist states and developing countries, this presents us with a rare opportunity to reimagine Africa in a post-COVID-19 era. The pandemic has forced us to develop new ways of addressing our challenges of peace and security, socio-economic under-development, and poverty. The COVID-19 crisis contains the seeds of a large-scale reimagining of Africa's economic structure, service delivery systems and social contract. The crisis is accelerating trends such as digitalisation, market consolidation and regional cooperation, and is creating important new opportunities – for example, the promotion of local industry, the formalization of small businesses and the upgrading of urban infrastructure.

Addressing disruptions caused by the pandemic and the return to a better normality require that innovation, particularly digital technology, is perceived as a prerequisite for Africa to address its main development challenges, such as poverty, limited access to health services, food insecurity, climate change and governance. It is also essential for enhancing productivity, competitiveness and economic diversification.

The last five years have witnessed a wave of change emerging in Africa. Three African initiatives indicate that the continent might be approaching a qualitative leap in both economic growth and development:

1. The creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with the objective of creating a single market should generate a combined GDP of more than US\$3.4 trillion and benefit more than one billion people.
2. The South African government's creation of a new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) of the World Economic Forum (WEF), for dialogue and cooperation on the challenges and opportunities presented by advanced technologies; and
3. The launch of the Africa Growth Platform, an initiative by the WEF that aims to help companies to grow and compete internationally, leveraging the fact that in Africa, entrepreneurial activity in its initial stage is 13% higher than the global average.

These initiatives, if successfully implemented, may be game changers that galvanize the development and growth in Africa, which puts the interests of the working class at the centre. In order to ensure that this is the case, is to be actively involved in the crucial decision-making processes where the implementation of these initiatives is discussed.

As workers on the African continent, we need to take an active role in all struggles that affirm human dignity and contribute to creating a new and just world order. We will never succeed in changing society unless we base our activities on the mass of the global working class.

CRITICAL POINTS for reflection:

- 1. Are COSATU affiliates engaging effectively with the global developments in their respective sectors, and sister unions – particularly on the African continent in order to have influence in key decision-making processes that have long lasting effects on the livelihoods of the working class?**
- 2. The federation has noted a lack of participation of some of its affiliates in international activities of the federation, or international platforms in general, including the ILC. With this lack of participation by affiliates, how will we carry out our mandate as defenders of the working class, on a global scale?**
- 3. Dual affiliation, how are we managing this? COSATU recently started paying affiliation fees to the WFTU, an equivalent to what the federation is paying to ITUC. How do we move forward with the disaffiliation of COSATU affiliates who are currently affiliated to WFTU, to allow the federation to take the lead?**
- 4. What is our posture on the election of the new ILO Director General, who is the first African candidate to occupy this position?**
- 5. Rise of right-wing governments in the BRICS countries: How does South Africa's BRICS membership benefit the country, and workers in particular. As a powerful bloc of emerging economies, the governments have invested huge political capital in pushing the BRICS experiment forward, and its institutionalisation has created its own momentum. However is BRICS still relevant? How should we be using this platform to engage more robustly with our counterparts on issues we do not agree with them on? China and Russia are perpetrators of injustices in some parts of the world. How are we confronting them on this?**
- 6. How can we revive the SIGTUR structure, to allow for greater South-South cooperation, solidarity and support?**
- 7. SATUCC is facing serious financial challenges. How are we going to rescue our regional body from imploding?**
- 8. SADC and the AU have failed to effectively intervene in the humanitarian crises unfolding in Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and therefore allowing for potential instability in the region. We are breeding potentially destabilising elements in these countries. What is our reflection on this front?**
- 9. On Palestine, Venezuela, Cuba and Western Sahara, what different approaches can we use to build a fortified body of international solidarity with these countries in distress? Our government needs to also stand firm on decisions taken by the Alliance collaboratively. We cannot allow for this continued dilly dallying.**

Part ONE: Trade Union Internationalism as our primary terrain of class struggle for worker’s power

Four Parts to the overall scope and focus of COSATU International work:

- a. Content of our internationalism
- b. Context of our internationalism
- c. Organisational Structure and form of our internationalism
- d. Processes and Future Considerations for our internationalism

a. The Content of our internationalism

The following key points are primary in defining the content of our internationalism:

- “Accumulation of massive wealth on one hand and accumulation of misery on the other”, is how Marx summarised the inherent development, design and functioning of the capitalist system.
- Capitalism is a system, meaning rule of capital whose ideas, organisation and tendencies aim at accumulating profit and therefore, reproducing the system of class dominance on a global/international/universal scale. It is not just a national system.
- The organisation of each class determines and is further determined by the power it wields in society and thus, the centrality of class power. Our struggle is for class power and therefore, our organisation and forms of struggle must, at all times, be guided by that aim.
- It must be accordingly noted that Proletarian internationalism is not the same as trade union internationalism, though they inextricably linked and connected. This profound linkage and distinction clarify why COSATU affirms its revolutionary content, class character and militant traditions of struggle, based on mass workers struggles and advanced organisational traditions.

In this regard, there are priority areas that we must pay more attention to and build a movement for just socio-economic alternatives, but in a context where the struggle, is to ultimately change the global balance of power in concrete political and strategic terms.

- The Ecological and climate justice crisis – it is not an accident of history that the destruction of the environment corresponds directly with the model of “development”, prescribed by the model or system we are “developing” under, called capitalism.
- Fighting for Fair and developmental industrial and trade systems that enhance manufacturing capacity and job creation
- The Poverty, unemployment, inequalities and hunger crisis
- Fighting the ruthless power of Multinational Companies and corrupt elites
- Fighting against racism, national oppression, imperialism and occupation
- Building a democratic developmental state, particularly in the Southern African region
- Building a broad front of progressive and democratic forces to draw in the widest possible forces against all and every form of injustice and human suffering

Towards that end, COSATU Congress Resolutions concretely give strategic content, practical expression and tactical guidance towards in pursuance of the above stated aims and in giving direction and effect to its principles. They are regularly evaluated by the Central Committee (CC) as regards progress, relevance and focus.

b. Context of our internationalism

The Southern African economy was, primarily shaped by and in the interest of colonial (capitalist) accumulation to become the supplier of raw material, cheap labour and markets for the products of the metropolitan (colonial masters) countries.

The main sectors of the economy in the region are mining, agriculture, eco-tourism and increasingly, services. The political economy of the region has not undergone any fundamental changes since the liberation/independence period. Most often, the post-colonial regimes acquired the neo-colonial state and power, but did not change them towards serving a new, democratic and developmental agenda. This led to the further integration of the regional political economy into the unequal and unjust global system as an instrument for the advancement of the narrow interests of the former colonial powers, with the collaboration of the new regimes.

The new regimes inherited and strengthened the very structures colonialism used to oppress and marginalise the African majority, hence the intensification of post-colonial suppression and persecution, accompanied by deepening levels of poverty, hunger, unemployment and inequalities in several of our countries.

The SADC region and the African continent as a whole are naturally endowed with abundant and rich human and mineral resources, which have not yet been effectively and properly harnessed, resulting in the current structure of the regional economy, which is based on the derivation and extraction of mineral commodities for export to the colonial (metropolitan) economies, thereby contributing to the patterns of perpetual neo-colonial underdevelopment and lack of economic expansion and job creation in the region.

Some of these massive and abundant natural resources that are the main reason why the Scramble for Africa by the former colonial powers happened, in the first instance, include: diamond, platinum, cobalt, uranium, gas, iron ore, coal, agriculture products, water, as well as the vast arable and fertile land.

c. Structure and Form of our internationalism

The International Department of COSATU is assigned by the federation with the responsibility to oversee, drive, advise and support the federation's international work in the interests of its constitutional and programmatic mandate.

In this regard, it offers support to the Political leadership, NOBs and other Constitutional structures towards that end, providing quality technical and strategic insights and writings that advance that mandate.

The Federation, through its Central Executive Committee (CEC) annually adopts an International Programme and Budget, based on the Congress Resolutions and at the same time, quarterly

evaluates progress on the same programme. The IRC which took place in March 2019, took a decision which was endorsed by the May 2019 CEC, that the four distinct objectives of the department should be divided into practical and feasible activities which will inform the yearly programme. As a result of this the Department has held Strategic Sessions in October/November 2019, 2022, and 2021, which have devised and concretised yearly activities which have informed the programme of the Department to-date. Understanding the nature of the Department's work however, the programme is subject to change as other more crucial activities are introduced during the course of the year.

Amongst the key priority issues for 2021/2022, are activities and actions we have always taken up, including the following international solidarity campaigns (guided by our Congress Resolutions):

The struggle of the Saharawi people (in Western Sahara) for self-determination and freedom from colonial occupation by Morocco

The Cuban peoples struggles against imperialist aggression and for the territorial integrity and sovereign self-rule against state-sponsored terrorism by the US. This has spread with Brazil, Venezuela and various parts of Latin America as expanded frontiers of US imperial aggression

- The struggle for democracy and freedom from royal oppression in Swaziland
- The struggle against apartheid and colonial occupation against the Palestinian people by Israel
- The struggle for democracy and justice in Zimbabwe
- Various struggles that affirm the dignity and freedom of workers, human rights and justice for all

Since the 13th National Congress, in addition our solidarity campaigns afforded to our priority countries, COSATU has also extended solidarity/made commentary on the following international occurrences:

COSATU slammed Turkey's continued attack against Kurdish forces in Syria

Call for US authorities to stop political persecution of Julian Assange

COSATU called for Israel to be excluded from diamond processing over 'war crimes

COSATU condemned US's Unjust Economic and Financial Blockade on Cuba

COSATU mourned the passing of SADR Ambassador Cde Radhi Bachir

COSATU called for the release of Kurdish leader – Abdullah Ocalan

COSATU mourned the passing of former ZCTU President Cde Lovemore Matombo

COSATU called for AU and SADC decisiveness on Zimbabwe crisis (joined the #FreeZimbabwe Movement)

COSATU commemorated Commander Fidel Castro – paying tribute to his remarkable legacy (celebration of Cde Castro's birthday)

COSATU condemned military coup d'état in Mali

COSATU condemned US war against Iran, killing innocent civilians

COSATU condemned US's Unjust Economic and Financial Blockade on Cuba

COSATU supported striking healthcare workers in Kenya

COSATU condemned Zimbabwean government's intimidation and harassment of its health care workers

COSATU outraged by Arab normalisation deals with Israel

COSATU urged Southern Africa to fight insurgence in Mozambique

COSATU disturbed by Nigerian government's attack on unarmed peaceful protesters

COSATU supported Nigeria's fight against police brutality (Joining the #EndSARS Movement)

COSATU sent heartfelt condolences to the family of gallant Swazi trade unionist and politician – Jan Jabulani Sithole

COSATU extended condolences to the UGTT on the passing of Deputy General Secretary – Brother Bouali Mbarki

COSATU extended condolences to the Palestinian people on the passing of "iconic" Dr Saeb Erekat

COSATU supported the Anti-imperialist Working-Class Global Conference

COSATU commentary on the US election outcome

COSATU extended condolences on the passing of Cde Kjeld Jakobsen – in Sao Paulo

COSATU supports ICC decision to probe war crime charges against Israel

COSATU extends condolences to CGT Colombia on the passing of President Julio Roberto Gómez

COSATU in solidarity with protesting farmworkers against repressive farm laws – India

COSATU expressed solidarity with the people of Myanmar

COSATU calls for vaccine equity – regarding concerns around non-South Africans not receiving the vaccine

COSATU congratulated Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on her appointment as the WTO Director-General

COSATU extends a message of sympathy to the people of Tanzania on the passing of President Dr John Pombe Magufuli

COSATU outraged by Lesotho's retrenchment of close to 350 nurses, as doctors warn of dire shortages

COSATU concerned over deadly attacks and deteriorating security situation in Mozambique calls for urgent action

d. Processes and Future Considerations for our internationalism

One of our core founding principles as a federation is international solidarity, based both on the fact that we were born at a crucial time in the history and struggle of the people of South Africa against apartheid (expressly racial variant of capitalism), but also in the broad struggle against global capitalism itself.

We remain fixated with the fast-changing global developments and struggles that shape the situation today in the world and how best to make durable and effective interventions that enhance our perspectives and challenge imperialism and all forces against humanity. Crucial to our time, is the

importance of international solidarity during this time of crisis. This crisis has demonstrated the potential for working-class people to come together around our common interests, as has happened many times in the past. But we also need to build a mass, anti-sectarian political force rooted in the organic unity of the working class, in workplaces and in struggle.

Such a force cannot ignore or wish away the issues which divide our communities but can demonstrate how genuine solutions can only be found when workers come together in a spirit of solidarity and mutual respect. Crucially, the means fighting for a socialist future, free from poverty, oppression and coercion.

Before the pandemic, it would have been difficult for many to imagine neo-liberal and right-wing governments nationalising failing industries, freezing rents, and the partial (and temporary) lifting of austerity. Before the pandemic, essential workers were “unskilled”. Before the pandemic, we were told by capitalist commentators that it was common sense that people are individualistic and selfish, thus justifying the greed and profiteering of the bosses and super-rich. We were not “all in it together” before the pandemic.

Like a storm unearthing a gem from the mud, collective hardship has revealed the international solidarity that exists amongst the working class. The sheer scale of our good will and collaboration has been a massive force in fighting the pandemic and giving people a new sense of hope.

It is more important than ever that we strengthen solidarity in the international labour movement, vigorously defend workers’ rights, support workers’ struggles across the globe, and make sure that workers’ voices continue to be heard. We need to go back to the principles of Proletarian Internationalism or International Socialism, where we all demonstrate an understanding that as **communist revolutionists, our struggle is a global class struggle rather than a series of separate localised events.**

The IRC, accordingly, met in April 2021 and decided that this matter, as done before, must not be discussed outside the prevailing balance of power, global configuration of class forces and the practical modalities of pursuing our class struggle in the concrete situation posed by today’s realities.

In this regard, the IRC which met for a Strategic Session in October 2020, recommended to the CEC that an International School Session take place in June of 2021, or before the Central Committee for the purposes of the following tasks:

- Correctly assess the balance of power and the forces shaping the world today and their concrete meaning to our struggle for working class power, in class and organisational terms
- Undergoing series of trainings on the fundamentals of working-class internationalism
- Clarification to the essence and meaning of trade union internationalism, to draw in the widest possible sections of workers into active, united and focussed struggles around minimum battles against the most basic manifestations of socio-economic crisis of capitalism at the workplace, community and in society generally
- Clarify our Strategic Perspective on the most contentious issues brought to the fore by the development of capitalism today and how to relate to them.
- Consolidation of the African trade union movement, and the revival of the African Left Networking Forum

- The Future of Work (what kind of jobs, workplace and organisational design and systems are now defining work and how do we respond?)
- Zero-in our international solidarity work, and the go back to the basics on the importance of international working-class solidarity.

Whilst the International School did not take place as envisaged, COSATU hosted an IRC Strategic Session in October of 2021, which amongst other crucial matters discussed the need to carry out International Workshops in the provinces, on the international campaigns that the federation is running, and more importantly to capacitate workers on the role and importance of international solidarity in the trade union movement. In order to do this effectively, in the Provincial Congresses held from late 2021 – March 2022, presentations were made on COSATU's international work, and for the Gauteng Provincial Congress, Ambassadors from the Palestinian and Cuban Embassy were invited to attend and deliver a message of support.

In line with attaining this objective, the COSATU International Department (represented by Comrade Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni) also presented at the COSATU Young Women Development Training held by the Organising Department in December 2021. The focus of the discussion with the Young Women's Committee was on **'Advancing Young Women in International Relations and the Impact of Solidarity'**. The engagement was very well attended by young women from the different provinces, Provincial Educator/Organisers, female young workers from COSATU's affiliates, members of the Young Workers Forum and several staff members of COSATU.

From all these, we hope to be able to adequately and appropriately, respond to the basic question on; what is the future of trade union internationalism? What Organisational model, capacity and resources are required to advance our aims in the most concrete and effective way possible, given the concrete realities, we face and shall still face?

In the midst of all these global manifestations and crisis, how best do we allocate our minimum resources and capacity to make real contributions, without either under-utilising our power or exaggerating it, in a real world where balance between the ideal and real is an imperative.

Reference Materials

- COSATU National Congress Resolutions
- COSATU International Policy Document
- CEC Decisions
- IRC Outcomes
- International Practitioners Resource Handbook
- International Shop stewards Guide
- Departmental Plans and Priorities – Matrix of the Implementation of CEC and IRC Decisions, Lines of Duty and Scope for each member of the Department and the Framework for International Deployments
- Specific Tasks allocated and assigned by the Secretariat and NOBs from time to time

CRITICAL POINT: Are we using the contradictions and opportunities of uneven class consciousness and level of organisation in the international trade union movement to advance a real working-class agenda in a more nuanced and sophisticated way or maybe we may be mechanical, even as we remain bold on the real working-class issues?

But also, what real and imagined influence and power do we wield in the international terrain, to advance or form strategic alliances towards our goals?

Part TWO: Progress since the COSATU 13th National Congress

In this regard, we wish to outline some of the major and most noticeable and focused activities that have taken place since the last Congress and the actual progress recorded so far. This will then be followed by the more concise COSATU International Programme for 2022, as adopted by the November 2021 Central Executive Committee.

1. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

The 4th World Congress of the ITUC

The ITUC held its 4th World Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark from the 4th – 7th November 2018, where Cde Sharrow Burrow was re-elected as the General Secretary of the 207-million-member movement.

Five urgent resolutions were passed calling for:

- human rights and peace in Colombia (ongoing – Attacks on indigenous communities intensify in Cauca),
- solidarity with students and workers in Iran (ongoing).
- solidarity with workers and students in Iran (ongoing).
- labour law reforms in Hungary (ongoing).
- labour rights and solidarity with independent trade unions in Kazakhstan; and
- freedom for Lula. ITUC President João Felício read a letter from former President of Brazil, Lula da Silva, thanking the trade union movement for the solidarity and collective action to protest against his unjust imprisonment. In April this year, COSATU joined the global progressive movement in celebrating the annulment of the unjust criminal charges and the restoration of Lula's political rights. Brazil's full Supreme Court upheld a ruling annulling former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's corruption conviction, which cleared the way for him to run for a new presidential term next year.

At the conclusion of the World Congress, unions committed to:

- organise, to create a 250 million-member ITUC over the next four years, to build workers' power.
- a new social contract, where businesses, including platform businesses, are made to take responsibility for their workers, and a UN Business and Human Rights Treaty.

- a Just Transition to sustainable economies to tackle climate change and keep temperature rises to 1.5 degrees or less.
- reverse the trend of low-wage growth and rising inequality through collective bargaining, increased minimum wages and social protection; and
- close the gender pay gap, fight discrimination and racism and take forward action against gender-based violence. These are foundations for the future of work.

The statement adopted by the ITUC World Congress included four pillars – on peace democracy and rights; regulating economic power; global shifts – just transitions; and equality – which set out the ITUC agenda for the next four years. Women delegates attending the ITUC World Congress increased from 42 per cent in 2014 to 46 per cent in 2018.

The ITUC General Council elected Ayuba Wabba, President of the Nigerian Labour Congress, as ITUC President. Cathy Feingold of AFL-CIO (USA) and Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson of LO Sweden were elected as the ITUC Deputy Presidents. Owen Tudor, Victor Báez and Mamadou Diallo were elected as the ITUC Deputy General Secretaries. The next ITUC World Congress will be held in 2022.

ITUC delegation to South Africa – meeting with COSATU NOBs

On the 23rd – 25th September 2019, an ITUC delegation was deployed to South Africa to assess the SAFTU's application for membership/affiliation. The delegation from Brussels was led by Deputy General Secretaries, Cde Mamadou Diallo and Cde Owen Tudor, accompanied by ITUC Africa General Secretary Cde Kwasi Adu Amankwah. Procedurally, the delegation was here on a follow-up visit to their previous visit in 2018, to assess, the existence, state, legality of structures and unions affiliated to SAFTU. The delegation met with FEDUSA, NACTU, NEDLAC and COSATU. Representing COSATU in the meeting was President Zingiswa Losi, General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali, Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni (International Secretary), Bongani Masuku (Secretariat Co-ordinator), Tshepo Mabulana (International Administrator).

The COSATU leadership indicated concerns/alleged discrepancies with the number of members SAFTU was alluding to having and raised concerns about the existence of a federation which seeks to divide workers, whereas our main focus is the consolidation of the working class and fighting to ensure that all workers in South Africa are organised, and therefore protected from their employers. The COSATU NOBs further emphasised that the federation had no “issues” with SAFTU. The more personal attacks and intentions to cause some division, were being perpetuated by Cdes from SAFTU. This is observed in spaces where COSATU and SAFTU are in the same space/meeting.

The ITUC leadership delegation also expressed concern with COSATU's decision to maintain a dual affiliation to both the ITUC and WFTU whose ideological differences are “different” according to the ITUC. The concern with this is also the precedence it will set for other affiliates of the ITUC, who may want to do the same. The COSATU NOBs stood on the principle that there is no rule or principle in the ITUC's Constitution that indicates that dual affiliations are prohibited. Secondly, COSATU NOBs clearly stated the position of COSATU's affiliates regarding the subject matter. The delegation compiled its final report which was to be presented in the first General Council in 2020, however due to the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the assumption is that feedback on both matters will be discussed once concluded.

5th ITUC World Congress

The ITUC General Council meeting, which took place on the 26th -27th of May 2022, confirmed that the 5th ITUC World Congress will now take place from the 17th – 22nd of November 2022 in Melbourne, Australia. The decision to postpone the Congress from July was taken in order to provide for the highest possible physical participation in the event, with international COVID-19 travel restrictions expected to continue into 2022.

The Council discussed the first draft of the Congress statement, with a further draft due to be circulated to all affiliates in early 2022, and it approved a list of organisations to be invited to Congress.

The ITUC Frontline Campaigns and Four Pillars for Action 2022 was adopted, providing the foundations for Congress 2022 and framed by the demand for a New Social Contract.

The Council also:

- adopted a resolution opposing attempts by the extreme right to subvert trade unions, reiterated the importance of vaccination, and stated that the intimidation of people who vaccinate is unacceptable.
- heard an oral report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) about the International Labour Conference and the process to appoint a new ILO Director-General.
- approved the budget for 2022.
- discussed affiliations to the ITUC, including welcoming the General Federation of Libyan Trade Unions (GFLTU) and welcoming back the Central Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT), Paraguay; and
- endorsed reports from the Solidarity Fund Management Board, the Elected Leadership Group and the Human and Trade Union Rights Committee.

The Council heard about countries that need particular attention from the ITUC in 2022:

- **Afghanistan:** The Council heard a proposal to organise a conference in 2022 to launch a global trade union solidarity strategy.
- **Hong Kong:** the Council considered a strategy to set up a worldwide campaign calling for the release of imprisoned union activists.
- **Myanmar:** The Council discussed plans to continue isolating the junta and recognising the National Unity Government, and it received thanks for the Myanmar Strike Fund.
- **Palestine:** The Council heard about the call to regularly update the UN database of companies operating illegally in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, relaunch the peace process and recognise Palestine as a UN member state.
- **Brazil:** The Council heard how the ITUC campaign contributed to the release of former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is now running for re-election, with the plan to change the political tide in the region.

ITUC General Secretary Position

Towards the ITUC Congress, COSATU leaders have been engaging with a number of possible candidates for the position of General Secretary in the upcoming Congress. To this end, COSATU is backing the nomination of Comrade Kemal Özkan for ITUC General Secretary. This process is being managed, in consultation with the ITUC-Africa and Quadrilateral leadership respectively to ensure that we have a collective voice/position at a continental level. Comrade Kemal Özkan was re-elected as Assistant General Secretary of IndustriALL Global Union at its 2nd Congress on 5 October 2016. He was first elected to the position of Assistant General Secretary at IndustriALL's founding Congress in June 2012.

As an engineer with a master's degree in Economics and Business Administration, Özkan worked at Petroleum, Chemical and Rubber Workers' Union, which belongs to the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey, for 16 years working at all levels of the union with his last position being Assistant to the President.

As of the beginning of 2007, Kemal Özkan joined the International Chemical, Energy and Mine Workers' Federation (ICEM) in Brussels as Chemical and Rubber Industries' Officer. Along with his specific industrial responsibilities, in June 2011, he was appointed as Director of Industry and Corporate Affairs of the organisation.

He has been active in international trade union solidarity action within global and European trade union federations, including participating in the founding Congresses of the ICEM and EMCEF in 1995 and 1996 respectively.

With this rich background in the trade union movement, we believe Comrade Özkan is a suitable candidate to carry this position with the diligence it deserves and deliver on the work of this very crucial office.

The ITUC-A convened an **Executive Bureau Meeting on the 1st of July 2022** and discussed the ITUC GS candidate nomination. COSATU has been lobbying our sister unions in the region through SATUCC as well to join us in unifying workers on the continent around Comrade Kemal standing for this position. This position was adopted by the Executive Bureau where COSATU was represented by General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali, and National Treasurer Freda Oosthuysen also wearing her cap as the Auditor for the ITUC-Africa.

Climate award

In 2021, the ITUC awarded the Dorje Khatri Award for Climate Justice, which recognises outstanding contributions to the fight for sustainability and just transition, to COSATU, FEDUSA, SAFTU, and NUMSA, all of whom participated in the Presidential Climate Commission in South Africa, where just transition was agreed to be the foundation of a social pact. The award was presented to COSATU in November 2021, in recognition of the federation's contribution to workers in taking action to address climate change.

This led to international recognition and agreement at COP26 in Glasgow with the Just Energy Transition Partnership and the declaration to support the conditions for a just transition.

2. ITUC-Africa

4th Ordinary Congress

Over 500 representatives from workers' unions across the continent gathered in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, on the 20th – 21st November 2019 for the quadrennial Congress of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa). COSATU was in attendance represented by the following leaders: Louisa Thipe (COSATU 2nd Dep President), Solly Phetoe (COSATU Deputy General Secretary), Freda Oosthuysen (COSATU National Treasurer), Gertrude Mtsweni (COSATU Gender Coordinator), Angeline Phetlhe (SACCAWU 1st Deputy President), and Lucky Cele (SADTU Deputy President).

In choosing '*Unite and make a difference*' as its theme, the African trade union movement aimed to promote unity as the key to achieving policies that respond to workers' needs, given the various socio-structural evolutions that we are experiencing. A united front is also needed to breathe renewed life into our continent through new strategies to tackle corruption, poverty, armed conflict, to end illicit financial flow and ensure a sustainable future for the youth. A major focus was placed on building unity within the movement in order to maximise impact on the policy-making process. Two underlying components of strengthening workers' power were highlighted in the Congress outcomes: growing the movement through organising more workers; and deepening the internal democracy of the movement.

The past four years have seen workers from the informal economy organise into unions and take important strides towards formalisation, notably through the extension of social protection coverage. This inspiring work remains the exception, but we can work to generalise the approach to ensure that more people can collectively improve their living conditions in a context where over 80% of workers operate in the informal economy. In terms of policy objectives, the African labour movement aims to advance social protection for all, to deepen democracy and advance workers' rights and interests, tackle corruption including through reducing the influence of money on politics and ending illicit financial flows. Furthermore, it was stressed that the labour movement should be committed to building industries to ensure that the value added on top of raw materials, is added here in Africa and can benefit the working people of the continent, their families and communities.

The first day of this important trade union meeting allowed participants to review the ITUC-Africa's work over the past four years. During the second day, several workshops and sub-plenaries took place on five key issues that will serve as a basis to orient the work of the next four years. COSATU congratulates our very own Cde Freda Oosthuysen on her appointment as part of the internal audit team of ITUC Africa. The Congress was preceded by a series of pre-congress activities on the 18th -19th of November with themes on women, youth, human and labour rights, peace and security, and Africa Development. COSATU was allocated 10 delegates as per paid-up membership. The following resolutions were sponsored by COSATU and adopted as standing resolutions.

1. Strengthening of the existing resolution on Palestine that includes supporting the BDS Campaign in Africa.
2. The 4th Industrial Revolution and its impacts on the industrialization of Africa
3. A resolution on the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the AfCFTA since it has been ratified by 44 of the 54 countries in Africa.

4. A resolution on Latin America, with a focus on solidarity with Cuba, Venezuela, and Brazil.
5. Reaffirmation of the resolution on Western Sahara.

The Congress also deliberated and concluded on the following outcomes:

1. Deepening Democracy, Advancing Workers' Rights, and Interests
2. Peace and Security in Africa
3. Social Protection for All in Africa: The Role of Trade Unions
4. Organizing: Organization Development and Unionization
5. Strengthening the Power of the Youth
6. Economic and Social Development for the People
7. Internal Democracy in Trade Unions
8. Promoting informal and social/solidarity-based economies for better development in Africa
9. Effective Trade union engagement on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

ITUC- Africa 21st General Council Virtual Meeting

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC-AFRICA) 21st General Council Meeting took place on the 30th of September and 1st October 2020. COSATU was represented by General Secretary Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali, and Cde Freda Oosthuysen, wearing the cap of ITUC-A Auditor.

For two days, about 50 trade union leaders who make up the members of the General Council of the ITUC-Africa, together with representatives of sub-regional organisations and the regional women committees discussed important issues relating to the functioning of ITUC-Africa: activities, financial reports, and ITUC-Africa 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. Issues relating to the reformation of the Youth Committee, and the role of the Assistant Secretary-Generals and new affiliation requests were also discussed, among others. The 2022 ILO Directorship was discussed, as an item sponsored by COSATU.

Some decisions resulting from the meeting are:

- The organisation of a virtual regional youth conference where young people can meet and set up a new youth committee for a four-year term
- Call for more solidarity action by trade union organisations for workers in Sudan, Ethiopia and wherever else necessary.
- For the ILO Directorship position, priority would be given to the support of an African female candidate, which is sponsored by trade union formations on the continent.
- The next meeting of the General Council of the ITUC-Africa will be held in September 2021.

It should be noted that the General Council is the highest authority of the Regional Organization between Congresses. In accordance with the current statutes, it is responsible for directing the activities of the Regional Organization and implementing the decisions and resolutions of the Congress.

24th General Council Virtual Meeting

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC-AFRICA) 24th General Council Meeting took place on the 29th – 30th September 2021. COSATU was represented by General Secretary Comrade Bheki Ntshalintshali, International Secretary Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni and Comrade Freda Oosthuysen, and wearing the cap of ITUC-A Auditor.

For two days, approximately 50 trade union leaders who make up the members of the General Council of the ITUC-Africa, together with representatives of sub-regional organisations and the regional women committees discussed important issues relating to the functioning of ITUC-Africa: activities, financial reports, and ITUC-Africa 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. Issues relating to the reformation of the Youth Committee, and the role of the Assistant Secretary-Generals and new affiliation requests were also discussed, among others. Six critical issues discussed in the meeting were Vaccination for All, Universal social protection, Recovery from Covid-19, the 5th ITUC-Africa Congress, Constitutional Amendments and the ILO Directorship.

New Year Schools

The ITUC-Africa has convened an annual New Year School either physically or virtually, during the period under review. The school is attended by ITUC-Africa affiliates, comprising of General Council members, ITUC-Africa Women Committee and Youth Committees; the sub-regional trade unions organizations, labour researchers and educators, Global union federations (GUFs); continental and international CSOs, academia and media amongst others as well as ILO representatives.

The sessions are conducted over a four-day period. The methodology consists of a mixture of plenaries: seminar- style presentations, panel discussions and thematic working groups, which set the tone on important thematic areas of focus for workers on the continent in that particular year.

2018

The 8th Edition of the ITUC-Africa New Year School took place on the 13th – 16th February 2018, in Lome, Togo. COSATU was represented by COSATU National Treasurer Comrade Freda Oosthuysen and General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali, The School was convened under the theme “The Changing Nature of Work and Growing Income Inequalities: African Trade Union Responses”.

Recognising the pressing need to begin marshalling pro-worker strategies to make the future of work the one we want, the ITUC-Africa 2018 New Year School focused on the implications of the changing nature of work for African workers and their organisations. It also paid attention to how new forms of employment arrangements including growing informal employment and underemployment contribute to the growth of inequalities especially that of income. A special focus was also dedicated to the impacts of growing income inequalities on male and female workers, young and older workers, workers from various race backgrounds and ethnicities, those in rural vis a vis those in urban areas, as well as on workers with disabilities amongst others.

2019

In 2019, the NYS was convened under the theme ‘African Trade Unions: Time for change!’, organised by the ITUC-Africa through its Research and Education Institute (ALREI) and funded by the ILO ACTRAV and FES, took place on the 11th – 15th of February in Lomé, Togo. Comrade Freda Oosthuysen represented the federation, also in her capacity as the ITUC-A Auditor.

In the development of the modern state, from the colonial era into what can be described today as the neo-colonial era, the systems of governance and institutions of public authority that have emerged often do not serve the interests of the working people. As a consequence, the trade union movement in Africa today is confronted with enormous challenges arising from the political and socio-economic realities confronting Africa and its people.

Trade union leaders got together to discuss the main challenges they currently face:

- Decreasing working class consciousness.
- Limited trade union structural power and low visibility and influence owed to low trade union density and Membership disfranchisement.
- Deepening disconnects between membership and leadership.
- Fragmentation, Low capacities to engage various stakeholders.
- Growing internal un-democratic practices; Lack of political independence and growing elitism within unions.
- Low financial independence and absence of sustainability strategies.
- Limited understanding and inclusion of the diverse needs of the membership (e.g. youth, women, workers with disabilities, informally employed); and
- Poor expression of solidarity with those in need.

Within five days of the School, the African trade union leaders identified and analysed best possible solutions to the current gaps and opportunities they encounter in their activities and union work. The main focus area of the school was devoted to the trade Union Unity; Democratic Governance in Trade Unions; Trade Union Membership and organizing; Building(financially) sustainable/autonomous trade union organisations.

2020

In the year 2020, the 10th Edition of the ITUC-Africa New Year School, took place on the 17th -20th of February 2020, in Lomé, Togo. The theme of the 10th NYS “African Trade Unions and The Future of Work“ derived directly from the ILO Centenary Declaration, Resolutions of the 4th Congress of ITUC-Africa as well as the Declaration of the 14th African Regional Meeting of the ILO and the need for African trade unions to chart a clear way to strengthen the trade union movement to enable it meet the new challenges raised by the future of work.

In Africa, trade unions are one of the oldest civil society organisations that have played a critical role in the evolution of modern societies. The essence and nature of progressive unionism are mass membership traditions, leadership mandates, including consultations and feedback as well as popular mobilisation around all issues that affect workers and society in general. However, today, it

has become clear that in most African countries, unions fail to meet these conditions as a result of fragmentation, membership decline, lack of internal democracy, loss of trust, deficit of communication, distance between leaders and members, unfulfilled and disappointed hopes, all leading to organisational and political failure. The African trade union movement still faces critically the weaknesses of:

- (i) low participation of young people, women, people with disabilities, migrant workers, domestic workers, workers in the informal economy; and
- (ii) low working-class consciousness and lack of ideological cohesion.

It is on this background, that this New Year School was a continuation of the different discussions of the 4th Congress of the ITUC-Africa for stronger, more united unions that make the difference in Africa and beyond and ready to face the challenges of the Future of Work.

The range of thematic issues drawn from the congress resolutions include:

- 1) Deepening democracy and advancing workers' rights and interests.
- 2) Promoting Internal Democracy in Trade Unions.
- 3) Trade Union Membership and organising
- 4) Social Protection for All in Africa: The Role of Trade Unions
- 5) Economic and Social Development for the people,
- 6) Climate Action and Just Transition
- 7) African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the role of trade unions

The range of themes were considered in the light of the Centenary Declaration and the 14th ARM Declaration as well as the 2019 ILO instrument on violence and harassment in the world of work, particularly in relation to the pursuit of social protection for all.

To this end, the school also:

- Reviewed the content of the ILO Centenary Declaration as well as that of the 14th African Regional Meeting and identify trade union initiatives for their implementation in Africa
- Reflected on the bottlenecks that prevent the African trade union movement from contributing effectively to policy engagement for ensuring inclusive and sustainable development for African workers.
- Identified appropriate trade union strategies to address challenges to African trade union unity
- Identified union actions and initiatives to ensure economic and social development for the people at the national, regional and continental levels.
- Revisited the UN reform and its implications on the ILO and the African Trade Unions; and
- Developed trade union strategies and actions towards implementation of resolutions of 4th Congress of ITUC-Africa.

2021

The 2021 ITUC-Africa New Year School focused on African trade unions' strategies for building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic through economic and social recovery and building resilience for future crises. Representing COSATU, the New Year School was attended by COSATU General Secretary – Comrade Bheki Ntshalintshali, COSATU National Treasurer – Comrade Freda Oosthuysen, and the International Secretary – Comrade Sonia Kaziboni, and Deputy International Secretary – Comrade Zanele Mathebula. The discussions during the school also aimed to assist the African trade union movement prepare for our active participation in social dialogue processes in the context of COVID-19. Among others, the following key development issues informed the discussions: social protection for all, occupational health and safety, migrant workers, equality, gender-based violence, climate change, decent jobs creation, conflicts and insecurity and economic recovery in link to COVID-19.

Among others key areas, the school also focussed on a range of thematic issues including the following:

- African trade unions actions and strategies for recovery from COVID-19 impacts
- ILO Strategic Framework for responding to the COVID-19 crisis
- Social Protection as key policy response to COVID-19 in Africa
- Occupational Health and Safety for Workers
- Labour migration and protection of workers
- Gender based violence and protection of workers at workplace
- Workers' organizing mobilizing young people and women for change
- The need for social dialogue in addressing economic recovery and development issues related to COVID-19
- The AfCFTA's implementation and the role of trade unions

2022

From the 28th of February to 2nd of March 2022, the New Year School was hosted virtually once again, under the theme '*Setting the agenda for a new social contract for Africa*'. COSATU was represented by General Secretary – Comrade Bheki Ntshalintshali, National Treasurer – Comrade Freda Oosthuysen, the International Secretary – Comrade Sonia Kaziboni, and Deputy International Secretary – Comrade Zanele Mathebula.

In January 2021, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) had set out five key demands from working people to build recovery and resilience, putting people and the environment at the centre of the new social contract. These demands are the following:

1. Creation of climate-friendly jobs with Just Transition. Job-creating industrial transformation to achieve net-zero carbon emissions, along with jobs in health, education and other quality public services.
2. Rights for all workers, regardless of their employment arrangements, to fulfil the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration with its labour protection floor including rights, maximum working hours, living minimum wages and health and safety at work.

3. Universal social protection, with the establishment of a Social Protection Fund for the least wealthy countries.
4. Equality. Ending all discrimination, such as by race or gender, to ensure that all people can share in prosperity and that the appalling concentration of wealth in the hands of a few at the expense of the many is undone.
5. Inclusion. To combat the growing power of monopolies and oligarchs, ensure that developing countries can actually develop their economies and guarantee tax systems that provide the income vital for governments to meet the needs of people and the planet. An inclusive approach to tackling the COVID-19 pandemic is paramount, both in terms of economic support as well as universal access to testing, treatment and vaccines.

ITUC-Africa, building stock on all these, considers social protection for all as a core element of the new social contract in Africa. Access and coverage of current social protection systems in Africa must be improved and expanded exponentially. There is a need to demand the cessation of Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) from Africa and progressive taxation administration to be applied. No one must be left behind. To achieve these will require conscious, collaborative, genuine and transparent efforts from all development stakeholders. Therefore, trade unions must continue to engage the social partners in constructive efforts. These efforts must be anchored on the rule of law, effective governance and accountability. Unions must also continue to rise above race, nationality, creed and language to reach out to anyone in need, anywhere and anytime.

Another challenge in the African context is the decline of democracy which is being accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. More Africans live under fully or partially authoritarian states today than at most points in the last two decades. Even before the pandemic, an increasing number of African heads of state had moved to undermine term limits or rig elections to remain in power. But COVID-19 has given them greater leverage, providing further pretext for postponing elections, muzzling opposition figures and imposing restrictions on media across the continent. The enforcement of pandemic restrictions by security services has often been brutal, provoking demonstrations in some countries and even in more advanced democracies such as South Africa.

Against this background, the 12th ITUC-Africa New Year School challenged the African trade union movement to reflect on the context and modalities of setting out the guidelines of a new social contract with reference to the realities and specificities of Africa.

3. World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)

Presidential Council Meeting

COSATU President Cde Zingiswa Losi attended the Presidential Council Meeting which took place on the 3rd – 4th April 2019. She was later joined by the General Secretary Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali on the 5th and 6th April 2019. The formalisation of the affiliation was done on the 5th of April where COSATU was formally welcomed as a WFTU affiliate.

During this visit a delegation which included the President of COSATU paid a courtesy visit to the President of Greece His Excellency Prokopis Pavlopoulos. During the visit the issues of the 4th industrial revolution on how ready the Trade Union movement is for this, and the ratification and implementation of the ILO conventions were discussed.

The processes and procedures of doing this is different from what we are accustomed to and therefore COSATU was not taken through its constitutional obligations, rules, governance structures and programme as expected, and we hope this process would still be done through the Africa regional office of the WFTU.

Update on dual affiliation

The 13th National Congress reaffirmed its decision to affiliate to both the ITUC and the WFTU. It was further agreed that in order for this to happen, COSATU affiliates who are affiliated to the WFTU need to withdraw their individual memberships, and COSATU resume affiliation as the federation, representing all its affiliates. The leadership of COSATU, together with the leadership of NUM, NEHAWU, POPCRU, were to hold a physical meeting in March 2020, however due to the disruptions of COVID-19 as a result of the lockdown and subsequent restrictions – the meeting could not take place in the intended form.

However, through engagements between the leaders, it was agreed that taking into consideration that COSATU is currently not able to assume the financial obligations that come with requesting NUM, NEHAWU and POPCRU to disaffiliate from WFTU, the status quo will remain until the federation is able to fully take over.

Progress regarding the matter needs to be made considering that the Congress resolve has been implemented and COSATU has taken the steps to formalise its affiliation with the WFTU. However, in order for COSATU to formalise the affiliation completely, the current affiliates of COSATU who are individually affiliated to WFTU need to map a way forward on how to manage their transit from the WFTU to allow COSATU to represent all its affiliates in the WFTU.

Thus far, managing the transition is proving difficult in light of the minimal affiliation fees payable to WFTU-Greece which are not near enough to cover the running costs of the organisation both in Greece and in Africa as well as other regions. Seriou's introspection needs to be done to develop a sustainable fundraising method, particularly for the Africa office.

The following can be considered by the Congress:

- Mobilising funds through dual affiliation (Greece and Africa)
- The affiliates of COSATU that are also affiliated to WFTU disaffiliate but continue to contribute resources to both the Greece and the Africa Office while a sustainable funding strategy is developed
- Assisting WFTU to coordinate the Africa Office for all Africa affiliates of the WFTU – create a system that is more coordinated and make the Africa office operational

Regional Office

WFTU at global level is one of the largest federations across the world, but the least funded of them all. This is partly due to the modest affiliation fees it charges its affiliates. This, however, poses detrimental challenges in terms of funding programmes and activities of the Federation as well as the regional offices in different continents.

The Africa office for example, needs to be supported with resources both financially and human. The other regional federations' offices (GUFs) that are based in South Africa are registered entities and function guided by legislations which means they are more formal in nature, ideally this should be considered for WFTU.

The Africa regional office, previously based in Johannesburg CBD is now based at COSATU House. The office is run by officials that were seconded by affiliates, which is similar to the situation of the office in Greece. Currently, there is no money received from Greece to run the Africa office and the office is funded by the affiliates of WFTU in South Africa. In this regard there is a need to look into the development of a sustainable funding model. This situation also influences and stifles progress in the debate regarding the disaffiliation of the COSATU affiliates affiliated to WFTU.

In 2021, the NUM seconded Cde Maja Mphahlele's appointment as the Africa Regional Coordinator. Through extensive engagements with Cde Maja, the following issues were identified:

- The Africa office is not visible in the region,
- There is a need to develop an organising strategy for the Africa Region,
- There needs to be a development of a funding model of the Africa office and the human resources to strengthen the office.
- All regions are able to grow membership and in Africa not much is happening regarding membership. Also, there is a lack of collaboration of programmes at regional and sub-regional level
- Greece needs to share the membership data with the Africa office to allow the office to start ground work in organising to grow WFTU
- The regional and sub regional programmes to promote trade union unity and internationalism
- Need to develop a strategy to operationalise the office in terms of Sustainability (Own Staff, Own Programmes, Own Funding Model)

Working with Comrade Maja, the below programme was devised for 2022 for the Regional Office.

WFTU Africa Regional Programme for 2022

No:	Activity	Targeted Period	Responsible Affiliate/Personnel	Desired Outcome
01.	Establishment of WFTU Africa Regional Interim Leadership Committee	February	Africa Regional Coordinator	Support and enhance the capacity of the regional office politically and administratively
02.	WFTU Africa Working Committee Meeting	Bi-Monthly	Africa Regional Coordinator	Streamline Communication amongst affiliates and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of resolutions
02.	Trade Union Organisational and Ideological Training (a) Swaziland (b) Botswana (c) Nigeria (d) Malawi	April	Africa Regional Coordinator	To create harmonious ideological and political relationships to stimulate capacity in pursuit of fighting for sovereignty in their respective countries
03.	Strengthening of Fraternal Relations (a) TUI's (b) COSATU (c) Affiliates (d) Allied Unions	On-going	Africa Regional Coordinator	To ameliorate formidable synergy between the Regional Office and Our Fraternal Allies
04.	Pan African Council Meeting	March and July	Africa Regional Coordinator	Assess and take stock of the implementation of WFTU resolutions and decisions

No:	Activity	Targeted Period	Responsible Affiliate/Personnel	Desired Outcome
05.	Recruitment (a) Lesotho (b) Swaziland (c) Zimbabwe (d) Zambia (e) Liberia	Periodically	Africa Regional Coordinator	The Regional office to make recruitment fashionable by prioritizing SADC and swiftly engulf the entire continent
06.	Launch of WFTU International Working Women's' Day	March	Women Gender Coordinator	Women Cadres are free to engage at all levels with their counterpart across the globe without any limitation
07.	Establishment of International Youth Committee	June	Comrade Oyena Paul	To inculcate class consciousness and ensure there is coherent political clarity amongst young workers
08.	WFTU 77th Anniversary Celebration	3rd October	Africa Regional Coordinator	To intensify the Campaign and deepen political consciousness amongst our affiliates
09.	Regional Visits to Affiliates (a) Swaziland (b) Namibia (c) Botswana (d) Zimbabwe	Periodically	Africa Regional Coordinator	To extend revolutionary and ideological support to our affiliates and further make sure they are independent
10.	Convening of Regional Seminars in Support of Vulnerable Countries	Periodically	Comrade Bongani Legodi	To intensify our campaigns against Israel, USA and other imperialist Countries
11.	Solidarity with Palestine, Venezuela, Swaziland, Cuba, Mozambique	Periodically	Cde Oyena	Reaffirm our political and ideological posture against the imperialist chauvinism

WFTU Anniversary Celebrations

74th Anniversary

The 3rd of October 2019 marked the 74th Anniversary of the WFTU. This year, the anniversary was commemorated with the theme: “Against xenophobia, racism and fascism”. Xenophobia and racism are intentionally raised among the peoples by governments and lobbies, so as to divide them, to make them accuse one another of the problems that are caused by capitalists and multinationals. In Africa, in the Middle East and many other places, the looting of the workers’ natural resources, poverty, imperialist wars and conflicts create millions of refugees who fall victims of hatred and racist discriminations.

In Europe and on other continents, the economic crisis facilitates the rise of fascist ideologies and actions that poison the mind and consciousness of people, making them to fight for the interests of big businesses, leading them even to crimes. Efforts are being made by the EU to equalize fascism with Socialism, to hide the great conquests that workers had achieved in the USSR and to distort the historical reality.

Since its Foundation, the WFTU has placed at the forefront of its demands the struggle for peace and equality, fighting against Apartheid in South Africa, against racial and all types of discriminations. For the rights of all workers: women, migrants and refugees. The WFTU affiliates, including COSATU staged a successful picket outside the Department of Labour in Johannesburg, Braamfontein which was attended and addressed by various leaders, and closed by WFTU President Cde Makwayiba.

75th Anniversary

In the framework of celebrating October 3rd and the 75th anniversary of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the WFTU and COSATU jointly organised a successful Symposium on October 1st under the title “Working-class solidarity, during a time of crisis: Unilateralism in the era of multilateralism” with the participation of trade unionists and officials from South Africa and many other African countries. The president of WFTU opened the Symposium, with George Mavrikos (WFTU General Secretary) and COSATU General Secretary Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali giving the key addresses. Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) General Secretary Cde Arezki Mezhoud addressed the Symposium with a strong solidarity speech and representatives from other countries gave messages of support at the end.

The discussion was enriched by the speeches of representatives from the Cuban and Iranian Embassies in South Africa. The Symposium concluded on joint actions, and collaborative efforts to strengthen international solidarity around the world.

76th Anniversary

In 2021, the WFTU 76th anniversary was celebrated virtually under the theme “Dignified Life for workers and the Peoples around the world” based on the understanding that the barbaric system of capitalist exploitation has not provided workers and the working-class a dignified life and this requires the working-class to venture into a struggle for a dignified life. As such, COSATU fully supported the demands as set-out by the WFTU in calling for a dignified life for workers and the peoples around the world.

These demands include amongst others:

- Public and free healthcare for all
- Improvement of the living standards of workers and pensioners
- Trade union and democratic freedoms
- Eradication of racism and discriminations
- Protection of the environment
- Workers' solidarity
- All People have the right to decide on their own about their present and future

Lastly, we will work with WFTU to wage a relentless struggle in ensuring that these demands are achieved in order to guarantee a dignified life for workers of the world.

77th Anniversary

This year's celebrations, and theme are yet to be announced and coordinated.

13th Congress of the TUI of Public Services and Allied Workers

The 13th Congress of the TUI PS&A of the WFTU concluded on the 17th of November 2019, with optimism and enthusiasm for the organisation faced by the new struggles of workers in the public services. The Congress elected its new General Secretary of the TUI PS, our very own Cde Zola Saphetha from NEHAWU. During his speech, the WFTU General Secretary, Cde George Mavrikos pointed out the importance of the TUIs which are the heart of the WFTU and called for the strengthening of the action and coordination of the TUI PS&A. COSATU congratulated Cde Saphetha on his election, emphasising that his appointment lays a solid foundation for COSATU and its other affiliates to reaffirm its ties with the workers of the world, as led by our class conscious and Socialist orientated allies in the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), amidst the deepening crisis of Capitalism in Europe, Greece and the United States. The ongoing global crisis of Capitalism and ousting of dictatorial regimes by the workers and the poor of Africa is living proof that a better and alternative world is indeed necessary.

It was through the unprecedented support of the WFTU, with the help of the South African Communist Party (SACP), that our struggle against apartheid was elevated at an international scale, and strong contacts were established for the African National Congress (ANC) to pursue the liberation struggle in exile.

WFTU World Congress 2022

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) congratulates the militant worker's movement, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) on convening a successful 18th World Trade Union Congress in Rome, Italy, on the 6th – 8th of May 2022, under the theme: "United, we continue! For the satisfaction of our contemporary needs, against imperialist-capitalist barbarity!".

In the run-up to Congress, the preparations were led by all WFTU affiliates with the involvement of COSATU General Secretary who were regularly briefed by both the WFTU President Mzwandile

Makwayiba and General Secretary George Mavrikos on WFTU Presidential Council decisions, such as the new action addressing vacancies in the Presidential Council and delegation of WFTU cadres to various responsibilities.

This 18th Congress of the WFTU took place during a very difficult period for workers of the world, who are heavily affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which only further accelerated the effects of the economic crisis and anti-workers measures taken in most countries. The Congress provided a great opportunity for trade unionists to discuss the problems and various challenges faced by the working class in the various countries and regions. The rich, democratic discussions of the Congress; and the revolutionary decisions adopted will give new momentum to the workers' struggles and the development of our big, class-oriented trade union family.

With the historic participation of COSATU President Zingiswa Losi and General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali as voting delegates, President Zingiswa Losi lead a high-level COSATU delegation to the Congress including our participating WFTU affiliates from NUM, POPCRU and NEHAWU. The Congress discussed the importance of carrying out a successful Congress that will light the course of class-oriented struggles of the world working class and further strengthen the WFTU in a period of sharpening of the workers' problems, social injustice and imperialist rivalries. President of COSATU Zingiswa Losi addressed the Congress and shared with delegates the unfolding socio-economic and political situation for working people in South Africa, and some crucial priorities for WFTU affiliates moving forward, as we continue to collectively fight for workers globally. The COSATU 1st Deputy President Mike Shingange also addressed the Congress, in his capacity as the President of NEHAWU.

As part of elaborating further the main thesis and priorities of the WFTU in the next five years; the WFTU Congress discussion documents highlighted the following issues for discussion by the NEC and all its affiliates in the run up to the 18th Congress.

- That in the light of the contradictions in the world today; the capitalist crisis, the pandemics, unemployment, poverty, the absence of a strong class-oriented trade union movement, can only lead to “disorientation and “assimilation”, meaning subordinating the main demands of working people to sections of the capitalist class.
- That the competition and rivalry between the US and China presents an extremely dangerous global situation. China has an upper hand and competitive edge largely because it commands a bigger share in the gross World Product in the last decade and has a huge trade surplus relative to the United States.
- There are many contradictions in the Western imperialist camp that imperils the hardnosed imperialist hegemony of the United States such as in the case of Germany in its relation to Russia and China as opposed to the US, the UK and NATO.
- There's also an evident shift towards using state intervention on the imperialist part to mitigate the effects of the crisis, including in the US, EU and Japan. They now follow fiscal policies that are less restrictive to meeting inflation targets and utilising overtly Keynesian economic strategies, although with intentions to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the people, but largely in favour of corporates to bail them out. In this overall scheme, social democracy is likely being revived, although as an alternative, it remains relatively discredited in the face of working people as not worthy of a credible alternative.

- The burgeoning military expenditure amounting to a 3.6% increase since 2018 with concentration of foreign military bases in many countries, primarily those of the United States with over 70 bases worldwide.
- The WFTU documents also criticises the ILO's bureaucratic functioning and lack enforcement of decisions. The WFTU unlike ITUC is not fully accredited as a full member but an observer. In this regard the WFTU struggles for proportional representation for labour representatives in the ILO. The WFTU does not romanticise the role of the ILO as a saviour of workers, nor does it blindly reject the ILO as being inherently incapable to take autonomous decisions which could even temporarily, make interventions in favour of workers interests.
- The biggest world national strike in India this year, with 250 million workers on strike was part of the overall awakening of working-class consciousness and the resistance being mounted by working class organisations.
- The documents highlight in our case, the militant strikes led by COSATU and its affiliates, for adequate protection of workers during covid-19 which took place in 2020-2021 and for rights including collective bargaining and its defence.
- In terms of priorities, the discussion document highlights:
 - The need for strengthening the WFTU, deepening unity, observing its principles, internationalism, anti-imperialism, equal participation of women and youth, class-orientation,
 - The need to improve living standards of workers, in defence of collective bargaining, social security, fighting unemployment and high prices, defending the rights of immigrants and refugees, prohibition of child labour, health and safety at the workplace and the reduction of working time and increase in leisure time for the working class to participate meaningfully in other activities of their choice, and
 - The need to fight against increased military expenditures, for dissolution of armed military alliances, against blockades, embargoes and sanctions.

Congress documents also details major WFTU activities and accomplishments by affiliates, sectors, the Trade Union Internationals (TUI's) including all its structures in fighting for worker's rights.

COSATU congratulates Comrade Michael Mzwandile Makwayiba on his re-election as President of the militant worker's organisation. COSATU also warmly welcomes the election of Comrade Pampis Kyritsis (from Cyprus), as the new General Secretary of the WFTU for the next five years. He takes leadership after the fiery Greek Communist George Mavrikos relinquished the position of GS of WFTU after leading for 15 years. In total he led the WFTU, with militancy, energy and growth, for 20 years as he served a 5-year term as one of the Vice Presidents. George has since been elected as Honorary President of the WFTU. The Congress also elected COSATU General Secretary Comrade Bheki Ntshalintshali as one of the 14 Vice Presidents, forming part of the Presidential Council.

COSATU commits to working hand in glove with the WFTU, to ensure that the commitments made in this crucial gathering are achieved, together with the newly elected leadership.

4. Organisation of Trade Union Unity (OATUU)

General Council

The 42nd Session of the OATUU General Council initially scheduled for 12th -16th August 2019, took place on the 16th – 20th September 2019 due to the Islamic festival -Eid al Adha on the 11th -15th August 2019. The session was convened in Nairobi, Kenya.

The programme included:

- I. The workshop on gender meeting,
- II. The ILO centenary workshop
- III. The Executive Committee Meeting and
- IV. The General Council.

The issue of the unity project was top of the agenda, to which COSATU sponsored the resolution to merge OATUU and the ITUC – Africa. We need to pick this conversation up again, as it is now also supported by the COTU-Kenya.

COSATU was be represented by the 1st Deputy President Cde Mike Shingange, Cde Gertrude Mtsweni (who sits in the Women’s Committee) and Cde Khutso Moloko Bolaka a Young Worker from NACTU representing South Africa.

10th Joint Annual Partnership Forum on Migration and Mobility for Sustainable Development

The Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) in collaboration with the African Union held its 10th Joint Annual Partnership Forum on Migration and Mobility for Sustainable Development from the 24th to 26th July 2019 in Tunis, Tunisia.

The forum set to bring light the role of trade unions in Migration and Refugees’ Challenges under the theme ***Migration and refugees challenges: The role of trade unions.***

During the Opening Ceremony, the Secretary General of Unions General des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT), the Ambassador Jalel Chelba, Head of Civil Society Division, CIDO, AUC and OATUU Secretary General Mr. Arezki Mezhoud addressed the participants.

The Objective of this meeting was to identify and intensify the role of trade unions on migration and refugees’ issues, publicizing current AU initiatives in connection with the migration and mobility issues and popularizing the revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030). The outcome of this forum was a trade union road map on addressing migration and refugees’ issues for promoting sustainable development on the continent.

OATUU Video Conference – pandemic and its Socio-Economic Impact on Workers in Africa: The Role of Trade unions

On the 22nd of September 2020 OATUU hosted a Video Conference under the title “Corona Virus (COVID 19) pandemic and its Socio-Economic Impact on Workers in Africa: The Role of Trade unions”. COSATU General Secretary, Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali was a panellist in the virtual event,

and shared on the experiences of South Africa, on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and trade union responses.

The virtual video conference discussed COVID-19, its impact on socio-economic development in Africa and identified its challenges on workers and their jobs; and recommendations were on actions to be taken or put in place to ensure jobs are protected. In addition to this, the leaders engaged on:

- The role of trade unions in combating the pandemic and ensuring that the workplace is made safe.
- Strategies or mechanism that workers and Trade Union can put in place to influence policy decisions on the pandemic now and in the future; and
- How trade unions can ensure that there are comprehensive social protection packages that will cover all categories of workers, both in the formal and informal economy.

COVID-19 Challenges in the World of Work

On the 8th of April 2021 OATUU organised a virtual conference for women and youth commission members dubbed “Covid-19 Challenges in the World of Work: Gender Equality, Youth Concerns and the Way Forward”. The conference was organised at a time when the pandemic continues to expose weaknesses in social and economic structures across Africa and further sharpens already existing gender inequalities, as well as challenges the youth are facing. COSATU was represented by Cde Gertrude Mtsweni, as the conference engaged women and youth leaders of the organisation in a bid to analyse the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on working women and youth in Africa and discover effective interventions that will diminish its effects so far and promote the interests of these groups. The conference participatory and involved brief presentations from members of OATUU’s Women and Youth Commission.

5. International Labour Organisation/International Labour Conference/ ILO Director General/ 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour

International Labour Conferences

The 108th ILO ILC session was convened from the 10th – 21st June 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. On the agenda for 2019 was the ILO centenary outcomes document, the standard setting second discussion on violence and harassment in the world of work and other thematic debates and events connected to the future of work including various centenary initiatives among other items. COSATU conducted the necessary ground work to beefing up its input in the debates particularly on the standard setting processes through consultation processes in the NGC and information sharing in the region.

The Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) discussed the report of the committee of experts on the application of conventions and recommendations. The preliminary list of 40 cases for possible discussion at the CAS (long list), as prepared by the social partners is now available on the ILO website. Out of those cases, 24 were selected for the CAS discussion. The list is on the link below:

<https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/108/committees/standards/lang--en/index.htm>

During the Africa International Labour Conference (ILC) preparation meeting held in Rwanda on 20th – 22nd March 2019, the African Trade Union selected the below list of Countries to focus on during the ILC.

LIST OF African CASES FOR 2019 ILC preparatory meeting Kigali, Rwanda

NO	COUNTRY	CONVENTION	Priority preference	Anticipated conclusion
Special Note case	Ethiopia	138	Decided by the CEACR	Technical Assistance
1	Zimbabwe	87	Short list	Special paragraph
2	Cameroon	87	Short list	Special paragraph
3	Chad	151	Short list	Special paragraph
4	Burundi	105	Short list	High Level Technical mission
5	DRC	135	Long list	High Level Technical mission
6	Uganda	81	Long list	Technical Assistance
7	Liberia	98	Long list	High Level Technical Mission
8	Malawi	138	Long list	Technical Assistance
9	Rwanda	87	Long list	Technical Assistance
10	Ghana	182	Long list	Technical Assistance

COSATU affiliates were requested to submit names of interested participants to the office of the General Secretary, if they wished to attend the ILC in 2019 at own cost. Only SASBO and SACCAWU confirmed names.

COSATU was represented by 5 people officially and in addition 2 representatives from SASBO and 4 from SACCAWU at the 108th ILC,

1. General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali
2. President Zingiswa Losi
3. Lebogang Mulaisi
4. Gertrude Mtsweni
5. Xolani Fakude

6. SASBO President Malesela Moses Lekota
7. SASBO Assistant General Secretary Myan Soobramoney
8. SACCAWU GS Bones Skulu
9. SACCAWU Deputy President Mike Tau
10. SACCAWU Secretariat Coordinator Lucas Ramatlhodi
11. SACCAWU National Gender Coordinator Patricia Nayman

In the year 2020, the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation postponed the annual International Labour Conference (ILC), until 2021 due to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. This decision was taken in light of severe worldwide travel restrictions due to the pandemic, and the need to ensure the health and well-being of delegates and staff. The conference was originally scheduled for May 25th to June 5th, 2020, in Geneva, Switzerland.

Following extensive consultations, the Governing Body (which includes COSATU General Secretary, Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali) decided at its 341st Session that the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference would be held virtually in two separate parts:

- A first part, from **3rd to 19th June 2021** to deal with all agenda items except items IV (inequalities and the world of work) and VI (skills and life-long learning), with the opening sitting being held on Thursday, 20th May 2021 to elect the Officers of the Conference, appoint its standing and technical committees and approve any adjustments to its Standing Orders and working methods, as may be necessary in view of the virtual format of the Conference;
- A second part, the dates of which will be determined at a later stage, to deal with items IV (inequalities and the world of work) and VI (skills and life-long learning).

In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the 109th Session of the ILC was held via ZOOM, which resulted in an increase in the number of Member States participating in this year's Conference. COSATU delegates represented the federation in the different Committees. Our delegation was made up of COSATU leadership, selected CEC and Staff members based on their area of expertise.

The Committee on the Application of Standards reviewed and discussed nineteen individual cases. Governments' delegates were given the opportunity to provide written and oral information to the Committee in response to their countries' non-compliance of international labour standards. The task of the COVID Response Committee had a unique opportunity to discuss and adopt an outcome document that would ensure that the ILO remained relevant in a time of unprecedented crisis and that would help the world of work build forward better.

The outcome document before the Committee was entitled, "A global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient", which was appended to the Report of the Director-General. The outcome document discussed matters, such as the urgent and coordinated actions needed to ensure that all people have speedy, equitable and affordable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. These actions are critical to curbing the growing inequality within and between countries and to restarting economies and commitments such as, placing the aim of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work, the needs of the most vulnerable and hardest hit by the pandemic, and support for sustainable

enterprises, jobs and incomes at the heart of strategies to build forward better from the crisis, taking into full account national circumstances and priorities. The Committee was successful in producing a resolution from the outcome document. The resolution entitled, “Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.”

In 2022, the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference took place in Geneva from 30th of May 2022, to the 10th of June 2022. Due to the rising COVID-19 cases in certain countries, and the permitted capacity for delegates to attend physical meetings in Geneva, the majority of South African delegates attended this ILC virtually. COSATU leadership represented by President Zingiswa Losi, and General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali attended the ILC physically.

The crucial items placed on the agenda by the Conference, or the Governing Body included:

- Apprenticeships (standard-setting, first discussion)
- A recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on social Justice for a Fair Globalization
- Decent work and the social and solidarity economy (general discussion)
- Inclusion of safe and healthy working conditions in the ILO’s framework of fundamental principles and rights at work through an amendment to paragraph 2 of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998
- Approval of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (subject to the adoption of any amendments by the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 at the second part of its fourth meeting in May 2022.

ILO Global Summit

From the 1st to the 9th of July 2020, the ILO hosted the largest ever online summit of workers, employers and government representatives to address the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work, and how to build a better future of work after the pandemic. The ILO Virtual Global Summit took place in a year in which the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body have been unable to meet. But it is a crucial year for the Organization and the world of work. This is the context in which the Summit was able to provide critically important guidance. The need is to identify how, the ILO can best contribute to moving the world of work forward from the COVID-19 crisis to the better future it committed to build last year. In the period leading up to the 2021 International Labour Conference, the Organization must negotiate and adopt its Programme and Budget for 2022-23. Moreover, the Conference itself provides the unique occasion to concretise the Organisation’s role in processes of recovery which will have lasting importance for those undergoing the impact of the pandemic, and those who come after.

Election Of the New Director General Of ILO

On the 25th of March 2022, during the 344th session of the ILO Governing Body in Geneva, Switzerland, the African workers’ candidate and former Prime Minister of Togo, Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo, was elected as the new Director General of the ILO, set to take up his position from October 2022.

COSATU played an instrumental role in lobbying for the nomination and election of Hougbo, collectively with our Quadrilateral partners, under the banner of the ITUC-Africa. The initial consensus from workers on the continent, was to put forward the nomination of Comrade Ebrahim Patel, however he declined this on the basis that he wants to serve his last years in-country. We then made multiple attempts to identify a capable and willing female candidate on the continent. Unfortunately, our only willing and capable candidate Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the World Trade Organisation Director-General, and officially begun her term in office in March of 2021.

After rigorous processes, the ITUC-Africa identified Hougbo as a worthy candidate to represent the interests of workers globally. The COSATU CEC endorsed his candidature, and the federation joined the continental position of workers which was to support He served as Deputy Director-General of the ILO for Field Operations and Partnerships and is currently President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Governing Body of the ILO, composed of 56 full members (28 governments, 14 employers and 14 workers) and 66 alternate members (28 governments, 19 employers and 19 workers), endorsed his appointment. He will take up his duties as the 11th Director-General of the ILO and the first African to hold this position. It is worth recalling that Gilbert Fossoun Hougbo was battling it out with 4 other candidates, namely Muriel Pénicaud, former French Minister of Labour; Kang Kyung-wha, former South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mthunzi Mdwaba, South African law professor and President of SANA (a joint South African-Norwegian business association); and Greg Vines, Australian and current Deputy Director General of the ILO.

In addition to being the 11th Director General at the Permanent Secretariat of the ILO, he is also the first Director General from the African continent. He will serve for the period 2022-2027 and his term will begin on the 1st of October, thus replacing the outgoing Director General, Guy Ryder from the United Kingdom, who has held the post since 2012.

5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour

During the week of 15th to 20th of May 2022, the Government of South Africa hosted the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour. It came at a critical time. Despite progress in many regions, 160 million children are still in child labour. Numbers are rising, and the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse years of progress. The Conference was attended by approximately 2000 delegate at the Durban International Convention Centre. On behalf of the South African organised labour delegation, COSATU was represented by: Comrades Bheki Ntshalintshali, Zingiswa Losi, Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni, Lebogang Mulaisi, Gertrude Mtsweni, Babsy Nhlapho, Thabo Mahlangu, and Edwin Mkhize.

An important output of the Conference, for implementation is the **Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour**. With this Call to Action, all the global government, labour, business and civil society groups present committed to scale up action to:

- Accelerate multi-stakeholder efforts to prevent and eliminate child labour, with priority given to the worst forms of child labour, by making decent work a reality for adults and youth above the minimum age for work.
- End child labour in agriculture.

- Strengthen the prevention and elimination of child labour, including its worst forms, forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons, and the protection of survivors through data driven and survivor-informed policy and programmatic responses.
- Realize children’s right to education and ensure universal access to free, compulsory, quality, equitable and inclusive education and training.
- Achieve universal access to social protection, and
- Increase financing and international cooperation for the elimination of child labour and forced labour.

The Declaration is accessible online from

[Durban_Call_to_Action_EN_20220607_0.pdf](#) (5thchildlabourconf.org)

6. COSATU-Ghana TUC- NLC Nigeria-COTU-Kenya Quadrilateral Engagements

Trilateral Meeting

In 2018 the Africa Trilateral Leaders Meeting and Extended Conference were deferred to 2019. The Nigeria NLC was meant to host the leaders meeting while Ghana TUC was meant to host the Extended Conference. I was later suggested that both meetings should be held in Ghana in 2018. Seeing this is the year for the ITUC-Africa Congress it is critical to ensure these meetings sit to prepare for the 4th Congress of ITUC Africa. The three Federations have discussed, and Ghana TUC is in the process of discussion internally and has promised to revert back to us regarding logistics and if they are able to host both meetings which we proposed should be back-to-back. Ghana TUC will communicate by 18th May 2019.

Africa Trilateral \ Quadrilateral Meeting COSATU-NLC-GTUC-COTU 2-5 August 2019

The 4th Trilateral Leaders and General Meetings were convened in Accra, Ghana on 1 – 5 August 2019 at the La-Palm Royal Beach Hotel under the theme “Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Workers in Africa”.

The Conference brought together the leaders and delegates from the TUC-Ghana, the NLC – Nigeria, the COSATU-South Africa and for the first time the COTU-Kenya was also in attendance. With the acceptance of COTU-Kenya as a member the trilateral had to be changed into a quadrilateral meeting.

The Trilateral\Quadrilateral Conference was convened in two parts:

The first part was leaders meeting of the four federations held from 2nd – 3rd August 2019. This meeting was attended by 5 representatives from each national centre and COTU – Kenya was represented 3 representatives. This session focused on political, economic, social situation and the current challenges confronting workers in their respective countries and the continent at large. It reviewed the progress on priorities agreed on in previous trilateral meetings and deliberated on current development globally and continental that has impact on workers and their trade unions. Further to the ordinary business of the leaders meeting, the meeting deliberated on the preparation for the ITUC – Africa 4th Ordinary Congress.

The second part of the conference was the Trilateral/Quadrilateral General or Plenary Meeting held from 4th -5th August 2019. This meeting was attended by the leaders of the 4 National Centres and their affiliates. Ghana was represented by 36 delegates, the NLC by 34 delegates, COSATU by 8 delegates and COTU-Kenya by 3 delegates. COSATU was disappointed by the lack of interest of the affiliates and the last-minute cancellation by others who had confirmed attendance. The plenary for this meeting was opened by the Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour Relations of Ghana, Honourable Bright Wireko-Brobbe.

COSATU was represented by the following 8 people:

- a) COSATU President Cde Zingiswa Losi
- b) COSATU GS Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali
- c) COSATU DGS Cde Solly Phetoe
- d) COSATU National Treasurer Cde Freda Oosthuysen
- e) COSATU Deputy International Secretary Cde Zanele Matebula
- f) SAEPU President Mr. Mpho Mpogeng
- g) SADTU President Mr. Magope Maphila
- h) CWU GS Aubrey Zanele Tshabalala

The trilateral hosting rotates among the Federations and the host country acts as secretariat with the International Relations officials of all 3 Federations working together to coordinate the programme and discussions of the Trilateral. The 5th Quadrilateral will be held in Nigeria in 2021.

The Leaders Meeting 2nd -3rd August 2019

The meeting received the country reports from each national centre, which highlighted the common struggles faced by workers in the respective countries and in the continent. From the discussion it became clear that the struggle of workers was not only intensifying but also changing in nature. All 4 countries reported on massive job losses, unemployment and deepening inequality and poverty. The impact of the technologic advances brought on by the 4th industrial revolution and the prospects positive of negative that the Africa Continental Free Trade Area may present. These discussions highlighted the importance of infrastructural development as a key issue to stimulate industrialisation for employment creation and the favourable implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area as well as preparing the trade union movement for the challenges ahead with the changing nature of work. The meeting agreed that this was an area of focus for all and advocacy for infrastructural policy development and implementation must be done and the strengthening of social dialogue must be achieved.

Assessing the implementation of the agreed priorities of the previous trilateral meetings, the leaders agreed that there needs to be a batter communication and strategies to ensure successful implementation of the priorities. The review was helpful in that it assisted in consolidation of all the priorities into realistic and workable plan of action that is time bound and measurable. Further to this the technical team has been tasked with coordinating all activities to ensure work of the trilateral is achieved and successful. In this regard, the Ghana TUC will develop the first trilateral annual bulletin and each national centre will develop a bulletin on the years the host the Trilateral which means the

next will be issued by NLC. The Technical committee will work with the information and communications departments to develop the bulletins.

The issue of the unity project on the merger/future of the ITUC-Africa and OATUU, deliberations made it clear that Africa needs an independent African Trade Union. The discussion led by the President of OATUU was a robust, open and honest discussion that highlighted the experience of veteran trade unionists in their interaction with ITUC – Brussels and hinted on the independence of ITUC-Africa from the Brussels office. This led to most leaders in the meeting agreeing that the merger of the two organisations may be difficult in the current form the ITUC-Africa is in and maybe the Trilateral must just agree that the two organisations need to work closely together in advancing the struggles of workers in the continent. It was agreed that there needs to be a proper discussion at each national centre, in the meantime both the organisations were encouraged to work closely together and to increase their visibility in all regions of the continent and this includes joint activities and programmes.

The forth coming 4th ITUC-Africa Ordinary Congress to be held in Abuja, Nigeria presents an opportunity for the quadrilateral to implement some of the priorities. Using the pre congress organisers' activity, all national centres will ensure their organising departments attend and take time during this event to exchange on their experience in organising particularly in the informal economy; the NLC will share its programme and training programme to kick-start the process of joint training of organisers.

On the Congress itself, Cde Kwasi Adu Amankwah took the meeting through the congress preparations and developments on the ground. Cde Kwasi advised that there are 5 positions the meeting needs to deliberate on (General Secretary, 2 Deputy General Secretary, Auditors, Deputy President) and also representation in the Standing orders committee (6) and the Credentials Committee (6). Then names of the Erick Manzi of Rwanda were raised for DGS, Cde Kwasi availed himself to stand for the GS position, he highlighted the great job done by Cde Freda currently as auditor, suggested a few names for the standing orders and credentials committee.

The meeting agreed that there should be a shift in how we elect and retain positions, and secretariat, it is time to review the issue of the Presidency of the ITUC Africa agreeing the current president has been in this position for too long and it was time for change. That also we need a plan for succession in the GS and DGS position. The Trilateral \Quadrilateral supported the idea for constitutional amendment on the position of the President and DGS. The suggestion for rotation of Presidency to the 5 regions of the continent, that Southern Africa sponsors the person this time and that the person should be female.

On the positions of the Deputy General Secretary the Trilateral\Quadrilateral agreed that there is a need for constitutional amendments to have 2 Deputies and that the amendment should be sponsored formally. The meeting agreed that the **NLC** would sponsor the name and decide if they want to offer for the 1st or 2nd Deputy. With this, caution was given to the meeting that there may be an issue regarding the position since the position of the GS is contested by English speaking country (Ghana) therefore the NLC being an English speaking country may not be able to hold the DGS as this was an issue when the name of Cde Mody Guiro was raised for the ITUC World Congress in 2018 that you can't let two people from Senegal (French Speaking) both contest or serve in executive and Cde Mody Guiro had to be let go so Cde Mamadou Diallo could then stand for the DGS of Brussels. Also the meetings attention was drawn to the fact that a 2nd DGS would

have financial implications for the organisation. The meeting agreed that they would sponsor the constitutional amendment for the position and the issue of funding for the position will be discussed when the amendment is passed. East Africa was requested to discuss the issue of the sponsored name of Menzi that they must discuss bearing in Mind we support the NLC.

On the position of the General Secretary the meeting agreed to support Cde Kwasi Adu Amankwah (Ghana-TUC) for this last term with the understanding that there should be a transition process to his term.

On the Auditor position the meeting agreed to support COSATU Cde Freda Oosthuysen to retain her position as auditor. The meeting learned that FEDUSA also is lobbying for the Auditor position.

On the question of the Deputy Presidents each region has a vice president (7) and among them, they elect the Deputy President.

For the general council there are 12 positions to be elected by the congress (North Africa – 2 members, East Africa – 2 members, Southern Africa – 3 members, West Africa – 3 members, Central Africa -2 members) and the meeting agreed that there is a need to lobby for people who we can influence to support our position but also ensure that representation is spread out that all regions are equally represented in all positions. It was noted that COSATU Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali, NLC Cde Ayuba Wabba, COSATU Cde Lefa Phatsoane and COTU Cde Francis Atwoli automatically become the GC members by virtue of being in the ITUC Brussels GC therefore there's a need to identify the others who can support the position of the Trilateral\Quadrilateral. Members need to go back to their regions to check first who the people who already serve or nominated are or to be nominated so we know who we lobby for. The meeting agreed that there is a need to lobby for gender parity. Our lobby should also go to the women (2) and youth (1) representation.

The meeting was cautioned regarding the approach the quadrilateral must take as these decisions are political. The quadrilateral was advised that it needs to be very careful, explaining that in West Africa there are 16 countries only 4 of which are English Speaking, Central Africa is French Speaking, and parts of North Africa is also French Speaking. The meeting was advised that Tunisia has also shown interest to sponsor the 2nd DGS.

The General \ Plenary Meeting

The meeting receive presentation and deliberated on the following new priorities:

- The SDG8 (Decent Work in Africa)

The National Centers were urged to engage their national governments to advocate for creation of tripartite structure (where they do not exist or are weak) that will bring about social dialogue in order to ensure the implementation that leaves no one behind. This structure should be used to advocate for the ratification of ILO conventions and Recommendation that advance the trade union agenda as well as the development of country programmes on decent work.

- Future of Work in Africa

The meeting recommended that centres should come up with suggestions at national level on how the trade union should respond to the 4th industrial revolution and the future of work. Once suggestions are made there should be a consolidation of responses done for a common response to be adopted. This should be done through the trilateral commissioning research work to be done for the urgent development and adoption of a continental trade union response to the 4th industrial revolution. This should be done and concluded by the next sitting of the trilateral \ quadrilateral.

- Universal Social Protection in Africa

The Trilateral raised a concern that majority of Africans are not covered by comprehensive social security. The trade union should shape the policy to be inclusive of everyone. Ratification of ILO Convention 102 on Social Protection and Recommendation 202 of 2012 on Social Protection Floor remains paramount to the protection of human and workers rights in terms of basic needs of people.

The trilateral expresses their concern about the continental management of pension funds by governments which jeopardises the pensions of workers this includes governments borrowing from these funds and the corruption in those processes.

The state must cover all its citizens the modalities as to how can be looked into and also what role does private sector play.

In this regard, the trilateral should call for a new social contract that involves all stakeholders (Governments, Private Sector, Trade Unions and Community) which will define the role of each stake holder in improving the livelihood of the people in this continent. This will help address the gap in the implementation of the social security systems

The Centres must close the gap by advocating for and influencing policy that promotes universal social protection for all.

- Organising in Formal and Informal Economy (including Challenges in organizing multinational companies like MTN and Chinese-owned Companies)

Recommendation 204 (R204) on the Formalisation of the Informal Economy was adopted by the ILC in June 2015. The recommendation ensures the protection of workers' rights in the informal economy through social protection and advocating for decent working condition.

The trade union centres have coordinated much at national level to organise the informal economy and experienced a lot of difficulty in retaining members as well as collections of dues.

In this regard, it was agreed that organising is at the centre of our existence and in a situation where, many of the working force in Africa are not unionised and informal sector having a huge number that unions and centres should invest time and money organising.

The NLC Programme of organising academy to be emulated. In line with this, centres were encouraged to send organisers to Nigeria during the ITUC Africa Congress first to participate in the side meeting of organisers planned by the ITUC-Africa, thereafter, meet with the NLC Head of Organising and industrial relations to share experiences and compare notes.

Affiliates organising in the communications sector got an opportunity to interact and exchange on strategies to handle the MTN problem.

- Elimination of Violence and Harassment at work in Africa

At the 108th session of the International Labour Organisation of 2019, Convention C190 with its Recommendation 206 was adopted. The Trilateral committed to the Elimination of all forms of Violence and Harassment in the world of work.

In line with this, the various national centres were encouraged to adopt their own policies on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work.

The centres are encouraged to advocate for their governments to ratify convention C190 and its accompanying Recommendation 206.

- AfCFTA (Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement)

The Quadrilateral is concerned about the processes that led to the adoption of the AfCFTA. It recognised that AfCFTA provides both opportunities and threats for the Trade Union Movement in Africa. The current manner in which it has been handled has not allowed the trade union movement and civil society actors to contribute to it and is strictly driven by governments.

In this regard, the meeting agreed that,

- the trade union movement must push to be included in all future AU deliberations on African Continental Free Trade Area.
- national centres should push for engagements at national level on the issue of route of origin of goods and use the opportunity to properly define the role of the trade union in AfCFTA and strengthen the rules on the route of origin of goods.
- the trilateral partners must mobilise regions in the continent to make a call to bring back the African Labour Affairs and Social Commission as it was before, this will re-instate the proper participation of the trade union in the A.U and will assist in strengthening our role in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

All affiliates had an opportunity to network with their sister unions during the session, and the meeting concluded with the adoption of the 4th Communiqué of the Quadrilateral and the accompanying Priorities.

7. Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC)

Leadership Induction Workshop

SATUCC convened a leadership induction workshop on 9-10 April 2019 which turned into the Central Executive Committee meeting alongside the Regional Seminar on Migration in Gaborone, Botswana.

The purpose of the induction was to introduce the leadership to what SATUCC functioning and programmes are. The Executive Committee was addressed by the former President of SATUCC Cde George Nkiwane who spoke about the history of SATUCC and looking back to the work done by SATUCC. The meeting also assessed the performance of SATUCC based on the SATUCC Strategic Plan 2014-2018. The meeting was further used to prepare for the 108th ILC meeting.

The EC agreed that there is a need for 2 more meetings before September 2019 which will include induction of the office bearers on the SATUCC Constitution. The SATUCC Regional Seminar on Migration was convened as informed by the Resolutions from the two previous congresses of SATUCC, which saw labour migration as a key development agenda. It aimed to highlight the key role of the trade union in achieving a fair labour migration and its role in ensuring that rights of workers were protected and were not subjected to the borders and immigration status.

The issue of labour migration remains one of the most difficult issues to tackle and in light of the challenges related to labour migration in Southern Africa, SATUCC and affiliates needed to contribute towards the development and implementation of a comprehensive regional and national migration systems and policies, while simultaneously strengthening their own capacities, competencies and coordination mechanisms in order to enhance their ability to positively influence migration and labour related policy outcomes at regional level.

The workshop was used to strategically plan a process towards achieving fair labour migration. The workshop objective was to develop a SATUCC Strategic Plan / theme on Labour Migration; and labour migration messages to promote decent work.

With regards to Strategic Plan- theme on Labour Migration, the workshop agreed on key focus areas to build messages on labour migration, these focus areas are:

- a. SATUCC and Affiliate Policy on Migration.
- b. Labour Migration Information System.
- c. Decent Work for Migrant Workers.
- d. Ratification of Regional and International Instruments.
- e. Education and Awareness raising (e.g. pre-departure information).
- f. Labour Migration and Xenophobia (Trade Union Role).
- g. Gender and Labour Migration

COSATU was represented by the SADTU Deputy President Cde Mabutho Cele at the Migration Workshop.

37th Central Executive Council Meeting

The 37th Central Executive Council Meeting took place on the 14th of November 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana. The Meeting was attended by COSATU President Zingiswa Losi, and Gender Coordinator Gertrude Mtsweni. Planned activities for this year have not been communicated yet and will therefore be reflected in the next CEC Report, or as attended.

Virtual seminars on COVID-19

On the 18th and 19th of August 2020, SATUCC hosted two virtual seminars on COVID-19 during the 16th Civil Society Forum (CSF). These two crucial seminars covered issues around 'The impact of COVID-19 on Workers in SADC Region' and The Role of Youth on Employment Creation Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic. The Seminars were opened by SATUCC President Zingiswa Losi, and

COSATU was in attendance represented by International Secretary, Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni and Deputy International Secretary, Zanele Mathebula.

Conclusions/Outcomes

- The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified a number of challenges that workers were already facing before COVID-19 emerged such as increase of insecure and informal work, lack of social protection, rising of unemployment which stand to exacerbate poverty and inequalities in Southern Africa.
- The youth are more vulnerable due to high youth working poverty rates and because the youth are overrepresented in vulnerable and informal employment which are at great risk of worsening due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Young women are facing an increasing double burden to manage both paid work and unpaid care and household work due to widespread school closures.

Action points

- Trade unions should be actively involved in the formulation and implementation of concerted responses on COVID-19 pandemic at both national and regional level
- COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impacts on workers (including the vulnerabilities of women and young workers) should be included on the agenda for social dialogue and an item in the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)
- Trade unions should not only focus on reacting to the devastating impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in SADC region, but also being pro-active with alternative proposals towards building sustainable economies after the COVID-19 pandemic

38th Executive Council Meeting

On the 15th of December 2021, the 38th Meeting of the Executive Council of SATUCC took place with COSATU represented by the COSATU President (undertaking both roles as the President of SATUCC), Deputy International Secretary Zanele Mathebula and SACCAWU 1st Deputy President Angie Phetlhe. Amongst other pressing matters, the Meeting discussed Administration and Operations, the SADC –ELS and JTTS Meetings Update, Women Activities, Youth Activities, and the SATUCC Elective Congress, which is scheduled to take place in August of 2022. The Constitutional amendments discussions are yet to unfold, with a meeting to be convened by the ES in 2022.

SATUCC 40th Elective Congress

The 40th Elective Congress of SATUCC was scheduled to take place in the fourth quarter of 2021. However, due to a lack of finances, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision was taken by the Executive Council Meeting which took place in May 2022, to further postpone the Congress to October of 2022, to allow affiliates to pay up their affiliation fees. This time is also being afforded, so that affiliates who are in the position to host the Congress to indicate so. The COSATU CEC endorsed the continued lobbying for the re-election of COSATU President Zingiswa Losi, who is the

current President of SATUCC. Thus far, there is general consensus in the region on Comrade Losi's re-election.

Regarding preparations for the Congress, it was furthermore agreed upon in this meeting that the Congress should take place in South Africa, Johannesburg as this would be a more central location for all delegates attending from the region (regarding flights, and less connection routes). The Executive Secretary Comrade Mavis Koogotsitse has set up a task team from SATUCC's affiliates including COSATU's International Secretary – Comrade Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni to assist with the technical preparations for the Congress. This team will be focusing on the Congress resolutions, Constitutional amendments, and technical assistance as per the request of the ES.

SATUCC Financial Challenges

As we prepare for the Congress, the SATUCC leadership has also indicated on multiple occasions that the issue of non-payment of affiliation fees by some affiliates, hinders progress on activities in SATUCC. The payment of staff salaries, and benefits is also included amongst the challenges faced.

The SATUCC Executive Secretary met with the COSATU President Zingiswa Losi, and International Secretary Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni, at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Kempton Park on the 19th of October 2021 to discuss some of the challenges the organisation is experiencing, which hamper its ability to function optimally. Whilst it was identified that COSATU's affiliation fees to SATUCC are up to date and always paid on time SATUCC has made a special request to affiliates of COSATU to assist with a vehicle which would assist in carrying out the work of our regional organisation.

The situation at SATUCC is so dire, that the request for affiliates (who are in a position to do so) to pay their 2023 affiliation fees in advance has been made. COSATU has also been requested to do so.

8. SADC Employment, Labour and Social Partners Meetings (2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022)

In 2019, Namibia convened the ELS Ministers meeting from the 4th – 8th March in Windhoek, Namibia under the theme “Coordination of development programmes to maximize employment creation and productivity”. The meeting commenced with the SADC ELS Technical Committee Meeting which sought to prepare for the ELS Ministerial Meeting. The meeting was divided into 3 sessions:

- Strategic Policy Dialogue
- Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
- International and Continental Commitments

On Strategic Policy Dialogue the meeting discussed the following.

- Labour migration considerations of the Global
- Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration
- Ratification of the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour

- On Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting the following were discussed.
- Follow-up on the mid-term review report of the SADC Decent Work Programme (2013-2019)
- Portability of social security benefits in the SADC region
- Follow-up on establishment of SADC ELS Forums
- Dispute Prevention and Resolution
- Labour Inspection
- Public Employment Services
- Labour Migration Action Plan (2016-2019)
- International Labour Standards – Addressing common challenges
- Follow-up on Report on ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189): Ratification by SADC Member States
- Decent work for youth in the rural economy
- Reports by Member States
- Revised RISDP (2015-2020)
- ELS Codes (Social Security, HIV&AIDS and Employment
- Reports by Social Partners
- SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF)
- Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC)

On International and Continental Commitments the following were discussed.

- SADC Members' preparations for the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment
- Report by SADC Members of the Governing Body of the ILO
- Preparations for the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC)
- ILO Centenary outcome document (Namibia)
- Violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work (standard setting, second discussion) (Lesotho)
- Thematic debates and events connected to the Future of Work, including various Centenary Initiatives (Eswatini)

The ELS Ministerial was divided similarly, under the Strategic Policy Dialogue the ministers discussed:

- The ILO Report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work: Implications for SADC
- Presentation of the Global Commission's Report (ILO)
- Tripartite Panel Discussion

In the session on Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting the Ministers deliberated on the Annotated Agenda and the Senior Officials' recommendations from the Technical Committee meeting. The meeting was concluded on the last day by observing the ILO Centenary celebration through presentation of the ILO work and its impact in the SADC Region.

COSATU attended the ELS meeting as part of the South Africa delegation representing labour and Cde Maja Mphahlele from NUM represented, while the President of COSATU attended representing SATUCC.

2020

In 2020, the SADC Employment and Labour Sector (ELS) Troika Virtual Meeting took place on the 19th of October 2020. The Meeting by representatives from the following members: Mozambique (Chair), Malawi, United Republic of Tanzania, SADC Private Sector Forum (SPSF), Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Cde Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni attended the Meeting on behalf of COSATU. The sole agenda item for the meeting was consideration and adoption of the draft SADC Employment and Labour Policy Framework (2020-2030).

The Secretariat introduced the policy framework highlighting that all key facets of labour administration had been addressed in a focused, coherent and logical way, which provides clear pathways for the region to achieve better decent work outcomes. These pathways were based on five strategic objectives in the areas of employment creation; rights at work; social protection; social dialogue; and labour migration. The Secretariat also pointed out that the draft policy framework was fully aligned to ELS commitments as outlined in the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030, as adopted by Heads of State and Government in August 2020.

The Consultants proceeded to unpack the draft policy document, with emphasis on the strategic orientation as follows:

- Strategic Objective 1 – To create decent job opportunities and inclusive economic growth across all sectors for men and women in SADC through the promotion of pro-employment policy making and implementation, employment-intensive public and private investments, and sustainable enterprises.
- Strategic Objective 2 – To promote application of International Labour Standards and fundamental principles and rights for social justice at work.
- Strategic Objective 3 – To enhance coverage of quality comprehensive and sustainable social protection and conditions of work to prevent and mitigate vulnerability.
- Strategic Objective 4 – To strengthen social dialogue and labour market institutions for harmonious labour relations and productivity at work.
- Strategic Objective 5 – To enhance labour migration governance for safe and regular labour migration.

The consultants also outlined the theory of change before touching on the institutional arrangements and structures, which also include aspects of roles and responsibilities, budgeting and resources requirements, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The meeting welcomed the draft policy framework as a useful framework for SADC in the pursuit of decent work in the region. However, a number of comments were made with a view to strengthen the draft emphasising the need to:

- Revisit the terminology used in the framing of the strategic objectives in line with standard nomenclature, notably with respect to the ones on International Labour Standards (how to address social justice issues), social protection (comprehensive treatment), social dialogue (aspects of social partners' roles) and labour migration (issues on mobility).
- Address labour market disruptions in a strategic and comprehensive way, which is not too limited to COVID-19.
- Rationalise the analysis of key labour market indicators, ensuring that the analysis is more strategic at the regional level
- Amplify interventions on two key issues for the region, that is, industrialisation and formalisation of the informal economy
- Amplify Occupational Safety and Health given that it is a key intervention area, including in the results framework, where the main activities will flag this issue.
- Address treatment of the Codes of best practice in the way forward (Codes on Social Security, HIV and AIDS, etc)
- Address issues of funding and resource mobilisation for full implementation
- Ensure that the draft policy framework's structure/format is fit for purpose and aligned to other blueprints
- Address issues connected to the labour market information system
- Ensure that the translation of the documents into other languages is done accurately

The Secretariat gave clarifications on the main issues raised, undertook to address the comments and to submit a revised draft policy framework by 26 October 2020.

As part of the way forward, the meeting considered and approved a roadmap for the development of a SADC Decent Work Programme as proposed by the ILO Director, Dr Joni Musabayana. The SADC Decent Work Programme will be the implementation tool for the draft policy framework. The following was the roadmap:

- Submission of the 1st SADC DWP Roadmap to the Troika by Friday 23rd October 2020
- Submission of members' comments to the Secretariat by Friday 30th October 2020
- 2nd sitting of the Troika to review the Draft DWP before presentation to the JTTS on the 6th of November 2020
- Final Draft SADC DWP to be presented for adoption by the SADC Ministers and Social Partners

Employment and Labour Sector Joint Tripartite Technical Sub-Committees (JTTS) Virtual Meeting

On the 23rd – 24th November 2020 COSATU through SATUCC participated in the Employment and Labour Sector Joint Tripartite Technical Sub-Committees (JTTS) Virtual Meeting of Experts, where a crucial issue discussed, among other things was, the Draft SADC Employment and Labour Policy

Framework (2020-2030). Members of the JTTS noted that the draft policy document proposes five strategic objectives in the areas of employment creation, rights at work, social protection, social dialogue and labour migration as follows:

- i) to create decent job opportunities and inclusive economic growth across all sectors for men and women in SADC through the promotion of pro-employment policymaking that facilitates increased industrialisation and formalisation,
- ii) to promote the application of International Labour Standards and fundamental principles and rights at work,
- iii) to enhance gender-responsive and inclusive social protection coverage and reduce workers' vulnerabilities through better working conditions,
- iv) to strengthen social dialogue and labour market institutions for harmonious labour relations and productivity at work,
- v) to enhance labour migration governance for safe and regular labour migration.

Members of the JTTS deliberated on the fifth proposed strategic objective on labour migration governance and noted that the complexity of labour migration management potentially necessitated the standalone strategic objective, to enable clear programming in the subject matter. However, it was also noted that under the well-established decent work agenda, labour migration is addressed as an integral part of the four strategic objectives and that, this approach should, therefore, be maintained. Accordingly, the ELS Troika was requested to revisit the issue and make a suitable recommendation in the draft policy, taking into account the deliberations. COSATU General Secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali, and Deputy International Secretary, Cde Zanele Mathebula attended the Meeting representing COSATU.

2021

In 2021, the Virtual SADC Ministers of Labour and Employment and Social Partners Meeting took place on the 28th – 30th April 2021.

On behalf of Organised Labour in South Africa, the delegation was as follows:

- Cde Zingiswa Losi (COSATU President, attending also as the President of SATUCC)
- Cde Maja Mphahlele (NUM Parliamentary Head)
- Cde Lucky Mabutho Cele (SADTU Deputy President)
- Cde Riefdah Ajam (FEDUSA General Secretary)
- Cde Zanele Mathebula (COSATU Deputy International Secretary)

The meeting discussed policies that address employment and labour conditions and ensure safe and healthy working conditions, as well as other pertinent items of global significance in the labour market.

The President of Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council, Ms Zingiswa Losi, called for structural transformation which will comprehensively suppress poverty, inequality and unemployment within an overall developmental context in which SADC Member States must play a more active and decisive role. She called upon Member States to ratify and domesticate International Labour

Standards, including International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention Number 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace.

During the meeting, the Ministers and Social Partners:

- approved key sectoral policy instruments towards realisation of the SADC Vision of a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle to high income industrialised Region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice and freedom.
- approved the SADC Employment and Labour Policy Framework (2020-2030) and the SADC Decent Work Programme (2021-2025) which seeks to address decent work deficits, including unemployment and underemployment, which continue to undermine prospects of productive structural transformation and poverty eradication in the Region. Member States committed to do this through enhanced application of fair labour standards and more effective cooperation between governments and the organisations of employers and workers, while taking into account the pressing challenges such as increased inequality, climate change and labour migration.
- noted with concern that the outbreak of COVID-19 has stagnated and subdued economic gains across all sectors, especially those that depend on global demand such as mining and agriculture, and those that depend on international travel, such as tourism and hospitality, all of which significantly employ the majority of young people.
- called upon SADC Member States to continue providing economic stimulus packages and to prioritise investment in employment-focused enterprise recovery; and move to introduce responsive and long-term social protection mechanisms, including unemployment benefit schemes. In addition, Ministers and Social Partners committed to improve working conditions through implementation of strategic workplace initiatives aimed at curbing the spread of the virus, informed by the public health measures and maintaining a balance between disease control and preservation of livelihoods and economic stability.
- prioritised the development of a new SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour which will include responsive measures to address emerging labour market challenges, such as those posed by rapid technological, climatic and demographic transformations; and
- commended the International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), notably ILO and IOM for continued cooperation at both the regional and national levels.

2022

The first SADC ELS Meeting this year, took place on the 28th – 30th of March 2022 in Lilongwe, Malawi. COSATU was represented by President Zingiswa Losi who attended in her capacity as COSATU President and SATUCC President. The Ministers and Social Partners reviewed the progress being made by the SADC in the area of employment and labour and a number of frameworks and reports which will be adopted, including among others the revised SADC Code of Conduct on Child Labour, the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan's Monitoring and Reporting Framework and the Model Framework on Social Dialogue Institutions in SADC. Once adopted these instruments will strengthen the policy and legislative framework on employment and labour in the region.

The meeting also provided guidance on the development of the new SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour, which seeks to strengthen labour administration systems in Member States taking into account emerging issues such as those related to climate change, technological transformation and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministers and Social Partners furthermore discussed and adopted common positions on issues of global significance, such as the implementation of International Labour Standards.

9. SIGTUR RCC Webex Meeting Notes – November 2019 and October 2020

In November 2019, SIGTUR members met on an urgent matter regarding the difficult circumstances faced in the Philippines. SIGTUR members deemed it important to re-schedule a face-to-face RCC for February 2020 subject to the availability of Comrades from the Philippines KMU.

Philippines

- 27,000 Philippines have been killed under ‘War on Drugs’.
- 45 unionists’ extrajudicial killings.
- At least 6 unionists in jail trumpeted up charges
- Police harassing people at home at night and raiding houses.
- KMU office along with other trade union centres raided.
- 53 union leaders arrested.
- ILO and UN delegations not being allowed into the Philippines.
- ITUC will announce International Day of Action for 10th Dec 2019.
- Australian states of Victoria and Western Australia preparing activities for 10th December 2019 with Sydney to follow on 11th December 2019
- Theme will be around red tagging.

Brazil

- Lula arrested and held in prison, but Supreme Court ruled that defendant be freed whilst appeals heard. Lula now free but concern for what might happen next.
- Elections not due for another 3 years.
- Labour and social security ‘reform’ and privatisation on the agenda of the right and ongoing
- Fires – still massive issue plus there has been an oil spill. Nothing has changed regarding attitudes – protecting environment not a goal of the current government.

Argentina

- Waiting for change of Government to occur on 10 December.
- Union congress planned.
- Economic situation the same, high debt and recession.
- Jobs loses in industrial areas.

- Poverty rising
- There will be a push for the next government to move quickly to resolve issues after the 10th of December 2019.

Australia

- Ensuring Integrity Bill – allows any party to make application to have individuals and/or unions deregistered. Rejected by Government in the past. Government now only needs 1 vote from cross bench to get legislation through. Union campaign to lobby members of parliament and stop legislation being passed.
- Welfare payments – government trying to claw back money arbitrarily from unemployed and vulnerable.
- Wage Growth – increased public debate on who low wage growth is affecting families and slowing economic growth.

On Wednesday the 6th of October 2020, the Australian Unions hosted by UnionsWA International Committee/SIGTUR held an open meeting inviting supporters to attend via Zoom to hear a report on the repression of unions in the Philippines. Elmer Labog, Chairperson of KMU, a Philippines union federation of over 115,000 members spoke and responded to questions.

Elmer talked about the Duterte Government's use of unlawful violence and killings in its war on drugs that has also targeted unionists and other civil society leaders as a way of silencing dissent. Elmer has recently been identified and "red tagged" a process of victimisation and targeting by the PNP and military.

A broad-based coalition including the KMU and other unions as well as civil society organisations has been formed to counter these measures and raise awareness. As the Philippines is now heading towards a national election, and Duterte himself cannot

be a Presidential candidate for election, the KMU and others are working on industrial as well as electoral strategies to counter these repressive measures.

Due to disruptions caused by the pandemic, we have been unable to meet more formally. The agreement is that the next RCC Webex will be scheduled for later this year, or as required.

10. COSATU-China Exchange

COSATU was invited to send a senior delegation to visit China by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) from 31st August to 6th September 2019. All costs for travel were borne by the Chinese hosts. The delegation consisted of President Zingiswa Losi, Deputy President Mike Shingange, Treasurer Freda Oosthuysen, International Secretary Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni, and Parliamentary Coordinator Matthew Parks

a) Programme

The delegation was hosted by the ACFTU and its Shandong Provincial and Qingdao Municipal Branches.

The delegation met with the following delegations:

- Research Institute of the Ministry of Commerce.
- ACFTU National Leadership.
- Shandong ACFTU and Chinese Communist Party Provincial Leadership.
- Qingdao ACFTU and Chinese Communist Party Municipal Leadership.
- Haier Group (leading Chinese electric appliance manufacturing company); and
- Qingdao Port Authority.

b) Observations:

The delegation had numerous extensive engagements and interactions with the ACFTU national, provincial and municipal leadership. Key observations from these discussions include:

- China will very soon become the world's largest economy and remain South Africa's most strategic economic and political partner.
- China will be the world's leading producer of 4th industrial revolution technology and lead in the implementation of its own economy.
- China is currently restructuring its economy, in particular key industries and rapidly automating key sectors. These sectors cut across all economic sectors from energy to finance, transport, ports and manufacturing.
- China-from the unions to industry to government are keenly aware of the need for a just transition to go hand in hand with these economic and structural changes. Particular emphasis and clear programmes to re-skill and retrain and redeploy workers is apparent. Equally clear is a social security programme for unemployment, injury on duty and retirement to ensure workers are protected. China is also actively investing in new economic sectors, enterprises and opportunities to ensure unemployment is kept under control. Currently their unemployment rate is 3%. They have also managed to drastically reduce poverty and inequality levels as well as investing in the social wage eg state provided education, healthcare, housing, transport etc.
- The ACFTU is clearly a central part of the Alliance with the CCP in China. This is not only in name but also in practise. ACFTU leaders are senior leaders also in the CCP. But they have not been reduced to conveyor belts.
- The ACFTU is significantly invested in the economy eg owns hotels and is seemingly financially secure.
- The majority of Chinese workers are members of the ACFTU. Though they are struggling to attract young workers especially as the nature of work evolves and increasingly young people are self-employed etc.

c) Recommendations:

- The ACFTU and its provincial counterparts are keen to strengthen and practicalise our bilateral relations. Particular opportunities include arranging for future COSATU and affiliate delegations to undertake study tours and programmes to the ACFTU.
- o This could be particularly relevant to such areas as the 4th industrial revolution, a just transition, a just energy transition, reskilling workers, social security, the social wage, financial sustainability of unions, recruitment and political education etc.
- There are opportunities to strengthen bilateral relations with the ACFTU in the BRICS and other international forums, on areas of common interest.
- The ACFTU is keen on visiting South Africa. Special thought would need to be given here on how such programmes should be structured.

11. BRICS – SA Trade Union Forum Presidency in 2018, Brazil (2019), Russia (2020), India (2021) and China (2022)

BRICS South Africa Presidency

In 2018, South Africa hosted the BRICS Chairmanship and 10th summit under the theme of “BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution”. A number of actors continue to be proactive in the BRICS fora and thus engage through the following tracks of diplomacy: Track I engages formal diplomatic role players at national governmental level; Track II engagement is facilitated through government and non-government affiliated institutions, business councils and academic forums; and Track III engages civil society and the “people-to-people” dimension of BRICS.

BRICS and COVID-19

For some time now, discussions about global political and economic change have been centred on the role played by the so-called rising powers in the world-system – and the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in particular. For some, the rise of the BRICS countries heralded the coming of a post-western world in which Euro-American hegemony in the world-system is a thing of the past. For others, the emergence of the rising powers was propelling a new development model that departs from neoliberal orthodoxies by bringing back public welfare and active state intervention in the economy.

However, the BRICS countries are hardly a homogenous bloc. On the contrary, the grouping is arguably frayed by divergent economic and political trajectories. What is more, the narrative of a ‘rising South’ jar with the reality of how the growth processes that have fuelled the rise of the BRICS are shot through with economic and political fault lines. First of all, the emergence of the rising powers has been coeval with the surfacing of a new geography of global poverty, in which more than 70% of the world’s poor now live in middle-income countries. Indeed, impressive growth rates notwithstanding, the southern BRICS countries (Brazil, India, China, and South Africa) are home to more than 50% of the world’s poor. The diversity of locations in the global political economy included in the BRICS countries, together with the similarity of the broad global trends, make for a compelling set of comparisons in relation to the political economy of a pandemic at this time of world system shifts and contestations.

Firstly, the pandemic creates a new political situation in each of these countries, which presents governing regimes with challenges and opportunities as they navigate the complex interface between public health measures and economic measures. How well do they do this, do they emerge strengthened or weakened? Does the crisis present workers with new and fair opportunities? Does it provide regimes with the opportunity to increase repression?

The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked a more extreme version of existing regime politics. For example, China's initial attempts to conceal the outbreak followed by an extraordinary mobilisation of resources to contain it is consistent with its interests as an emerging superpower whose internal legitimacy and external stature rests on its technocratic prowess in delivering economic growth, the safety of citizens, and preventing dissent. South Africa's recent return to neoliberal orthodoxy dictated its adoption of a 'global best practice' lockdown tailored for the wealthy societies of the West rather than its own split society and state, and then abandoned this for a shambolic reopening of the economy.

Right-wing nationalist regimes have fared worse. Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro attempted to deny the existence and seriousness of the pandemic with devastating consequences for those he hopes to crush, and his growing isolation from the elites. In India, Narendra Modi has used the crisis to consolidate his Messiah-like image in the public sphere, and there is much that suggests that this has at least been partly successful. In Russia, similarly, it is unlikely that the pandemic will destabilize Vladimir Putin's rule in any substantial way.

Secondly, how does the pandemic affect the dominated classes? It does, of course, have a devastating impact on livelihoods. In fact, in all the BRICS countries the working poor, precarious and informal workers and unemployed have to bear the brunt of both the pandemic itself, and economic devastation. However, the question is also whether or to what extent these scenarios lead to relief measures and expanding welfare initiatives from above, or whether the crisis is characterised by brutal indifference to the suffering of the poor.

South Africa's response was to allocate resources for grants and food parcels for the poor and retrenched workers, but corruption in state institutions is hampering effective and efficient service delivery. The Modi regime in India has systematically disregarded the needs of the country's most vulnerable citizens. The result has been nothing short of a humanitarian crisis. In Brazil, public pressure forced Bolsonaro to order financial relief for the poor, but his brutal indifference to the pandemic is devastating poor communities. In Russia, many vulnerable groups are falling through the cracks of a limited welfare system, and voluntary efforts are unlikely to remedy these shortcomings. In China, the regime's systematic response appears to have protected its citizens, but the comprehensive control over information means it is difficult to tell the situation on the ground, and particularly in the repressed populations of Tibet and Xinjiang.

This takes us to our third dimension: what is the popular response to this crisis and the politics of the regime? Do old and new movements and popular initiatives respond in innovative ways to the crisis? Do they focus on mobilising relief for the poor and marginalised communities? Do they attempt to work with the regime or challenge its responses? To what extent do new demands emerge from below in response to popular desperation?

These questions are important, as inequality and precarity had already thrown up political convulsions across the BRICS countries before the COVID-19 pandemic. In the current situation,

the BRICS countries exhibit a wide range of popular responses. In India, there have been scattered protests by desperate migrant workers and extensive relief work by activist and civil society networks, but little by way of sustained organised protest, given the repressive conditions of the lockdown. South Africa, in contrast, has seen vibrant organising and mobilising at national and local levels.

In Russia, protests against the government's handling of the pandemic have taken a variety of forms, ranging from online live streams to mass gatherings, while Russian authorities have responded with a mix of co-optation and repression.

In Brazil, movements and activist networks have organised mutual solidarity, educating, organising food supplies, and demanding healthcare, but with no connection to or response from left-wing parties or Bolsonaro.

The Chinese government tolerated the efforts of volunteers to support health workers in China, but has tightened its repressive control of the internet, information, and the revolt in Hong Kong, where activists and the general public provided a coordinated response to the pandemic in the face of its battered authorities' inaction.

It is important that we look at the other BRICS countries, and analyse the different dynamics, and their points of vulnerabilities. What lessons can we get from each other, so that we can overcome this pandemic and emerge still as a solid bloc?

BRICS Trade Union Forum (BTUF)

2019

The VIII BRICS Trade Union Forum took place in Brasilia, Brazil on the 16th -20th September 2019 under the theme *“The Future of Labour, Social Rights, Multilateralism and the Importance of the BRICS in the Global Context”*. COSATU was represented by the General Secretary – Bheki Ntshalintshali. A Special IRC was convened on the 19th of July 2019, in preparation for the forum. The meeting recommended that a small team of IR practitioners be put together to process inputs to the BRICS Forum, the small team together with the IR department were to then meet with the Department of Labour and Employment, DIRCO and other relevant departments to assess their views are on the current developments in Brazil and India regarding the rise of the right wing governments and the suppression of trade union and human rights, as well and the US-China wars. This exercise assisted in informing COSATU's overview and position moving forward as well as in the development of inputs to the BTUF.

2020

On the 9th of October 2020, the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting (LEMM) under the Russian presidency took place. In view of the ongoing restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the LEMM was held via videoconference (Zoom platform). Due to an unusual format, and hence very limited time, trade unions (including COSATU) attended as observers only. On behalf of the trade unions, a welcome address was delivered by the FNPR President Brother Mikhail Shmakov as a representative of the host country. The key areas of discussion were the future of work in the

digital economy; poverty alleviation through social and economic transformations; and development of a preventative, safe and healthy work culture.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder has welcomed the commitment made by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa to take more action to support labour markets in meeting the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19. In remarks to the sixth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting (LEMM), Ryder also praised the employment and social protection measures already implemented by these five major economies, noting that 121 new social protection measures had been introduced between March and August 2020 as part of the BRICS crisis response. In a Declaration issued at the end of the Meeting, the Ministers made a wide range of commitments intended to support enterprises, stable and inclusive labour markets, and human-centred development.

After multiple engagements, and postponement considerations – the BRICS Trade Union Forum met virtually on the 30th of October 2020. COSATU General Secretary Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali, and International Secretary, Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni represented COSATU in the engagements which commenced by a presentations on country contexts by the representatives of major trade union centres from Brazil, India, China and South Africa, who spoke in the same vein dwelling on how the pandemic crisis was addressed in the labour markets of their respective countries.. The forum was attended by 106 delegates representing 13 national trade union centres which bring together almost 400 million workers, and by honorary guests from Russia and beyond.

Following the Trade Union Forum, the delegates adopted a Declaration addressed to the BRICS heads of state and reflecting the trade union stance on workers' most urgent concerns. It is worth noting that in the period of Russia's presidency at the BRICS in 2020 the Trade Union Forum was for the first time made part of the formal event programme of this international association.

2021

India has assumed the BRICS Chairmanship from the beginning of January 2021. In this regard, the Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST) hosted the first meeting on the 20th of January 2021, to discuss the agenda, priorities, deliverable & events to be organised during India's BRICS Presidency. Dr Sanjeev Kumar Varshney, Advisor & Head International Cooperation (DST) led the meeting attended by representatives from BRICS scientific ministries, foreign Missions & MEA. The meeting primarily discussed the finalisation of the BRICS Calendar of scientific events & programs. All countries also agreed upon taking initiatives for flagship projects in the areas that may address the challenges the BRICS countries face, particularly relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

India also proposed to review the progress made in last five years (2015-2020) under the BRICS MOU, its consolidation, and streamline the BRICS cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI) which has been agreed by all unanimously. Dates for the BRICS Meetings, including the Trade Union Forum are yet to be announced.

The rise of the right-wing governments within the BRICS bloc: Case of Brazil and India

The BRICS are a very heterogeneous group of nations, united neither by ideology nor geography. In its conception, however, BRICS countries embodied a form of a leftward political orientation. For instance, the Communist party governed India; Workers Party was in power in Brazil; China and

Russia have communist histories and the African National Congress (ANC) has its own ideological roots but leftward leaning. These countries collectively represented a new political left. However, the emergence of the right wing or populist government in two of the BRICS countries namely Brazil and India have proved to be a thorn in flesh not only within BRICS but also among domestic trade unions.

The right wings governments in both Brazil and India have positioned themselves against workers rights. This has been achieved through the implementation of the bourgeoisie drive to cultivate a cheap-labour haven for global capital. The effects of this drive are seen in a way the governments squeeze labour politics outside mainstream debates and excludes labour in structures supposedly should form social dialogue.

Consequently, this new political path has been nothing but a tool to weaken the worker's power.

Case of Brazil

The inception of BRICS in 2006 and the affiliation of Brazil to the bloc was seen as one of the pillars of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's ambitious foreign policy project. It served three major purposes. First, the BRICS reinforced Brazil's identity as a rising power, not only in terms of economic growth, but also of political influence beyond South America. Second, the BRICS was a catalyst to stronger trade relations with emerging economies, notably with Russia and India. Third, the bloc gave Brazil a "safe space" where it could relate with China as diplomatic equals. That was particularly important as China quickly established itself as Brazil's – and Latin America's – main trade partner. Therefore, BRICS is heavily associated with the left-wing government of the Workers Party (PT).

With the newly elected right-wing government in place under the stewardship of President Jair Bolsonaro, the Brazil has embarked on a radical reorientation of strategic partners, in line with the populist winds that have shaken much of the globe. Bolsonaro's main ally is Donald Trump, followed by Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and the populist leaders of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. Italy's Mateo Salvini is already considered a close friend. In Brazil's neighbourhood, he has formed solid partnerships with Chile and Colombia, also governed by conservatives.

The new government rejects multilateralism, the United Nations and global pacts. One of the first acts of the new government was to withdraw Brazil from the recently signed global pact on migration. Therefore, the new Brazilian diplomacy consists of few friends and limited goals, with no global ambitions. One of these goals is solving the crisis in Venezuela, and that, incidentally, is another factor to weaken the links with the BRICS. President Bolsonaro has made it clear that toppling the government of President Nicolas Maduro is a priority, and for that he counts on political and military support from the United States. On the other hand, Venezuela is supported by Russia, China, South Africa and India (although not a staunch supporter) which all are BRICS members. In this regard, the bloc and Brazil are pulling in different directions with respect to Venezuelan issue.

Moreover, the current relationship Brazil has with China exemplifies this abrupt change. In the last decade, the Chinese have become the most important trade partners of Brazil and have been treated accordingly by all previous Brazilian presidents. President Bolsonaro, however, has followed Trump in his criticism of Chinese imperialism. Keeping with this paradox, it is probable that Brazil

may abandon BRICS in the long run – either symbolically or officially – on the grounds of a renewed relationship with the West.

To further undermine Trade unions, Bolsonaro's administration closed the country's 88-year-old Ministry of Labour thus weakening the institutions responsible for labour regulations including the Labour Court. The administration also lowered the minimum wage (despite inflation). In fact, labour rights, acquired through the struggles of organised Brazilian workers, are one of the main targets of Bolsonaro's government.

The registration of unions now falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, overseen by Minister Sérgio Moro, the former judge who jailed former president Lula as an attempt to block him from running against Bolsonaro. This restructuring can be viewed as a move to strip the registration of unions and weaken labour organizing in the country, and thus 'break the legs' of the enemy of the government.

The Case of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were brought to power in 2014 and re-elected in May 2019 in the India general election. Modi's party has hardly any history of leading a worker's movement or a peasant struggle. It is for this reason he identifies, embraces and advocates for the leftist ideals.

Labour law reform is a major part of Narendra Modi's economic reform agenda. This aims at making India the destination of choice for global manufacturing investment by continuing with previous government's generous subsidies for large corporations and promises to cut government red tape. Industrial conflict and union rights stand in the way of this dramatically ambitious agenda to challenge China's (India's South-South strategic partner) domination of global manufacturing.

The most serious threats against trade unions and workers came through amendments to India's labour laws, many of which the unions rely on for basic protection for their workers, especially limits to how employers lay off their workers. These are all reforms that the capitalists in India have been clamouring for, citing them as the primary reasons that they are unwilling to invest in large enterprises in India. Therefore the right wing government and its capitalist class have used this and other glitches in the economy to argue for their standard solutions—the suite of neoliberal policies: restructuring the working class, especially reducing legal protections on unions and workers; more deregulation and informalisation of production; a further reduction in the regulatory regime and the scope of its laws; an end to what little social welfare continues to exist; an expansion of state-sponsored infrastructure development, but a continuation of the privatization of state-owned industries; and a greater reliance on the state to force through development against those sections of the population that might otherwise resist displacement.

It is in this backdrop that Modi-led BJP government has integrated India, ever more fully, into US imperialism and encouraged it in its reckless drive to offset the erosion of its economic dominance. At the same time, Modi's right-wing government is seeking to leverage the support and strategic favours accorded by Washington to pursue its own predatory aim. Keeping with the ideas behind the formation of BRICS and particularly the element of balance of power, India is, in other words, colluding with Trump's administration to counter against BRICS and mainly China.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

The rise of the right-wing government in Brazil and India and what effect this might have on BRICS

Strained relationship between governments in question and trade unions/workers as result of regressive changes in labour policies

Development of a working-class counteroffensive strategy to unify workers against capitalism

In the November 2021 CEC, it was agreed that we must begin taking the BRICS Trade Union Forum as a platform to engage on issues that involve our ideological postures as a bloc and positions on certain solidarity areas. It cannot be that Brazil continues to abstain from the UN General Assembly vote on Cuba's resolution on ending the economic embargo imposed by the USA. This has to be discussed.

A discussion also took place which questioned why South Africa continues to loan money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) instead of the BRICS Developmental Bank. The answer to this is that **the interest rates from the BRICS Bank are much higher than those of the IMF, which is an area of great concern.**

The 11th BRICS Trade Union Forum, took place virtually on the 13th of July 2022, hosted by China and chaired by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), under the theme "Deepening Partnership for a Better Future". COSATU was represented by Comrade GS, Bheki Ntshalintshali, and the Head of International Relations Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni. Guided by the BRICS spirit of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation, and upholding the theme of our times of peace and development, we, the representatives of workers from the BRICS countries, focused our efforts on skills upgrading and safeguarding workers' right to development, aiming at exploring a common solution for developing a high-quality partnership among the BRICS trade unions and for creating a better future of work.

12. African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) started from 1st January 2021 onwards in the context of the evolving African and global policy landscape, including the development challenges – highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the responses to it. While the AfCFTA spirit of integration is creditable, the initiative has not started without challenges.

Even at its foundations, the AfCFTA still faces a number of ideological, political and economic hurdles, which are likely to derail the ambition of the Africa Vision 2063. These range from the commitment of African Union Member States to the AfCFTA, to unresolved trade tensions between the regional economic blocs and diplomatic difficulties. It is also worth to note that there are a number of interconnected issues to the AfCFTA, which require focus. Such issues range from understanding the political economy of financing the AfCFTA; implementation of AfCFTA in the context of agendas like the Post Cotonou, Economic Partnership

Agreements, Compact with Africa. Trading under the AfCFTA will also have implications on various critical topical subjects like agriculture, climate, migration and labour. Whether this is a result of

variable geometry or putting national interests first, an AfCFTA that has commenced with «cherry-picking» by Member States reveals various underlying challenges. These conversations aim to offer some insights and thoughts towards the areas yet to be negotiated under the AfCFTA that could contribute to addressing Africa’s maldevelopment as well as issues with implementing the protocols already concluded.

On the 3rd of November 2021, the COSATU International Department hosted the first of a series of three workshops on the AfCFTA, virtually from 14:00 – 16:00. This engagement took place under the theme: **‘Positioning COSATU to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement’**. The decision to host the AfCFTA Workshop was mandated by the Central Committee outcomes on the need for COSATU to convene more workshops for affiliates to grasp the details of the proposed AfCFTA, including its impact on labour.

COSATU will host the second of a series of three Workshops on the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement in July 2022 and include the perspective of colleagues from the Ghana Trade Union Confederation (GTUC), Central Organization of Trade Unions of Kenya (COTU-K) and Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

13. South Africa’s AU Chairmanship: Silencing the guns

President Cyril Ramaphosa took over as AU Chair in February 2020 and was welcomed to the position at the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The year that followed tested the African continent on several fronts as the pandemic highlighted gaps in Africa’s health care systems and lack of economic and social development. In 2020, Africa was also burdened by conflicts that arose in the eastern and western parts of the continent, including civil disputes that the United Nations’ deemed a “full scale humanitarian crisis” in Ethiopia’s Tigray region, and Nigeria’s #EndSARS protests which garnered international attention.

At the beginning of 2020, Ramaphosa’s priorities as Chair of the African Union included furthering peace and security on the continent, promoting women’s economic empowerment, and deepening intra-state economic integration. As the pandemic persisted throughout the year, these priorities naturally had to shift to include Africa’s pandemic strategy and continental relief from the pandemic’s impacts.

Here are some key things that South Africa managed to achieve in its one-year term as chair of the AU:

Securing 1 billion COVID-19 vaccines

In the latter half of 2020, Ramaphosa established the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT), a group of 10 individuals from across the continent whose main goal is to secure enough COVID-19 vaccines to achieve continental herd immunity by 2022. The establishment of the AVATT came in response to the vaccine nationalism taking place around the world, where wealthier countries have bought more than enough vaccines to inoculate their total populations, without consideration for middle- and low-income countries who cannot afford to acquire enough vaccines for their citizens. To date, the African Union has secured over 1 billion doses of the vaccine through the AVATT’s efforts, which will be distributed among the member states of the AU.

COVID-19 debt relief and financial assistance

As AU member states acknowledged the serious impact that the pandemic would have on the continent, under Ramaphosa's leadership, several prominent Africans were appointed as special negotiators who communicated with international financial contributors and institutions to discuss financial support and debt relief on Africa's behalf. This achieved debt relief for many middle- and low-income countries — such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Kenya — and secured financial assistance for Africa's pandemic response and future economic recovery.

Building on Africa's economy

In 2020 the AU was finally able to launch the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA), which had been in development for over two years.

This launch worked in line with Ramaphosa's economic integration priority. According to the World Bank, the establishment of the AfCTFA will create the largest free trade area in the world connecting 1.3 billion people. The success of AfCTFA could potentially lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty.

Promoting peace in Africa's east

The continent saw several civil conflicts arise in 2020 and part of the AU's purpose is to unite nations and help bring an end to conflict. In his first weekly newsletter for February, on Feb. 1, Ramaphosa confirmed that the AU has been actively involved in negotiations around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in order to achieve a ceasefire in Libya and promote peace in South Sudan.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's President Félix Tshisekedi, who will succeed Ramaphosa as AU Chair this week, will continue these efforts to achieve peace, and is also expected to address the long-standing unrest in the Great Lakes region. The African Union also established the African Medical Supplies Platform as well as a continental COVID-19 response fund to help ensure that all African countries could respond immediately to the pandemic without having to wait for international assistance.

Decade of Women's Economic Financial Inclusion

Ramaphosa championed a 10-year continental declaration aimed at gender equality and women's empowerment that was introduced in February 2020. This declaration, called the Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion, sees African leaders commit to taking action for gender inclusion towards sustainable development at national, regional, and continental levels.

In his acceptance speech on the on the 9th of February 2020, President Ramaphosa reaffirmed the principle of finding African solutions to African problems as the fundamental approach to addressing all conflicts on the continent, working within the frameworks of the AU and UN.

He further called on the AU to continue to support the just struggles of oppressed people elsewhere in the world, reiterating unwavering support for the people of Palestine in the legitimate quest for an independent and sovereign state and the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination.

In calling for support in the realisation of these priorities, President Ramaphosa said *“the African continent is on the ascent. It is indeed a regeneration moral and eternal, as described by the South African revolutionary Pixley ka Isaka Seme. If we pursue our objectives with diligence and determination, and mobilize our fellow African countries to support them, I am certain that ours can be a meaningful, effective and impactful Union Let us build the Africa we want. Let the Guns be Silenced. Let our swords be beaten to ploughshares, and our spears turned into pruning hooks. It is the actions we take from this day onwards that will determine our continent’s destiny”*.

COSATU under the banner of the ITUC-Africa Team of ATUDCN, attended the Seventh Virtual Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-7) on the 1st – 4th March 2021, hosted in Brazzaville by the Government of the Republic of Congo. COSATU was represented by Deputy International Secretary Cde Zanele Mathebula.

The Regional Forum is an intergovernmental platform convened annually by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations system to review progress, share experiences and lessons learned and build a consensus on policy options and actions in the form of key messages to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. Accordingly, the Forum serves as an important mechanism to ensure integrated monitoring and evaluation of the impact by supporting countries in unlocking bottlenecks in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 as stipulated in the AU–UN Development Framework on the implementation of the two agendas.

ARFSD-7 also prepared African countries to articulate Africa’s priorities at the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) to be held in New York from the 6th -15th July 2021. In this regard, the key messages adopted by the Regional Forum will also serve as Africa’s collective input to the 2021 HLPF.

14. COSATU Labour Migration Policy Position Paper

Labour migration in Africa is largely intra-regional and mainly characterized by the migration of low-skilled workers. 7.9% of workers in Africa are migrant workers. Of great importance in the region is the consolidation of significant Southern African migration corridors to neighbouring labour markets in the search for a job and better wages. Indeed, today, there are few African countries not participating in migration flows, whether as countries of origin, transit or destination. Demand in economic sectors such as agriculture, fishing, mining and construction as well as services such as domestic work, health care, cleaning, restaurants and hotels, and retail trade are significant drivers within the continent. African migrants, asylum seekers and forcibly displaced persons often use the same migration routes. Growing inter-regional corridors and the significant increase in the movement of persons is noteworthy

The International Labour Organization (ILO)’s strategy on labour migration in the African region is guided by its International Labour Standards (ILS) and Decent Work Agenda and implemented in close collaboration with the World of Work actors (Ministries of Labour and workers’ and employers’ organisations from the 54 African countries). ILO’s rights-based approach takes into consideration labour market needs and covers all migrant workers irrespective of nationality, skill level and immigration status.

In Southern Africa, South Africa is the magnet for millions of migrants but countries like Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, DRC also host many. Migrants already face a slew of challenges, including accessing healthcare, even in normal circumstances due to lack of health insurance, cost, administrative hurdles, lack of access to facilities, and language barriers. Additionally, some migrants are frontline workers who keep people healthy, safe, and fed. social protection for these workers, if received at all, is typically limited to some work injury compensation or health benefits, and almost never includes unemployment assistance.

The Covid-19 pandemic has once more highlighted the vulnerabilities of migrant workers to informal contracts, exploitative employers, unsafe work conditions, and restricted access to basic services. It is important that COSATU continues to campaign for the basic rights of migrants, to ensure that no one is left behind. It has been the South African government's long-standing objective to reduce migration, and the pandemic has provided a cynical opportunity to do so. There is a danger that post Covid-19, most migrant workers from the region will find themselves jobless if countries insist on inward-looking policies to try and placate local populations with populist, nationalist solutions.

COSATU must take the union position that is anchored on the conceptual analysis that acknowledges that the unequal global production system breeds an underdeveloped labour market orientation whose manifestations among others resonant into labour migration.

It is on this basis that the Collective Bargaining Conference which took place on the 11th – 13th November 2020, took a resolution that the federation should:

- Do an extensive study that will lead to a consolidated programme to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers in all sectors including the informal sector. Including assisting them to get permits and legal documents to comply with the law.
- Develop a programme to defend migrant workers and organize them into unions here and in their home countries, with due consideration to the evolving character of the total workforce and migrant worker perspective.
- Campaign for a policy or legislation at SADC.

COSATU has since vigorously engaged in processes which advocate for the integration of labour migration in the current development frameworks in the SADC region and recommend the best possible ways of engagement on labour migration and rights of migrant workers' development initiatives that could be implemented at sub-regional level. In further implementing these resolutions, a ***COSATU Draft Labour Migration Position Paper*** has been developed, in collaboration with labour migration experts from the Chris Hani Institute (CHI), funded by the ILO through their Southern Africa Migration Management Project (SAMM). The Policy Position Paper takes into consideration the following key areas:

- labour rights of migrant workers.
- labour migration and social protection portability
- labour migration information support systems.
- labour migration/the brain drain.
- role of remittances in development.
- feminization of labour migration and gender.
- informal cross-border trade and labour; and
- Labour migration and xenophobia (SATUCC, 2020)

A coherent and comprehensive policy position around labour migration is imperative to allow unions in South Africa to speak with one voice. The CHI carried out a multi stage research process aimed at the development of this policy position paper, which reflects the experiences and best practices of affiliates most affected by labour migration as well as the progressive, inclusive ideals of the Federation.

The initial phase is comprised of secondary data analysis of labour migration, primarily government and trade unions labour migration policy. The focus was specifically on the Department of Employment and Labour's Draft Labour Migration Policy, the Department of Home Affairs White Paper on International Migration for South Africa, and COSATU and its affiliates existing documents on labour migration. The researchers also reviewed recent ILO publications related to labour migration in South and Southern Africa, particularly the work ongoing under its SAMM (Southern African Migration Management) Programme.

The second phase involved primary data gathering with affiliates and key stakeholders; this necessitated consultations in the form of focus groups with all affiliates, followed by interviews with affiliates that are most impacted by labour migration (including SATAWU, SACCAWU, SADSAWU, NUM and AFADWU). Interviews were also conducted with representatives of other organisations that work with migrant workers, both labour service organisations and non-profits (including MAWUSA, Community Worker Advice Office, the CCMA, the SAHRC, Wiego and Street.net as well as the SACP).

This phase formed the bulk of the work undertaken by CHI, and it is proposed that focus groups be held with a mix of affiliates in order to allow for discussions and sharing of experiences and best practices as a way to ensure that all parties gain something from the engagement: the researchers are able to gather valuable data and the participants are able to benefit through a sharing of knowledge and experiences. As it is important to speak to both international officers as well as organisers, so the proposal is to have multiple focus groups, with follow-up interviews with the affiliates and other organisations as specified above. It is envisioned that there will be four (4) focus groups: One with international officers of public sector affiliates; one with international officers of private sector affiliates; One with organisers of public sector affiliates; and one with organisers of private sector affiliates. This will be followed by the key informant interviews which will target the international officers, education officers and organisers of SATAWU, SACCAWU, SADSAWU, NUM and AFADWU, as well as representatives of other organisations that work with labour migrants. Engagements in the form of key informant interviews with representatives of the labour movement in key sending countries in the region and on the Continent will also be pursued. This will be facilitated through SATUCC structures. It is important to note that COSATU will lead the process of arranging the engagements with the affiliates in order to ensure participation and consultation.

This will then feed in to the third and final phase which is the development and articulation of a COSATU position on labour migration which will guide both the Federation and its affiliates in dealing with issues involving migrant workers in South Africa. The Policy Position Paper is attached, for adoption.

The Congress is requested to:

Adopt the attached COSATU Labour Migration Policy Position Paper

15. MIS Programme

The year 2021 was the last year of the initial 5-year partnership program between the CGSLB and COSATU – through the Belgium Development Cooperation, on the objective of Decent Work through social dialogue for vulnerable workers. We are proud of our long-standing solidarity partnership with the CGSLB since 2012 and have achieved a number of good results and learning opportunities from each other. The MIS Programme has enabled us to carry out some of our very core functions as a worker’s movement working closely with the COSATU Organising, Gender and International units.

However, since the beginning of our current program, which started in 2017, a number of elements have changed in the Belgium Development policy. The most important is that since 2019, South-Africa is sadly no longer one of the 14 priority countries for Belgium. And from 2022, South-Africa will also no longer be on the list of 30 countries where Belgium non-state actors can apply for development cooperation funding. This will sadly have an impact on the development of the new 5-year program for the period 2022-2026.

To foresee an overbridging strategy the Belgium Government allows the non-state actors (like MIS) to have an exit program based on the two Belgium development cooperation transversal themes, namely gender and environment -climate. On this basis, COSATU has agreed to continue working with MIS/CGSLB on a new exit 5-year program (2022—2026) focusing on these two areas. Comrades Gertrude Mtsweni and Boitumelo Molete (in coordination with Comrade Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni), are the Project Persons responsible for the programme’s implementation.

16. International Workers Day Celebrations

COSATU joined several progressive trade union federations from all over the world to observe the international workers day on May 1, 2020, through a Mayday International Solidarity Concert under the theme “ The Crisis Should not be Paid for by Workers”. Represented in this programme were progressive unions from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Uruguay, Spain, France, Italy, Russia, Portugal, South Korea, Filipino and others. The virtual Mayday concert was the project of LabourStart, the trade union movement and GUFs.

Each Federation sent a 3min video message and a struggle song that represents workers the country to be featured in the concert. The General Secretary Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali sent the video and South Africa (COSATU) shared the song “Yibambeni” by Chicco Twala featuring Nokwezi Dlamini. The Concert was shared on different social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, twitter, and websites of participating organisations.

The Concert collaboration was a huge success, and is accessible on: <https://www.labourstart.org/mayday/>

17. International Solidarity Campaigns

Swaziland

The situation on the ground in Swaziland is still extremely volatile, and the Mswati government has no desire to give up its power. In July 2021, pro-democracy groups began marches to the homes of parliamentarians with petitions seeking political change. When the police intervened, violence erupted, and acting Prime Minister Themba Masuku banned all marches. “We saw we have no outlet to express ourselves. We’re not allowed to protest injustice. We’re not allowed to even dare suggest reforms in petitions,” said Nelson Maseko, a youth activist in the central industrial hub of Matsapha. “The whole system is set up to make us silent”. An ensuing call to action by political activists via social media was seized upon by criminal elements. The government responded with a dusk-to-dawn curfew, the blocking of the internet, and the deployment of the military. While police shot tear gas, soldiers used live ammunition against civilians.

The government admits to 27 deaths attributed to soldiers, but this number does not come close to the deaths documented by organisations such as the Foundation for Socio-Economic Justice (FSEJ), the People’s United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) and others. According to the FSEJ, the number of people security forces have killed since the protests began exceeds 100 at present but is sure to climb. The number of those arrested since the protests began is much higher. As for injuries, figures are hard to come by as many people continue to battle for their lives in hospitals or quietly at home. The figures also could not factor in those kidnapped, missing or long dead and covertly buried. pro-democracy groups claim the number killed is higher.

COSATU continues to denounce and condemn the murderous Mswati Regime in Swaziland for unleashing violence and brutally, oppressing workers and students who are standing up for their rights and demanding justice for the two lawmakers arrested during protests earlier this year. Swaziland has become a police state that brutalises its citizens with impunity. The people of Swaziland are trapped in the world’s biggest open prison. Violent protests in Swaziland escalated to the point where major towns in the kingdom were shut down, and over 30 people died in October 2021 alone, as police clashed with protesters in one of the worst moments of unrest in the country’s history.

We call on the people and the government of South Africa to stand up and take drastic action against this medieval regime that is trampling on people’s rights using the support from both the South African government and the private sector. At this stage, whilst we commend South African president Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) organ on Defence, Politics and Security Cooperation, for dispatching a special envoy to Swaziland and visiting the country in 2021. However we cannot shy away from the fact that **SADC has failed to solve the situation in Swaziland and is therefore allowing for potential instability in the region. We are breeding a potentially destabilising factor in Swaziland.** When people have reached a point where they cannot get recourse even from our own regional board, they tend to fight.

We demand to receive adequate feedback on the engagements held with the King, and other key civil society stakeholder, and citizens whom they will have met with.

In commemoration of Swaziland Global Week of Action, COSATU has held several activities in 2019, with a huge disruption being caused in 2020. In September 2021, from the 6th – 10th, COSATU embarked on the following activities:

- COSATU International Seminar – 6th September 2021: Swaziland Independence Day for Who? – Talks about Justice, Human Rights, Despotic Rule, and Solidarity a Roadmap to Change
- Global Seminar Convened by Global Swazi Lives Matter – Diaspora – 6th September 2021 Global Lecture #53YearsASlave
- Young Workers International Seminar Programme – 7th September 2021 on the Swaziland Massacre, Police Brutality and Civil Unrest: What Does Independence Day Mean to Young People in Swaziland?
- Virtual Memorial Co Hosted with United Eswatini Diaspora 7th September Paying Tribute to the Victims of Repression and Police Brutality Under the Directive of the Despotic Regime of Mswati III
- KZN Multistakeholder Engagements including representatives from Swaziland and COSATU PEC – 8th September 2021
- KZN Border Blockade at Golela\Lavumisa border – 9th September 2021
- Mpumalanga border blockades at Matsama and Oshoek – 9th September 2021
- Joined the Global launch Campaign for the release of Amos Mbedzi – engaging with DIRCO, AI, UNGS, UNHCR

COSATU Memorial Lecture – Comrade Mario ‘Bhambatha’ Masuku

In honour of the late gallant freedom fighter Comrade Masuku, COSATU hosted a Virtual Memorial Lecture, on the 12th of April 2021 commemorating the life and times of the later founding President of PUDEMO – Comrade Mario Masuku. The lecture was held in honour of Comrade Mario Thembeke Masuku, who played an outstanding role in the evolution of the people’s revolution for democracy and social justice in Swaziland. He was amongst the key figures that contributed immensely to the growth and development of the People’s United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO). He led PUDEMO from the underground between 1983 and 1990, actively building an organ of political consciousness in advancing the people’s struggle. Being at the forefront of the people’s struggle, Comrade Masuku was subjected to extreme torture at the hands of an evil regime which also contributed immensely to his ill-health and retirement in 2017. He met his untimely death on the 11th of January 2021 at the age of 69.

The Key note Speakers to the event included:

Cde Zingiswa Losi – COSATU President

Cde Mandla Hlatshwayo – Founding member and former Organising Secretary of PUDEMO

Cde Dr Matsebula – Founding member of PUDEMO

Cde Mlungisi Makhanya – President of PUDEMO

Cde Zodwa Mkhonta – Deputy President of PUDEMO

The engagements were successful, and concluded on a high note, with all participants agreeing that the life of Comrade Masuku is worth celebrating and that the most befitting way to honour Comrade Masuku's legacy is to continue fighting for a free and democratic Swaziland. COSATU continues to pledge its commitment and solidarity to the people of Swaziland.

Swaziland Communist Party (SCP) 4th Congress and 10th Anniversary Virtual Engagement. The Swaziland Communist Party held its 4th Congress from Friday 2nd April to Sunday 4th April 2021 under the theme Decisive mobilisation for Democracy Now. Leadership in the COSATU Mpumalanga Province attended the Congress, which reviewed the work of the Party since the previous Congress, analysed the current situation in Swaziland, engaged in thorough analysis of the Party's progress thus far as well as the condition of the oppressed people and revolutionary forces in the fight against the tinkhundla system and imperialism.

On the 9th of April 2021 the Swaziland Communist Party celebrated its 10th Anniversary through a virtual engagement, which COSATU participated in. The formation of the CPS marked a significant leftward turn in the politics of Swaziland, which COSATU recognises and continues to celebrate.

Swaziland stakeholder meetings/engagements

On the 22nd of October, COSATU International called an urgent Swaziland Solidarity Strategic Meeting with several Swaziland pro-democracy stakeholders operating in the diaspora and in the country. These included our strong allies TUCOSWA, ANC, SACP, the United eSwatini Diaspora (UEA), the Southern Africa Liaison Office (SALO), the Council of Churches, and other progressive forces acting in their personal capacities as agents for the urgent need for democratic freedom in Swaziland.

We agreed that the situation unfolding in Swaziland is a ticking time-bomb and required serious action from the international community. SADC and the AU have on multiple accounts failed to fulfil their mandate of implementing mediation and peacekeeping in the region and the continent. We have therefore taken it upon ourselves to look internally and urge our government to start taking serious action against the Mswati III's regime. He does not care about his people, what they want, and more so that the people of Swaziland have been in this bondage for decades. On the 24th of March 2022, SALO hosted a follow-up dialogue on Swaziland under the title "The Future of eSwatini: Progress towards a Dialogue Process?". COSATU and her affiliates participated in the dialogue, with a specific focus on Swaziland's future and the possibility of meaningful dialogue.

COSATU will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Swaziland, and advance our call for the following urgent actions:

- Closure of the Swaziland Embassy in South Africa; and
- Targeted business sanctions

COSATU mourns the passing of Comrade Amos Mbulaheni Mbedzi

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is deeply saddened by the passing of an internationalist and revolutionary leader of our time, Comrade Amos Mbulaheni Mbedzi (57), who lowered his flag on the morning of the 7th of June 2022 in Polokwane Provincial Hospital, South Africa, while serving an 85-year sentence after conviction by King Mswati III's absolutism courts in 2012.

Comrade Mbedzi was wrongly arrested in September 2008 for contravening the country's Terrorism Act and sentenced to 85 years for his alleged involvement in a bomb explosion which claimed the lives of his two accomplices Musa "MJ" Dlamini and Jack Govender. The government of Swaziland claimed that Mbedzi and the two deceased set up a bomb to blow up a bridge, after receiving information that King Mswati would be travelling on that bridge. According to the Communist Party of Swaziland (CPS), however, when the Swaziland government failed to prove a case of terrorism against Mbedzi they arbitrarily changed his charge to that of murder for the deaths of his accomplices.

Whilst Comrade Mbedzi was held in the Swazi prison, in 2014, the SACP, joined by COSATU, CPS, SSN and several organisations in the Swaziland pro-democracy movement launched the Release Amos Mbedzi Campaign, which not only called for the release of Comrade Mbedzi but that of all political prisoners in Swaziland. It is upsetting that the Swazi government failed to heed our call, and today, just two months after being handed over to prison authorities in his home country, South Africa, Umkhonto We Sizwe former member and SACP member Comrade Mbedzi is no more.

Comrades, the most befitting way to honour Comrade Mbedzi's legacy is to continue with the fight for a free and democratic Swaziland. COSATU continues to pledge its commitment and solidarity to the people of Swaziland. We call on all progressive forces to agitate for the economic and political isolation of the Mswati government. We also continue to call for the release of all political prisoners in Swaziland, who are being incarcerated with no trial, under inhumane conditions.

Comrade Mbedzi died, not because his time had come, but because he was tortured, starved, and deprived of medical attention when he suffered a stroke and required serious medical attention whilst in the Swazi prison. The regime delivered a slow, inhumane and painful death to him by tormenting and draining the life out of him in the cruellest manner, and (then) sent him to a South African prison in an attempt to sanitize his image from the unjust incarceration that led to his untimely death.

The federation conveys its deepest and heartfelt sympathies to the Mbedzi family, the Swazi people, progressive forces in support of the Swazi struggle, colleagues and friends of the late Comrade Amos. We wish them strength and comfort during this difficult time. COSATU vows to continue the struggle for Swaziland's liberation from the rule of King Mswati III, the last absolute monarch in Africa, for which Mbedzi paid the ultimate price.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabweans have been living under oppression for many years due to the iron fist of ZANU-PF. Many activists continue to be spied on, intimidated, assaulted, arrested, tortured, and murdered. Freedom of expression is restricted in Zimbabwe. Organising outside of the ruling party is condemned in Zimbabwe. Journalists are persecuted by state security, and instead of dealing with the situation in the country President Emmerson Mnangagwa blames the crisis on what he calls 'dark forces and Western influences.

The former national liberation movement have both collapsed into gangsterism, brazen corruption and dangerous authoritarianism. Our comrades in Zimbabwe, including trade unionists and movement activists, as well as our Zimbabwean friends of our movement in South Africa have been crying out for help for years. During lockdown, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed two special envoys to Zimbabwe following reports of a human rights crises. The first mediation attempt which

took place on the 6th of August 2020, got off to a rocky start after his special envoys met only with President Emmerson Mnangagwa and not the opposition.

COSATU/ZCTU Webinar

On the 22nd of August 2020, COSATU co-hosted a webinar with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, to discuss the human rights violations in the country, with a specific focus on the attacks on trade unionists and civil society activists. The event served as a platform for engagement on the crisis in Zimbabwe, with a focus on: its imploding political economy; the authoritarian, dictatorial and kleptocratic government; the plight of workers considering the political situation on the ground and COVID-19; human rights violations; and the role of the youth in spearheading unity of the marginalised.

The Webinar featured trade union and civil society leaders, including Comrade Peter Gift Mutasa (President of ZCTU); Brian Kagoro (Open Society Foundations); Justina Mukoko (Director of Zimbabwe Peace Project and Chairperson of the NGO Forum); and Takudzwa Ngadziore (President of the Zimbabwe National Students Union). COSATU 2nd Deputy President Comrade Louisa Thipe chaired the engagement, and COSATU President Comrade Zingiswa Losi gave the Opening Address.

Outcomes:

- Deep concern and alarm were expressed at the events unfolding in Zimbabwe. The meeting called on the government of Zimbabwe to:
 - Immediately release all the trade union and CSO activists who are in detention for merely exercising the right to peaceful assembly and association
 - Restore and uphold civic and political rights in accordance with that country's Constitution
 - Commit to credible social and political dialogue with stakeholders and role-players to find appropriate responses and shared actions for sustainable recovery
 - Address the justified concerns of health workers to provide protection against their risk of COVID at work
 - Publicly disassociate from attempts at classifying of trade unions and CSOs in Zimbabwe as terrorist organisations
 - COSATU reiterated that a trade union is a legitimate, transparent, and democratic entity whose formation and operations are provided for in the national statutes and international labour instruments to which the Government of Zimbabwe is a signatory. As such, a trade union can never be a terrorist organisation. COSATU, therefore, vehemently condemned the labelling of ZCTU as a terrorist organisation alongside other CSOs.
 - As we engage in conversations about land reform, and compensation of White farmers in Zimbabwe, it is important to ask questions such as “what about compensation to the farm workers who lost their jobs, and have struggled to do anything since then?” What compensation for lost time is being prepared/afforded to them?
 - Bemoaned the continued arrests, hostile treatment and intimidation of trade unionists and civil society activists by state security agents in Zimbabwe.
 - Applauded COSATU for the stern position taken to call out SADC and the AU to act decisively on the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

ZCTU Congress

On the 28th – 29th October 2021, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions held its 9th Ordinary Congress at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Harare, under the theme “We are at a crossroad! Unite, Fight Neoliberalism, Repression and Austerity”. COSATU was represented by COSATU International Secretary Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni. The newly elected leadership is as follows:

- President: Florence Taruvinga – Energy Sector Workers Union of Zimbabwe
- 1st VP: Valentine Chikosi – Zimbabwe Revenue Authority Trade Union.
- 2nd VP: Nicholas Mazarura – Zimbabwe Construction and Allied Trades Workers Union
- 3rd VP: Runesu Chipamaunga – Railway Association of Enginemen
- Treasurer General: Douglas Chiradza – National Energy Workers Union of Zimbabwe
- 1st DSG: Runesu Dzimiri – Food Federation and Allied Workers Union of Zimbabwe
- 2nd DSG: Kudakwashe Munengiwa – Zimbabwe Urban Councils Workers Union

The federation has also robustly engaged in a number of activities hosted in support of the people of Zimbabwe. This includes participating in dialogues hosted by SALO, and the Institute for Global Dialogue (IDG) on charting a path towards a prosperous Zimbabwe: analysing the role of South Africa and SADC.

COSATU is committed to organising more rigorously in solidarity with the Zimbabwean people. We need to support our comrades here and in Zimbabwe, putting pressure on our governments in the region to act more decisively on this brutal and autocratic state.

Palestine

One of the wide-spread and talked about campaigns internationally is the struggle against the apartheid state of Israel for freedom of the Palestinian people and calls for their right to self-determination. The global Zionist movement today has tactically set in motion a robust strategy to counter and push back extensive advances made by all progressive forces including the BDS movement. The strategy is characterized by the following elements:

- Enacting new apartheid laws to further institutionalized Zionism and racial supremacy
- Massive deployment of financial, political and material resources to organize groups that are in favour of Israel and criminalize the cause of Palestinian people
- Waging of a legalistic and ideological warfare against activists, institutions and bullying certain countries to enact laws that criminalize activism against state of Israel

In addition to these strategies, the US under the administration of Trump has been central in enabling full application of these strategies. This was also evident in the pronouncement of recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocation of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Subsequent to this, the administration proposed a flagrant bias peace plan which will ensure that 1) Israel keeps the vast majority of Jerusalem as its sovereign capital; 2) Palestinians get no right of return; 3) it redraws borders mainly between Israel and the West Bank; and 4) does not allow for Palestine to create a fighting force to defend itself.

These developments insinuate that all social forces and progressive organisations across the world should redefine and practice contemporary and effective forms of internationalism and solidarity that will help identify new inputs to shape global connections and campaigns against the Israel apartheid state.

Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) 2019-2022

COSATU has pledged to discharge its international solidarity duty and rally behind the struggle of Palestinians by lending its unmeasured support to BDS and its campaigns. Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) has been an effective tool to bolster support for the BDS campaigns and widely amplify the Palestinian struggles. COSATU in this regard undertook several activities to mark IAW which include pickets as the US consulate, virtual discussions and endorsing the IAW through press statements.

Affiliates committed to undertake the following:

- To release statements of support for IAW
- Release a communique to their structures (branches, regions, provinces and etc)
- To organize events/actions during and for IAW
- Use their social media accounts to follow the IAW South Africa accounts and promote the IAW campaign by sharing information

We are deeply impressed by the consistency, activeness and involvement of unions in real practical solidarity work of the IAW and the general support for the cause of the Palestinian people. However, we are concerned that some affiliates are not equally involved in the overall IAW campaigns and we, therefore, urge all affiliates to take an effective role in the IAW activities.

Israel Apartheid Week kicked off in Africa from the 21st of March – 6th of April 2022 under the theme ***Art Against Apartheid': aiming to highlight the role of culture and art in the Palestinian struggle against oppression.*** COSATU and her affiliates joined the different engagements (physical and virtual) held in Johannesburg in support of the Palestinian people, who continue to have their rights suppressed under the subjugation of the Israeli government.

On the 1st of April 2022, COSATU hosted an Israel Apartheid Week dialogue to reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemn the actions of Israel, under the theme “Working under Israeli occupation: the experiences of working- class women in Palestine.” at COSATU House. The aim of the event was to bring in women workers from Palestine to give their lived experiences of living and working in an occupied state.

The programme was as follows:

- Messages of Support
- The Chairperson (COSATU Gauteng Deputy Provincial Chairperson – Thabang Sonvathi) opened the session and welcomed all participants. The Chairperson gave a brief of the purpose of the program and reaffirmed COSATU's solidarity with Palestine.
- Mr. Bassam Elhussiny delivered a message of support on behalf of the Ambassador of Palestine in South Africa. He thanked COSATU for their constant and consistent support of Palestine and encouraged COSATU to continue to fight for the freedom of Palestine.

- Comrade Reneva Fourie delivered a message of support on behalf of the South African Communist Party. Comrade Fourie reaffirmed the SACP's solidarity with Palestine. She condemned the world turning a blind eye to Palestine and rushing to support the people of Ukraine. She reiterated how Israel is accepting refugees from Ukraine while it has expelled and displaced many Palestinians. She challenged COSATU to raise their voice on behalf of Palestine and not allow it to be silenced.
- Comrade Mercia Andrews delivered a message of support on behalf of BDS-SA. Comrade Andrews encouraged us to do more for the plight of women and children in Palestine. Encouraged us to strengthen our solidarity campaigns in Palestine and boycott campaigns against Israel.
- Speakers from PGFTU

Comrade Khawla Ilian and Comrade Summer Abu Mughli spoke to the participants on their lived experience of being a woman living in occupied Palestine.

The issues they raised included:

- High unemployment rates among women and the youth
- Lack of food security
- Lack of safety and security
- Lack of freedom of speech (silencing)
- Lack of freedom of movement (pass laws)
- Lack of basic services and opportunity

The speakers, furthermore, thanked COSATU for the continued support to their struggle and asked that we strengthen our solidarity, through the media and sanctions.

Discussions and Resolutions/Recommendations

- We need to stop calling what is happening in Palestine a conflict. An oppression that is one sided cannot be labelled a conflict.
- We need to foster a peaceful co-existence between Jews and Muslims, just as a peaceful co-existence was fostered between whites and blacks in South Africa.
- The discussion must include the oppressor in order to find a solution (speak to Israeli women, see what their view is on the Palestinian women issue, foster solidarity on the basis of womanhood).
- COSATU must host a Labour Conference on Palestine
- We need to show more visibility on social media, more boycotts of products and constantly condemn the oppression.

Nakba Day Protest

To commemorate the Nakba, COSATU participated in a protest organised by the BDS – SA Coalition on the 14th of May 2022, the ongoing catastrophes that Palestinians are forced to endure at the hands of Apartheid Israel. The protest began at the Israeli Embassy in Pretoria, followed by a motorcade procession to the DIRCO offices from 09:00 – 13:00. A memorandum was delivered to DIRCO demanding an end of the diplomatic ties between South Africa and Israel.

Split of Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Coalition and Africa 4 Palestine (A4P)

In the 11th National Congress, COSATU took a resolution to “Support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign as initiated by the Palestinian progressive movement. The BDS call is not simply a principle but rather a political movement and campaign strategy”. From 2013 COSATU has unwaveringly supported the BDS movement and its campaigns and participated actively in annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) activities organised by the BDS-SA. However, for the first time since the adoption of this resolution, the BDS SA did not lead in the South African IAW activities in 2020 as per usual.

In 2019, the BDS-SA took a decision to detach from the BDS National Committee (BNC), which is based in Ramallah, Palestine, and operate independently. This follows a series of disagreements built over the years, which led to this breaking point. Therefore, the BDS-SA felt that its political, ideological and other positions are not really aligned with BNC. For instance, BDS-SA felt that it did not have the autonomy to carry out or do not carry out certain campaigns, events and/or activities; to publicise or do not publicise certain statements, articles, images, organisations or policies; too much interference from BNC in its internal organisational processes; and dictate who BDS-SA can or should not be friends with.

BDS-SA was renamed to Africa for Palestine. They are the exact same organisation as before with the same office, structure, board of directors, staff and same members. The current board includes cdes Sheila Barsel, Bram Hanekom, Farid Esack, Kwara Kekana, Muhammed Desai, Khaya Xaba and Michia Moncho. The reasons for the rebrand included expanding into Africa.

The BDS office in Palestine on the other hand, appointed certain people to create an organisation called “SA BDS Coalition”. The coalition has an interim structure and is in a process of establishing itself. The CEC took a decision that COSATU should continue to work with the former BDS Coalition Cdes, under the rebranded Africa4Palestine, and remain open to working with other progressive pro-Palestine movements such as the new South Africa BDS Coalition.

Reactionary Remarks by the Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng on the question of Israeli and Palestinian conflict

On the 26th of June 2020 the Chief of Justice released a statement that reads as follows: The Jerusalem Post Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng expressed support for the state of Israel guided by his Christian beliefs and biblical texts. He stated his disappointment with the South African government’s position vis-à-vis Israel and its tacit support for the Palestinian side, calling for it to rather promote peace guided by its rich experience of reconciliation.

As South Africa, we now have a serious dilemma where our chief justice implicitly supports a modern-day colonial genocide with disregard for the human rights of the native Palestinians. In concrete terms what are the implications for our judiciary where the highest official of the land is guided by religion in his political opinions and actions? How could this possibly not influence crucial cases that land up in the Constitutional Court — many of which relate to the unfinished business of apartheid and colonialism such as the land question, housing, discrimination? What are we to expect on other issues relating to the right to life and abortion or the death sentence? More specifically, there are cases relating to Israel-Palestine in our lower courts such as the Palestine Solidarity Campaign vs the Labia Theatre destined for the equality court and the South African

Human Rights Commission and the Jewish Board of Deputies vs COSATU and Bongani Masuku, which could end up in the Constitutional Court. COSATU is committed to undertaking committed actions to deal with such reactionaries within the country and ensure that the Palestinian rights can no longer be exceptions to the rule of international law.

Cuba

This year marks 60 years since the US began its blockade in Cuba, an economic warfare designed to collectively punish a people for their independence. This criminal blockade against the people of Cuba is manifesting itself through hundreds of extremely malicious threats, sanctions, defamation and economic-political harassment. It is unjust that the Cuban people continue to suffer from the criminal irrationality of the North American empire and throughout the period under review, COSATU has on multiple platforms condemned the unjustifiable US embargo against Cuba, waged as an economic war and general fascination of persecution.

CTC – COSATU MOU

In 2019, COSATU participated in the CTC Congress with a delegation led by the President Zingiswa Losi. During the Congress the Memorandum of Understanding was signed and activated the cooperation between our two federations (see MOU addendum).

Cuba Humanitarian Aid

As Cuba's economic crisis becomes untenable, the government is struggling to provide for the population and to quell the growing unrest amid the COVID pandemic. Though Cuba has been undergoing an economic crisis for years, the situation has worsened considerably in the past few months.

During the Central Committee, affiliates made a commitment to making contributions to the Cuba Humanitarian Fund. In February this year, the CEC once again condemned the genocidal US blockade waged against the people of Cuba, reaffirming the decision to contribute to the Cuban Humanitarian Aid, as Cuba's economic crisis becomes more and more untenable. We salute our affiliated unions NEHAWU, POPCRU, NUM and SADTU, including Comrades in the Western Cape and Free State province for making donations to the Cuban people and we continue to urge all organisations who are opposed to the senseless sanctions against Cuba to donate to the Cuban Humanitarian Aid.

May Day Cuban Brigade from South Africa

The Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples and its Travel Agency Amistur Cuba SA extended an invitation to South Africa to participate in the May Day International Brigade 2022 through the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS). The objectives of the brigade are to contribute to a greater understanding of the Cuban reality.

FOCUS-SA seeks to among others raise awareness about a number of key solidarity issues, and the extent to which our struggle for non-racialism and democracy in South Africa had also been a

recipient of 'global solidarity'. The key focus of such a trip would be to broaden the understandings of South Africans and continue to build the people-to-people relations of these nations whose ties date back centuries ago when the forefathers of Cubans of African-descend became part of this Caribbean Island and made it their home. This brigade will again in 2022 be led by FOCUS as the South African Brigade to Cuba. Participants will carry out days of voluntary work; will visit places of historic, social and cultural interest, will receive lectures on up-to-date topics and exchange with representatives from different political and mass organisations, workers, Trade Union leaders and living testimonies of Cuban history.

The invitation was extended to COSATU affiliates who then, on an individual capacity submitted names of delegates who joined the Cuban Brigade under the banner of the federation from the 23rd of April – 8th of May 2022. A delegation comprised of leadership and Comrades from SADTU, NEHAWU, POPCRU and NUM joined the Brigade.

International Meeting of Solidarity with Cuba

The Cuban Workers' Federation (CTC) – and its trade union branches, invited COSATU to participate in the events celebrating the Day of the International Proletariat on the 30th of April and 1st of May 2022. Given the situation now facing the world, marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, the program of events was held on a virtually, jointly with the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples ("ICAP") and the political, mass-membership and social organizations. The Meeting also announce the new International Forum of Solidarity with Cuba, under the slogan Together We Shall Win. COSATU President Zingiswa Losi delivered a 3-minute message of support for the event.

Western Sahara

COSATU is concerned with the lack of progress in resolving Western Sahara's issue in a manner that recognises the Saharawi people's right to full independence and self-determination. During the period under review, we have intensified our efforts through an increased presence in global solidarity campaigns and continued to push our government to amplify their stance in the African Union, the United Nations and other forums to advance this struggle. We have also has stood firm on our unwavering position on Western Sahara, calling on the African Union (AU) to be decisive and expel Morocco on its illegal occupation of Western Sahara.

The AU's decision to limit the Peace and Security Council (PSC)'s role in Western Sahara to heads of state could negatively impact the council's work. PSC summits of heads of state take place only once or twice a year and usually discuss a burning crisis.

As a result, the Western Sahara may not make it to the PSC summits and, even if it does, there may not be binding decisions given that the AU is meant to support the UN process.

This could have several consequences. Member states that disagree with the PSC's involvement in future could insist on a UN process with the support of heads of state. This not only affects the way the PSC works but could undermine its relevance in tackling certain threats. Also, the troika of former, current and future AU chairs is not included in the AU Constitutive Act and has no real powers outside the AU Assembly. Similar high-level committees were set up in the past to deal with conflicts in Libya, Burundi and South Sudan, but were not effective. Going forward, the AUC

chairperson has a responsibility to include the issue of Western Sahara on the agenda of the AU Assembly and PSC summits. A roadmap for the AU troika must be developed to ensure it meets regularly and urges the UN to accelerate efforts to resolve the crisis.

45th Anniversary of The Sahawari Republic virtual engagement

On the 24th of February 2021, COSATU 1st Deputy President Mike Shingange was a panellist at the African Movements in Solidarity with Western Sahara, on The Occasion of the 45th Anniversary of The Sahawari Republic virtual engagement hosted by the SADR Embassy.

Virtual Symposium on the current developments of the Western Sahara conflict

On the 23rd of April 2021 COSATU participated in a Virtual Symposium on the current developments of the Western Sahara conflict, hosted by the Freedom for Western Sahara e.V The Symposium discussed Colonialism, Imperialism and Self-Determination.

Venezuela

The political situation inside Venezuela remains volatile. The Venezuelan economy also continues to deteriorate, causing widespread humanitarian distress and large-scale outflows of refugees to neighbouring countries. Potential state collapse and the spill over effects of the humanitarian crisis and insecurity threaten the stability of the hemisphere. COSATU recognizes, at least in a context of Venezuela, that today two economic models are in open dispute: on one side, the model of parasitic and destructive capitalism; and on the other, solidarity and social equality based economic model of socialism. The epicentre of the contention between these two models is now being waged between the United States and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, whose interests are diametrically opposed. In 2019, COSATU condemned the imperialist attack fostered mainly by the United State government, under the helm of Donald Trump, to overthrow the constitutionally elected government through a coup d'état.

The U.S government under Donald Trump has waged an unconventional war against Venezuela whose purpose is to overthrow the government of the Constitutional President of the Republic, Nicolás Maduro, as an imperative step to exterminate Chavism, end democracy and seize the wealth of Venezuela. In keeping with these plans, the US has implemented various set of unilateral coercive measures; threatened to invade the country militarily and with exceptional force; applied inhumane economic, financial and commercial blockade that aggravates the Venezuela's problems. This translates into substantial losses that prevent the acquisition of food, medicines, inputs for production, raw materials, among other items essential for the population of Venezuela.

The current character of capitalism is assuming an unprecedented voracity that affects the working class and humanity as a whole. Neoliberal capitalism has engulfed the world economic-financial system, pursuing a ceaseless search for profit through the conquest of new markets. It strengthens the dominance of finance capital and intensifies the plundering of nations and the exploitation of labour.

At present, US imperialism is capitalism's staunchest defender. Latin America is the main theatre of operations where it undertakes its offensive to maintain its global hegemony and impose its model.

The restoration of neoliberalism on the continent means that Latin American and Caribbean states suffer the threats of unilateral use of force to the effective loss of their sovereignty. The region's natural environment is currently suffering the destructive ravages of neoliberalism. The working class, especially women and children, are increasingly being exploited.

In the face of this imperialist onslaught, COSATU stood together with the people and government of Venezuela. It has expressed its solidarity with the Venezuelan people through the following activities:

1. Picket outside U.S consulate

In February 2019 COSATU along with the SACP, the ANC, NEHAWU, and other civil rights groups staged a picket outside the U.S Consulate in Johannesburg and in Cape Town.

- Expected outcomes

The picket was intended to call for the U.S government to stop pushing for a “regime change” in Venezuela and to stop undermining the Venezuelan people’s right to self-determination. It also intended to show solidarity with the Venezuelan people, and to call for the U.S government to end the imperialist behaviour against Venezuela, as well as to stop interfering in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

2. Solidarity assembly with Venezuela

On March 2019 the Tripartite Alliance which includes the ANC, the SACP and COSATU, gathered to show solidarity to Venezuela, along-side Venezuelan Foreign Minister.

- Expected outcomes

The solidarity assembly intended to show solidarity with Venezuela and to condemn U.S former president Donald Trump’s sanctions against Venezuelan.

3. Statement on the attempted coup of 2020

On May 2020 COSATU released a statement, after the attempted coup on the Venezuelan government in order to show solidarity.

- Expected outcomes

To show solidarity with the Venezuelan government, and to denounce the inhumane and murderous stance taken by the U.S to force sanctions against Venezuela preventing the supply of basic necessities and much needed equipment to fight against the Covid 19 pandemic.

COSATU also:

- Demands respect for the sovereignty of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and we ratify the support for the Bolivarian Revolution, and we salute the efforts of Constitutional President, Nicolás Maduro, to maintain peace in the South American nation.
- Salutes the Bolivarian Revolution for the implementation of a political-social model that not only protects the working-class confronting imperialists aggressions, but also makes it participant of the decision-making process.

- Condemns the imperialist policies and their neoliberal project in the most energetic way because they undermine the sovereignty of nations in terms of the plundering of their wealth and the exploitation of workers.
- Rejects the militarization of Our America and especially the presence of US and NATO military bases in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Repudiates the use of force and the implementation of unilateral coercive measures used to subdue our peoples and the working classes.
- Stands together with the peoples and governments of the world in struggle against imperialist policies and in defence of their sovereignty. We specially express our solidarity with the Venezuelan people in their struggle for self-determination.

Venezuela Elections event hosted by Africa for Palestine and the Venezuelan Embassy

Africa4Palestine hosted a virtual conversation with the Embassy of Venezuela titled “The importance of the upcoming elections in Venezuela”. The event included Sophia Shaningwa (Secretary General of the SWAPO, Namibia), Jesús Farias (Vice President of the PSUV Economy Committee, Venezuela), Yuri Pimentel (Venezuela’s International Relations Deputy Minister), Diego Sequera (International Political Analyst, Mission Truth, Venezuela), and Carlos Ron (President of the Simón Bolívar Institute, Venezuela).

The online event took place on Thursday, 8th October 2020, at 15:00 and was broadcast simultaneously on Facebook pages of the hosting organisations. COSATU’s International Secretary Comrade Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni was a panellist for the event and shared on COSATU’s position regarding the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the significance of these elections for the people of Venezuela, and also provided a message of support.

Anti-imperialist Working-Class Platform

The United Socialist Party of Venezuela (Spanish: Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, PSUV) and the Central Bolivariana Socialista de Trabajadores de la Ciudad, Campo y Pesca (CBST-CCP) are convening a global “Anti-imperialist Working-Class Platform Virtual Meeting” on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of October 2021.

The initiative to establish the Platform Of The Anti-Imperialist Working Class (PCOA), a project promoted by the Vice Presidency of the Working Class of the Party United Socialist of Venezuela (VCO-PSUV) and the Central Bolivariana Socialista de Trabajadores de la Ciudad, Campo y Pesca (CBST-CCP), is a movement that aims to contribute to the rebirth of the anti-imperialist struggles of workers against the globalising project neoliberal with a new social identity, from the multiple and the diverse. COSATU International Secretary, Comrade Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni delivered a message of support in this Meeting, which was a first of its kind.

Mozambique

For almost three years, the ISIS-affiliated extremist group Ansar al-Sunna has spearheaded an insurgency in Mozambique’s northern province of Cabo Delgado. In recent months the situation in

Cabo Delgado has deteriorated significantly and violent attacks are now frequent. Militants have begun to target military positions having previously focused on civilian targets. It is a sign that the group is growing in resilience, operational capacity and confidence.

SADC has long recognized the urgent need to intervene in Mozambique. However, after each summit, there has been little, or no action taken to combat the attacks. In November 2018, at the SADC extraordinary Troika Summit in Angola, the regional bloc pledged support in ending the attacks. Nothing has been done and there has been a call for another summit on the Mozambique question what with the escalation of the attacks in late March 2021. On the 19th of May 2020, Harare was a host of the SADC summit of the Troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security of which the insurgency in Mozambique was on the agenda. The meeting ended without any decisive agreement on SADC's role in the Mozambique question.

On the 8th of April 2021, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) held an emergency meeting in Maputo to discuss terrorism in Mozambique. Following the talks, SADC said attacks could not “be allowed to continue without a proportionate regional response”.

SADC troops were deployed to Cabo Delgado on the 15th of July 2021, a week after Rwanda sent troops independently. A year later, despite some progress, violent extremism continues. According to Medecins Sans Frontieres, the situation on the ground remains dire. Violence is moving south, which is leading to further displacement, there is not enough aid to address the growing humanitarian crisis, and the effects of the conflict are taking their toll on people's mental health.

In addition to the military approach, SADC implemented its Peace Building Support Programme in July 2022, which is aimed at “enhancing social protection mechanisms, law and order, humanitarian assistance and capacity building initiatives in Cabo Delgado Province.” However, the little or lack of effective intervention from SADC and the AU has presented an opportunity to commercialize the Mozambican crisis notably with private companies looking to attain military contracts. Moreover, the discovery of oil has been seen as an opportunity by the Western forces to seek an influence in Mozambique.

COSATU Meeting with OTM and progressive movements in Mozambique

On the 4th of March 2021 COSATU's International Office held a virtual meeting with our allies in Mozambique – the Mozambique Workers' Organization (Organização dos Trabalhadores de Moçambique) (OTM) to revive relations, offer solidarity, and get first-hand information on the situation in Cabo Delgado. Comrade Damiao Simango (OTM International Secretary) indicated that the situation in the Northern Province of Mozambique is worse than what is being depicted in the main stream media. Children are being headed, innocent people killed and many more displaced. Comrade Helder Consolo from OTM and Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development – Adriano Nuvunga also shared on their experience and thoughts, and the type of intervention expected from other countries in the region.

COSATU is in constant contact with Comrades from OTM, on the current developments. The IRC recommends that COSATU lead an initiative that will lead to an intervention in Mozambique, through SATUCC. The IRC agreed that COSATU should call for an Urgent Special Meeting on the Mozambique Insurgency coordinated by SATUCC. The Meeting should look into the deadly attacks, and deteriorating security challenges which have detrimental effects on the region. The trade union

movement has a huge role to play in regional stability, and COSATU should be driving this item forward.

SALO Engagements on Mozambique

The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) has hosted several regional multi-stakeholder engagements, with the aim of highlighting the deteriorating security issue in Mozambique and the need for regional solidarity. COSATU has engaged and participated in these dialogues organised by SALO. The most common outcome of the engagements has been action points from respective civil and political groups in the region aimed at developing regional and international consensus on the conflict in Mozambique.

Lesotho

LFTU-COSATU MOU Renewal

COSATU in the Free State province has renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lesotho Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU). IN 2011, COSATU and the Federations of Trade Unions in Lesotho entered into an MOU with the sole purpose of, among other things, promoting unity of workers in Lesotho with the assistance of COSATU and where necessary, the involvement of SATUCC was envisaged.

During the MOU period, parties organised joint activities to create a conducive climate for Lesotho Federations to work together. Parties used to organise joint May Day Celebrations both in Lesotho and South Africa. In 2017 3 Federations viz APTU, COLETU, and LECODU engaged in talks to explore the possibility of merging into one Body. The intention was further strengthened by the Teachers' strike, where workers realised that having different and separate Trade Unions was not to their advantage. The challenges faced by the workers during Covid19 lockdowns further amplified the disadvantages.

The Lesotho Federation of Trade Unions was established in August 2020 and resolved to pursue the aims and objectives of the 2011 MOU, which has been slightly modified.

Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racism Campaigns

On May 25th, 2020, George Floyd a 46-year-old black man was killed in Minneapolis when a police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. The death of Floyd sparked months of global Black Lives Matter protests and a worldwide racial justice movement that has continued since then. What links people all over the world today is rage and anger against the system that has caused serious precarity, poverty and disturbed livelihoods of people of colour in the world. The murder of George Floyd spun the world into action and was observed by the Alliance (ANC, SACP and COSATU) as a campaign to be adopted in support of the anti-racism struggle in the U.S, here in South Africa, as well as anywhere else in the world it happens.

COSATU participated in two webinars organised for the campaign. The first was an ANC hosted webinar that was addressed by activists Keith Jennings, John Taylor, Martin Luther King III, Ms LaTosha Brown, and Antoinette Keith. This panel represented different levels of activism from

community, church, unions, women, and students. The second Webinar was hosted by COSATU addressed by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). The Durban +20 meeting which took place in December 2020 also presented an opportunity for a joined programme to raise our voices on the issue.

Following the interaction of the Special IRC held on the 30th of June 2020, it was resolved that a follow up session should be held, and a joint programme developed in solidarity with CBTU that will focus on this campaign. The call from CBTU is for the South African voice to be increased in support of the campaign. CBTU has moved past the demand for equality to the struggle for equity. They called for solidarity through open letters, pickets at the U.S. Embassy, guidance, and sending messages of solidarity and encouragement. COSATU will continue to contribute and participate in the Alliance activities on the campaign.

In addition to this, COSATU has condemned the heavy-handedness and racial profiling by law enforcement when responding to protests by unarmed poor people. The federation has also called for an end to this act of undervaluing the lives of poor black people. We have also called for justice for the slain poor black people protesting for a better life.

More recently in May 2021, COSATU Deputy International Secretary participated as a panel discussant at the TUC Black Workers Conference. The focus for this discussion was how the trade union movement can build an international Black workers' movement against racism that protects Black communities from state violence and economic exploitation. The TUC uses the term Black worker to describe workers who are viewed as culturally and intellectually inferior because they are perceived as non-white and often share a common history and experience of oppression and exploitation through colonialism, imperialism, and contemporary capitalism.



COSATU 14th National Congress 26 – 29 September 2022

Programme

First day, 26th September 2022

Chairperson: First Deputy President Comrade Mike Shingange

10:00	1. Opening and Welcome
10:05 – 10h25	2. Choir singing Inkosi Sikelel' I Afrika, Internationale and Solidarity Forever
10h25 – 10h30	3. Health and Safety Procedure
10h30 – 10h40	4. Presentation of the Credentials Report
10h40 – 10h50	5. Confirmation of the Congress Agenda
10h50 – 11h00	6. Adoption of the Congress Rules
11h00 – 11h10	7. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 13 National Congress
11h10 – 11h20	8. National Congress Roll call
11h20 – 12h15	9. Opening Address by Cosatu President Zingiswa Losi
12h15 – 12h20	10. Acknowledgement of Guests
12h20 -12h40	11. Process report on the election of the new Cosatu National Office Bearers
12h40 – 13h25	12. Address by the ANC
13h25 – 14h45	LUNCH
14h45 – 15h45	13. Presentation of the Political Report
15h45 – 16h00	14. Message of support by ITUC
16h00 – 19h00	15. Debate on the political report and the affiliates political resolutions
19H00	16. Congress adjourns

Second Day, 27th September 2022

Chairperson: President Comrade Zingiswa Losi

09h00 – 09h25	1. Address by the SACP
09h25 – 10h25	2. Debate on the political report and Affiliates political resolutions continues
10h25 – 11h25	3. Presentation of the organisational report
11h25 – 12h00	4. Presentation of the Financial report
12h00 – 13h00	5. Debate and discussion on the organisational and financial report and affiliates resolutions on organisational
13h00 – 14h30	LUNCH
14h30 – 18h30	6. Debate on the organisational and financial reports and affiliates resolutions continues till 18h30
18h30	7. Congress adjourns

Third Day, 28th September 2022

Chairperson Second Deputy President Comrade Louisa Thipe

09h00 – 09h20	1. Message of support from the WFTU
09h20 – 10h40	2. Presentation of the socio –economic report
10h40 – 13h00	3. Debate on the socio economic report and affiliates resolutions on socio economic
13h00 – 14h30	LUNCH
14h45 – 15h45	4. Debate on the socio –economic report and affiliates resolutions continue
15h45 – 16h45	5. Presentation of the International report
16h45 – 19h00	6. Debate on the international report and affiliates resolutions
19h00	7. Congress adjourns
Supper and Cultural evening till 21h00	

Fourth Day, 29th September 2022

Chairperson: First Deputy President Comrade Mike Shingange

09h00 – 09h30	1. Message of support from OATUU/ITUC Africa
09h30 – 10h00	2. Adoption of the Secretariat report
10h30 – 11h00	3. Announcement of the NOBS elections results
11h00 – 11h30	4. Presentation of the Congress Declaration
11h30 – 12h15	5. Closing remarks by the new Cosatu President

Head Office

COSATU House, 110 Jorissen Street , Corner Simmonds Street, Johannesburg • P O Box 1019 Johannesburg 2000 • Tel: 011 339 4911