



The Shopsteward

The official publication of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

Volume 33.1 • COSATU News Publication • December-January 2025



Charity beyond the green
#COSATUGolfChallenge

Contents

Worker Issues

- Beyond loadshedding: The critical role of eskom in SA's economic recovery – **Page 6**
- Young Workers from num march against retrenchments and youth unemployment – **Page 8**
- Charity beyond the green – **Page 10**

The Economy

- Re-industrialise to enhance job creation, argues SACP – **Page 14**
- It's time to fix the UIF and COIDA - now! – **Page 16**
- On Industrial Policy Master-plans-a trade union perspective – **Page 18**
- Steel is the foundation of any industrialisation plan - How much does it cost to save ArcelorMittal? – **Page 20**
- Township Economic development framework – does it reach the ground? – **Page 22**

The Alliance

SACP remembers Joe Slovo following his death in 1995 – **Page 24**

Gender Agenda

- In conversation with Domestic Workers on the COIDA Amendment Act – **Page 26**

International

- Mozambique struggling to calm down post-election chaos – **Page 29**
- 'Any defence budget cut literally translates to loss of life', argues COSATU – **Page 31**
- A call to lift Imperialist Economic Blockade heightened! – **Page 33**
- Hamas-Israel ceasefire deal in force! – **Page 35**

Affiliates

- 'Nurses are unsafe in Limpopo clinics', declares DENOSA and NEHAWU – **Page 37**
- DENOSA Western Cape concludes its provincial congress – **Page 39**
- SATAWU vows to accelerate membership recruitment and defend jobs in its sector – **Page 39**

Commentary

- Why the Expropriation Act is crucial for the country's future! – **Page 41**
- Decisive intervention is needed in the DRC as women and children are suffering – **Page 43**
- Defend and preserve our noble culture Ulwaluko from the whims of commercialisation and profit-making: Signposts of Capitalism – **Page 45**

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Solly Phetoe **EDITOR:** Norman Mampane **LAYOUT & DESIGN:** Nthabiseng Moloi

EDITORIAL BOARD: Solly Phetoe, Norman Mampane, Nthabiseng Moloi

SUBSCRIPTION & DISTRIBUTION: Nthabiseng Moloi **PRINTERS:** Shereno Printers

ADVERTISING SALES: Nthabiseng Moloi **Tel:** +27 (0)10 219 1341 **Fax:** 086 481 6163

Email: nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za • 110 Jorissen & Simmonds Street, Braamfontein, 2001 PO Box 1019, Johannesburg 2000 **Tel:** +27 (0)11 339 4911 **Fax:** +27 (0)11 339 5080/6940 www.cosatu.org.za

© **Copyright 2024. All rights reserved.**

On 1 December, COSATU will celebrate 40 years of fighting for and defending workers' rights. But our commitment to waging the workers' struggles remains as strong as ever.

In our quest to better serve you, we find new and exciting ways to connect with you. To that end, in the last week of February COSATU launched a new and improved call centre to help workers deal with the challenges they come across.

These could be anything from an employer who refuses to pay the National Minimum Wage, which has increased to R28.79 from 1 March 2025; to a boss who does not pay workers' UIF or pension fund contributions; or perhaps a worker experiences problems claiming benefits from UIF or the Compensation Fund.

The call centre is a partnership between COSATU and Rand Mutual Assurance and is located



Editor in Chief

Solly Phetoe

at the Federation's head office in Braamfontein. This call centre will assist members of trade unions affiliated to COSATU, as well as those who do not belong to any union in line with the Federation's policy of fighting for and defending the rights of all workers.

The call centre will also intervene when workers are not happy with the service they receive from their union. Most importantly, it will help COSATU reach the next level because unorganised workers who receive assistance from the call centre will be encouraged to join COSATU affiliated trade unions and by so doing grow membership numbers.

In the long run we are hoping to have dedicated people at the UIF and CCMA attend to calls directly from the COSATU call centre to make sure their queries are resolved quickly.

The days of having workers sent from pillar to post when attempting to claim their rightful benefits will be a thing of the past once the call centre is fully operational.

We have grown tired of hearing stories of mothers who eventually went back to work without receiving their maternity benefits although they applied on time. Worse still, the child they were carrying would

be running around and yet they hadn't received one red cent of their benefits.

Workers are frustrated waiting in queues for days on end at the UIF out of desperation to access funds due to them. The same is true for the Compensation Fund for Occupational Injuries and Diseases where workers can wait for years to receive their relief. The call centre will have achieved its mission when workers are paid their benefits on time, every time.

We hope this partnership between COSATU and RMA will inspire others in the financial services sector to join hands with the Federation and deal with the challenges of unclaimed benefits from retirement funds, to UIF, COIDA and lost wages. The number one goal of this call centre is to have workers paid what is due to them, and by so doing improve their lives.

The call centre will soon have a tollfree number, so workers do not have to hassle for airtime when they need help the most. ■■■■■



Word from the Editor
Norman Mampane

Is South Africa's higher education system in crisis?

Compliments of the New Year! COSATU Shopsteward Magazine welcomes workers and their families to another promising year, 2025 to change society and lead the radical workplace transformation.

We congratulate all the learners who achieved awesomely in the Matric Class of 2024.

As the 2025 academic year begins some South African universities have

seen overwhelming numbers of applications, much more than they can accommodate.

Parents and community organizations have amplified their outcry about the trajectory of zero capacity building to accommodate these students in a demanding economy for skilled workforce.

Public universities across the country have received a high number

of applications, with only limited available spaces. In such moments as citizens, we should be asking how far are we in achieving 'Quality Public Education for all', 'The People's Education for total emancipation', ensuring everyone has access to inclusive, equitable learning opportunities?

COSATU and affiliated trade unions have participated in various #Back2School Campaigns and the

#Right2Learn Campaign in communities.

We acknowledge all worker leaders, education activists, safety activists and school governing bodies for working with the federation through the Mass Democratic Movement structures such as the Progressive Youth Alliance, Education Alliance and also the newly formed Education Front.

All these efforts much galvanise every stakeholder

to play its role in promoting education and overhauling public education provision as a critical component in accelerating economic growth and human development.

In this Edition, we elevate the critical importance of MasterPlans across all sectors of the economy and sustainable electricity provision to stimulate economic growth and creation of decent jobs.

The high unemployment rate in South Africa, sitting at 32.1% is a calamity!

According to Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 'There were about 158 thousand more people who were unemployed in Q2:2024 than in Q1:2024. Employment decreased by 92 000 in the second quarter of 2024, following an increase of 22 000 in the first quarter of 2024.

The number of employed persons increased from 14,1 M in Q2:2020 (COVID inception) to 16,7M in Q2:2024. The official unemployment rate increased by 0,6 of a percentage point to 33,5 % in Q2:2024 compared to Q1:2024. The expanded unemployment rate increased by 0,7 of a percentage point to 42,6% when comparing Q2:2024 and Q1:2024. Graduate unemployment rate decreased by 2,1 percentage points to 9,7% in Q2:2024 compared to

11,8% in Q1:2024.

Those with matric and less than matric remain vulnerable with unemployment rates of 35,8% and 39,3% respectively. Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at 60,8% and 41,7% respectively."

The State of the Nation Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the government's main goals for the year, and then the Minister of Finance must set the budget to support those goals, amongst others to create jobs, harmonise delivery of quality public services, eradicate red tapes on infrastructural projects which are job drivers in the economy and create decent living standards for all citizens.

Safety and security concerns of citizens where they live and work, must be addressed!

Young workers from NUM marched against retrenchment and youth unemployment in South Africa at Rosebank at the Minerals Council South Africa and unemployed doctors organised by SAMATU led a massive march in Pretoria to the office of Minister Enoch Godongwana at the National Treasury, demanding eradication

of austerity measures in the country!

These are correct building blocks to strengthening class struggle in all sectors of the economy! We congratulate all newly elected worker leaders in various affiliates who convened elective Congresses and Conferences.

COSATU will be convening Provincial Congresses and Provincial Gender Conferences. We wish all comrades success in "Building Working Class Unity for Economic Liberation towards Socialism," as the previous National Congress mandated structures to fulfil!

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Class struggle is a political struggle!

On the International front, since the inauguration of President Donald Trump, we have observed rising concerns about the 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisies', 'fascism' and 'right-wing parties' trending across the globe.

This calls for left-wing forces to reorganize and rally society against this direction in the pursuit of class struggle.

Global citizens must welcome the advancement of peace processes in the Middle East, especially after the signing of the Gaza

ceasefire by Hamas and apartheid Israeli regime!

Humanitarian aid and trauma counselling programmes must be accelerated to those who lost their loved ones, homes, those were tortured, starved and with missing limbs.

Majority of women and children were the mostly affected components of society!

Let's demand the arrest of all individuals who instigate wars and ensure they face appropriate legal proceedings to ultimately achieve justice for the most vulnerable populations in our global community.

Multilateralism is seriously under threat, especially after Trumps' Executive Orders', which have affected every country across the globe, whether on issues related to foreign aid, trade tariffs or on geopolitics.

It is time that the United Nations must rise to the occasion to play its primary role on fostering peace and stability across all the continents.

In the same way, it is essential to prevent the violence and loss of life among both civilians and soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We wish all our members and readers alike a Happy, Prosperous New Year!

Aluta Continua! ■



BEYOND LOADSHEDDING

The critical role of eskom in SA's economic recovery

The return of loadshedding on the weekend of January month-end is a timely reminder that despite the excellent work in turning Eskom around over the past few years, it remains fragile and needs our collective support if, we are to ensure the economy has the reliable and affordable electricity it needs to grow, create jobs and provide the tax revenue public services require to function.

We have seen steady progress over the past

two years, where not long ago loadshedding was the norm and we reached the peak of 12 hours a day. The government, led by the African National Congress [ANC], has done well to help Eskom stabilise and rebuild.

The efforts of various Ministers, the management team of Eskom, and most importantly Eskom and municipal employees must be applauded. The fact that the economy has been spared loadshedding for 10 months, leaving aside

the short and relatively minor period over the past weekend, is a testimony to their hard work and South Africa's inherent potential.

However, we dare not be complacent. Eskom remains fragile and an economy struggling with 1% gross domestic product growth and 41.9% unemployment cannot afford to return to the dark days of loadshedding.

While the green shoots of Eskom's turnaround are inspiring, the danger lights remain as this weekend

reminds us. Many areas continue to be hindered by load reduction. This is particularly problematic for factories and other heavy electricity users who cannot operate under such reductions.

While Eskom did not receive its ill-considered 36% tariff hike, it was granted a 12.7% increase that is still four times the level of inflation and most workers' salary increases. It comes against the backdrop of increases since 2006, amounting to

over 600%! Eskom is the nation's most important economic asset. The entire economy depends upon its efficient functioning and ability to generate reliable and affordable electricity. Even businesses and homes that have gone off grid still require society and the economy to have access to electricity supplied by Eskom.

Eskom's turnaround success has correctly been based upon addressing its maintenance challenges. It now needs support to address its financial and infrastructure crises. The approach of massive double-digit tariff hikes that fail to fix the underlying faultlines are tantamount to pickpocketing consumers at best and at worst they are pushing consumers off grid and thus threatening Eskom's own sustainability.

Law enforcement must be brought in to help Eskom tackle entrenched criminal activities. These range from supply chain fraud and tenderpreneurs, to private sector collusion supplying low grade coal whilst high grade was purchased, to criminal syndicates stripping copper cables.

Eskom is not the police nor the National Prosecuting Authority, the courts or State Security. These organs of state must play their part and help Eskom to deal with and remove these criminal syndicates that have inflicted so much damage upon the State-

Owned Enterprises (SOEs) over many years.

The government did well as proposed by Cosatu, to relieve Eskom of R253 billion of its debt burden. This has helped Eskom shift its resources towards maintenance and thus easing loadshedding.

We must be deeply worried, however, by the rising level of municipal debt owed to Eskom, which has more than doubled over the past few years to R90 billion and is projected to double again in the medium term unless bold action is taken.

Treasury put in place measures to assist municipalities settle their Eskom debt, yet already many are returning to their old non-paying delinquency.

While there is a long overdue need for a municipal funding model, Eskom cannot wait nor continue to be used as to fund to prop up dysfunctional municipalities. Nor can consumers continue to be squeezed with tariff hikes far above inflation.

Eskom cannot be blamed when they are compelled to drag municipalities to settle their debts, especially after they continuously renege on settlement agreements. Some of these municipalities owe billions.

Eskom is also confronted by a crisis of some municipalities allowing their infrastructure to fall into

disrepair, yet they decline the SOE's offers of help to deploy teams to get them running again.

Linked to a new municipal funding model, has to be a shift towards all consumers paying Eskom directly. This will ensure it has the daily cash flow to keep the lights on and undertake the necessary maintenance.

A new municipal funding model needs to compensate municipalities for their electricity infrastructure costs and how they've depended upon electricity tariffs to cross-subsidise other municipal functions. But the status quo of rising municipal debt cannot continue.

The second key intervention area needed is on Eskom's infrastructure.

The government needs to relax its debt relief conditions on Eskom, including its repayment and interest charged to allow it to invest in new generation capacity.

Eskom must be enabled to enter the renewable energy generation space not only as a purchaser but also as an owner. This will help Eskom to lower its generation costs, dependence on Independent Power Producers and also expand the diversity of its generation.

The fundamental reason why we saw a return to loadshedding is that Eskom's generation fleet is aging and will continue

to struggle as time moves on. Enabling and assisting Eskom to invest in new generation capacity is key to overcoming loadshedding and in fact to positioning South Africa to once again becoming an exporter of surplus electricity to the region and thus helping spur the economies of neighbouring states and reduce the pressures of migration on ourselves.

The 2024 State of the Nation Address made a bold commitment to invest in 14 000 kms of new transmission lines. This will unlock renewable energy generation in the three Cape Provinces and attract badly needed investment and construction jobs. But we need to be worried about the tepid progress in rolling out this infrastructure.

If we want to ensure we do not see the return of loadshedding, to end Eskom's unsustainable dependence on unsustainable tariff hikes and provide the economy with the reliable and affordable electricity it needs to grow and create decent jobs; then collectively we must do more to support Eskom.

Solly Phetoe is the General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions in Braamfontein.



ANCYL joined NUM Youth Structure on the picket lines outside the Minerals Council South Africa premises in strong opposition to the ongoing retrenchment of mineworkers

Young Workers from NUM

march against retrenchments and youth unemployment

Hundreds of young people gathered outside the premises of the Minerals Council South Africa, at Rosebank to demand a moratorium against jobs losses in South Africa.

This came after various employers such

as Sibanye, De Beers, Petra Diamonds, Anglo Platinum, Murray and Roberts mining and the notorious Seriti Resources announced Section 189A Notices.

The National Union of Mineworkers and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

were deeply concerned following ArcelorMittal's announcement of its plan to wind-down its long steel mill in Newcastle in January 2025, which could result in the loss of 3 500 direct and indirect jobs.

The company lists unaffordable energy and logistic costs, and surging

low-cost steel imports into the country, particularly from China, as some of the main reasons for this decision.

Sandra Maseko, the National Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) National Youth Structure

and the ANC Youth League handed over a powerful memorandum to the CEO of the Minerals Council South Africa, Mr. Mzila Mthenjane, calling for urgent action on key issues affecting the mining sector.

“Last in, first out [LIFO] principle during retrenchments affects young people who have the highest percentages of unemployment in South Africa. We demand social labour plans in all poor working class communities to alleviate poverty, unemployment and inequality”, said Maseko.

ANCYL President,

Collen Malatji addressing members and supporters of the party outside the Minerals Council of South Africa in Rosebank during the picket against retrenchments of mineworkers said, *“We have made a political decision to picket against the black Christmas that your mines have given to the workers by retrenching them on the eve of Christmas.”*

“Today, we stand unwavering with the National Union of Mineworkers on the picket lines, demanding justice and accountability. We will not tolerate the destruction

of our workers’ livelihoods, and we will fight until their rights are fully realised. We stand united with the National Union of Mineworkers, fighting for the rights and dignity of our mineworkers.

We will not remain silent while their livelihoods are being destroyed. Justice must prevail.” *“We are saying no to the retrenchment of workers,”* reiterated Malatji.

Receiving the memorandum of demands, the Minerals Council South Africa Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mzila Mthenjane said, *“I accept*

the memorandum on behalf of the Minerals Council South Africa and commit that I will engage the Board of the Minerals Council Executive as well as members in terms of how we go about with yourselves as the leadership in order to resolve these issues.”

Meanwhile, COSATU has called on all stakeholders including the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the National Union of Mineworkers and other industry trade unions and ArcelorMittal to urgently find a way to halt the impending job losses.



President Cyril Ramaphosa tees off at the Johannesburg Country Club in Woodmead, Sandton

— CHARITY — BEYOND THE GREEN

The Johannesburg Country Club hosted a huge charity event on December 2, 2024, hosted by the Congress of South African Trade Unions in collaboration with Promptly, Momentum, and Sanlam.

In addition to providing school shoes, stationery, and sanitary goods for those in need, the event aimed to raise money for orphans and humanize those in need.

For the benefit of all participating golfers, Cyril Ramaphosa, president of the African National Congress, teed off at hole number one prior to noon. For the women who took part, COSATU President Zingiswa Losi gave a teed off.

More than 40 golfers participated from various companies such as Santam, Sanlam, Safrican.

Zingiswa Losi said "COSATU is pleased to welcome all the golfers to the inaugural, annual COSATU Charity Golf Challenge's Prize-Giving which will take place after what we hope would be a

worthwhile exercise on the fairways with networking and giving back to the community."

"We appeal to all corporate South Africa to support this initiative of its kind to give back to needy citizens. A date will be announced to ensure that we diarize this annual event for 2025".

"COSATU, the National Office Bearers and the Central Executive Committee appreciates your generosity. We are hopeful you enjoyed your time on the green".

Solly Phetoe, COSATU General Secretary acknowledged all participants and 'appealed for a solid partnership going forward.'

Thank For Helping Make The Inaugural COSATU Charity Golf Challenge A Success

We extend our sincere gratitude to you for joining us at the COSATU Charity Golf Challenge held on 02nd December 2024 at the Johannesburg Country Club. Your presence and enthusiasm on the course were integral to the

event's success, creating an unforgettable day for all involved.

Your Mzansi spirit not only made the tournament competitive and enjoyable but also contributed to our CSI projects, #Bek2Skul and #padagirl campaigns. We can be proud of our achievement in our inaugural year and know that we can only grow from strength to strength from here on.

We hope you enjoyed the day's activities, from networking with President Losi and President Ramaphosa, and the prize-giving awards, to the camaraderie shared with fellow golfers. Your commitment to the game and our cause inspires us to continue hosting events that bring people together.

Thank you once again for your support. We look forward to welcoming you in 2025. Please be on the lookout for the event details to be shared soon.

Click on this link www.cosatugolfchallenge.co.za/media to go down memory lane with our professional event pictures.

Please feel free to share your feedback or suggestions by contacting us at info@cosatugolfchallenge.co.za

Regards,
Organising Committee

Winners at the COSATU Charity Golf Day Gala Evening

Individual Stableford A Division

Jabu Khumalo
Sifiso Khumalo
Mtunzi Giwana

B Division

Dinash Pillay
Tendante
Ceeekay Kapambe

Ladies Division

Makgola Makololo
Olefine Ramashale
Sylvia

Nearest to Pin Ladies Hole 15

Fufu Galeni

Longest Drive Ladies Hole 3

Thobile Ngalmoni

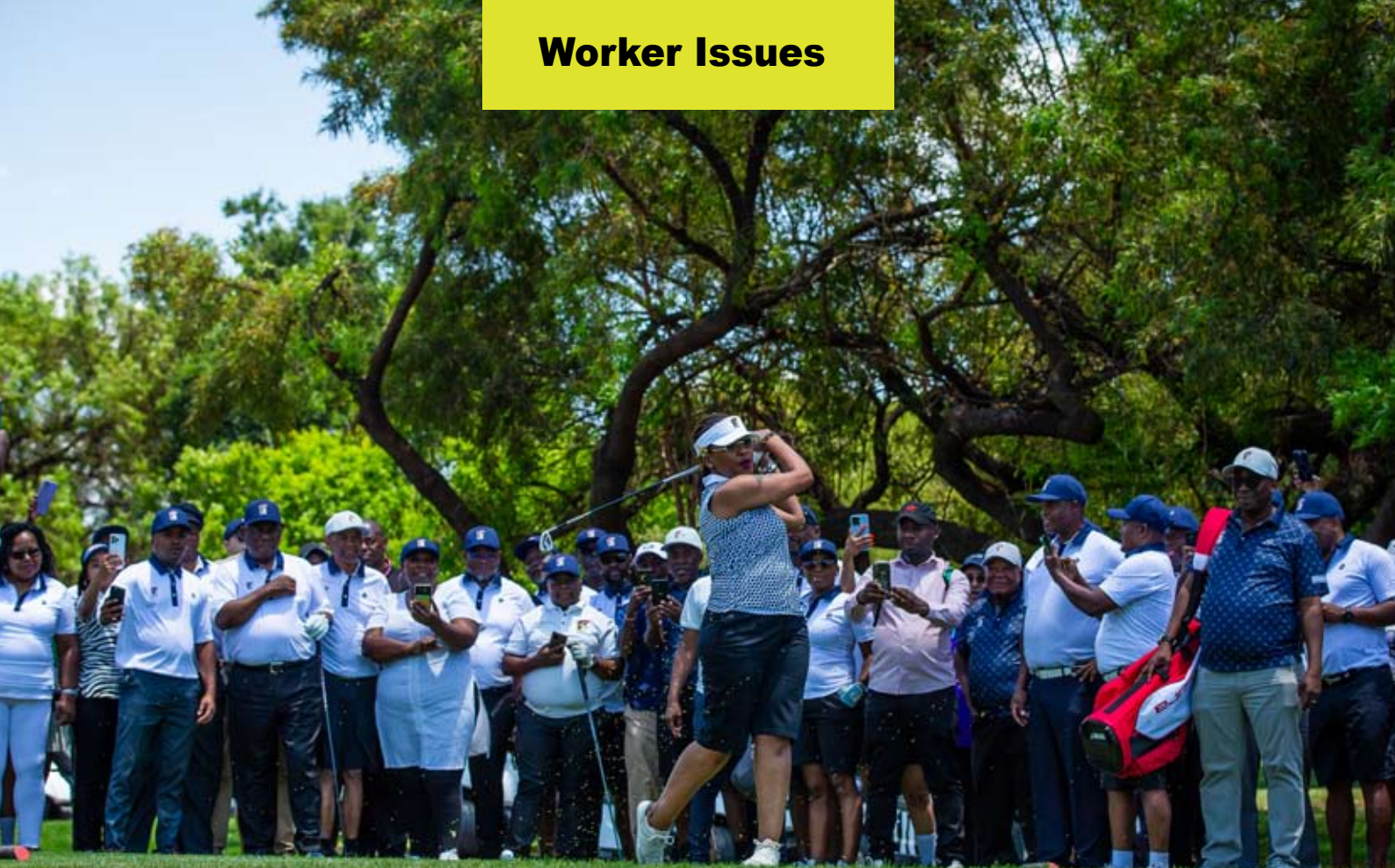
Nearest to Pin Hole 4 Men

Kevin Naidoo

Longest Drive Men

Frans De Beer

Worker Issues



#COSATU Golf Day Challenge

COSATU President Zingiswa Losi teed off at hole number 1



Participants on the green course

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Workers' education,
Education of special type,
Always sifting and weighing the evidence,
Perceive clearly truth from false,
Reality from unreal, fact from fiction,
Think intensively and think critically,
Intelligence plus character is a goal of true education.
When reactionaries plot, progressive minded people must plan,
When counter revolutionaries burn and bomb, revolutionaries build and bind,
You only need!

Pedagogy of the Oppressed,
The Special type of education.

No tree can grow without roots, like a house without foundation,
Pace, breadth and the degree of change are struggle on its own,
The fragile flower refuses to grow!
Where people agree on aims, squabble over methods,
Where they agree on aims and methods, squabble over personalities,
You only need!

Pedagogy of the Oppressed,
The Special type of education.

We cannot allow being pawns in the hands of artificially strong,
Our strength must set the tone we are the hope of humanity,
They say, "Little people shut up!"
They tell us what our aims are,
If they choose to fight, we get trampled,
If they tell us to fight, we trample on each other,
You only need!

Pedagogy of the Oppressed,
The Special type of education.

Political equality does not of itself guarantee freedom,
But absentee of political equality guarantees a mess,
Never shut up until!

You have power of chasing away poverty,
You have means of your life material existence,
You have freedom, peace and bread,
You have power of your own creation and control,
You only need!

Pedagogy of the Oppressed,
The Special type of education.

By Thobile Maso



The closure of Arcelor Mittal Steel in South Africa is expected to affect much more than the anticipated 3,500 direct job losses

RE-INDUSTRIALISE TO ENHANCE job creation, argues SACP

Worker Issues

Large corporations are laying off employees. To mention a few, ArcelorMittal, Seriti Resources, and Anglo Platinum. The mining union, NUM, continues to express worry and disapproval over recent decisions by employers across all areas to retrench large numbers of members.

Retrenchments jeopardize the stability and livelihoods of dedicated employees while also demonstrating

a disrespect for the critical role that people play in the success and profitability of businesses.

According to several economists, 'ArcelorMittal's collapse shows the urgent need for industrial policy reform. ArcelorMittal SA (Amsa), South Africa's largest steelmaker, has stated that it will close its long steel division as well as its Newcastle and Vereeniging operations.

According to the Chief

Executive Officer, Kobus Verster 'Amsa was first postponed due to a planned Transnet project in early 2024; however, it was forced to close after the government failed to complete it. The steel industry is crucial to South Africa's production and economy.

Achieving our country's infrastructure investment goals, as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) relies on a consistent local supply of steel products such as

bars, rods, rails and wires for industries such as manufacturing, transport, mining or construction. Dr. Alex Mashilo writes to articulate the position of the South African Communist Party on a socialist agenda to re-industrialise the stagnant economy in the current conjuncture.

Mashilo argues that 'we need to halt the erosion of our national industrial base.'

First and foremost, the Party pledges its solidarity with the workers and reiterates its call for decisive state intervention to halt the erosion of our national industrial base and stop manufacturing de-industrialisation.

Ensuring that ArcelorMittal does not mothball or shut down production at the long-steel operations in Newcastle Works, Vereeniging Works and the Retail and Structural Mill must be an immediate priority. In making this call on 3 December 2023, the SACP Central Committee stressed that the continuity of production at the factories that ArcelorMittal adopted its intention to mothball or shut down must not hinge on the ownership of those factories by the Global North-based multinational corporation.

“Therefore, state intervention should include possible transfer of ownership or direct takeover [of the affected productive capacity] from ArcelorMittal to ensure the continuity of production, as opposed to allowing ArcelorMittal to close [it]”, said the SACP Central Committee in a statement of the key outcomes of its plenary, held from 1 to 3 December 2023.

The SACP reiterates this call, further noting that any engagements that may have taken place between the government and ArcelorMittal have not

translated into the desired outcomes, given the decision by ArcelorMittal to go ahead and mothball or close down production at the factories to be affected.

Over and above the reported 3,500 direct workers to be affected are others in the medium- and longer-term multiples in the value chain, in the region of 20,000 to 25,000.

This is unacceptable in a country struggling with an unemployment crisis, with over 12 million active and discouraged work seekers unemployed.

ArcelorMittal: Privatisation failure

ArcelorMittal is what was once a state-owned Iscor since 1928. It is a result of Iscor’s privatisation in 1989 by the apartheid regime after adopting neo-liberalism in the 1970s.

This privatisation was, however, not completed until the early 2000s following the adoption of the neo-liberal economic policy called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear), by the first administration post-apartheid in 1996.

Along with the subsequent foreign acquisitions and mergers, Iscor’s privatisation marked the beginning of the distressing journey that forced our pre-existing industrial capacity to succumb to foreign control and private profit-driven monopoly closures, now under ArcelorMittal.

The full takeover of the Saldanha Steel Mill in 2002,

developed through a joint venture with a public entity, the Industrial Development Corporation, paved the way for ArcelorMittal to determine the future of our domestic steel manufacturing industrial landscape, with far-reaching implications, including the recent decision by ArcelorMittal.

This privatisation failure should shame the advocates of privatisation. However, they are typically unrepentant and unlikely to acknowledge the truth in their tendency to insist on more of the same failed neo-liberal policy prescriptions.

The global context in which neo-liberal forces pushed privatisation, affecting state-owned enterprises, such as Iscor, was and still is characterised by capitalist competition for dominance and monopoly.

This is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Foreign-controlled multinational corporations, such as ArcelorMittal, have multiple manufacturing factories in different global regions. Others have overcapacity.

As a result, they tend to neglect investment into parts of the productive capacity that they capture from privatisation, mergers and acquisitions, in favour of importing the affected products from elsewhere within their global value chains.

The repercussions for affected countries have

been dire. In our national situation, they include the anti-developmental import parity pricing model that ArcelorMittal resorted to, abusing dominance, making its affected domestic steel products expensive.

From this standpoint, ArcelorMittal’s “complaint” about other domestic producers who, unlike itself, did not resort to the exploitative import parity prices but instead offered the same class of products at lower costs, sounds unreasonable.

As an industrial policy instrument, export tariffs on scrap metals have the positive effect of ensuring that scrap metal, which would otherwise be exported, is made available for domestic foundries, thereby supporting associated employment.

This benefits the associated products, which are made available at lower costs without the greed of import parity pricing.

However, to the extent that import duties, if any, must be raised from below the World Trade Organisation’s bound rates as part of measures to develop the domestic metal industries, this should be considered.

Dr Alex Mohubetswane Mashilo is the SACP Central Committee Member, National Spokesperson and Political Bureau Secretary for Policy and Research.



IT'S TIME TO **FIX** the UIF and COIDA - now!

by Jan Mahlangu

Retrenchment and workplace injuries can devastate families. That is why we, as workers organised under the banner of COSATU, had struggled to protect ourselves through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and

Diseases (COIDA) Act.

UIF and COIDA are meant to be safety nets that support us in our time of need. UIF provides a lifeline during unemployment, illness, and maternity leave. COIDA steps in when we are injured or become ill because of the work that we do.

UIF is funded by contributions from both workers and bosses, while COIDA relies only on contributions from bosses.

Both are managed by the Department of Employment and Labour. But the reality is that workers are experiencing serious problems with UIF and

COIDA.

UIF is failing workers
Too often, the UIF is a source of frustration rather than support. We're seeing:

- **Unacceptable delays:** Workers are waiting months for payments, especially during mass layoffs and

crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Backlogs, errors, and system failures are to blame.

- **Silence and frustration:** UIF communication is a disgrace. Workers are left in the dark, unable to get updates on their claims or understand why they've been delayed or rejected.
- **Exclusion of the vulnerable:** Casual workers, those on fixed-term contracts, and workers in the informal sector are often excluded from UIF, even when they lose their jobs. This leaves the most vulnerable without support.
- **Ignorance is no excuse:** Many workers, especially in the informal sector, don't even know their rights or how to claim. The system is complex, and misinformation is rife.
- **System abuse:** Fraudulent claims drain the UIF fund, impacting its ability to help those genuinely in need.
- **COIDA:** Injured and ignored COIDA, designed to protect workers injured or made ill at work, is also falling short.
- **Denied and**

delayed: Claims are routinely rejected due to paperwork issues or a lack of "proof." Even when claims are approved, payments are often delayed, leaving workers without income while they recover.

- **Fear and silence:** Workers are scared to report injuries, fearing reprisals from bosses. This not only prevents them from getting compensation but also hides dangerous working conditions.
- **Inadequate support:** Even when workers receive compensation, it's often not enough to cover medical bills or lost wages, especially for long-term disabilities.
- **Exclusion of the most vulnerable:** Domestic workers and those in the informal sector are often left out in the cold, denied COID protection.
- **Safety Failures:** A lack of workplace safety inspections means employers are getting away with dangerous practices, putting workers at risk.
- **Employer dodging:** Many employers, especially small businesses, don't even register for COID, leaving their workers

completely unprotected.

COSATU's Struggle

COSATU is taking these issues head-on. We've raised our concerns at NEDLAC, demanding action. The recent eFiling debacle is just the latest example of the chaos. We are also deeply concerned by the suspension of the UIF Commissioner amidst allegations of corruption.

Transparency and accountability are non-negotiable. Serving the needs of workers and the working class is the priority

We are demanding:

- **System overhaul:** Modernizing the UIF and COIDA systems to make them more accessible, user-friendly and efficient.
- **Education is power:** Mass education campaigns to ensure all workers know their rights.
- **Enforcement and accountability:** Tougher action against employers who flout the law and put workers at risk.
- **Streamlined claims:** Simplifying the claims process and cutting red tape.
- **Real support for workers:** Improved

customer service and communication, so workers get the help they need, when they need it.

We need unity and strength to win this fight.

We must demand a UIF and COIDA system that truly serves the working class.

Organize in your workplaces, raise these issues with your members, and join the struggle!

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Jan Mahlangu is the National Retirement Coordinator at COSATU House in Braamfontein.

Strengthening sustainable electricity supply and workforce development are critical components in South Africa in building a sustainable future and boosting local economies.

ON INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Master-plans-a trade union perspective

by Tengo Tengela

Globally, there has been a proliferation of industrial policies in the form of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) Act in the United States under Biden administration, the Green

Deal Industrial Plan in the European Union, and the Made in China industrial policy, the New Direction on Economy and Industrial Policy in Japan and the K-Chips Act in South Korea.

For example, the K-Chips Act is a legislation in South

Korea designed to boost its domestic semiconductor industry by providing tax breaks to investments in the semiconductor and other “national strategic technologies” industries. The legislation would increase the tax credit to 15% from the current 8% for

major companies investing in manufacturing facilities. Smaller and medium-sized firms would see their tax break go from 16% up to 25%.

Even the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was forced to acknowledge the return of industrial policy,

this it did by publishing a long working paper titled “The return of industrial policy in Data.”

This paper makes the following observations:

- That the recent wave of new industrial policy activity is primarily driven by advanced economies, and that subsidies are the most employed instrument.
- Trade restrictions on imports and exports are more frequently used by governments both in developing and developed economies.
- Strategic competitiveness is the dominant motive governments give for these measures, but other objectives such as climate change, resilience and national security are on the rise.

In 2019, the South African government adopted what was called the Reimagined Industrial Policy Masterplans, this was a continuation with the practiced adopted by previous administration which was first piloted in the Auto and Components sector, which was then extended to the Textile Footwear, and Leather Industry.

Industrial policy making in South Africa from 2007-2018 was guided by what was known as industrial policy framework, the industrial policy frameworks, guided and provided a framework for the development of

Industrial Policy Action Plans, Priority industries across all IPAPs were Metal Fabrication, Capital Equipment and Transport; Agro-Processing; Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Plastics, Cosmetics and Medical Devices; Clothing, Textiles, Footwear, and Leather (CTFL); Automotive; Forestry, Timber, Paper and Pulp, and Furniture; Green Industries; and Business Process(BPS).

The question this article seeks to answer is what are industrial policy masterplans and how different are they from the previous Industrial policy action plans?

According to the 30-year industrial strategy and review document (2024), “the Reimagined Industrial Strategy proposed a new approach to industry-level planning, which was implemented through a set of Masterplans starting in 2019.

The Masterplans established a multi-stakeholder approach to industry-level initiatives, in which government, the private sector and labour collectively developed and implemented plans. In this regard, they contrasted with the earlier approach of state-led measures developed through comparatively informal consultations.

The Masterplans typically posed pragmatic questions about the constraints facing each industry and then developed a joint action plan to mitigate them. They involved actions around

multiple dimensions of a company’s operations, ranging from firming up demand to securing competitive inputs to resolving regulatory barriers and upgrading productive capacity”.

Work on industrial policy masterplans has been uneven, in sectors wherein there is history of economic policy making and the practice of social dialogue has been entrenched, and institutions of industrial policy are entrenched. There has been success in the formulation and implementation of industrial masterplans such as in the auto industry and components manufacturing.

We can also include here footwear, textile and leather industry, but there are cases where there have been significant failures such as in the health economy masterplan which should have included medical devices, nuclear medicine and pharmaceutical industry.

With the hard drive on austerity measures we have also seen massive cutbacks on the financing of industrial policy masterplans, this is in contrast to the increasing use of subsidies by South Africa’s competitors.

The energy and logistical challenges have also had a negative impact on the performance of South Africa’s manufacturing sector which is supposed to be the backbone and the driver of the broad-based structural

transformation of the South African economy.

So far, progress on Master Plans, include the following:

- Twelve [12] Masterplans were finalized and implemented during the sixth administration in sectors from clothing, textile, footwear and leather; poultry; sugar; commercial forestry; steel and engineering; automotives; global business services; furniture; agriculture and agro-processing; tourism; and most recently medical devices.
- Three [3] Masterplans are in the process of finalization including renewable energy, and cannabis and hemp.

In conclusion, this short article is an introduction to many articles that the Policy Unit will be sponsoring, providing deeper assessments and economic analysis of Industrial Policy Masterplans, giving progress updates, and proposing strategic interventions to move the process of codetermination forward.

It will also be a platform wherein we will inform the shop stewards of the changes in the industrial policy making ever-changing policy landscape.

Tengo Tengela is the Industrial Policy Coordinator at COSATU Head Office in Braamfontein



Steel production was an epicentre of industrialization in the early discovery of minerals such as gold, diamond, iron ore and coal and ArcelorMittal South Africa (AMSA), was the nation's leading steel producer

STEEL IS THE FOUNDATION OF ANY INDUSTRIALISATION PLAN - How much does it cost to save ArcelorMittal?

Many industry experts have regarded steel as material of choice to fuel electric vehicle revolution. However, in South Africa the potential closure of ArcelorMittal (Amsa) plants at Newcastle, Vanderbijlpark, and Vereeniging and the value chain of the steel sector which includes its flat steel business, corporate office and care support services and other operations which relies on its operations, threatens to jeopardize over 3.500 jobs.

With calls for re-industrialisation gaining momentum from poor communities as a result of high unemployment rate in South Africa, which stands at 35.2%, this could bring doom to such hopes.

Statistics South Africa reports that 8.4 million people are unemployed in the country, with

youth unemployment at 35.2%. The expanded unemployment rate stands at 42.6%, and the highest provincial rate is in North West.

The Minister of the Department of Employment and Labour, Ms. Nomakhosazana Meth met the management of Arcelor Mittal at the Vanderbijlpark Metal Works. Labour has welcomed the proactive efforts by the Minister of Employment and Labour, Hon to engage with the management to save these jobs. The unions have called on the company to open its engagements with potential investors to rescue the plants and also explore lobbying government to consider other ownership patterns which could yield positive results because the industry is crucial in the localisation of manufacturing

as an economic growth driver in terms of the National Development Plan [NDP].

Many workers have not forgotten how they lost jobs at Highveld Steel at eMalahleni area after South Africa's second-biggest steel manufacturer after ArcelorMittal SA, Highveld Steel & Vanadium collapsed around 2015. The collapse of the group, which was majority-owned by Evraz, resulted in the retrenchment of almost 3 500 people, including about 1 800 of its own staff as well as contractors. A Business Rescue plan was assigned to kick in, but jobs were lost forever in the area of eMalahleni. The Minister of the Department of Employment and Labour, Ms. Nomakhosazana Meth held in-depth discussion

on the challenges faced by the company, to find ways in which the Department can also provide support to enhance the ongoing Government support led by the Department of Trade and Industry.

According to the ArcelorMittal CEO, Mr. Kobus Verster 'the high cost of transport and fuel were among the main reasons the company had faced pressure relating to running costs over the years. He also mentioned that 'steel consumption had reduced by 30% less than 30 years ago.' The company had undergone the consultative stage with organised labour and had started the Section 189 retrenchment process.

'The impact will be huge. We are looking at 2000

employees and a further 1500 sub-contractors who will be impacted; resulting in a downstream impact of 80 – 100 000 jobs,” argued Verster

Minister Meth appealed to ArcelorMittal not to rush any process and provide the Department of Employment and Labour some time to affect the proposed intervention strategy, which includes the Temporary Employer/ Employee Relief Scheme (TERS), applied for

by ArcelorMittal.

The company argued that ‘the structural issues facing the Long Steel Business, have proven unsurmountable.’ Amsa claims that their competitors are given an unfair competitive edge on discounted scrap metal of about 40% and, they are demanding a discussion on import duties. Other social partners such as employer associations argued that ‘the loss of jobs will have

a devastating impact on the communities around these towns. However, throwing more taxpayers’ money at Amsa’s predicament, is not a permanent solution. Amsa’s antiquated steel mill consumes 60% more electricity in comparison to a modern steel mill.

The eventual burden of this ‘assistance’ will also be carried by South Africa’s taxpayers. The Steel Industry has already

shrunk by 20% since the introduction of duties in 2015. This very fact poses a substantial threat to Amsa’s long-term viability.’

Neva Makgetla, a Senior Researcher with Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies writes to unpack the huge challenges faced by ArcelorMittal and on how the company may respond to the crisis as a steel producer.

When Henry Bessemer began large scale steel production you can bet the local blacksmiths said he was unfairly stealing their market share.

Almost 200 years later ArcelorMittal has adopted a similar approach blaming its shutdown at Newcastle largely on the growth of cheaper, greener scrap-based steel production. However, undermining its competitors would in effect raise costs for local customers. It makes more sense to work on raising productivity at the remaining Amsa plants, which could help fill the gap left by Newcastle.

Big steel is always a challenge for democracies. Historically, the sector was dominated by a few companies with huge mills in secondary towns. They could lobby at the highest levels of government mobilising their communities and workers and shaping media coverage.

Over the past year, Amsa has aggressively pursued this model. In contrast, its competitors and customers are less well organised and capacitated. Most are relatively small businesses, spread

across a range of industries and towns. Historically they have not been organised to pressure the government to flood the media with opinion pieces and to encourage support from unions and municipalities.

But the disproportion in political power and publicity does not reflect the real needs of society and the economy. Amsa’s long steel plant at Newcastle employs 1,500 permanent workers out of its total workforce of 6,500. The competing mini mills, which only produce long steel, together have more than 5,000 workers. The disproportion is even larger if we take downstream users into account.

Manufacturers of structural inputs for construction, hand tools and other basic steel products, cars and machinery employ about 350 000 workers. Mining and construction together account for about 1.5 million more.

Closing down the competition will not address Amsa’s long-term decline. From 2011-23 it made losses in eight years, while its unit cost per tonne of steel climbed 55% above inflation. Since the early 2000s, its output has fallen two thirds by weight

and its exports have plummeted. In flat steel, where Amsa does not face local competition, imports now meet 30% of South Africa’s needs. In long steel, where scrap based mini mills are its main competitors, its market share has dropped below 60%, with imports of just 5% of local demand.

Critically, Amsa has lost advantages that historically fueled big South African steel. From the 1910s local steel production thrived thanks to South Africa’s low-cost, high-quality iron ore, electricity and rail freight, with strong domestic demand from mining, construction and manufacturing.

However, in the early 2000s global steel giant ArcelorMittal acquired what was then Iscor and gave up its local iron ore mines.

That means Amsa now has to pay some approximation of international prices for iron ore. As a result, it suffered a severe cost squeeze when world iron ore and energy prices spiked in the early 2020s.

At the same time the travails at Eskom and Transnet escalated its costs.

Meanwhile, steel demand in South Africa has been almost flat

since 1976 and from early 2000s Amsa lost export markets in Europe and Asia.

In contrast, in the early 2010s, the government initiated a strategy to reduce input costs for the mini mills. To that end it required South African scrap producers to supply local users at well below world prices. In response the existing mini mills upgraded their capacity while some new producers emerged. South Africa is now a world-class, low-cost producer of long steel, lowering prices for South African users as well as expanding exports.

Faced with these realities, Amsa has not lobbied for a strategy to boost its own competitiveness, except for [unsuccessful] demands for huge cuts in its payments to Transnet and Eskom. Instead, for decades it has demanded protection from both local producers and imports. That approach necessarily raises prices for downstream users. Ultimately though, economic development requires more advanced, cleaner, competitive production, not the preservation of existing producers at any cost.

TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

– does it reach the ground? by Pat Horn



Informal traders call for government to support informal traders to grow the South African economy by championing the township economy through localization and promoting local jobs creation communities

The Gauteng Township Economic Development Bill was passed as an Act in March 2022.

On the 8th November 2023 a provincial dialogue was held in Kempton Park Civic Centre between the Inclusive Economy

department of the Gauteng Department of Economic Development) (GDED) and 50 informal traders from the five regions of the province, facilitated by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Gauteng.

The dialogue was

organized with GDED by WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising) who worked with SAITA (SA Informal Traders' Alliance) and NITASA (National Alliance of Informal Traders of SA) leaders in Gauteng.

While the Township

Economic Development framework was initiated in Gauteng, it was anticipated that other provinces would be likely to follow.

Organized informal traders insist that they not be left behind in the planning and establishment of such initiatives.

In the Act a township is defined, as well as a business, and support is outlined.

One of the biggest issues faced with the crafting the Act was how to recognise businesses that are not registered, and it was decided that this should be through established membership-based organisations.

It was also recognised that technology should be used to support economic activity, e.g. App platforms.

The Act talks about 60% of economic supply that should come from the townships, which means that product development support is needed, as well as quality control and regulation.

A 60% set-aside for procurement by the provincial government from townships was announced, but the actual level at the time was as low as 14%. Efforts were made to identify what products exist in the townships.

While furniture, cleaning materials and so on are widely produced, supply and contracting remains a problem. Partnerships have been designed to try to re-shape the production so that it qualifies for procurement. The province supports product testing as well as the provision of machinery.

The following programmes were introduced: Township Retail Programme; Backyard Infill

Residential Development; Taxi Economy; and a general programme of Construction, Retail, Manufacturing, Transport and Logistics.

However, during the course of the dialogue it became evident that, despite the welcome focus on the retail sector, the programmes were more designed for Small, Micro And Medium Enterprise (SMMEs) than catering for the needs of the informal trade sector.

So, the following was proposed by GDED, and agreed:

- to sit down with informal traders to develop a programme to be implemented in the next financial year, before the finalisation of the budget. Every quarter there should be a progress report to keep the province accountable. The plan must be costed and must be developed in a fully inclusive manner – no one should be left out, only to complain later about exclusion. The structured plan for the sector (MUST be inclusive) can then be institutionalized.
- The Province proposed to prioritise this and treat this as the main conclusion.
- Spatial planning is actually a bigger problem for province than Local Economic Development (LED) – this needs to be tackled jointly with informal traders.
- Criteria for supporting

specific groups must have specific appropriate criteria, not general criteria. There will always be criteria – but these need to be well-designed criteria which do not exclude informal traders. Unfortunately, like many other things, this noble outcome was disrupted by the upcoming elections in May 2024, and so the follow-up has not even started.

SALGA Gauteng has followed up by convening consultative meetings of all the municipalities in the province, and invited participation and feedback from the informal traders in 2024 when a review of informal economy policies was conducted in Emfuleni, Mogale City and Ekurhuleni Metro.

SALGA also suggested that organized informal traders try to make use of the following spaces to engage local government:

- IDP reps Forum – this is open, informal traders can apply to participate.
- LED Forum – another space for engaging municipalities.

Having a space to work with provinces on economic policy could be very helpful. There would still be some implementation problems, especially at municipal level. What is critical is the implementation by municipalities of the Public Space Guidelines for Local Government 2021 – 2026, developed with participation

by all stakeholders including street vendors and informal traders.

Pressure from the ground is also critical to drive this implementation.

The problem of coalitions and overnight changeovers has been highlighted, but sustained social dialogue and institutional partnerships can override party political changes, or even changes in officials. Such working arrangements must be put into writing and signed.

Free Wifi in all the townships can help the economic activities enormously, with the establishment of Help desks in each township for assisting people to fill in digital forms.

On the competition issue, this has increased since COVID-19, with so many jobs lost in the formal sector and those workers joining the informal economy.

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), a network of workers and organizations in the informal economy, commissioned the Wits Southern Centre for Inequality Studies (SCIS) to assist to develop economic proposals for informal traders dealing with competition.

The article was written by Pat Horn, the informal economy Activist and SACP Central Committee member.



Alliance leaders having a light moment at the Joe Slovo annual commemorative event at Avalon cemetery

SACP remembers **JOE SLOVO**

following his death in 1995

On January 6, 2025, the 30th annual memorial service for Comrade Joe Slovo was held at the Avalon cemetery in Soweto. The party has utilized this New Year's program to set goals for each year and to start the Joe Slovo Education Campaign in advance of the reopening of the schools.

According to Slovo's teachings, class struggle and national liberation are inextricably linked. He maintained that the end of apartheid was merely

the beginning of a socialist social revolution.

Yossel Mashel Slovo popularly known as "Joe Slovo" was born on the 23rd 1926 in Obelai, Lithuania and died on the 6th January 1995. He came to South Africa at the age of nine marked the beginning of his lifelong commitment to the working class and its struggles. His childhood hardships forced him to start working in a warehouse at the age of sixteen, where he encountered the harsh realities of capitalist

exploitation.

Slovo joined the trade union to combat exploitation and advocate for a living wage and safe working conditions for workers. He became a shopfloor steward. He even led a workers' strike, which, upon reflection, benefitted white workers more than all workers collectively. This experience deepened his understanding of the interconnectedness of national oppression, class exploitation and gender domination. He committed himself to fight against the systemic roots of these forms

of oppression and others – the capitalist system.

At the time of his death, he was the national chairperson of the SACP, a member of the national executive committee of the ANC and former chief of staff of joined military army (MK). Joe Slovo played an active role in the fight against the apartheid regime in the country. He is celebrated with countless heroes and heroines of the liberation such as Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, Solomon "Kalushi" Mahlangu,

Commander Barney Molokoane, Combatant Linda “Lion of Chiawelo” Jabane, Jerry “Tshepo” Semudi, and King Sibiyi. The SACP general secretary Solly Mapaila who delivered the keynote address argued that ‘Joe Slovo is a revolutionary giant whose life was dedicated to the national democratic, anti-imperialist, revolutionary struggle for people’s liberation, non-racialism, equality, freedom, justice and peace—as the road towards socialism. Thirty years since his death on 6 January 1995, his legacy continues to inspire our Marxist-Leninist struggle.’

The party raised concerns about ‘the appalling living conditions of the poor working class communities since the dawn of democracy.’

Mapaila said “The majority of our people live in dire poverty and in degrading conditions caused primarily, but by no means only, by capitalist domination of the economy, exploitation and monopoly capital. Youth unemployment is particularly severe, with a rate of 45.5 per cent among individuals aged 15-34 years.

Poverty continues to plague our nation. As of 2024, approximately 13.2 million South Africans are living in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$2.15 per day, equivalent to R18.78 recently. Furthermore, nearly 63 per cent of our people live below the upper-middle-income poverty line, indicating widespread economic hardship. This is a national crisis and cannot be resolved by repeating the same failed, neo-liberal policies, no matter what costumes you dress

those policies with.

The working class faces the dual burden of exploitation and its associated conditions, results and levers of the accumulation of wealth on a capitalist basis – inequality, unemployment and poverty, which are at crisis-high rates.

Closely related to the high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality is rampant crime, a manifestation of the systemic decay inherent in a profit-driven society. Violent crime, including gender-based violence, femicide and murders, thrives in conditions of poverty, inequality, unemployment and social alienation created by capitalist exploitation.”

Mapaila reiterated the SACP’s 5th Special National Congress resolution to stand for the coming 2026 local government elections as an independent party. He called upon the working-class communities to unite and mobilise to lead a revolutionary transformation to realise the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution.

“The reconfiguration of the Alliance has not materialised, despite over 22 years of our efforts to achieve it through comradesly engagements. This and addressing the crisis of working-class representation are among the key factors behind our SACP 15th National Congress resolution, reaffirmed by our Fifth Special National Congress in December 2024, to contest the 2026 local government elections independently. We have long reserved the right to exercise this direction, making it a mechanism of the last resort when all else we

have tried has not brought the reconfiguration of the Alliance to fruition. Prior to the Fifth Special National Congress, we held a bilateral session with the ANC to discuss post-election implications for the NDR. We formally informed the ANC of our intentions to implement this resolution given the dismal failure to reconfigure the alliance.

We will continue the talks with all our allies, now based on the outcomes of the Fifth Special National Congress. We want to use this opportunity to give this clarity. In no particular way does exercising our independence as a working-class party mean we are abandoning the Alliance we have built since the late 1920s. To be clear, we do not have a single resolution to leave the Alliance,” elaborated Mapaila.

Other key demands tabled by Mapaila were around the following matters;

- Intensify the battle against austerity, a hallmark of neo-liberalism in fiscal policy, and advance a revolutionary shift towards growing working-class and democratic state control in the economy as part of structural transformation.
- Fasttrack the decisive implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) to ensure quality healthcare for all, alongside a comprehensive social security system with a universal basic income grant.
- Intensify the struggle against all forms of state capture and corruption. States capture and corruption have

set our country back for many years and to recover from the damage caused by state capture and other forms of corruption.

- Strengthen public employment programmes as part of the wider national apex priority to create employment and as part of advancing towards the Freedom Charter’s right of all to work.
- Reaffirms the party’s commitment to strengthen the vanguard attributes and role of the SACP as an independent working-class Party committed to the success of the National Democratic Revolution and deepening the advance towards socialism.
- Calls for the United States to end its illegal blockade of Cuba and occupation of Guantanamo Bay and to remove Cuba from the so-called list of countries sponsoring terrorism.
- Reaffirms its solidarity with FRELIMO and the people of Mozambique, the Saharawi people under Morocco’s occupation, the oppressed Swazi people and support their calls for democratisation, pledges its solidarity with Palestinians against the apartheid Israeli settler regime’s occupation and genocide, and stand with the peoples of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and others in South America against US imperialist aggression.

ANC President Cyril Ramaphosa and COSATU Second Deputy President Duncan Luvuno, meanwhile, sent supportive messages.



IN CONVERSATION WITH DOMESTIC WORKERS ON THE COIDA Amendment Act

by Mulalo Murudi

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) welcomed in 2023, the coming into effect of the Compensation of Injury on Duty Amendment (COIDA) Act. The Federation endorses the progressive provisions of the COIDA

Act. This Amendment Act was long overdue and has now extended cover and relief to millions of workers, in particular, previously disadvantaged workers such as domestic workers and farm workers.

We are pleased to

be working with the Compensation Fund as it conducts roadshows across provinces, to workshop domestic workers on the provisions of the Act. We are pleased that the compensation fund is taking the necessary steps to ensure that

domestic workers are aware of its provisions and that employers are held accountable for non-compliance, as these roadshows also seek to empower domestic workers in terms of their responsibilities as well as that of their employers.

COSATU continues to work with its Affiliates, SADSAWU, government and domestic workers to ensure workers are aware of their extended rights and protections under these long overdue amendments. Domestic workers have waited long enough for their rights to a safe working environment to be recognized and enshrined into law. It will provide relief and protection to millions of workers across all sectors of the economy.

Domestic workers are now covered, benefiting almost a million largely women workers who had been unconstitutionally excluded. An expanded definition of workers' dependents and beneficiaries now includes their spouse(s), children, siblings, parents, and grandparents, thus reflecting South Africa's cultural norms.

COSATU's support is based upon the following critical interventions included in the COIDA Act:

- Diseases and post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from the workplace are now included, providing relief for millions of workers in the mining, security, and other sectors, and women exposed to gender-based violence at work.
- Introducing a no-fault rule, to replace practices in the past that have been abused to deny relief to workers.
- Providing stiff penalties

for non-compliant employers.

- Providing incentives for compliant employers.
- Empowering labour inspectors to ensure compliance by employers.
- Allowing courts to place caps on exorbitant fees claimed by lawyers.
- Extending the time frame for submitting claims from 1 to 3 years; and
- Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of employers, contractors, and sub-contractors; thus, protecting millions of workers who often fall through the cracks.

Whilst welcoming the enactment of this progressive Amendment Act, the Federation is disappointed it took so many years and unnecessary delays by government to reach this stage, however we continue to work with the Department of Employment and Labour and the Compensation Fund to ensure implementation of the Act.

Noting the current ongoing roadshows being conducted in collaboration with the Compensation Fund, we felt it necessary to have a conversation with the Domestic workers themselves in order to get their impressions on the roadshows, the Act and its provisions and the impact as well as the challenges that Domestic workers continue to face in their daily world of work.

Below is a summary of COSATU's intervention during the amendment process and the advocacy role we played as a federation to advance the rights of Domestic workers:

1. What role did COSATU play in advocating for the inclusion of domestic workers under COIDA?

COSATU was closely involved in several processes. First, we were part of the NEDLAC engagements where we supported the inclusion of domestic workers. Second, we actively pushed government from the Ministry and Department of Employment and Labour but also even the Presidency to table the COIDA Bill at Parliament before the 2024 conclusion of the 6th Parliament. Third, we not only participated in the parliamentary processes in both the National Assembly and NCOP but also engaged the Committees to expedite its passage. Fourth, we supported SADSAWU in its Constitutional Court challenge to compel this amendment. We also actively campaigned for the Bill in the public discourse with countless statements and interviews.

2. What were the

main challenges faced during this advocacy?

The greatest obstacle was getting the Department to table the Bill at Parliament. Government moves slowly at the best of times. This Department is amongst the slowest. So, we had to chase the Department and repeatedly intervene to unlock bureaucratic obstacles throughout its journey. The Bill did not face ideological resistance just bureaucratic indifference. But also, legislation takes on average 5 years to process so each step does require COSATU's intervention to ensure that delays are dealt with. Now the challenge is implementation, making sure domestic workers and employers are aware and can register and that the administrative challenges at the CF are resolved.

3. How has the inclusion of COIDA impacted the lives of domestic workers you represent?

- Domestic workers are now recognised and included in the provisions of the act. Which means that they can now be registered to enjoy benefits covered under the Act. In the event of occupational injury, illness or death, Domestic workers can now claim benefits with the Compensation Fund,

however in order for this to happen, their Employers need to register them with the CF and failure to do so is a punishable offence.

4. What further steps are you taking to ensure the proper implementation of COIDA for domestic workers?

- The act was only enacted in 2023, which is last year so thus far, there hasn't been many claims, however, to ensure proper implementation of COIDA, COSATU urges its members to report any cases of injuries or occupational diseases at work. and in terms of compensation claims we, on a regular basis we send a list to the CF to make follow up in terms of the status of the claims submitted and check if they have been processed, if not, we ensure that all outstanding documents are submitted in order to finalise claims.

5. How do you work with employers to ensure compliance with COIDA?

- Domestic workers are most vulnerable because they work in private households and its quite difficult to organise them because trade unions do not have access to people's private homes. As a result, it becomes difficult for trade unions to hold employers accountable.

What we do, however, is to empower the domestic workers so that in the event something happens, the workers know their rights and the process of reporting the incident and also the process of compensation that need to be followed.

6. Are there any ongoing challenges that domestic workers face despite the inclusion under COIDA?

- The act is still new, the employers are not well informed about its provisions. Employers are not capacitated. Domestic workers are not registered for COIDA
- The online registration system doesn't work, which means employers must face long ques and they are not willing to do that. Employers need to be capacitated as well
- Domestic workers are afraid to raise the issue of COIDA registration because they are afraid, they would lose their jobs
- Domestic workers getting injured in the absence of their employers. The domestic workers are not able to report the injury without their employers within the stipulated timeframes and Domestic workers are often accused of lying by their employers.
- Due to non-compliance by the employers, in

the event of an incident that required medical attention, Domestic workers cannot access private healthcare as they are covered by COIDA. Having to access public health care has its own challenges as the cases of injury on duty often take too long to be finalised.

- The workshops done by COIDA are not making impact because domestic workers are not educated and need the amendments to be broken down into simple terms so that they understand better

7. How do you educate domestic workers about their rights under COIDA?

- COSATU has been working with the compensation fund that has been conducting roadshows across different provinces, which are aimed at capacitating domestic workers on the COIDA act and how they can access compensation from COIDA in the event of injury or occupational disease acquired at the workplace.

It's important to note that employers should equally be workshopped on the same Act, as the responsibility to register domestic workers lies with them. This needs to be communicated strongly so that employers know what is expected of them and that should they not

comply, they will be in contravention with the law.

8. Can you share a success story resulting from the COIDA amendment?

- Still too new to comment about a successful story related to domestic workers resulting from the amendment, however, generally within our trade unions, we have had successful stories of workers who have been compensated by the CF as a result of illness or injury at work. The process of it all, does come with its own challenges.

9. What are your union's next goals in improving conditions for domestic workers?

- COSATU will continue advocating for domestic workers to be capacitated in terms of their rights so that they are able to stand up for themselves. Not only focusing on COIDA, but focusing on the general rights of every domestic worker which includes right to paid maternity leave, minimum wage, UIF, etc.

Mulalo Murudi is COSATU National HIV/AIDS Health and Safety Coordinator at the head office, Braamfontein.



— MOZAMBIQUE — STRUGGLING

to calm down post-election chaos

Mozambique's President, His Excellency Daniel Francisco Chapo
posing during the inauguration ceremony

Maputo is still in a state of fear and chaos as the violence that followed the election continues. Venâncio Mondlane, the leader of the opposition, encouraged protesters to take to the streets.

Mozambique conducted general elections on October 9, 2024, to elect the president, 250 members of the Assembly of the Republic, and ten provincial assemblies.

The scourge of unrest began after the country's ruling party, FRELIMO was declared victor in October's election. Daniel Chapo, of the ruling Frelimo party, won the presidential election with 65.2% of the vote.

Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), the democratic socialist

political party in the country has governed the country since its independence from Portugal in 1975. Esteemed leaders who led the party were Eduardo Mondlane, Samora Machel, Joaquim Chissano and Armando Guebuza.

COSATU has raised the alarm over the escalating crisis in Mozambique. The federation describes the situation as a ticking time bomb and warns that the crisis could have ripple effects that may rock South Africa's security and economic stability.

Mozambique has been on fire after October 9, with 236 violent incidents, more than 21 lives lost, prisons attacked, inmates freed, hospitals paralyzed. It is reported in media

circles that 'Residents are enduring long queues for food, fuel, and medicine, which are in short supply following widespread looting and vandalism.'

Mozambique's highest court has confirmed the victory in October's presidential election of the ruling party candidate Daniel Chapo. The opposition leader, Venancio Mondlane, came second and contested the result, alleging fraud.

This has brought the Southern African Development Community (SADC) under a dark cloud.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres concerned about the post-election violence in Mozambique, urged political leaders and stakeholders to defuse tensions and

redouble efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to the ongoing crisis. Daniel Francisco Chapo was sworn in as Mozambique's fifth president on the 15th of January 2025. The defeated presidential candidate Venâncio Mondlane, who challenged the official results, has continued to call for a national strike in protest.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) International Relations Secretary, Bongani Masuku ventures in raising concerns about security issues in the region.

Masuku argues for 'strengthening of democratic elections management systems in the African continent.'

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing tensions in Mozambique, in particular the loss of life, the destruction of property, the disruption of economic activity and the potential impact the unfolding crisis could have on South Africa's own security and economic growth.

South Africa's fate and history is deeply intertwined with that of the people of Mozambique; we have shared decades of struggles, and we only wish the best for our neighbouring

sister nation. COSATU notes the ruling of the Constitutional Council on the outcome of the national elections.

We urge all stakeholders to heed the call by many international partner organisations, civil society and multilateral bodies, including the African Union and the United Nations for calm, political accountability, end to violence and destruction of property, and the call for the strengthening of democratic elections management systems.

This should include:

- Upholding rights to peaceful association, organising and free expression of voters and political parties.
- Review of concessions with multinational companies to secure the resources necessary to end inequality, poverty and unemployment in communities where tensions have long been festering.
- Strengthening of SADC institutional capacity to support, enforce and affirm democratic elections in line with the SADC Treaty and the relevant Protocols.
- More inclusive national consultative and

participatory processes in nation building to end the feeling of alienation and exclusion. COSATU supports the government of South Africa's interventions to mediate and offer advice to the Mozambican government and people.

We are confident that this matter will be resolved and urge all aggrieved parties to seek a peaceful and calm resolution as both our nations cannot afford the destabilisation that will result from further violence, loss of life and economic disruption



'Any defence budget cut literally translates **TO LOSS OF LIFE**', argues COSATU

South African National Defence Force Delegation visits
deployed troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Many global citizens have seen footage of 'gunfire ringing out in Goma as M23 rebels seize control of the city, a vital trading and transport hub. Thousands of civilians and some Congolese soldiers have fled to Rwanda. South African soldiers have also faced tragic losses.'

The M23 rebel group has over years threatened peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). M23 is one of the groups seeking to establish control in the mineral-rich regions of North and South Kivu provinces located near the border with Rwanda. The South

African National Defence Force have been deployed in the DRC as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission to bring stability in the region, however developments over years have yielded no tangible peace. Instead, more deaths were registered.

Recently the M23 rebels launched an attack, killing nine soldiers, with others suffering various degrees of injuries. The public have raised concerns about military precision issues such as combat preparedness, defence intelligence capabilities and specifically the

availability of combat support equipment including air support and ammunition. Other have argued about budget cuts as one of the contributory factors, disarming the soldiers to be empowered to overpower the M23 rebels.

According to a presentation done by the Defence Department to the Appropriation Committee years back, the Department raised the dilemma of 'the current state of decline in DENEL and other related local defence industries (SADRI) that are the original equipment manufacturers for the SANDF's prime mission

equipment. The fusion of civil wars and terrorism, globally and on the African continent, introduces a complex new challenge to peace and security operations. The demands of simultaneously attempting stabilisation efforts, humanitarian operations, and counterterrorism have proven difficult for national and international policymakers. The limitations of hard power to address asymmetrical warfare, complex security challenges and the increased shift to utilise soft power issues and unconventional methods to undermined and submerge sovereignty of states increased the

inability of governments to neutralise security threats. Threats of terrorism.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Standby Force consists of forces across the domains of warfare (land, air and maritime) and appropriate support elements such as military health and logistic support.

Due to the decline of the Defence capabilities as a result of budget reductions, the Republic of South Africa pledge to the SADC was revised downwards to reflect current resource levels availability. The SADC Standby Force Pledges may still be affected by

further budget cuts.

Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula has announced that her department, particularly the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), is being defunded through an estimated R15-billion budget cut.

Former president Thabo Mbeki has argued that 'the Democratic Republic of Congo should disarm genocidal forces who fled into its territory after committing the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 in line with the Sun City Agreement signed between Kigali and Kinshasa in April 2003. President Mbeki declared that 'South Africa must

continue to contribute to promoting peace and stability in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo and to the continent's overall peacekeeping efforts.'

These recent killings have forced the United Nations Security Council to hold an emergency meeting regarding deadly clashes in eastern DRC, following Kinshasa's withdrawal of its diplomats from Kigali as Rwanda-backed rebels advanced on the key city of Goma. More than 400 000 people have been reported displaced since the beginning of 2025.

Various stakeholders are calling for the resumption of both the Luanda and

Nairobi Processes to find a lasting political solution to the cyclical conflict in the eastern DRC.

COSATU International Secretary, Bongani Masuku weighs in to raise concerns with 'the deepening crisis in the DRC, which is threatening the whole of the SADC and East African regions.'

COSATU has send its sincere condolences to the families of the members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) who fell in the line of duty in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the federation has raised concern about 'sustaining lasting peace on the continent.'

COSATU recognises the role and importance of soldiers as workers involved in protecting civilians, ensuring peace and advancing democracy and development, not only in the country, but in other parts of the continent and the world.

This is an integral part of the constitutional mandate of the SANDF and the SADC mission.

The Federation calls for more dedicated attention to the deepening crisis in the DRC, which is threatening the whole of the SADC and East African regions, while greatly undermining prospects for

development on the continent. COSATU also calls on workers, particularly on the African continent to unite against wars, looting of minerals, corruption and undemocratic governance. It is workers and the poor who pay the highest price for all these ills.

This is also a call to SADC, the East African Community and the African Union, as well as the United Nations [UN] itself, to be more concrete in supporting institutions of democracy and development for lasting peace on the continent.

That would be the only way to honour the

memory and heroic contribution of our fallen soldiers, but also to ensure generations to come can live in better and decent conditions for all.

Lastly, the Federation adds its voice to the call for the adequate resourcing of the SANDF to ensure South African troops are not left exposed, vulnerable and unable to fend off attacks when they are deployed on missions.

Various stakeholders have continuously warned that the SANDF is severely under resourced and is desperately in need of a boost in its budget to make sure it delivers on its missions.

COSATU calls on the National Treasury to turn its back on austerity, particularly when it comes to the defence budget because any cut literally translates to loss of life.

The conflict in the DRC has dragged on for three decades. There is a role for peacekeeping missions and South Africa has correctly actively participated in them.

But they can only play a supportive role whilst the affected governments, parties and international bodies find lasting political solutions, including through negotiations. Peacekeeping cannot on its own replace that. ■



A call to lift **IMPERIALIST ECONOMIC** Blockade heightened!

Progressive organizations have condemned the reinsertion of Cuba in the list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism by Donald Trump and reaffirmed their solidarity with the Cuban people in the fight against the blockade and all the unilateral sanctions.

It is extremely disappointing that the 47th US President Donald Trump, in an executive order on his first day in office, on the 20th of January, 2025, redesignated Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism.

The executive order overturns President Biden's previous plans to 1) remove Cuba from the U.S. Department of State's State Sponsors of Terrorism list and 2) rescind the 2017 National Security Presidential Memorandum 5 on Cuba policy, which would have eliminated

the so-called "restricted list," and the associated additional limitations on engagement by U.S. persons and entities with Cuban persons and entities, beyond what is set forth under U.S. law.

A common denominator of the promoters of the US economic blockade is that Cuba's economic problems are self-inflicted.

If so, why the need to continue punishing the standard of living of the Cuban population?

Pure hypocrisy to justify aggression and abuse. Cuban President

Miguel Diaz-Canel criticized the move as an act of mockery and abuse.

The United Nations General Assembly on October 30, 2024 voted for an end to the United States' economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba, adopted with 187 votes in favour, exposing the isolation of the apartheid Israeli settler regime and the imperialist United States as the only opposing votes, with Moldova abstaining.

The 'state sponsor of terrorism list' currently

includes only four nations: North Korea, Iran, Syria and Cuba. Cuban officials have long advocated for removal of the designation, which has led to strict economic sanctions, compounding the effects of a U.S. embargo that has persisted for more than 60 years.

Cuban trade embargo issues across diverse industries, including airlines, shipping lines, hotels, heavy equipment distributors, insurers, agricultural, and pharmaceutical companies and organizations. Amongst

the executive orders signed, Trump withdrew funding to the World Health Organization! Many international experts argued that the 'US withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Paris Climate Change Agreement shows current US government's contempt for multilateralism, international cooperation and wellbeing of humanity, thus supporting its absolute commitment to the big consumerist and predatory capital.'

Friends of CUBA Society-South Africa (FOCUS) Deputy President, Stan Motimele said "it is absurd that a country such as Cuba that has for many decades dedicated its human and financial resources, in training many youths from poor communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America could still be classified as sponsor of terrorism.

The continued redesignation will make it difficult for Cubans to make transactions using international banking system and acquire goods on the international market, such as fuel, food, construction materials, hygiene products and materials for generating electricity. We call upon global role-players to continue to pledge solidarity with the people of Cuba and demand that the US government lift the illegal economic, financial and commercial blockade

on Cuba without any conditions."

Fidelist' perspectives!

A Fidelist, Bruno Rodríguez P argued that 'How can President Trump be so irresponsible and, without checking with US special agencies in charge of fighting terrorism, which have just said that they have no evidence that Cuba sponsors terrorism, once again consider that Cuba does so?'

'Only lying one could do that. This action by Trump against Cuba lacks genuine motivation, referring to terrorism and its consequences. It is used as an instrument of defamation to apply and reinforce coercive economic measures contrary to International Laws and condemned by the international community.

Trump's decisions on Cuba add up to new medieval-style measures meaning a regression in civilization, namely, support to the genocide vs Palestine; withdrawal from Climate Change agreement and the World Health Organization; hunt of immigrants; conquest of territories and change of hemisphere's map at will. The "promotion of peace by force" is the false and fraudulent slogan of the US government which seeks to disguise its imperialist, warmongering, expansionist, interventionist and neo-

colonialist domination policy which is contrary to International Law.'

Welcoming Ambassador Mrs. Esther Armenteros Cárdenas, who is Charge D'Affaires A.I Ambassador in the Cuban Embassy as she commenced her duties in South Africa, the SACP has 'condemned with the utmost contempt it deserves the newly inaugurated US president Donald Trump's reinstatement of Cuba into its list of so-called "state sponsors of terrorism".'

The reinstatement of Cuba into this fraudulent list reinforces the close to seven-decade-long blockade imposed by the United States government on the Cuban people, a stance that has been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations as a violation of international law and calling upon the US government to remove the blockade.

The irrational executive order signed by Trump moments after his inauguration underscores the unilateral arrogance of the United States' imperialist regime. The list, compiled without international recognition or any credible evidence, exemplifies this overreach. When it comes to evidence, Trump's executive order blatantly exposes the baseless inclusion of Cuba, standing in stark contradiction to the truth.'

Solly Mapaila, said "The SACP salutes the brave

people and government of Cuba who, with the active support of the overwhelming majority of the people across the globe, continue to be resilient and have stabilised their country's people-based system. Cuba's fight is a fight for all of humanity against imperialist domination, exploitation and foreign occupation. The SACP will continue to support the total lifting of the illegal blockade and calls for the United States to end its occupation of Cuba's Guantanamo Bay with immediate effect and unconditionally."

Young communist in South Africa in Gauteng, Jan Nabane said "We have noted with concern the heightened imperialist aggression in the language of US President Donald Trump who has threatened to annex Canada, re-colonise the Panama canal, colonise Greenland and impose unilateral coercive economic measures against BRICS countries. We condemn all such imperialist intentions. We call on the US and all imperialist states to abandon these and other neo-liberal and neo-colonial tendencies in the hope of fostering a more just and equitable world order and a stable geopolitical future. We call for the lifting of the illegal imperialist economic blockade."

Hasta la Victoria Siempre! 



Hamas-Israel CEASEFIRE DEAL IN FORCE!

Palestinian families returning to their demolished homes after the ceasefire deal

Global labour federations have welcomed the ceasefire in Gaza and Israel as a crucial step toward ending violence, safeguarding civilian lives and building a lasting peace.

In the first hours of the ceasefire on the 19th of January 2025, families displaced in North Gaza checked on their homes in jubilation, a place cut from them for more than 15 months and battered by heavy bombing.

What they found was total destruction. Homes turned into dust. The life they once lived gone.

Essentialservices have collapsed. What they were excited to chase after, we humanitarian trucks delivering water, nutrition items, hygiene kits and warm clothes.

The citizens were hoping for more supplies and services in the Gaza Strip so long as the ceasefire deal is in force. This brought more hope to the affected families who have lost everything.

A man with an amputated leg was seen setting up a tent over the rubble of his destroyed family home in Jabalia camp, northern Gaza.

The World Health Organization reported that only half of Gaza's 36 hospitals are still partially operational after 15 months of Israeli attacks.

Ceasefire deal conditions!

Global leaders and organizations welcomed the announcement of a deal to secure a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza. Many commend the mediators, Egypt, Qatar and the USA for their dedicated efforts in brokering this deal.

Some of the key conditions of the

ceasefire deal are:

- The phased release of hostages, beginning with women and children, with negotiations for the release of all remaining hostages.
- The phased withdrawal of Israeli forces, accompanied by security arrangements to ensure stability along Gaza's borders.
- A process to allow civilians to return home to northern Gaza, with safeguards to prevent the transfer of weapons into these areas.
- An increase in humanitarian aid to address the dire crisis

in Gaza.

ITUC

ITUC General Secretary Luc Triangle said “This ceasefire provides a glimmer of hope after prolonged devastation and tens of thousands of deaths. We call on all parties to fully adhere to the agreement and prioritise the safety and well-being of affected communities.”

“For all the hostages, and their families who have waited so long and suffered such unimaginable pain, this ceasefire must lead to their liberation as soon as possible. We commend the work of Histadrut in supporting the families of the hostages.

“We urge the international community to ensure aid is delivered to the people of Gaza promptly and without obstruction. We demand that the labour market is urgently re-opened for all Palestinian workers, and we repeat our call for compensation for those who lost income as their jobs were unilaterally terminated.”

“This ceasefire offers a much-needed opportunity to address the immense suffering in Gaza and to pave the way for reconstruction and sustainable peace. The reconstruction must embed the principles

of decent work, quality public services and the involvement of local social partners, as set out in ILO Recommendation 205. We pay tribute to the humanitarian relief work of the PGFTU and stand ready to support our affiliate as it increases this vital effort.”

WFTU

The World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU] have called for peace in the Middle East for years.

WFTU General Secretary Pambis Kyritsis said “The WFTU condemns the crimes and the barbarity of the state of Israel, and expresses its support for the heroic Palestinian People in their struggle for freedom and dignity.

The massacre and genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza has continued unabated with the support and encouragement of the USA, the EU and their allies. All efforts for a ceasefire have been falling on deaf ears, with the arrogance of the Israeli government reaching new levels.”

“The recent escalations in the region by the murderous state of Israel, with more military campaigns in the region, the invasion and continuous bombardment of

Lebanon, the destruction of infrastructure in Syria and Yemen, confirm the fears of a generalized regional war. At the same time the imperialist hypocrites continue their attempt to present it as the “right of Israel to defend itself”.

“The internationalist class-oriented working youth will continue to struggle alongside Palestine. It will continue to fight for the strengthening and the enrichment of the role of the international trade union movement in the struggle of the Palestinian people.

It is deeply rooted in the way the class-oriented trade union movement functions and acts that internationalist solidarity is the most powerful weapon of the peoples. Until the final victory, in Palestine and throughout the world.

However, Israel authorities were on record declaring that they ‘would not compromise on its objectives of dismantling Hamas’s military and governing capabilities, and that there are no guarantees for the success of the three-phase ceasefire in Gaza.’

Meanwhile, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres said “At long last, the

ceasefire and hostage release deal in Gaza offer a ray of hope. Now commitments need to be fully implemented. I urge the parties to ensure that this deal leads to the release of all hostages and a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. For our part, the United Nations will do all we can to scale up humanitarian aid across Gaza, fully aware of the significant obstacles, challenges and constraints that we face.

The Middle East is in a period of profound transformation – rife with uncertainty, but also possibility. The international community has a responsibility to help ensure the people of the Middle East come out of this turbulent period with peace, dignity and a horizon of hope.”



‘NURSES ARE UNSAFE IN LIMPOPO CLINICS’, declares DENOSA and NEHAWU

gaChuene clinic at Chuenespoort wherein two nurses were raped on duty

Two nurses at gaChuene clinic in the Capricorn District experienced a traumatic incident in the new year when they were attacked, abducted, and raped by an alleged culprit while healthcare professionals were on night duty.

According to the South African Police Services Limpopo Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Thembu Hadebe, has ordered an immediate investigation following ‘a shocking and disturbing incident of business robbery, kidnapping and two counts of rape incident that occurred at Chuene Clinic, in Thokgwane Village, Ga-Chuene under

Lebowakgomo Policing Precinct, in the early hours of Friday, 10 January 2025.’

Healthcare trade unions in the Limpopo came out to condemn the barbaric act and called on law enforcement agencies to arrest the perpetrators and also that the Provincial Health Department must review security measures at all health institutions.

NEHAWU Limpopo Provincial Secretary, Moses Maubane said, “*The latest act of violence proves beyond reasonable doubt that security is non-existent in healthcare facilities and immediate attention is urgently required on*

the matter.”

‘As NEHAWU, we are concerned about the lack of proper security in hospitals and clinics across the province. We therefore repeat the call for government to insource security services, develop standards of operations of this service which responds to this challenge. The union will not accept a situation wherein workers are attacked while in their place of duty while employers have a responsibility to protect all employees.’

Maubane elaborated that “The Department of Health must provide Psycho-social therapy to the

workers who got exposed to this traumatic incident.

As crime is societal matter, we call on our communities to work hand in glove with the police and other law enforcement agencies to find the perpetrators as soon as possible so that they can be punished for this heinous crime.”

DENOSA Limpopo Provincial Secretary, Jacob Molepo alluded to fact that ‘DENOSA leadership visited the clinic in the early hours of the 11th of January 2025 to assess the situation and to ensure that the affected nurses and other employees receive the necessary support.’

Molepo said “The affected nurses were referred to the hospital for further management. DENOSA held an urgent meeting with the Department of Health representatives led by Deputy Director General Dr. Ndwamado.”

“The unions agreed to a decision taken by the Provincial Department of Health ‘to close the clinic until Monday, 13 January 2025, to refer all the staff for counselling and that night duty be suspended indefinitely.”

“DENOSA calls upon the community members to cooperate with the SAPS and provide all the necessary information to ensure that the perpetrators are arrested.

DENOSA further calls upon the Department of Health to strengthen security in the health facilities by ensuring that service providers deploy competent armed security officers, install cameras, and other monitoring security devices. DENOSA furthermore calls upon the police to leave no stone unturned until the perpetrators are arrested.”

COSATU Limpopo joined the healthcare unions in condemning the heinous act.

The Provincial Secretary, Hangwani Mashao said, “The Federation condemns in the strongest

possible terms this horrific and wicked criminal act. This does not lend itself to proper service delivery as workers are bound to work under constant fear of the ever-present prospect of being attacked while on duty.

COSATU sympathises with the victims of this vile attack and urges the Department of Health to provide them with all available professional help.” “The Federation calls on law enforcement agencies to leave no stone unturned to bring the perpetrators of this heinous act to book, to account for their reprehensible behaviour. COSATU also calls on the Limpopo Provincial Government to conduct a review of its security arrangements in all government institutions in the province.

We reiterate our call for the insourcing of all security officials in all government departments and institutions. COSATU further urges the Department of Health in Limpopo to engage our Affiliates in the health sector, DENOSA, NEHAWU and SAEPU on matters related to shifts and other working conditions to prevent unilateral changes in the terms and conditions of workers as has been happening.

We look forward to positive engagements to ensure that workers are safe, and the community

is content with the service it is receiving,” concluded Mashao.

The organisations wished the affected nurses speedy recovery.

Meanwhile, the Limpopo Health Provincial Department MEC visited the clinic to offer support to the affected staff.

MEC Dieketseng Mashego said, “The Provincial of Health is heartbroken and enraged by the recent brutal attack on two of our nurses at Chuene Clinic outside Polokwane.

These strong women, dedicated to caring for our most vulnerable, were violated while working tirelessly to save lives. This attack is not just an assault on healthcare workers—it is an attack on the very foundation of our public health system and the trust that should exist between communities and those who serve them.”

Dieketseng Mashego reiterated that, “Our nurses are our frontline heroes, and no one—especially not criminals—should ever threaten their safety. It is time for us to ask ourselves: why are those who heal and care for us, often at the most critical times, subjected to such horrors? We cannot, and will not, allow this to continue.”

“We have been working hard as a government to ensure that we increase

the number of our health facilities that provide 24-hour services. This is informed by our conviction that such a service to the communities that we are serving is non-negotiable. These recent attacks and many others, that have occurred before, are a serious setback and an undoing on ensuring our communities have clinics that serve them for 24 hours.”

Other measures taken by the Department included instructing the Departmental Executive Committee and management to re-evaluate the security issues in our facilities, especially those that provide night duty to our communities.

“The Department will improve on the involvement of all sectors of society to ensure that we defeat this satanic scourge. From traditional leaders to healers, faith-based organisations to non-government organisations, the business community, and as well as civic organisations.

And also, to lobby communities to share information with the law enforcement agencies to apprehend the perpetrators,” argued MEC Mashego. SAPS investigations continue.



DENOSA Western Cape CONCLUDES ITS PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

Delegates singing during plenary sessions at the Fountains hotel, Cape Town

The 9th Elective Provincial Congresses of the Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa (DENOSA) for the Western Cape and Gauteng were held in Cape Town and Benoni, respectively.

DENOSA continued with its organizational programmes in the New Year by convening the Congresses under the Theme, 'Promoting Organisational Growth Through Innovative Practices Towards a Resilient Quality Healthcare and Effective Member Servicing.'

Key issues debated in plenary sessions included

compromised security in healthcare facilities and constant attacks on healthcare workers in the workplace, a severe staff shortage and non-filling of vacant positions, the province's readiness for National Health Insurance (NHI), and the continued reduction in health funding and its effects on healthcare services in the province.

Delegates at plenary sessions expressed concern about the continuous decline in the number of student nurses admitted to higher education institutions in recent years, as well as the effects of the nursing education curriculum

reform on both nursing and patients.

DENOSA resolved, amongst others, to demand;

- Full implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI),
- Filling of all funded vacant posts in the health facilities, and installation of security features such as panic button to deescalate attacks on healthcare workers

All Provincial Office Bearers (POBs) were re-elected to their respective posts, including the Provincial Secretary, Sabelo Ntshanga, who was also elected under

the organisation's new constitution. Formerly, provincial secretaries were appointed.

Elected DENOSA Western Cape Provincial leaders were:

- Provincial Chairperson: Eleanor Roberts
- Provincial Deputy Chairperson: Emily Visagie
- Provincial Secretary: Sabelo Ntshanga
- Provincial Treasurer: Mashudu Munzhelele

COSATU Western Cape Provincial Secretary Malvern de Bruyn wished the elected leaders success in serving the nursing union in South Africa.



SATAWU vows to accelerate **MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT** and defend jobs in its sector

Members of SATAWU at the 6th Elective National Congress at Mangaung, Free State

The South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union held its 6th National Congress in Mangaung from the 13th to the 15th of December 2024 at Kopano Nokeng Country Lodge and Conference Centre, under the Theme *"Reclaim, Renew, and Unite for Working Class: Back to Basic"*.

Delegates from rail, maritime, security, road freight, road passenger, civil aviation, taxi, and motor ferry in all structures of the union in provinces and branches met in accordance with the provisions of its Constitution to assess organizational development and review the mandates of elected leaders. The union was founded in 2000 to oppose worker divides in its field, resist employer exploitation, advance members' interests, and improve working conditions.

SATAWU General Secretary, Jack Mazibuko said "the 6th

Elective National Congress was convened in terms of the union's Constitution, Clause 29.6 which states that 'The National Congress has powers to consider and make decisions arising from reports submitted by National Office Bearers and its structures, assess the union's progress, determine the policies of the union, amend the Constitution and also elects National Office Bearers to serve the union.'

The Congress took place in the aftermath of the African National Congress's worst electoral defeat, in which the party decided to form a Government of National Unity in the context of policies that follow a neoliberal trajectory, with massive austerity measures in place and the deterioration of the capacity of state-owned enterprises. Structural disparities, rising debt levels, collapsing infrastructure, privatization of public commodities, and profit

maximization by capital are insurmountable.

SATAWU resolved, amongst others, to;

- Accelerate recruitment campaign to organize unorganised workers across various workplaces,
- Strengthen the union by embarking on a renewal and revitalisation programme in all structures on issues such as climate change, mental health, migration, national minimum wage,
- Unleash education and training programmes to empower members in general to defend jobs and strengthen capacity to provide quality membership services,
- Enhance collaboration with the gender structures to develop, promote and encourage participation of women workers in the activities of the union
- Strengthen the union's investment policy and

promote ethical leadership, good governance and accountability, and

- Strengthen its participation and affiliation within the international federations to push back against capitalist's exploitative nature at the global level.

The newly elected National Office Bearers were:

- President: Cde Ntuthuzelo Mhlubulwana
- 1st Deputy President: Cde Nkoketse Sepogwane
- 2nd Deputy President: Cde Siyabulela Dinisile
- National Treasurer: Cde Mahlomula Makhura
- General Secretary: Cde Jack Mazibuko
- 1st Deputy General Secretary: Cde Anele Keit
- 2nd Deputy General Secretary: Cde Paul Nephawe

Congratulations to the elected leadership! ■

Why the Expropriation Act is crucial for the country's future!

by Zingiswa Losi



The Minister of Land Reform & Rural Development, Hon Mzwanele Nyhontso recently handed over 10 title deeds to labour tenants and farm dwellers for properties purchased by the department under the uMgungundlovu District, as part of government's efforts to secure tenure rights for people who live on farms

The Expropriation Act is a long overdue common-sense intervention by the government led by the ANC to accelerate efforts to address the desperate need for land whilst providing a rational framework that protects the rights of ordinary citizens.

Cosatu has been intimately involved in the development

of the Expropriation Act over the past decade at National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) and Parliament.

We support it as it empowers government to accelerate land reform, to address the legacies of apartheid and colonialism and our continuing inequalities. If one listens to hysterical right wing commentariat, one

would assume the Act is an irrational, unconstitutional license for anarchy that will collapse the economy.

A simple read of it shows it is a remarkably well crafted, surgical and detailed law in line with the Constitution and international norms. Something that is confirmed by the most renowned legal and land experts in South Africa.

The Act's critics say it's a shock to our legal framework.

What is their alternative?

To retain the existing Expropriation Act adopted in 1975, the darkest days of apartheid. This 1975 Act not only does not reflect the progressive values and mandate of the 1996 Constitution, but it was

under this 1975 Expropriation Act that thousands of African, Coloured and Indian families were brutally evicted from District Six and countless other communities with no compensation!

The fact that opponents of the new Act, prefer the old apartheid Act speaks volumes about where their priorities are. Empowering the dispossessed is not one of them.

What does the new Act signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa entail?

It compels the state to address the legacies of the past and the inequalities of today. It recognises millions of South Africans lost land, homes and property with little, if any compensation. It mandates government to ensure all South Africans, in particular the historically disadvantaged, have access to land, water, minerals and other critical resources.

This is incredibly important as society can then hold government accountable and demand it tackles these painful scars.

Access to land is critical to empowering families living in our cities and towns to build their own homes and small businesses, to enable farm workers and labour tenants security of tenure, to support families in rural areas to establish their own smallholding farms. Ownership of land and property is key if we want to empower families, provide

the seed to generational wealth and provide a better life for future generations.

Previously there were more than 100 separate laws providing for expropriation to various state institutions. This was a recipe for chaos and confusion. There is now a single legislative framework for the entire state, where all persons can understand their rights and how to exercise them. It ensures uniformity across the state.

Society expects government to tackle access to land and has been frustrated by the sluggish pace at which this has occurred. Frequently government has been tied up for years in court by property owners demanding outlandish compensation.

We have seen some property owners demand compensation far above market value and at the expense of a fiscus that will always be under severe stress given the many socio-economic challenges faced by society. Much of the debate unfortunately has focused on the matter of compensation and ignored the progressive and pragmatic balancing act that the Act deliberately achieves.

The Act provides for full, partial and nil compensation. It requires the state to take into account:

- How the property was acquired, e.g. did the owners themselves pay market-related prices when they took ownership?
- What is the public use that

the property is needed for, e.g. to build a road, power station, dam, school, hospital, public housing?

- What public and private investments have been made to the property?

Contrary to right wing theatrics, the Act does not give a reckless blank cheque for when partial or nil compensation may be paid. These are specific and include:

- State land to avoid different state organs seeking to profit from each other at the public's expense. This has been a reality and is critical with the state being the largest land owner.
- Idle and abandoned land. A drive across any city reveals countless plots and buildings that have been abandoned, fallen into disrepair, are a threat to public safety and where the owners have absconded or disappeared. How and why should the state pay for such property?
- Land not developed for speculative purposes. Some owners buy land with no intention to use it but to wait for it to appreciate and then sell it in the distant future. When there is a desperate need for housing, infrastructure, economic opportunities and land reform; can we afford to squander land?

Some cry that the Act denies people the right to legal redress. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Act affirms all citizens' inalienable right to seek relief

from the courts and specifies how this can be done.

The Act provides for the Land Court where land disputes can be resolved by dedicated judges with extensive knowledge of land matters.

Critics claim the Act threatens the rights of ordinary citizens. This is hysteria based on social media likes not reality. The Act affirms the rights of all South Africans.

The Act has gone through extensive public participation at Nedlac and Parliament where it was overwhelmingly supported. It will go to the Constitutional Court where we are confident, along with South Africa's most renowned legal experts, that it will pass constitutional muster.

We have a choice.

We can continue to remain the most unequal society in the world, ignore the cry for land and then we must not be surprised when society one day implodes. Or we can address this cry and ensure all South Africans have access to land and natural resources.

Cosatu is clear, the only sober choice is the latter. South Africa must realise the vision of the Freedom Charter of a nation that belongs to all who live in it, Black and White.

Zingiswa Losi is the President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions



‘Decisive intervention **IS NEEDED IN THE DRC**

as women and children are suffering’, argues Rebhone Tau

This 2025, January, the South African National Defence Force delegation visited the deployed troops in the Democratic Republic Of Congo

The political instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been going on for many decades, seemingly without a long-lasting solution. There have been many mediation processes, such as the Sun City Agreement

that happened during the era of President Thabo Mbeki.

This process came out of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement that was signed in 1999 and which, notably, also involved Rwanda and Uganda. The Sun City dialogue, officially known as the Inter-Congolese

Dialogue, took place from 2001 to 2003.

This process led to the DRC having four Vice Presidents. This meant that the President of the DRC, then Joseph Kabila, could not take decisions alone. If you look at the size of the

DRC, it is very big, and some would argue that having four Vice Presidents helped to bring some stability in the country.

President Cyril Ramaphosa should consider appointing Former President Thabo Mbeki as his Special Envoy

to the DRC. Wisdom and the historical context will be needed at this point in attempts to engage the role players in this conflict. Women and children are suffering a lot in the DRC and South Africa has lost troops on the ground.

Have we asked ourselves how many of the citizens of the DRC have died since the conflict started up to date?

In 1998, former President Nelson Mandela, in his role as the Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), called twin summits of regional leaders in Pretoria to engage on a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the DRC.

The then Presidential spokesperson, Parks Mankahlana, said, "We believe in a peaceful solution, and I think that is the attitude of the majority of the heads of state in this region."

It is not for the first time that Rwanda is accused of being active in the DRC. The then Ambassador Ben Karenzi, who was Rwanda's Ambassador to South Africa, denied allegations that his government was involved in the DRC. This was in 1998 when President Mandela called the twin summits.

This is because President Mandela, before the twin summits, met with President Kabila, President Mugabe, President Museveni and President Bizimungu of Rwanda. Those engaging

on the DRC file need to engage some of those who were in these meetings to get a better understanding of what were the engagements and what were some of the disagreements in the meetings.

There is the Pretoria Accord which was signed by Rwanda and the DRC and this was around 2002 during the era of Mbeki. That is why it is important for Ramaphosa to appoint Mbeki as his Special Envoy to assist him since South Africa has played a huge role in the DRC when it comes to political engagements.

The South African government must not treat the matter of the DRC as if it is a new thing. While trying to find new solutions, it is best to bring in those who have been involved historically as they have all the information on what was discussed in those meetings.

Reading reports of the Human Rights Watch, it is painful to see how women continue to be raped in this conflict.

How many women and children should continue to suffer?

Have we ever asked ourselves over the years how many children in the DRC have been born out of rape?

The ordinary people of the DRC don't know how it is to live a peaceful life without having to run for your life. The minerals of the DRC are a curse to the people of the DRC. Their country should be rich, and the majority of the

people should not be living in fear and poverty.

There is a need for political will from the leadership of the DRC, SADC region and the rest of Africa to bring stability to the DRC. The DRC has never been stable since it got its independence from Belgium in 1960.

Have we asked ourselves what the people of Goma are going through at this point?

While noting that SA troops have lost lives, we must not forget the people of Goma.

Another issue is the tribal issue that most people are avoiding talking about.

The tribalism issue was the created the Belgians. It has led to people being denied citizenship, and this was part the Sun City Agreement.

Did the government of the DRC deal with this matter and resolve it?

The Banyamulenge issue needs to be resolved at some point. DRC should continue to be on the agenda of SADC summits until they bring stability and make sure that there is accountability on what is happening in the DRC. The people of the DRC continue to live in fear and continue to be on the run. SADC should appoint a high-level panel consisting of people who have worked on the DRC before as well as new people as it needs to have a balance.

Women must be included; it must not only be a high-level panel of men.

One of the things that need to happen is a joint summit

between SADC and the East African Community (EAC) since the DRC is a member of both bodies.

There should be a discussion between Kenya's President William Ruto and Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa as they are the current Chairpersons of these regional bodies. Both regional bodies have called special summits individually to discuss the same country.

One of the reasons why it is important for both communities to work together is because there is also a Nairobi Process that has been taking place.

In 2013, there was a peace agreement that was signed by the government of the DRC and the M23 rebel group. And one of the things that they agreed on is for the M23 to transform into a legitimate political party. In 2007, there was a Nairobi process between the DRC and Rwanda. You have another peace agreement in 2002.

There is a need for a different attitude by our leaders when dealing with the DRC conflict as there have been many different processes by SADC and EAC. There is a need for agreements to be fully implemented by those who have signed, and they need to be monitored.

Rebone Tau is a former Alliance International Relations Committee and the author of 'The Rise and Fall of the ANC Youth League.'



Defend and Preserve Our

Noble Culture **ULWALUKO FROM THE**

Whims of Commercialisation and Profit-Making: Signposts of Capitalism

by Nkosana Dolopi

What a festive season it has been, as we travelled far and wide attending imigidi (ceremonies marking the return of boys). Voices rang high with enthusiasm and passion as we sang uSomagwaza.

The art of stick fighting remained a central attraction, while ululating, joyful, and anxious mothers welcomed their sons back alive, celebrating their return.

The ceremonies introduced new songs, playful teasing, and culminated in the crucial moment of ukuyalwa kwabantwana (guidance of the boys).

For the purposes of this article, and with specific reference to the amaXhosa, the rite of passage marking a boy's transition to adulthood is a proud and defining moment, celebrated by boys and parents alike.

This tradition has

endured for centuries, shaping character, instilling discipline, and teaching values of Ubuntu—love, care, honesty, humility, sacrifice, selflessness, and integrity—long before the advent of missionary education. Boys were educated about their history, heroes, heroines, songs, poetry, and identity as a people.

While the cultural significance of ulwaluko remains profound, recent years have witnessed tragic instances where a few boys have lost their lives during this important journey. We must continue to mourn these young souls while actively working to prevent such losses, ensuring this cultural milestone is safe and honoured.

However, the practice of ulwaluko faces threats from commercialisation and profiteering.

Some surgeons, health professionals, and amakhankatha now exploit this sacred

tradition for financial gain. It is imperative to protect this rite of passage from the greed of capitalists, whose actions risk diluting and ultimately destroying its cultural essence.

Appreciating surgeons and amakhankatha has always been integral to the tradition.

Historically, their contributions were recognised with tokens of gratitude, not payments driven by profit motives. These individuals were respected for their calling, often refusing gifts from impoverished families, as their pride lay in the lasting impact they had on the boys they guided.

Today, however, this practice is increasingly commodified, driven by financial interests rather than community spirit.

While culture evolves, we must protect ulwaluko from the corrosive forces of profit-making, commercialisation, and the inhumane nature

of capitalism, which threatens to stain, distort, and destroy this tradition.

Disturbing signs abound, from the tendering of ibhoma (hut) construction for profit to the ostentatious displays of wealth during ceremonies. These excesses undermine the values of modesty and communal contribution, replacing them with bling, material arrogance, and competition. These ceremonies can influence the national landscape of values and practices in a positive or negative way.

The growing trend of opulent ceremonies, exemplified by TikTok videos of boys being transported home by helicopters and dressed in designer labels, risks introducing harmful values of materialism and superficiality.

This not only distorts the cultural significance of ulwaluko but also widens the gap between the wealthy and the poor,

exposing the working class to shame and alienation.

Our mothers, radiant in their beautifully designed imibhaco dresses, add to the splendour of these occasions. Yet, we must guard against the commercial pressures that burden poor families, driving them into debt while capitalists profit from their sacrifices.

December, a month of cultural celebration, should not become a time of financial ruin, exacerbated by exploitative Black Friday sales and the relentless consumerism encouraged by big businesses.

Karl Marx aptly summarised this dynamic: "Accumulation of wealth at

one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony, toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, and mental degradation at the opposite pole."

This observation resonates deeply as capitalism encroaches on ulwaluko, transforming it into a site of profit-making at the expense of cultural integrity.

This critique is not an attack on personal development or the celebration of achievements but a call to protect our culture from the corrupting influences of greed and excess.

While some flaunt designer clothes,

and expensive whiskeys, many of our people languish in poverty, debt, and despair. Capitalism, with its divisive, exploitative, and destructive tendencies, poses a grave threat to our traditions and collective identity.

Capitalism as a system has captured our funerals already and is now encroaching our best, this passage, and see it, to paraphrase Karl Marx, as a moment of accumulation of wealth, while at the same time observing accumulation of misery and agony by the working class.

To preserve ulwaluko, we must confront these

challenges head-on. Provincial summits, leading to a national dialogue, should be convened to debate these issues and explore ways to moderate the opulence. Preaching and practising the values of modesty and prudence can counteract the culture of materialism and corruption.

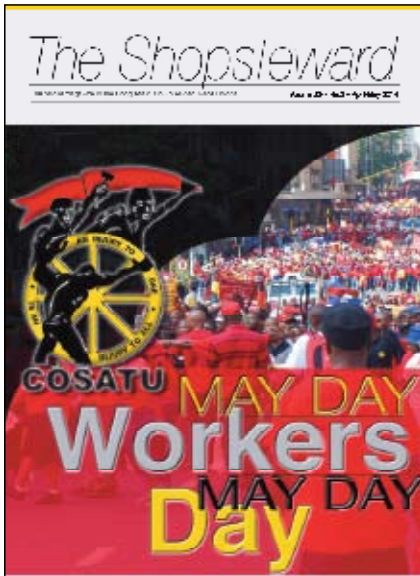
Let us reclaim this sacred tradition, ensuring it continues to nurture, unite, and uplift our people.

Nkosana Dolopi is the Deputy General Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, writing in his personal capacity.

Subscribe to The Shopsteward

THE SHOPSTEWARD is a unique magazine. Most newspapers and magazine owned by millionaires and reflect the outlook of the rich and powerful. The Shopsteward is produced by COSATU and gives the workers a point of view on the big issues in the workplace, the community, politics and the world. Why not

make sure you get issues by subscribing?



Shopsteward Subscription

COSATU's website offers an option to download the subscription form from there, you can print it out and resend it back to us. www.cosatu.org.za

Subscription rates

The cost of six issues is

South Africa		Foreign subscription	
Workers and students	R45	Airmail	
Salaried employees	R55	Southern Africa	R290
CBO's and NGO's	R80	Other countries	R310
Institutions	R80	Surface mail	
Companies	R90	All countries	R180



Subscriber contact details

Surname

Name

Designation

Company

Address

Country

Tel

Fax

Cell

Email

Payment options

Cheque Enclosed, payable to COSATU

Direct transfer:

Banking details:

Name of Account: COSATU CEC

Bank: First National Bank

Branch code: 255005

Account number: 62345348644

Account type: Current

Please put in reference: SSJ & Your name

Name of credit card Visa Mastercard

Card Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CVC (Last 3 digits on the reverse side)

--	--	--

Expiry date/.....

Signature Date

Please post, fax or email proof of payment to

COSATU House, 110 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein

P.O. Box 1019, Johannesburg, 2000 or

Fax to +27 (0) 11 339 5080/6940

OR Email nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za

For Subscriptions and Distribution please contact nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za or Tel: +27 (0) 11 339 4911