**SADTU Post National Executive Committee (NEC) Statement**

Congress of South African Trade Unions

May 28, 2018

<http://www.cosatu.org.za/docs/cosatu2day/2018/pr0528a.html>

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) held its scheduled National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on 25 May 2018 at its National Office in Kempton Park, Gauteng. As the meeting coincided with Africa Day, the NEC used the opportunity to remind the Department of Basic Education and Government of the long-standing campaigns waged by SADTU for the promotion of African indigenous languages in our curriculum and the compulsory teaching of relevant African and South African history.

The meeting was the first after the conclusion of public service wage negotiations that dragged for eight months. The NEC conceded that the negotiations were the most challenging as the prevailing conditions were not in favour of workers. Government has auctioned the power to negotiate to the ratings agencies and lending institutions. The ratings agencies and international lending institutions seemed to influence indirectly the negotiations towards a particular outcome through threats of a ratings downgrade and international lending institutions "advice" to cut down the public sector wage bills and social spending from the national fiscus to please the ratings agencies.

Despite the challenging environment, the NEC believes that the final offer by the employer, after much persuasion by organized labour particularly from COSATU Joint Mandating Committee (JMC), was closer to what would have suited the workers. The NEC noted in particular the long-standing pay progression issue and the delinking of the housing allowance as significant victories for the workers. The Unions managed, under the circumstances, to secure a 2% above inflation increase for all public services employees.

Education matters

The NEC welcomed the Department of Basic Education's IT strategy in schools. The NEC said it recognizes the role of IT and the need of education to keep up with changing times. It warned however, that the Department should always ensure that an instrument does not replace a teacher and that IT is not used to de-professionalize the teaching profession. The education system should always have a human element.

Post Provisioning Model

The NEC urged the national office bearers to continue prioritizing the review of the Current Post Provision Model as it is leading to overcrowding in rural and township schools. Overcrowded classes compromise the quality of education.

"Our teachers are getting sick of the workload caused by teaching 'Mass Meetings'," the NEC noted. Further, the NEC called for the destruction of the two-tier education system for the haves and have-nots as seen through the small manageable class sizes in the ex-Model C schools and overcrowded 'mass meetings' in the townships and rural areas.

Policy Monitoring and Interventions

The NEC noted that the generation of policies by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) impacts on the work of teachers by changing their classroom roles without proper consultation with stakeholders. In most instances, DBE utilizes orientation workshops to introduce and bring about changes in the education system. The NEC called on our structures to be vigilant and oppose any amendments implemented without consultation.

Temporary teachers

The NEC noted the increasing numbers of educators who continue to work as temporary teachers across all provinces. The NEC resolved that provinces should collate the information of temporary educators occupying substantive posts for three months and more and declare a dispute on behalf of all those members. The NEC further resolved to take the matter to court as the Labour Relations Act (LRA) forced the employer to comply with the three-month probation.

The PSA/ANC Youth League Posture

The NEC raised strong objections to the stunts pulled by the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) during the wage negotiations. It is a well-known fact that the PSA has no traceable history of pulling any industrial action in the public service but they tried to fool the public by giving false militancy using rhetoric to get our members in particular to lose confidence in the leadership.

They may have played to the media gallery, but the workers and history know them. Their "Puppy Approach" strategy where a puppy barks loudly in a provocative manner whilst relying on the bull dogs to fight and bite, fell flat on its face this time around.

The PSA effectively wanted to drive COSATU aligned unions to a strike as it has no known organizational capacity to do so on its own.

Declaring a dispute on their part was disingenuous. They must come out clear as to why they have lodged a dispute on another dispute when they have a certificate to strike. The PSA must learn that a union that negotiates through the media is actually a paper tiger. The media is not a platform to negotiate. The volumes of airtime the media gave to the PSA has not translated in the improvement of the offer. The Unions that remained in the chamber and fought fiercely are the ones that pushed the employer to agree to the delinking of the housing allowance, pay progression parity and the salary adjustment amongst the other victories.

The PSA stunt is not new to collective bargaining processes, as records will show that they always break ranks with other unions on the last minute and decide not to sign. They did this in 2009 and again in 2011. They always threaten to strike but they never take to the streets. The only time you see the PSA on the streets is, when they are distributing white t-shirts and fighting for the visibility of their banner at marches with no actual members in attendance.

History has no blank pages and we know that the PSA has no scars of war and no experience of the pain inflicted by the "No Work No Pay" rule. It is a fact that when progressive "red unions" mount an industrial action, the PSA actively encourages its members to acquire affidavits stating that the striking workers prevented them from going to work.

The NEC said the PSA stunts, supported publicly by NUPSAW and SAFTU, are part of a bigger agenda to profile COSATU unions as toothless and use that narrative to counter-organize. We will not negotiate with the other unions because we know who the employer is. Just because PSA are a new affiliate and even the biggest affiliate of FEDUSA, this should not intoxicate them. Numerical arrogance in any coalition or working together arrangement including in federations is an indicator of an organization with no political clarity. Unity of the workers is of paramount importance in negotiations and improvements of working conditions.

SADTU is the biggest union in the Public Service Co-ordination Bargaining Council (PSCBC) but it has never undermined any union because we believe in the unity of the workers. SADTU has never waved its majority vote weight in the face of any union because SADTU is a progressive fighting union. SADTU does not make threats to strike she will not implement. SADTU has signed the agreement because of a mandate from her members and understood the difficult conditions the workers are facing. We challenge all unions that are ready to sign to do so with clear conscience. They should not allow PSA who always breaks ranks with allies to coerce them.

ANCYL

These negotiations exposed us to developments unheard of before; the ANCYL that never commented on labour issues suddenly found courage to release a statement on what is happening at the PSCBC. This was clearly for political expediency. The ANCYL has not released a statement of any significance for almost three years and yet has now found a voice. The ANCYL's silence is deafening when young people lose their lives in pit toilets in schools and subjected to over-crowded classrooms.

Drug abuse, gangsterism, bullying, victimization and beatings of teacher by learners and sexual abuse of the girl child are rife in our school but we have never heard the ANCYL making a noise about these challenges.

The ANCYL is facing contestation as it approaches its own congress. Its statement suggests it could be suffering from a "Nasrec hangover" and that the real intention of such public utterances are to pit public servants against the leadership of the ANC and government. The NEC vowed not to allow SADTU to be used as pawns in a political chess game.

Attacks on SADTU

The NEC noted the continued attacks on SADTU from among others, the DA leader Mmusi Maimane and lately the IFP and the NGO Sector.

Responding to the President's budget vote speech, Maimane "advised" the President to "rein in SADTU". Later the IFP also made the same call.

These attacks on SADTU are a well-orchestrated move to position the Union as public enemy number one before the elections. Every corner of this country has a classroom and by implication a member of SADTU. With the perception that the tripartite alliance and its components are archrivals of monopoly capital, therefore those who are providing a strong support base for the ANC must be discredited. The influence that SADTU has in the political discourse both quantitatively and qualitatively makes it the perfect and ideal target for the working class enemy.

With general elections approaching, the real intention of the opposition alliance consisting mainly of the DA, EFF, COPE and the IFP is to weaken the ANC by weakening its strategic supporters particularly SADTU. This is the reason why the leader of the EFF addressing the elderly in Seshego in 2017 accused SADTU members of being "drunkards that came late to class and lacked professionalism".

The opponents of SADTU and the tripartite alliance conglomerate do not consist only of opposition parties. Some NGO, civic and even non-profit research organizations that are in cohorts with the mainstream media. The latest example is the South African Institute of Race Relations. This organization recently published research results that provide compelling evidence that parents and not politicians and teachers, run schools

The report argues that the bulk of our state schools "are not in the main inferior because of a shortage of money. Many emerging markets spend less on education than South Africa, but produce much better results".

The report continues to suggest that in South Africa's case, however, "corruption, destructive trade unions, ideological dogma, and incompetent bureaucrats and politicians are responsible for the fact that only a small [minority] of children will be well educated". It concludes by tabling frivolous recommendations that include that all public schools must be "sold" to NGOs, parents and private education providers, etc.

As SADTU, we agree that parents should be involved in the education of their children even in schools. However, this study and its recommendations are one of the many attempts to bringing through the back door, the privatization of education. We are opposed to privatization of education.

Another article published in April in a daily major newspaper on the public service wage negotiations, the author who is a senior researcher from the IRR speaks about the contradictory relationship that Margaret Thatcher had with the powerful trade unions of the UK and how she ultimately diluted their power. The author then makes an example about SADTU in a South African context. He makes use of the words "the untouchable SADTU in South Africa" in a veiled attempt to incite public opinion against us. He argues that the union is in the forefront of a burgeoning public sector wage bill that would lead to downgrades. Let us expose this politically confused author and the IRR for not following the dictates of research. They have allowed the popular narrative led by the DA to influence their findings if those were findings at all and the bizarre recommendations. What is collapsing governments in Africa is not SADTU or any union.

It is how African governments are allowing millions of dollars to leave the continent in illicit schemes. It is the lack of action by the people of Africa to halt this criminal behavior by the rich countries. Numerous provide real evidence, and not faked findings by IRR, that $192bn is out of Africa each year whilst Africa receives $30bn in aid each year. This should concern an Institute that really cares about race relations in South Africa.

When Africans demand their land and call for their dignity to be restored as human beings we expected IRR to lead the campaign by providing quality evidence of what the Africans are experiencing on a daily basis and how returning the

land to them impact their dignity. If the SAIRR is to restore its integrity, it must use hard facts from proper research and not popular narratives.

The recent report is frivolous and aimed at advancing the DA agenda of privatization of education and all public services as we approach the general elections. This Institute goes against the UN resolutions not to sell education because privatization of education leads to polarization and inequalities. We reject the report with the contempt it deserves. We call upon the leadership of this Institute to join us as we fight against tax evasion and other illicit financial flows facilitated through tax havens because these criminal activities are the ones destroying governments and robbing the nations of money to fund public education.

Our people are angry; they are poorly serviced because government has to pay debts following irresponsible loans. Our people in the continent are angry because multinational companies are making $46bn in Africa but leave this continent poor. Is it not the role the IRR is supposed to play in informing our people instead of being the DA election manager?

SADTU will not allow herself to be the scapegoat for the ills that the country faces

Posture on the National Minimum Wage:

The NEC criticized the so-called "national shut down" to fight against the National Minimum Wage led by the former General Secretary of COSATU. It described the "shut down" as nothing but a charade meant to parade the leadership of a limping new federation that relies on one union for its very survival.

These enemies of worker unity led the workers onto the streets on an unprotected action based on lies in an attempt to gain relevance within the labour movement discourse.

The former General Secretary of COSATU who led our Federation for no less than 20 years as a flag bearer demanding a legislated National Minimum Wage developed a sudden onset of amnesia. The enemies of worker unity were contending that the minimum R20 per hour rate was too miniscule yet their largest affiliate signed two collective agreements in two sectors of R18 and R21 just last year.

The leadership of that SAFTU whose membership is still unverifiable has no class-consciousness in its trajectory; is self-centered and sees nothing wrong with dividing workers. Addressing the march, the General Secretary of that federation could not complete a sentence without mentioning COSATU. This goes to show that the real aim of their charade was to demonize COSATU.

International relations

The NEC condemned Israel for continuing to subject the people of Palestine to sub-human conditions in their own land. It however commended the South African government for withdrawing its ambassador to Israel after the mass murder of unarmed Palestinians recently. Our freedom is partly due to the solidarity from outside our borders; we will therefore have to strengthen our solidarity with Palestine. The children of Palestine deserve a peaceful environment conducive to learners and not bullets, torture and imprisonment they face every day.

We are going to mobilize our masses to boycott Israel goods and campaign for international sanctions against Israel. The world cannot standby and leave Israel and the Trump administration to violate international rules. The NEC called on the United Nations to conduct and independent enquiry into the latest killings and deal decisively with those found to be responsible.

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