

## **DECLARATION OF THE 11<sup>th</sup> NEHAWU NATIONAL CONGRESS**

We the 575 delegates of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of NEHAWU, a giant public sector union representing 272 826 members across the public service, post-school education, parastatal, private health and private social development sectors - proclaim that over the next four years our union shall underpin its programme of action around our theme: 'Strengthen workplace organisation, deepen class consciousness and advance internationalism'. Our 11<sup>th</sup> Congress took place on the special occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our union. We pay tribute to all the gallant founders and all generations of leaders and members that came before us; and we pledge to sustain their spirit and hard work in building and defending NEHAWU and advancing the interests of members and the broader working class. Thus we emerge from this congress as a maturing and biggest affiliate of our federation COSATU and a leading affiliate of WFTU on our continent, with confidence and determination to strengthen, deepen and advance our work on all that we have achieved on the key pillars of our programme of action since our last congress. Our congress was graced by keynote addresses delivered by leaders of our Alliance and government as well as inputs from WFTU and our Trade Union International of the Public Service and Allied Employees (TUI-PAE). We are honoured by the attendance of about 36 fraternal international trade unions and parties from Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and Asia, and received messages of support and congratulations from many others, underlining the growing international influence of our union.

It is now a decade that global capitalism is in the clutches of multiple crises - of economic stagnation, rising inequalities, unemployment, poverty, ecological destruction and geopolitical tensions and civil wars. Since 2007 the various policy interventions that have been used to stimulate economic growth, including quantitative easing and cheap credit, have yielded nothing but lower economic growth rates if not stagnation in many of the advanced countries in North America, Europe and Asia. Instead, inequalities and poverty have deepened whilst unemployment expanded, whereby the current higher average rates of unemployment in many countries, including South Africa, are increasingly becoming a permanent feature of capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We now live in a world in which the rich 10% owns 90% of global wealth, 71% of the world population lives on less than R100 a day and unemployment shall surpass 200 million by the end of this year. This is part of the unfolding all-round crises of capitalism that also manifest in the collapse of the legitimacy of the Neoliberal bourgeois parties and the resurgence of extreme right-wing forces in the global-north, as well as the geopolitical and military encirclement of Russia in Eastern Europe and China around the South China Sea that threaten large scale wars. All these and others, including the continuing terrorist atrocities perpetrated against the peoples of Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Syria and others especially in North Africa and the Arab Peninsula underscore the insights of Lenin that the epoch of imperialism "is relatively much more violent, spasmodic, disastrous and conflicting, an epoch which for the mass of the population is typified not so much by a "horror without end" as by a "horrible end".

We condemn the recent moves by the United States to reverse the advances of the Cuban revolution. Similarly, we condemn the intensification of counter-revolution activities in Venezuela and other parts of South America by the US and its expansion of military bases on our continent.

We can proudly proclaim that over the past four years, NEHAWU has been the torch-bearer of proletarian internationalist activism and solidarity campaigns in our country. We are now challenging ourselves with the task of advancing our internationalist work. In this regard, we shall take on the responsibility of strengthening our work with other African affiliates of WFTU, including NUM, POPCRU, CEPPWAWU and the Africa Office in building WFTU and the TUI-PAE on the African continent. We shall support COSATU as it carries out the mandate to affiliate to WFTU and work tirelessly to encourage other COSATU affiliates to join WFTU TUIs. Our 11<sup>th</sup> Congress has finally taken a historic resolution to disaffiliate from the Public Service International which shall be implemented with immediate effect.

We shall step up our solidarity campaigns with the struggling peoples of Swaziland, Western Sahara, Palestine, Venezuela and with the Cuban revolution. We shall strengthen our relations with other progressive solidarity and peace movements and build fraternal bonds with the progressive trade union movement of the Basque country, Latin America and North Africa. The BRICS, which emerged as a potential counter-hegemonic force as it amongst others sought to create a multi-polar world order, to reform the United Nations and to create an alternative global financial system, has been weakened by political changes in Brazil and India and this happens at a time when western imperialism has taken an aggressive posture towards Russia and China. As South Africa hosts the 10<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in 2018, we undertake to gear ourselves to play a central role in the BRICS Trade Union Summit. As part of deepening class consciousness, we shall work with the SACP, COSATU and WFTU in organising different activities to celebrate the centenary of the epoch-making Great October Socialist Revolution. We are forever indebted to the contribution of the Soviet Union in our national liberation struggle. Central to these celebrations shall be discussion forums and lectures on the contribution of Bolshevism in theory and practice to Marxism-Leninism, national liberation struggles, class-oriented trade unionism and the unprecedented and outstanding socioeconomic and scientific achievements of the Soviet Union in transforming a backward, semi-feudal and poverty-stricken country into a highly advanced modern society

Political and socioeconomic power and the massive endowment of natural resources in our continent remains under the influence and control of western imperialism which is involved in the scramble for these resources with other emergent powers such as China and India. It is therefore our duty to deepen our fraternal relations and to step-up our joint work with the progressive trade union movement in our continent in the fight against the massive looting of resources by mineral extractive monopolies, corruption, the annual elicit

outflow of \$41 billion and the domination of public life by a tiny comprador elite. Such collaboration and solidarity within the African trade union and amongst progressive forces must be part of the long-term endeavours to break-down neo-colonial relations with imperialism, efforts to place an alternative development agenda at the centre and the development of democratic developmental states. This developmental agenda and the people's struggles for democracy in Swaziland and self-determination in Western Sahara are two sides of the same coin. Hence, we condemn the readmission of Morocco into the African Union and the position taken by South Africa and other African countries in support of the Mswati regime at the ILO. Thus, we pledge to intensify our solidarity campaigns in this regard.

Congress analysed the state of the NDR and reiterated our deep concern that the ANC is currently dangerously divided and organisational paralysed and thus risking the derailment of our revolution. This is taking place at the time when the balance of class forces are decisively in favour of monopoly capital and the reactionary political forces led by the DA are increasingly making inroads on the ANC's mass base and political power. Whilst we maintain that the Alliance remains strategically relevant, we welcome the fact that the SACP is now calling for the reconfiguration of the Alliance. As we have learned over the years in the implementation of the COSATU 2015 Plan, ultimately the reconfiguration of the Alliance is a function of, and is determined by the balance of forces on the ground.

Corruption and corporate state capture are indeed part of a counter-revolution. Thus, congress undertakes that NEHAWU shall actively support the SACP initiative of building the broadest possible patriotic and popular front to defend, advance and deepen our democracy and national sovereignty, to fight corporate state capture, corruption, rent-seeking and all forms of manipulation of our national wealth and public resources by sections of individuals and elitist groupings - regardless of whether they are black or white. We know that ultimately the struggle for socialism involves the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat led by the vanguard party, the SACP. And this is the real content of the question of the party and state power rather a narrow parliamentary road to socialism. Hence, the perspective of the SACP to establish democratic working class power and hegemony over the state and all other key centres of power in society in general is correct. This includes contesting in multiparty elections, which as part of the organised working class in COSATU, SACP and SANCO we shall continue to debate and consider its implications.

Congress supports the succession of Cde Jacob Zuma by Cde Cyril Ramaphosa at the 54<sup>th</sup> ANC Conference that is taking place at the end of the year in Gauteng. Thus, in this regard we pledge to campaign through our national and provincial structures, for a progressive leadership to emerge at the 54<sup>th</sup> ANC Conference on the basis of a programme for a more radical second phase of our transition.

We note with deep concern the fact that since the adoption of the National Development Plan by the fifth ANC administration, with its Neoliberal macroeconomic policies, growth in the South African economy has plunged year after year such that it is now in contraction and condemned to a junk status. The current recessionary state of the economy is aggravating the already crisis levels of unemployment, poverty and inequalities. In this regard, we shall be in the forefront in support of COSATU's call for the Jobs Summit, which amongst others must also discuss the macroeconomic policies, industrialisation and comprehensive social security. Congress appreciates that our federation COSATU is steadily regaining its strengths and impact in society, as, amongst others, illustrated by successful Section 77 mass actions and May Day activities. Thus, we undertake to continue to support efforts to address challenges faced by some of the affiliates, the Listening Campaign and the Section 77 notice which amongst others must put forward our demands such as safe and reliable integrated public transport system, the implementation of the NHI, safe and productive investment of workers' retirement savings by the Public Investment Cooperation, Fees-free post-schooling system, the absorption of CHWs into the public service and an end to e-tolls, outsourcing, casualization, etc. Congress directs the national union to develop position paper on nuclear energy for discussion within COSATU, in this regard the first draft shall be presented at the first CEC of the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress and discussed in our structures sub-nationally. We are inspired that our North West province is rolling out preparations for a total shutdown in the public service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The demands put forward by the province on the filling of vacancies, outsourcing, PPPs, labour-broking and others are part of the broader national campaigns of the union in defence of public services and the fight for the developmental state. Thus, as we move towards the new round of collective bargaining in the public service, we shall mobilise our members in mass actions in support of our demands which must not only deal with the demand for wage increase but also the implementation of the outstanding issues in the current agreement, an end to austerity regarding vacancies, an end to the outsourcing of administration at GEMS and other issues related to the benefits of GEMS members and its governance. We shall work with the COSATU public sector union to campaign for the investment of our retirement savings managed by the PIC into the public service housing scheme rather than in speculative projects in which it is currently involved.

We note with deep concern that the deepening triple-crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality in turn reproduce and worsen social ills in our society, including the abuse of women and children, xenophobia, drug and alcohol abuse and others. Thus, we condemn the escalating incidences of rape and killings of women and children; and undertake to actively participate in efforts directed at building a progressive women's movement, combating patriarchy and to promote gender activism amongst men as part of the overall strategic objective of the NDR to overcome the triple oppressions of women in our society. The struggle for the emancipation of women is directly related to the broader struggle for socialism, and therefore as part of COSATU we pledge to support the efforts of the SACP and ANC in deepening the conceptualisation of the perspective of a more radical phase of

our transition. This includes an emphasis on building the developmental state, in which as NEHAWU we shall be in the forefront of the fight against privatisation, outsourcing, agencification and corruption in the state and society, including in the SOEs. In this regard, we undertake to mobilise our members in support of the COSATU activities in the fight against state-capture and to support the establishment of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry.

Congress has placed a monumental challenge to the national union to strengthen workplace organisation. This requires a strong national union in the overall. Our synchronised programme of democratic renewal that began with branch congresses in 2014 and our assessment of the overall state of our branches to date show that this organisational development process is uneven across provinces and sectors as it has been characterised by advances and reversal alike. Therefore as we roll-out dedicate activities to strengthen workplace organisation, we shall simultaneously retrace our footsteps to rebuild our branches where there have been reversals, whilst consolidating and improving on our work to achieve strong workplace organisation in the overall. As part of this, we shall ensure that all our 1813 branches have fully constituted leadership structures, regular meetings take place including monthly general meetings with members, and our regions must carry out their mandate of visiting branches to listen to members and to support branches in taking up demands and driving campaigns to transform the workplace and improve conditions of work. At the same time, as part of growing the union, we shall break new ground in every region in establishing and building new branches. Our regions, as engines of service delivery to members, must play a key role in supporting and strengthening our branches, must work with provincial structures in convening regular town-based meetings to report back and to mobilise for our campaigns. The congress appreciates the enormous strides that we have made in building a reliable and up to date membership system. Whilst our membership has effectively grown since our last congress, in the overall the rate of growth per branch, sector, region and province still falls short of the requirement of the 10<sup>th</sup> National Congress mandate for the 50%+1 target in all workplaces and sectors. This means that we must accelerate our recruitment campaign, improve service to retain members and broaden our recruitment strategy beyond the identified priority regions and sectors. A sustained growth of membership also depends on the overall organisational programme and the implementation of key priorities thereto, including:

- Reviving and operationalising seamless machinery across all spheres of our departments, units and executive structures.
- Improving the quality of our bargaining strategies, the accountability and capacity of our bargaining forums.
- Reviving and strengthening coordination and operation of our provincial organisers' forums which must be accompanied by a suitable programme of organizing and ideological training.

- Addressing our large case-load, strengthening our Legal Department and the review of the Paralegal Strategy.
- Strengthening our basic shop-stewards training programme, which must also be accompanied by ideological training.

Since our last congress we have won landmark cases in Labour Court and Constitutional Court in the interests of our members and workers in general. In the period ahead, we shall continue with our work towards the realisation of our strategic objective of centralised bargaining in higher education and the legislative sectors. To deepen class consciousness, we shall strengthen our Education Service Centre, engage our fraternal class oriented unions in the WFTU family and the SACP to review and enrich the content of our ideological and political material, improve the capacity of our commissars across all spheres. Our ideological and political training shall include imparting leadership skills to build capacity and confidence especially of women, shop-stewards and young workers of our union. To ensure financial sustainability and to lesson dependency on service providers and donors in order strengthen our independence and to ensure our resources are efficiently directed towards activities that advance the interests of our members, Congress directs the national union to reduce our financial liabilities and wastages.

We look forward to the outcomes of the ANC's 5<sup>th</sup> National Policy Conference that begins tomorrow and of course the SACP 14<sup>th</sup> Congress that is taking place on the 10-15<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The theme of the SACP Congress: "Defend, Advance, Deepen the National Democratic Revolution - The Vanguard Role of the SACP", gives confidence to us that once again our vanguard party shall seize the moment to provide strategic direction and rescue our NDR. As we rise to bring the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress to a close, we underscore the principle that the unity and cohesion of the union of Bheki Mkhize and Yure Mdogolo is sacrosanct. We take to heart the key message from the SACP that it is easy to destroy and yet it is not easy to build. Therefore, as we gear ourselves to renew democratic mandates of our branches, regions and provinces going forward, we shall place this principle of unity and cohesion at the centre.

***Amandla!!!***

***Matla!!!***

***All Power!!!***

***Aluta!!!***

***Socialism Is The Future!!! Build It Now!!!***