



**MINISTRY  
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SPEECH OF THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION MS  
FAITH MUTHAMBI, MP, AT THE 11<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE NATIONAL  
EDUCATION HEALTH AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION (NEHAWU)**

**26 June 2017**

**BOKSBURG, GAUTENG PROVINCE**

President Mzwandile Makwayiba;

General Secretary, Bereng Soke;

Other National Office Bearers of NEHAWU;

Provincial Leadership of NEHAWU;

Members present in this National Congress;

Leadership of Trade Unions/ Federations Nationally and Internationally present in support;  
and

Distinguished guests.

**Comrades,**

Allow me to express my profound appreciation to be invited to address this auspicious occasion of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU).

We believe that this Congress under the theme, ***Build Strong Workplace Organization, Class Consciousness and Internationalism***, marks yet another milestone in the history of the Union.

It is through amongst others the struggle of the working class of NEHAWU members, that various milestones in our history were achieved.

The political system of apartheid fragmented public service labour relations. While the apartheid government sought to expand the role of employee organisations, only those racially centred staff associations were granted recognition and included in the consultative structures of the apartheid system for negotiations in the public service. The exclusion of progressive

unions, such as NEHAWU, in the consultative structures of this apartheid regime, rendered them ineffective.

NEHAWU was founded on 27th and 28th June 1987 by workers from the Education, Health, Government and Social Welfare sectors.

The late 1980s also witnessed militant struggles by organisations such as NEHAWU for recognition and to engage in a fully-fledged collective bargaining.

The concept of collective bargaining in the public service is woven into the general political and labour relations fabric of this Country. There is no better example of this relationship than your own organization, NEHAWU. In 2014 the Country asked of NEHAWU to release their national leadership to be deployed in national and provincial parliaments. NEHAWU adhered to this call, without hesitation.

### **Comrade President,**

In any other Organization this would have resulted in a total collapse. NEHAWU showed its character, stature and maturity by hosting a one day Special National Congress in June 2014, where amongst other issues the Congress successfully elected leadership to replace those deployed. Those leaders are the ones that have led the Organization successfully to this 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress.

This stability is testimonial of the leadership of the many comrades that charted the way for you such as – EJ Khaile, J La Guma, John Gomas and de Norman. Stalwarts from the 1940s and 1950s include Selby Msimang, Moses Kotane, JB Marks, Moses Mabida and Joe Slovo.

### **Comrades,**

NEHAWU must carry that stability into this Congress. When you discuss relevant issues in your commissions, the outcomes should strengthen workplace organizations, such being the strength of a trade union, deepen the class consciousness of your members and promote International Solidarity in protecting and defending the gains of the working class.

### **Comrades,**

The same selflessness and commitment you show towards your organizations and the same your predecessors cultivated as the foundation of this organization, is the selflessness and commitment we have to show towards the public service and more specifically how we ensure the delivery of basic frontline services.

The majority of our people remain without a means of control over their own lives as they continue to be exploited only to fuel the engines of profit in servitude to white monopoly capital and global iterations. As public servants dedicated to changing the material conditions of our people, we do so being consciously that unless a radical socio-economic transformation path is undertaken those conditions will not improve.

We recognise that we cannot continue as a collective, after all of your struggles and past victories, to remain enslaved in an economy that remains highly monopolised and foreign owned, controlled and also at the hands of a white minority.

We should agree that we need a democratic and interventionist state that will work to eradicate decades of social exclusion and economic exploitation.

We should commit that determining the content of radical economic transformation should be a collective responsibility that should include the working class.

We require a new, innovative, selfless and inspired type of public service. All of which are in line with the principles of the Constitution of the Republic to "provide [an] effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government".

We have the collective responsibility to create conditions that are favourable to our public servants for the delivery of those services that will allow for achieving these ideologies.

**Comrades,**

We need better cohesion between those that draft legislation and the structures of the PSCBC, where NEHAWU is a majority party. If legislation that directly impacts on the public service is discussed in NEDLAC, NEDLAC needs to ensure that a comprehensive process of consultation is undertaken on those areas, with trade unions and employers in the public service. Legislation is drafted, consulted, agreed to and submitted to Parliament with direct implications on the conditions of service or employment provisions of public servants, without proper consultation with parties to the PSCBC.

Examples of such legislations that directly impacted on the membership of NEHAWU is the Border Management Authority Bill, The FETC and TVET legislation and the Foreign Service Dispensation Bill. I invite you to engage with me, on finding solutions to this.

**Comrades,**

In addressing some of the challenges we face, we have undertaken and agreed in PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2015 to conduct research on the privatisation and outsourcing of the public services through the establishment of agencies and entities. Public Servants and many of them NEHAWU members, get caught up in these structures, where it becomes challenging to exercise the basic rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. We must vigorously debate and be innovative in finding an amicable solution.

**Comrades,**

Integral to the employment relationship is ensuring that an employer assists employees in securing a habitat or a home. A lack of adequate housing not only compromises development, but eventually also constitutes a security threat from myriad social ills that arise from homelessness. In the logic of this argument, homelessness or inadequate housing is therefore retrogressive to the prospects for sustainable livelihoods.

The PSCBC has entered into Resolution 7 of 2015. This agreement was entered into as to prevent retrogressive prospects of sustainable livelihoods of public servants. We need to collectively identify the reasons why the implementation of this agreement collapsed and we need to reposition for the full implementation of this agreement. This agreement is not an agreement of the state alone, it's a collective agreement that requires as much your drive and commitment to implement.

**Comrades,**

It is known that NEHAWU has advocated in support of the NHI. The Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) is an integral cornerstone to compliment and transfer to the implementation of the NHI. However, in the interim GEMS must ensure that it provides an affordable medical aid scheme to its members.

Parties to the PSCBC has agreed in Resolution 3 of 2015 to review GEMS in totality. I have been eagerly engaging the GEMS board and Trade Union parties to expedite the review and implementation of the provisions of the agreement. I am confident this process will soon be concluded.

### **Comrades,**

Considering the imminent salary negotiations. As a country we have witnessed several years of stability in the public service. I am confident that both the state as employer and employees have learnt valuable lessons from the advantages of having a stable environment.

In continuing this stability, parties to the PSCBC has entered into a protocol agreement outlining a process to be undertaken in conducting the upcoming wage negotiations.

I am confident that signing a multi-year agreement benefits all parties involved. This will also provide the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council with sufficient time to monitor the implementation of agreements, ultimately avoiding and or minimizing disputes on the failure to implement these collective agreements.

As the Department of Public Service and Administration we have a legal obligation to ensure the implementation of collective agreements and we commit ourselves to ensure we do exactly that.

As Government we are committed to collective bargaining. We are committed to protect the principle of majority rule, we are committed to prevent the proliferation of trade unions and we are committed to centralised collective bargaining.

Our ethos is one guided by the Constitution and it implores us to demonstrate that ***We Belong*** (to our communities), ***We Serve*** (our communities) and ***We Care*** (about our communities). In the end we must ensure that our government belongs to all our people and it is in service to our people, wherever they are.

I wish you well with this Congress and we look forward to the resolutions you will take in contributing to building a public service cadre that will be able to deliver a professional service that will allow us in "***working together, taking South Africa forward***"

I thank you!



## **KHAYA XABA**

**Media Liaison Officer**

**Tel: +27 11 833 2902 Ext: 60636**

**Mobile: +27 82 455 2500**

**Email: [khaya@nehawu.org.za](mailto:khaya@nehawu.org.za)**

### **NEHAWU HEAD OFFICE**

**National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union**

56 Marshall Street | Marshall Town | Johannesburg

PO Box 10812 | Johannesburg | 2000

Tel: +27 11 833 2902 | Fax: +27 11 833 0757 (Secretariat)

Website: [www.nehawu.org.za](http://www.nehawu.org.za)

Follow us on   