



13TH NATIONAL CONGRESS NEWSLETTER

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13th National Congress Newsletter



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INTRODUCTION

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) is convening its 13th National Congress from 26 to 29 June 2026 at the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre in Boksburg, Gauteng Province, under the theme: "Advance Workplace Organisation to Defend Collective Bargaining, Heighten Class Consciousness and Advance Internationalism."

The second day saw the congress receive addresses from the COSATU President, TUI PS&A President, WFTU General Secretary, and the presentation of the Secretariat Report and Financial Report and the outlining of the congress commissions.



Advance Workplace Organisation to Defend Collective Bargaining, Heighten Class Consciousness and Advance Internationalism



COSATU Message of support – Cde Zingiswa Losi



Programme Director, Comrade Mike Shingange, President of NEHAWU and First Deputy President of COSATU;

General Secretary Zola Saphetha;

National, provincial and local leadership of our militant affiliate, NEHAWU;

Leadership of the ANC led by cde 1st DSG Nomvula Mokonyane

Leadership of the SACP, led by cde GS cde Solly Africa Mapaila

CEC of COSATU;

Former leaders of this glorious union
International guests and friends, Most importantly, the members of NEHAWU.

Thokozani, Camagwini kubantwana bethongo

Comrade Mike Shingange, Thank you for inviting your Federation, to join you for this historic congress. We are honoured to be here, to offer our full support to NEHAWU and most critically, to hear the struggles of our members from public

service departments to public sector entities and to listen to the successes and challenges facing workers on the ground.

We thank President Shingange and General Secretary Zola Sapetha and the collective leadership of NEHAWU for being consistent and active members of the CEC of COSATU, for engaging in robust but progressive debates and for defending the collective resolutions and decisions of the Federation.

We must congratulate the union of Yure Mdyogolo and Bhekokwakhe Mkhize for reaching this milestone of 39 years. It is a path of revolutionary struggle that has shielded cleaners and nurses from some of the worst forms of exploitation, defended Community Health Workers and uplifted ordinary public servants from the shackles of apartheid to being recognised for the public service they provide to the nation.

We salute you on behalf of the entire Federation of Elijah Barayi and Ray Alexander.

It is no accident that COSATU will soon be celebrating 41 years of continuous struggle. We are humbled that throughout this journey of toil and

sacrifice, COSATU and NEHAWU have stood as one.

This is a unity of the working class that is grounded in ideological consciousness...in pursuit of the principles of scientific socialism and whose unity must always be jealously guarded. We dare not take our Affiliates, our Federation, our Alliance for granted.

It is important that we pay heed to the wise words of Amilcar Cabral "Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children".

The challenges facing the working class and the rural poor are immense, they are dire. It is no exaggeration to state that the working class is under siege.

Workers, in particular the youth, battle to find work in an economy barely growing at 1% per annum, with a 43.7% unemployment rate. We remain the world's most unequal society, faced with entrenched levels of poverty and inequality.

This necessitates that we respond collectively and decisively as the Alliance. We cannot continue naively, upon a path of neo-liberalism and reckless austerity budget cuts. To repeat the mistakes of the past is to continue to reap the very same socio-economic crises.

COVID-19 proved beyond doubt, the critical role of a capacitated developmental state. The working class and the poor do not have the luxury of medical aid, private schools and security. They depend upon a well-oiled state to uplift them from the bondages of poverty.

It was during COVID-19 that our healthcare workers protected the nation, saving millions of lives. It was during this global pandemic that, COSATU with government and social partners put in place one of the world's largest economic and social relief packages, including more than R65 billion from the Unemployment Insurance Fund that enabled 5.7 million workers from our restaurants to our textile factories to feed their families.

We must be careful in our moments of anger not to abandon the battlefield of class struggle. Some ask, what is the point of Nedlac, our statutory social dialogue forum? Yet...it is at Nedlac that

time and again we have defended the hard-won rights of workers and improved the lives of the working class.

When some wanted to end the COVID-19 socio-economic relief package, it was COSATU that stepped to ensure it continued. Today, 8 million unemployed persons receive the SRD Grant, that with all its limitations.... is a foundation for the Basic Income Grant.

It was COSATU that intervened with the recent fuel price hikes with government, to ensure that R18 billion fuel levy relief was provided to cushion commuters.

We are not elected to merely lament on the challenges facing workers but to find and implement progressive solutions. When clothing workers were not paid during COVID and the UIF was unable to dispense relief in time, COSATU and SACTWU tabled the Two-Pot Pension Reforms. Today more than 4 million workers, including many public servants, have received over R70 billion relief.

We are now engaging government on the next phase of these reforms, to reduce the suffocating tax and provide greater relief for struggling workers. Whilst we continue to push forward, we must avoid the temptation to denounce our own victories.

Workers are battling retrenchments on a daily basis, and many are injured during the course of work yet, when they go to claim monies due to them from the UIF and the Compensation Fund, they are met with never ending queues, delays and frustration. Can we emerge from this conference with a concrete set of proposals on what must be done to fix these public sector institutions that exist to serve the working class?

We must congratulate our public sector unions and the Federation on a battle won to stop the abusive increase GEMS sought to impose upon members. This is what a fighting trade union movement does. We must extend such campaigns across all medical aids.

We must ramp up our fight in defence of the National Health Insurance as the only path to achieving universal healthcare. We dare not lose this war comrades. We must be on the ground and in the courts.

COSATU was insulted when we tabled the Eskom debt relief package in 2019, we persevered and

today Eskom has turned the corner and defeated the loadshedding that once crippled the economy. Now we must defend this anchor of industrial growth and block any attempt to privatise it. We must ensure that Eskom is assisted to make electricity affordable for economic growth.

The recovery of Transnet and Metro Rail prove that the state can and must be fixed and not abandoned to privatisation. More must be done to return these and other critical State-Owned Enterprises to full capacity. This is not a luxury but essential to growing the economy and creating decent jobs.

The Federation has long agreed to champion Proudly South Africa and Buy Local. But when we ask affiliates for reports on this, we are met by silence. Are our investments supporting companies that produce locally produced goods? Are the t-shirts and bags purchased for this conference made in South Africa?

A discussion is needed about the role of the Public Investment Corporation. These are workers' hard-earned pensions and insurance funds. They must be used to ensure workers can retire in comfort and to provide relief for workers when in need. They must be mobilised to stimulate inclusive economic growth and industrial development, to tackle unemployment and to ease the cost of living burden upon members.

We must express our frustration about the challenges many public servants, teachers and police officers face when it comes to the affordability of housing. What is our plan to ensure the GEPI provides affordable home loans and housing subsidies for our members? Why is this a matter for conference resolutions but not for implementation?

The Minister for Higher Education and Training has correctly called for an overhaul of our SETAs. This is long overdue. Our economy is struggling to grow, and our youth lack the skills of the economy of today, let alone tomorrow. Why are we silent as comrades who organise the SETAs on this urgent matter? Or are we content to allow the mismanagement and looting of workers' monies?

The danger of the call by some to abandon Nedlac, to withdraw from engaging, even your class enemies, is that you will leave the site of contestation to your opponents and rivals. When the original proposals to amend the labour laws were tabled at Nedlac, they were nothing less than

an assault upon the hard-won rights of workers that generations fought for. We were presented with a fait accompli that would have gutted our labour protections.

Some chose to run away from engaging at Nedlac. COSATU stayed and persevered and succeeded securing agreement to double severance pay, to expand maternity and parental leave, to extend labour protections to vulnerable workers, to protect the Minimum Wage from deductions, and most critically to defend our hard-won rights.

It is easy to criticise and denounce. We were insulted as COSATU when the National Minimum Wage came into effect yet today it has doubled for 1 million domestic workers, increased by 66% for 1 million farm workers and by 50% overall in the few years it has been here. It has raised the wages of 6 million vulnerable workers from construction sites to petrol stations. This is victory of the Federation of John Gomomo and Nana Abrahams.

Former President Thabo Mbeki correctly said that "Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity. Trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times."

Our alliance with the African National Congress, the leader of the liberation movement, and the South African Communist Party, is not a fair-weather friendship, it is the most effective and only vehicle to secure the total emancipation of the working class. Yes, each Alliance Partner, including ourselves, are faced with serious challenges, and own goals, but to abandon the Alliance which defeated apartheid and set the nation on the path of transformation and ultimately of building socialism would be reckless at best.

The September 2025 COSATU Central Committee mandated the Federation to defend the Alliance and engage each Alliance Partner on the need to unite and to reconfigure the Alliance. We are encouraged that an Alliance Summit to do exactly this is to be convened by the beginning of August.

This is not a matter that we can abandon nor allow workers to be divided over. We need an ANC that is renewed and biased towards the working class. We need an SACP that is capacitated and on the ground. We need an Alliance that is able to provide clear political direction to government at all levels and to hold it accountable.

We dare not fail when the very gains of the 1994

democratic breakthrough are at stake. The lessons of 2024 require the Alliance to unite and flesh out the modalities of contesting the 2026 local elections. We need our Alliance Partners to work with the Federation to find each other. Now is not the time not to allow our narrow differences to divide us.

Karl Marx correctly implored the Proletariat of the World to Unite and that is what guides this Federation of Violet Seboni and John Nkadimeng. Our struggles are not unique to South Africa. Workers from Zimbabwe to Myanmar are under siege. This is why COSATU and its Affiliates must continue to raise the red banner of international solidarity from the ILO to SATUCC, from ITUC to WFTU. We must leave no corner uncontested.

Whilst some may dismiss social dialogue, it is COSATU and the international labour movement with the support of our government that forced the ILO to adopt Convention 190 to End Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. Today its principles have been cast into our labour and criminal laws to protect our daughters and sisters as they seek to earn living as waitresses or receptionists, as paramedics or cleaners.

Recently the International Court of Justice ruled in favour of our demand to declare the right to strike an inalienable right of all workers. This is a powerful tool in defence of workers and the labour movement by which all governments can be held accountable.

Some question why COSATU engages in matters of trade from AGOA with the US to the EPA with the EU, to the FTA with China and India yet it is our motor manufacturing, farm and clothing workers whose jobs will be lost if the voice of workers is not heard. It is the tax revenues that the state depends upon to pay the staff of SARS and Home Affairs that will be in danger if we do not ensure that South Africa exports can be sold.

We must not be naïve comrades, the most reactionary forms of right-wing chauvinism are on the rise across the world, from the industrialised west to even here at home. It is during these dark times that the left and the labour movement must be united.

It is during these naked assaults that we must ramp up solidarity, not slogans, to provide support to workers in Cuba, Venezuela, Palestine and eSwatini.

We must be equally clear that we reject all forms of

xenophobia, violence, criminality and vigilantism. Our laws must be obeyed at all times, by South Africans and those who chose to come to South Africa. Only the state must enforce our laws.

Government must abandon the austerity budget cuts that have weakened the ability of the state to enforce the rule of law and it must act without fear or favour against criminals.

Equally we reject accusations that South Africa is xenophobic. We expect people, including visitors, to respect our laws, including immigration. We expect our sister African nations' governments to embrace democracy and human rights and to create jobs and economic opportunities for their people in their countries.

South African cannot carry this burden along, not when we are battling a 43.7% unemployment rate, when our public services are overstretched and our crime levels are unacceptably too high.

Amilcar Cabral reminded us to "Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories".

If we are to win these wars, to protect and uplift the working class, then we must ensure NEHAWU, COSATU and the labour movement are battle ready. Slogans are not enough.

Are we content with only 25% of workers being unionised and half of these being members of COSATU? Have we abandoned the call of one industry, one union, one country, one federation? What is our plan to take NEHAWU to over 300 000 members?

Do we appreciate that recruitment is a step and not the end? Are we empowering our branches and servicing our members? The reality is no as we are flooded with calls on a daily basis.

Are we servicing and supporting our Branches or are we distracted by our narrow differences and conference ambitions? We must raise our serious concerns about the loss of once vibrant Branches such as UWC and the dangers we face in repeating this fate at Parliament, NECSA and elsewhere. Let us not be complacent when members raise their frustrations.

Our most effective recruitment tool is a happy member. Let us action our Cost-of-Living campaigns from securing better wages to providing affordable housing to our members.



COSATU Message of support – Cde Zingiswa Losi



NEHAWU has always been a pillar of support for COSATU. We are heading to our national congress in September. We need NEHAWU to continue being a source of revolutionary ideas and a defender of COSATU and workers' unity.

The tasks facing NEHAWU at this conference are immense.

COSATU can only be as strong as our Affiliates, we are confident NEHAWU will continue to be a defender and engine of the Federation of Mark Shope and Dora Tamana. We need to see a fighting, militant, coherent and united NEHAWU emerge. We need to see a decisive and bold programme of action adopted and implemented that unites workers, builds the state, grows the economy, creates jobs and lays the path for socialism.

We do not during these dark days facing the working class have the luxury to give up or wallow in self-pity, nor do we have the time to rest upon our laurels and engage in slogans.

We are confident that NEHAWU will continue to make us proud, to push COSATU to do more and to defend the working class.



Highlights of Secretariat Overview – General Secretary, Zola Saphetha



General Secretary, Comrade Zola Saphetha presented the Secretariat Report to the 13th National Congress. In this section, we highlight key areas that emerged from the secretariat as presented by the General Secretary at the congress.

International context

The report made an assessment of the international balance of forces and agreed there's a shift from a unipolar order dominated by the United States towards a multipolar world led by emerging powers, particularly China and BRICS. It contends that the decline of US imperialism, deepening contradictions within global capitalism, and the expansion of alternative economic and political institutions create new opportunities for the Global South. The report strongly condemned imperialist wars and interventions in Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sahel, while expressing solidarity with oppressed peoples and liberation movements. It further called for strengthening international working-class solidarity through the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), deepening

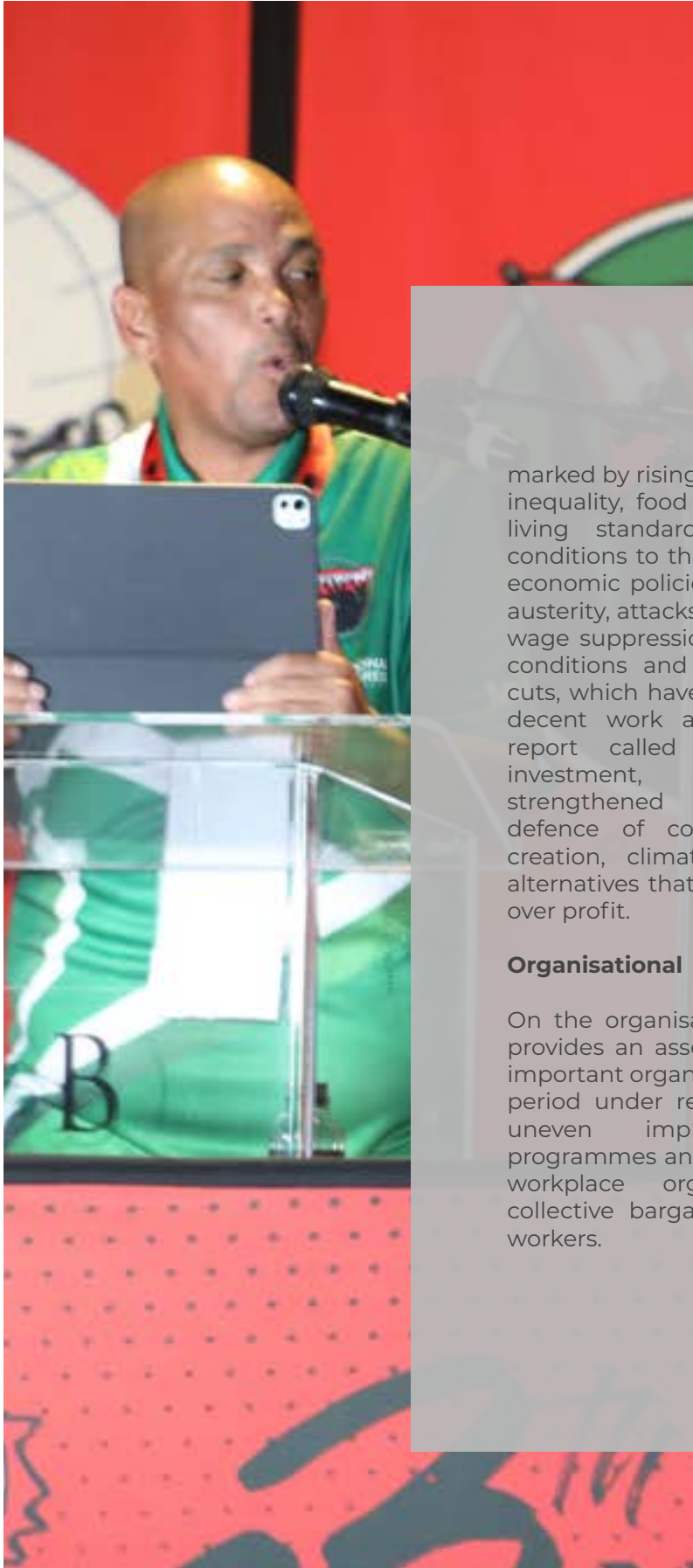
ideological education, and advancing proletarian internationalism.

National Political Context

On the national political situation the report makes an assessment of the National Democratic Revolution and the balance of class forces, the alliance at the present conjuncture and the working class strategic outlook. Furthermore, the report assessed the political situation post the 2024 elections as one characterised by increasing instability following the emergence of the Government of National Unity (GNU). It argued that the weakening electoral support of the ANC has emboldened conservative and right-wing forces, while threatening the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). The report called for strengthening of the socialist axis and supporting the SACP's working-class political programme, and advancing the strategic objective of socialism.

Socio-Economic

The report characterises the socioeconomic situation as one of deepening capitalist crisis,



marked by rising unemployment, poverty, inequality, food insecurity and declining living standards. It attributes these conditions to three decades of neoliberal economic policies, including GEAR, fiscal austerity, attacks on collective bargaining, wage suppression, deteriorating working conditions and public sector spending cuts, which have failed to deliver growth, decent work and redistribution. The report called for expanded public investment, industrialisation, strengthened public services, and defence of collective bargaining, job creation, climate justice and socialist alternatives that prioritise workers' needs over profit.

Organisational

On the organisation context, the report provides an assessment that there were important organisational gains during the period under review and acknowledges uneven implementation of its programmes and the need to strengthen workplace organisation to defend collective bargaining and the rights of workers.



TUI PS&A Message of Support – President Artur Sequeira



I extend my greetings to the NEHAWU Executive, the Chair of its 13th National Congress, all delegates and guests, as well as the organisations they represent, and I thank you for the invitation and your warm welcome.

The motto of this congress— “Advance Workplace Organisation in the workplace to Defend Collective Bargaining, Heighten Class Consciousness, and Advance Internationalism” — summarises the continuous priorities of the class-oriented labour movement in organising workers’ struggles against the capitalist system, imperialism, and colonialism, and for a socialist society.

I am a leader of the National Federation of Public and Social Service Workers’ Unions, affiliated with the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP-IN), and President of the Trade Union International of Public and Allied Services Unions (TUI-PS& A) of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), whose General Secretary is Comrade Zola Saphetha, a member of the NEHAWU Executive Committee.

Comrades,

I cannot speak about TUI- Public and Allied Services without mentioning the World Federation of Trade Unions, whose founding Congress took place 80 years ago on October 3rd, 1945 in Paris. Its emergence responded to an urgent need in a world transformed by the 1917 Russian Revolution, the emergence of the first Socialist State, the defeat of Nazi-fascism and the end of World War II.

Its statutes define the WFTU as a class-oriented federation of progressive trade unions, founded on fundamental principles: to be a democratic structure based on representative participation, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist; to be a federation of class-oriented trade unions from all over the world that promotes internationalist solidarity in workers’ struggle against exploitation and for a decent life; and to play a decisive role in building a world without the exploited or the exploiters — socialism.

To carry out its work amongst workers, the WFTU’s statutes create the Trade Union Internationals (TUIs), sectoral organisations with their own statutes and organisational autonomy, but guided

by the political and trade union decisions adopted by the WFTU at its congresses.

These organisations are fundamental to promote internationalist and solidary actions in the workplace and to give substance to the WFTU's revolutionary project, bringing together trade unions and class-oriented federations from all Continents. Their aim is the collective construction of broad demands for each sector, structured through the sharing of knowledge about the problems affecting workers in each sector in each country, taking into account their political and social context.

For this purpose, the Trade Union International of Public and Allied Services (TUI-PS&A) places great emphasis on its internationalist and solidary action, supporting the sectoral struggle of public administration workers worldwide to achieve and uphold their rights, as well as to defend the public services they provide to the people.

The WFTU and the TUI-PS&A consider that the social functions of the State and free public services — including healthcare, education, social security, the right to water, housing and transport, amongst many others — are basic needs which, following the defeat of Nazism and the end of World War II, emerged from the demands of workers and peoples. They became a social reality inspired by the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union, whose state apparatus was under workers' control, and were later consolidated through the struggles of workers in each nation.

Throughout its 76 years of existence — celebrated on October 29, 2025, in Johannesburg — the TUI-PS&A's fundamental task has been to grow and strengthen its organisation in order to enhance internationalist action and solidarity.

This stance was of foremost importance in the development of proposals and struggles for universal rights, such as decent wages, an end to precariousness, collective bargaining, a reduction in working hours, trade union rights and free public services for all, amongst other fundamental aspects for ensuring a more decent life for workers and the populations.

However, all the challenges that affected the WFTU following the fall of the Soviet Union also had an impact on the TUI-PS&A. Similarly, the process of rebuilding the WFTU — which began in 2000 at the 14th Congress in New Delhi (India) and continued at the 15th Congress in Cuba, where the leadership was renewed and the global

headquarters moved to Athens (Greece) — also shaped our path.

The concrete reactivation of this TUI-PS&A took place at the 12th. Congress in 2015 in Nepal, with the election of Comrade Pierpaolo Leonardi, of the USB (Italy), as General Secretary. Subsequently, with the election and re-election of Comrade Zola Saphetha, of NEHAWU, at the 13th Congress in Cyprus and the 14th Congress in Colombia, the activities of the TUI-PS&A gained new momentum.

We have promoted its growth through the adoption of statutory amendments to involve more comrades in continental leadership roles, establishing committees for Internationalist Solidarity, Women, Youth, Information and Propaganda, and Finance. We have thus ensured closer cooperation with the WFTU's regional offices and a more collective decision-making process at the World Executive Committee meetings, which are held annually on a different continent, in response to the challenges arising from the class struggle within the sector.

Comrades,

US imperialism and its allies, particularly NATO and the European Union, are intensifying the militarisation of international relations and pursuing a strategy of encirclement, creating instability and conflict with their adversaries, notably China and Russia.

In its attempt to resist the decline of its hegemonic role, US imperialism is intensifying the recessionary trends already present in the global economic system — a system also influenced by the strengthening and expansion of the BRICS, which are challenging the dominance of the dollar. In an attempt to resist this, the imperialist system promotes war economies, heightens inflation and reshapes energy systems to serve financial capital, leading to a concentration and centralisation of wealth in the hands of a very few and to the impoverishment of millions of workers, whether active or retired.

US imperialist intervention is intensifying in various parts of the globe. In Latin America, it threatens all those who do not submit to its interests and aims. Notable examples include interference in countries such as Brazil, Colombia and Mexico; the abduction of an elected president in Venezuela; or threats against Cuba, on which it imposes a criminal commercial, economic, financial and energy blockade. We must continue

to strengthen our solidarity with Cuba, in a call that can and must extend beyond the organisations of the WFTU, reinforcing our support for the heroic Cuban people.

In the Middle East, the US has launched an aggression against Iran and continues to support Israel's assault on Lebanon, whilst perpetuating genocide against the Palestinian people. It is necessary to put a stop to this aggression and guarantee Palestine's right to self-determination, as well as the recognition of an independent State of Palestine, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

In Africa, attempts at destabilisation, wars and conflicts are intensifying, whilst the major G7 powers continue to exploit and plunder natural resources, and the peoples struggle and resist for the right to sovereign development and against colonialism.

The historical contradictions and limitations of the capitalist system are obvious in the accelerated class reconfiguration of States — placing them at the service of large corporations and multinationals — which promote disinvestment in their social functions. They thus become incapable of fulfilling their obligations, spreading the illusion that the privatisation of public services will improve them when, in reality, it transforms them into new areas of business and capitalist exploitation.

Comrades,

Capital promotes far right and fascist forces to flood the working classes with reactionary divisionism, individualism and the false promise of personal entrepreneurship. This strategy channels conflicts amongst the workers themselves in their quest for better living conditions, diverting attention from the real conflict — which is between capital and labour — and from the need for unity and organised struggle by the exploited class against exploitation.

Meritocratic, racist and xenophobic narratives, which aim to confuse, deceive and instil fear amongst the masses, thereby sowing divisionism amongst workers, must be resolutely combated. This struggle is waged alongside the workers, through the building of class consciousness and their fight for the right to work with rights, for collective bargaining and collective agreements, for the improvement and valorisation of wages, and for a better life.

The neoliberal attack on labour laws is intensifying, seeking to dismantle hard-won civilisational rights, normalising precarious work, long working hours and other setbacks that undermine human dignity. This attack also targets trade union

freedom, the right to strike and to protest, as well as the autonomy, independence and internal democracy of class-oriented trade unions.

Advances in technology and science are used by capital to increase exploitation and boost profits. However, human sacrifices continue, as employers regard health and safety at work as an undesirable cost that reduces their profit margins.

Comrades

Despite the efforts of the mainstream media, the strength and vigour of the workers' struggle cannot be concealed. Workers are resisting and, in some cases, making headway. Both globally and regionally, the WFTU and its Trade Union Internationals have demonstrated unwavering internationalist solidarity.

We believe there is still much to be done to deepen our mutual understanding and strengthen coordination between the struggles taking place in each country. Strengthening the struggle in each nation — a goal to which we must devote even greater effort — also requires an understanding that these struggles are part of a broader international context, full of strength and potential to achieve the workers' class objectives.

In this regard, our TUI-PS&A will contribute to the documents for the forthcoming 19th World Trade Union Congress in Sri Lanka (Asia), on May 13, 14 and 15, 2027. This will be an internationalist event of foremost importance for the dynamics of the class struggle of workers around the world, in defence of contemporary rights, against capitalism, imperialism, colonialism and fascism, and for a fairer society: Socialism.

Comrades,

I would like to conclude by stating that there is a consensus, both within the TUI-PS&A's global leadership, and the WFTU Secretariat, that the work of our General Secretary, Comrade Zola Saphetha, with the support of NEHAWU, has indeed given a significant boost to the activities of the Public Services TUI. This effort has focused on developing the organisation in order to strengthen and expand it, by approving annual action plans — and ensuring that their implementation is monitored — whilst taking into account the real problems affecting workers and public services in each country and always demanding accountability for their execution.

Long live the 13th. NEHAWU Congress!

Long live the TUI-PS&A! Long live the WFTU!

Long live workers of the world!



WFTU Message of Support – General Secretary, Pambis Kyritsis



Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the tens of millions of members of the WFTU, from all corners of the world, please accept our warm militant and class greetings and our wishes for a successful and productive conference. I am confident that your Conference, through its decisions, will contribute creatively to further strengthening the presence and role of NEHAWU in the lives, actions, and struggles of South African workers in general, and public service workers in particular.

NEHAWU is an example of a militant, democratic, and class-oriented union that has kept very high the banner of solidarity and internationalism. It is one of the unions that carries with respect and pride the glorious and militant history of the struggles of the South African people and the South African working class for liberation from foreign colonial and neo-colonial shackles and from misanthropic and racist apartheid, and which fights steadfastly and firmly for a society based on democracy, equality, and social justice. We are proud that NEHAWU stands firmly and fights through the ranks of the WFTU and has supported it unwaveringly, even in its most

difficult moments.

NEHAWU is rightly represented by its General Secretary, G. Zola, who also serves as Secretary of TUI Public Services—a historic TUI with a great history and a very important role within the structure of the great family of the WFTU.

Your conference is taking place at a time when workers around the world are facing the generalization and deepening of the capitalist crisis, accompanied by new attacks on their rights and achievements, a dramatic widening of social inequalities, further environmental degradation, and reckless overexploitation of our planet's natural resources.

The genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza, supported and encouraged by the United States, the European Union, and their allies; the attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen; the crude attempt to strangle Cuba through the illegal and immoral economic and energy blockade and the open threats of military intervention; the military aggression against Venezuela and the kidnapping of the country's President, have once again revealed the aggressive character and inhumane

nature of imperialism.

The unprovoked imperialist attack against Iran, in violation of every principle of international law, once again reminds us that global geopolitical and economic rivalries continue to pose a direct threat to world peace and security.

It is obvious that the motive of imperialism behind this behavior is neither concern for human rights nor care for democratic freedoms. Quite the contrary. The real motive is greed for profit; it is oil reserves and energy routes; it is rare earth minerals and geopolitical control of the planet.

Of course, in Cuba's case, the motive behind their aggressive behavior is different. It is clearly rooted in class interests and ideology. They want to erase the example of a people who, through their revolution, chose the path of socialism—the path of a society based on solidarity and equality rather than exploitation and social injustice. They cannot tolerate the determination of a people to assert their right to choose their own path of political, economic, and social development. They want only compliant states that align themselves with their interests and policies, especially in a region that they have arbitrarily and arrogantly defined as their own backyard.

In order to secure and expand the profits of the monopoly giants they do not hesitate to turn war into an outlet for the crisis that now permanently afflicts the capitalist system.

The shift towards a war economy is clearly a priority for the ruling circles of capitalism today, as it ensures profitability for multinational monopolies and the expansion of the geopolitical power of developed imperialist states.

The USA, the EU, and their NATO allies are announcing massive increases in military spending, which, apart from being a threat to global peace and security, also mean even harsher austerity policies and widening social inequality.

That is why the struggle for peace, for us, means first and foremost a struggle for the dismantling of NATO and all military coalitions, a struggle to defend the right of every people to choose the path of their economic and social development without interventions, sanctions, blockades, and economic wars.

Economic and social inequalities across the globe continue to grow. Entire populations are forced to leave their countries either as refugees or migrants because of uncontrolled military

conflicts and conditions of economic and social deprivation.

International organizations and collective security mechanisms are manipulated and instrumentalized, while international law is being replaced by the law of the powerful.

Fascism is once again finding favorable political, ideological, and social conditions and once again raising its head.

We are proud because, under the flag of the WFTU, millions of workers in dozens of countries are mobilizing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, demanding justice and freedom for Palestine, and condemning not only Israeli barbaric aggression but also the support and encouragement of that aggression by the dominant circles of imperialism.

The solidarity with heroic Cuba, not only through slogans but also through campaigns of material assistance, fundraising efforts, and collections of essential goods. We express solidarity with Venezuela and with all peoples targeted by imperialism because they refuse to surrender to its geopolitical plans.

Severe and relentless attacks on workers' labor and social gains also continue.

Temporary, precarious, and uninsured employment is expanding and becoming established.

Unemployment, precarization, the over-exploitation of vulnerable workers as cheap labor, and the anti-people and anti-worker legislative measures systematically and methodically promoted by neoliberal governments are steadily undermining employment with rights and collective bargaining agreements that reflect the contemporary needs of workers.

Individual contracts, privatizations, outsourcing, teleworking, and "service leasing" are just some of the forms taken by this harsh neoliberal offensive. Democratic and trade union freedoms are being restricted and challenged.

On the altar of profit, human sacrifices continue, as occupational health and safety are considered by employers to be an undesirable cost that reduces their profits.

Major social achievements such as social security and public healthcare are being privatized, while

the arbitrary increase of retirement ages continues methodically.

The attack on workers in public and social services is particularly harsh. This attack stems from the desire of capital to expand into as many new areas of profit as possible and to exploit the wealth created by state investment in public services.

The policy of privatization in public services, as well as the general reduction of the social role of the state through austerity policies and so-called fiscal discipline, are key components of the neoliberal capitalist offensive of recent decades.

The theme under which your congress is being held successfully reflects the key priorities facing the class-oriented trade union movement today, not only in South Africa but across the world as a whole.

"Advance workplace organization to defend collective bargaining, heighten class consciousness and advance internationalism".

At a time when globally it is evident that labor relations are continuously deregulated, collective negotiations are shrinking, and collective agreements are violated, when stable and permanent employment is being replaced with so-called "flexible" forms, when child labor instead of being eradicated is making a fierce comeback, when public utilities and other social enterprises are rapidly privatized, The slogans developed by the various think tanks that serve the economic system and which are adopted with great pleasure by the ITUC and then turned to be slogans of ILO for a "new social contract", Social collaboration and social dialogue, in practice is evidently an empty slogan. What workers need it is not slogans but rights, measures that reduce exploitation and social inequality, that practically support organization, collective bargaining, and collective agreements, that limit the greed of monopolies for more and more profits at the expense of wages, health, insurance, and generally to cover the contemporary needs of those who create wealth through their labor.

We demand and will keep fighting, for a genuinely representative and pluralistic ILO, with democratic and participatory operating procedures as dictated by the role and the reason for which it is supposed to have been created.

We know that employers and governments are satisfied and comfortable with the complete monopolization of workers' representation in the ILO by the ITUC. They thus avoid annoying voices

defending the class interests of the workers and opposing the double-standards policy and the selective targeting of countries for the convenience of the dominant circles.

The struggle to defend collective bargaining and workers' labor and social rights is fought every day in the workplace, through the participation of workers via organization and hard class struggle, and not through procedures and so-called "social dialogues" conducted far from workers, which most of the time serve as a means to channel policies that have nothing to do with the interests and legitimate demands of workers.

The strongest weapons of workers in these struggles are solidarity and internationalism. And your slogan rightly highlights the duty facing every class-oriented trade union: to strengthen the class consciousness and fighting spirit of workers, and to further deepen the connection of our struggles in every country and continent with the global struggle against a system that reproduces war and exploitation and fuels oppression, discrimination, and social injustice.

The encouraging and hopeful element within the depressing picture of today's world is that workers are not passively accepting these anti-people and anti-worker attacks. Guided by class-oriented trade unions, millions of workers around the world are choosing the path of struggle to defend their trade union, social, and political rights.

Through militant mobilizations in every corner of the globe, they demand jobs with rights that ensure the satisfaction of their contemporary needs.

And we have every right to be proud because class-oriented unions that are affiliates or friends of the WFTU across the world have led and supported major mass and militant struggles.

As expected, the stronger workers' resistance becomes and the more massive and militant these struggles grow, the more frequent become the phenomena of authoritarianism, repression, police persecution of trade union leaders, and attacks on trade union freedoms, particularly the right to strike.

However, it is not only employers and governments that are mobilized to undermine workers' rights and struggles. Employers and governments also seek to manipulate labor struggles by relying on yellow unions and compliant trade union leaders. In many cases, workers find themselves confronting not only

employers and the state, but also unions that follow the path of class collaboration and integration into the system of exploitation. This path, as was once again demonstrated in the case of the arrest of former ITUC and ETUC General Secretary Luca Visentini, is a path that reproduces careerism, bureaucracy, and corruption within the trade union movement

Dear Colleagues,

Last month, the Presidential Council of the WFTU evaluated the course and activities of our Federation over the past year and approved the Action Plan for 2026, as well as the guidelines on which we will move forward to implement the goals and priorities facing the world's class-oriented trade union movement in the coming period.

International developments clearly place anti-imperialist and anti-war mobilization at the forefront of our priorities. Our annual campaigns on September 1st, which we have established as a Day of Action for Peace, and on October 3rd, the International Day of Action marking the anniversary of the founding of the WFTU, provide opportunities for coordinated worldwide actions of solidarity and internationalism under the umbrella of our Federation.

At the same time, the many and serious problems facing workers constitute the main axes of struggle for better living and working conditions and for the satisfaction of their contemporary needs. Wage and pension increases combating the high cost of living, the 35-hour work week without reduction in pay, occupational health and safety, the exploitation of migrants, the right to collective bargaining and to strike, and the impacts of automation and artificial intelligence are all issues highlighted through our plan of action.

The recent Presidential Council has also taken an important decision. It has officially announced the organization of the 19th World Trade Union Congress on May 13, 14, and 15, 2027, in Sri Lanka. We are already in the fifth year since the Rome Congress, and according to our Constitution, our next Congress must be held in May 2027.

The Presidential Council unanimously accepted the proposal of the WFTU affiliates in Sri Lanka to host the next World Congress there. It will be held in an Asian country where the people's movement recently carried out major and difficult struggles that achieved significant victories, successfully overthrowing an authoritarian and anti-people

regime.

Naturally, our aspiration is to organize a Congress that will become a mass and militant global forum where class-oriented trade unions from every corner of the world will meet to discuss, plan, exchange experience and knowledge, and adopt guiding decisions that will give new momentum to the struggles for a better world—without imperialist wars and interventions, and without the exploitation of human beings by other human beings.

It is obvious that, in our era, the conditions for truly decent working and living standards for all workers exist in abundance. The rapid development of science and technology has led to a tremendous increase in the productive capacity of human labor. The central issue for us is that these capabilities should not be used to increase capitalist profits and create immense fortunes for a few, but rather to ensure decent living and working conditions for those who, through their labor and effort, are the real creators of society's wealth.

Organization and struggle are the only path capable of overturning the existing realities of misery, exploitation, and social injustice.

We struggle under very difficult and often harsh conditions, against enemies who possess enormous resources and who do not hesitate to employ a fifth column within the ranks of the trade union movement itself. Nevertheless, we remain optimistic.

We have confidence in the judgment and orientation of the working class. When the working class becomes conscious of its position and role in the progress of society; when, through its daily small and large struggles, it realizes its strength and understands its historic mission, it becomes an invincible force.

With our united and organized struggles, the system that generates crises and reproduces exploitation can be defeated. A world free from wars and imperialist interventions, free from exploitation and discrimination; a world where work is permanent, stable, regulated, and safe, is achievable.



Summary of key issues of Financial Report



The National Treasurer, Comrade Kgomotso Makhupola presented the Financial Report to the 13th National Congress. Over the five-year period under review, the union implemented the financial mandate adopted by the 12th National Congress focusing on financial sustainability, compliance with statutory requirements and strengthening the union's assets base.

The report highlighted that the union has strengthened its financial position despite difficult economic conditions, through disciplined financial management, cost-cutting measures and improved governance. Furthermore, the union also made strategic investments to strengthen organisational capacity and improve service delivery



Outlining of Congress Commissions



In terms of commissions at the 13th National Congress, the commissions were structured and organised in such a manner that it encompasses the pillars of the organisation, namely;

- (i) International
- (ii) Ideological & Political
- (iii) Socio-Economic
- (iv) Organisational

