

THE NATIONAL ORGANISING, SERVICING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFERENCE



26TH TO 29TH OF AUGUST 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. EDITORIAL CONTENT | *PAGE 03*

02. INTRODUCTION | *PAGE 06*

03. OPENING REMARKS | *PAGE 08*

04. CONTEXT | *PAGE 11*

05. PRESENTATIONS | *PAGE 27*

06. MESSAGES OF SUPPORT | *PAGE 28*

07. ADDRESSES & PRESENTATIONS | *PAGE 39*

08. PROGRAMME OF ACTION | *PAGE 70*

09. CONCLUSIONS | *PAGE 74*

10. CLOSURE | *PAGE 79*



EDITORIAL COMMENT



CDE ZOLA SAPHETHA GENERAL SECRETARY

On behalf of the national office bearers, we bring revolutionary and profound greetings to all members of our gallant and giant union.

The union concluded a resoundingly and successful national organising, servicing and collective bargaining conference convened on the 27th – 29th of August 2025 under our theme: “Strengthen workplace organisation to defend collective bargaining, deepen class consciousness and advance internationalism”.

This year 2025, represents a historic and significant milestone in the history of the international working class struggle, for our



world class-orientated federation, the World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU] commemorates 80 years of existence, the Trade Union International of Public Service and Allied [WFTU-TUI&PSA] commemorates 76 years and our federation here at home, the Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU] celebrates 40 years of existence.

Indeed, these important moments in history, which, over years, have inspired the working class to venture into a revolution in search for alternative. Hence, in recognition of the milestones of both WFTU and TUI-PS&A, the union convened an international seminar preceding the conference, to celebrate the 80 years of WFTU as it remains a vital force for international working-class solidarity, following the line of a militant class-oriented trade union movement in defence of workers and the working-class from the barbaric system of capitalist exploitation and oppression and from the imperialist aggression.

As a transformative union that combines and links workplace struggles with community struggles for the realisation of transforming our society, the union has been in frontlines in defence of workers and the working class against the huge offensive of neoliberalism and its manifestations directed at workers and the working-class in general.

The union remains firm in rejecting neoliberalism and strongly opposes government austerity measures, dismantling and privatization in the public service and other sectors and policies that weaken labour rights.

The union has overtime expressed

succinctly that the trade union movement has reached a decisive moment which requires a deliberate and conscious position to maintain militant traditions in order to sustain organisational integrity that has been built over time and grounded on solidarity as integral part of the strategic and ideological clarity. As such, the union informed by the urgency of militant organisational integrity, agreed to convene a national organising, servicing and collective bargaining conference.

Indeed, the conference was tasked to critically review what we have been doing, how we seek to reposition ourselves as a union in different sectors in which we are located to best organise our work in terms of servicing and representing members going-forward, whilst at the same time, grappling with issues facing members and workers at the workplace and the sectoral landscapes, with a view to find ways and means of strengthening the workplace organisation.

The primary existence of a trade union is premised on the understanding that collective bargaining, organising and servicing is the lifeblood of the union and as such paying a particular attention to these aspects is crucial in our broad vision as the union which entails organising and uniting workers to effectively wage a struggle to improve their working conditions and wages, standards of living and provide security and protection against any forms of discrimination and exploitation in the workplace.

Organising, Servicing and Collective Bargaining are the most crucial aspects of our work as a union, it is a terrain where our ability to effectively organise



and unite workers is tested whilst simultaneously improving working conditions and standards of living for our members is truly expressed. Our approach to bargaining, organising and servicing therefore has a potential to strengthen the workplace organisation and build the ideal union that we would be able to champion the struggles of its members and workers in general.

It is imperative that we continue strengthening workplace organisation in order to respond to the offensive of neoliberalism and its manifestations directed at workers and the working-class in general.

Comrades, we have produced this bulletin to reflect the proceedings of the National Organising, Servicing and Collective Bargaining Conference for information, education and practical implementation by our structures and leadership at all levels of the union.

This bulletin therefore provides the context and overview of the conference, which focuses on the historical development of the class-orientated trade union movement, the history of the WFTU, COSATU and the vision of one-industry-one union and further outlines the current trade union landscape in South Africa, assessment on the implementation of the decisions on organisational pillar, collective bargaining systems as well as the impactful of our national public service delivery campaign.

The bulletin further focuses on the informative presentations by the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council on the state of collective bargaining challenges and opportunities, presentation by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation

and Arbitration on the changes in the legislative framework and their impact to Collective Bargaining and Strike Actions. It contains a presentation by the Labour Research Services on the Analysis of Collective Agreements across sectors and Bargaining Gains that have been won in the period 2018 – 2025.

The bulletin also include presentations on the National Health Insurance Campaign, Government Employees Housing Scheme and revised Public Service Delivery Campaign.

Lastly, in this bulletin, we have included the union programme of action and conclusions and way forward of the national conference as part of disseminating information and for practical implementation by every member of the union of Bheki Mkhize and Yure Mdyogolo.

We hope and trust that you will enjoy reading this bulletin and find its content very useful and educational in our quest of making meaningful and strategic contribution towards strengthening workplace organisation part of our strategic imperative of close ranks defend the base.

Amandla!
Matla!
All Power!



INTRODUCTION

As directed by the 12th national congress, the national union convened the National Organising, Servicing and Collective Bargaining Conference that was preceded by a very successful and resounding international seminar celebrating the 80th anniversary of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and 76th anniversary of the

Trade Union International – Public Service and Allied (TUI PS&A) in the afternoon of the 26th of August 2025 attended by our sister union from African Continent and blessed by the presence of the Honorary President, Cde. George Mavrikos who delivered the main speech focused on the history of the WFTU covering setbacks and successes



including tasks ahead.

On the 27th of August 2025, the union commenced with its National Organising, Servicing and Collective Bargaining Conference attended by 323 delegates comprising of national office bearers, members of the national executive committee, provincial office bearers, regional

secretaries, about 181 coordinators from all sectors that the national union is organising and officials drawn from head office and provinces.



BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISING, SERVICING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 26TH TO 29TH OF AUGUST 2025

OPENING REMARKS

**CDE MICHAEL
SHINGANGE**
PRESIDENT



STRENGTHEN WORKPLACE ORGANISATION TO DEFEND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, DEEPEN CLASS
CONSCIOUSNESS AND ADVANCE INTERNATIONALISM.



The conference was officially opened by the President, Cde. Micheal Madala Shingange who made the following political and organisational remarks:

Context

The conference is convened at a decisive historical moment since the last major bargaining conference held in 2013. The present conjuncture demands a re-strategisation and re-imagination of the bargaining terrain, given the restructuring of the workplace, technological shifts, casualisation, and the intensification of capitalist exploitation.

Fundamentally, there can be no collective bargaining without organisation, no organisation without systematic recruitment, and no recruitment without servicing and retaining members. This dialectical link must frame the orientation of the movement. The conference must therefore sharpen the tools of organising, servicing, and collective bargaining as interdependent components of building working-class power.

The union is not merely a vehicle for bread-and-butter demands, but an instrument of the revolution in the hands of the working class. Every strike, every campaign, and every bargaining demand must be understood as part of the broader struggle for the transformation of society. When we demand the employment of more nurses, clerks, teachers, or staff in Home

Affairs, it is not simply for numerical growth in membership, but to ensure that the people of South Africa receive dignified, quality services.

The union must remain grounded in the principles of the Freedom Charter, which recognised the right to organise, to strike, and to engage in collective bargaining. Any attack on collective bargaining is an attack on the historic struggles of the working class and the martyrs of 1955 who envisioned a democratic, socialist South Africa. Likewise, the Women's Charter reminds us of the unfinished struggle for gender equality, including equal pay, childcare facilities, and an end to gendered discrimination in the workplace.

The global context – marked by trade wars, climate crisis, technological displacement, and imperialist aggression – continues to destabilise the lives of workers. Retrenchments in NGOs, higher education, and public institutions reflect the global crisis of capitalism. The South African working class, particularly women and youth, bear the heaviest burden of unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

Collective bargaining is not a bureaucratic process; it is a terrain of struggle. It is where the interests of labour and capital collide. To retreat is to betray the working class. To advance requires militant organisation, unity, and revolutionary consciousness.

Recommendations and Actions



1. Strengthen Workplace Organisation:

- Consolidate recruitment and retention strategies.
- Build vibrant branch structures that are active daily, not only during congresses.
- Ensure shop stewards are capacitated to respond immediately to violations of worker rights.

2. Defend and Advance Collective Bargaining:

- Link bargaining demands to the Freedom Charter and Women's Charter.
- Frame all negotiations within the broader transformation of the public service to meet the needs of the working class.
- Resist retrenchments and casualisation with militant campaigns and coordinated actions.

3. Advance Gender Equality:

- Demand childcare facilities in all workplaces.
- Push for sector-specific clauses that improve women's working and living conditions.
- Ensure equal pay for equal work across all sectors.

4. Confront Global Capitalist

Attacks:

- Conduct impact assessments on retrenchments in NGOs and other globally-linked organisations.
- Mobilise against the importation of foreign labour where it replaces South African workers.
- Develop campaigns to expose and resist imperialist manoeuvres

that undermine South African sovereignty and workers' livelihoods.

5. Deepen Political Education:

- Reinforce Marxist-Leninist education to raise class consciousness.
- Reassert NEHAWU's role as a revolutionary, not politically neutral, trade union.
- Build alliances within COSATU, WFTU, and the broader liberation movement to strengthen working-class internationalism.

6. Service Delivery Campaigns:

- Link worker struggles to community struggles by demanding improved staffing, infrastructure, and resources in all public services.
- Position NEHAWU as the vanguard that defends both the workers and the broader working-class communities that depend on public institutions.

This conference must emerge with a renewed strategy of militant organising, effective servicing, and revolutionary collective bargaining. The union must adapt to the changing terrain of work, resist the assaults of global capital, and remain an uncompromising defender of workers and the working class as a whole. Collective bargaining is not a gift from the employers; it is a weapon of class struggle, and only through unity, militancy, and revolutionary clarity can the working class emerge victorious.



CDE ZOLA SAPHETHA

GENERAL SECRETARY

The context and purpose of the National Organising, Services and Collective Bargaining was done by the General Secretary of the national union and he touched on the following:

When delivering the opening address, President Shingange greeted all present in accordance with protocols on behalf of the national office bearers collective as a result I will not repeat the same. Upfront we need to state the purpose of this conference which is to be educational to our shop stewards as the workplace is becoming younger on the tradition and culture of the union, to properly prepare for COSATU 8th Central Committee organisationally, to reposition of ourselves for the battles ahead both politically and organisationally as well as clarifying the union's posture, going forward.

Our point of departure is that the Organising, Servicing and Collective



Bargaining Conference provides a specific platform with dedicated time and scope to deal with the overarching task in our mandate of “Strengthening Workplace Organisation”. In other words, the conference provides a broader platform to attend to and focus on the fundamental work of a trade union, which is twofold:

- Firstly, in critically reviewing what we have been doing, we seek to reposition ourselves as a union in the different sectors in which we are located to best organise our work in terms servicing and representing members, going-forward. Therefore, in the commissions we shall have to grapple with the issues that are coming up from our members at the workplace and in the sectoral landscapes, with a view to finding ways and means of giving an elevated expression to these issues and ensure that they are addressed by the employers.
- Secondly, in order to respond to the issues of concern coming up from our members in different sectors, as a conference we are also charged with the responsibility of looking at our own subjectivity, organisationally. In other

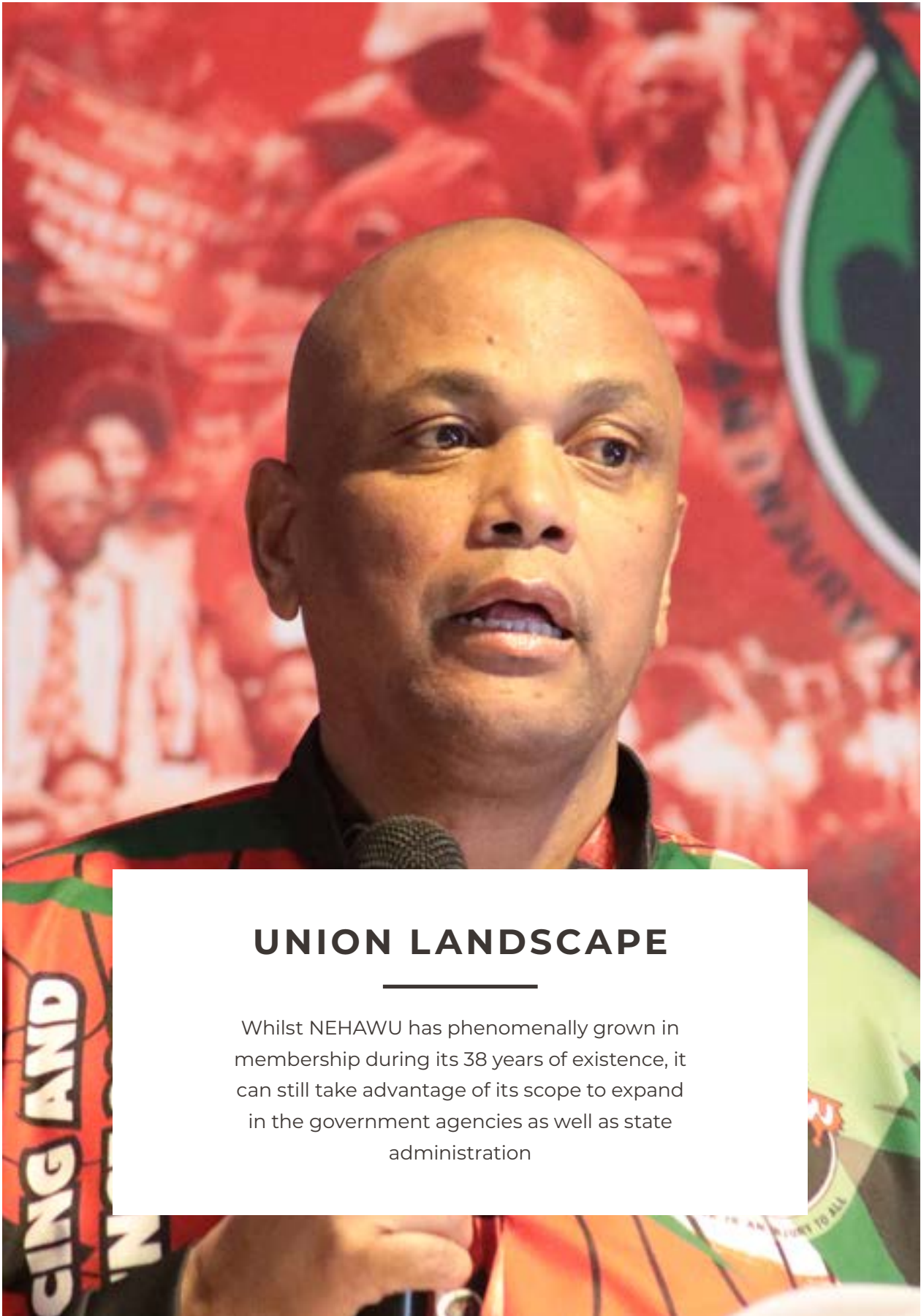


words, we must critically look at ourselves as a union in order to find better ways and means of strengthening our organisation at all levels, in all our sectors, starting with our basic units at the workplace, to ensure that the demands of the workers are addressed.

There would be additional work that would also find expression in the outcomes of this conference, but the question of advancing the interests of our members at the workplace and in collective bargaining and the question of strengthening our organisation to provide better service to members are the core tasks. And these twofold basic tasks are intertwined, intersecting and mutually reinforcing. In other words, there can be no strong workplace organisation if the union is not picking up and advancing the issues and interests of the members at the workplace and in the collective bargaining process in the sector. At the same time, the union cannot advance the issues and interests of the members if organisationally it is weak, in disarray and have lazy and poor cadreship.

The conference would know that to strengthen workplace organisation, we must deal with another two-fold, mutual reinforcing dialectical factor of quantity and quality. It is not enough to be the biggest union in a particular workplace or at the level of the collective bargaining chamber. A union can have the biggest share of membership but still be unable to have the power of imposing and driving its agenda. Therefore, when we set recruitment targets, the motivation cannot be a narrow focus on increasing revenue from the subscriptions of the workers. Retaining members and recruiting more workers must always be about building power, shop floor or workplace power, first and foremost. Therefore, in our discussion, we must clarify as to how to ensure that we have decisive majorities wherever we are located. Those who are in the public service would bitterly know about the importance of 50%+1 majority and actually our previous conference directed us to work towards this goal in all our sectors.

So, all this comes down to the numbers – how to increase our numerical weights – our membership in every sector in order to transform quantity into the practical quality of the power of a union that has a decisive majority. Therefore, improving



UNION LANDSCAPE

Whilst NEHAWU has phenomenally grown in membership during its 38 years of existence, it can still take advantage of its scope to expand in the government agencies as well as state administration



our service to members at the workplace and consistently driving their demands in the collective bargaining processes and timeously reporting back, is essential to ensure retention of members. At the same time, being able to show concrete gains by NEHAWU for workers provides a better platform for a successful and sustainable recruitment drive.

This also comes down to the quality of cadreship in terms of leadership, shop stewards, organisers and support staff, which must always be improved using our training platform to ensure that the improved quality of cadreship can translate into a bigger numerical presence of the union in workplaces, sectors and more workers would be interested to join NEHAWU. Our overall basic tasks as trade unions is and has always been to fight for shorter working time, higher compensation for our labour per hour, safe and better terms and conditions of work, social security insurances such as medical and retirement insurances, and other benefits. Any trade union that neglects this work is doomed and has no future.

But a trade union is also an instrument or organ of the working class, whose power and influence goes beyond the narrow confines of the workplace. As NEHAWU, from our birth, we have always been a union that identifies itself with the broader interests and struggles of the working class in our communities. Our founding unions, in particular the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and the General and Allied Workers' Unions (GAWU), both of which were General Unions, were already known as "community unions" and were amongst the few unions that were affiliated to United Democratic Front (UDF), before the founding of COSATU in 1985. In other words, it is not accidental that we are class-oriented, that we are part of COSATU and through the Trade Union International - Public Service and Allied (TUI-PS&A), we are part of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). This is because we draw our ideological inspiration from the theories and practices of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin in particular, and the overall body of work of Marxism-Leninism in general.

At the Geneva Congress in 1866, which was the first General Congress of the International Workingmen Association or the First International, Karl Marx had to draft a resolution himself, to provide clarity on the role of the trade union movement, which reads as follows:

"In addition to their original tasks, the trade union must now learn how to act consciously as focal points for organising the working class in the greater interests of its complete emancipation."

When Marx says trade unions must "act consciously" and be involved "in



organising the working class in the struggle for its complete emancipation”, he is also asserting another element in our mandate expressed in our theme, the element of “deepening class consciousness”. Building class consciousness is interrelated to strengthening workplace organisation, so that our cadreship in a union like NEHAWU understands that the workplace struggles are an integral part of the broader class struggle, they are two sides of the same coin. This understanding, combined with deepening class consciousness, speak to the task of a union like ours in helping the working class from being just a class-in-itself, to a class-for-itself! Hence, in the same resolution that he sponsored, Marx added that the trade unions “must convince the whole world that their efforts are far from narrow and egoistic, but on the contrary, are directed towards the emancipation of the down-trodden masses.”

On the other hand, in clarifying the question of the relationship between the economic struggle at the working place and the broader struggle of the working class in communities, in what is to be done?

Lenin reinforced Karl Marx’s ideological and strategic line by stating that:

“the economic struggle can lead to a lasting improvement to the conditions of the working masses....only if it is properly combined with the political struggle.”

So, in a nutshell, strengthening workplace organisation is about building shop floor power, as a foundation to building class consciousness and to pursue all the socioeconomic and political strategic tasks, including proletarian internationalism.

We are now in the 23rd month of sustained genocidal onslaught on the Palestinian people Israel. Over the past few weeks, the government of the fascist devil, Benjamin Netanyahu, has taken a decision to occupy the entire Gaza strip, which is another way of saying that it is now poised to complete the agenda of “ethnic cleansing”, mass expulsion and physical takeover of the Palestinian land. No one can any more doubt or deny that this unfolding genocide is not carried out by the Zionist state alone. The United States in particular and the West in general, are also directly involved in committing this genocide, with their constant supply of money and weapons to Israel.

The Zionist lobby groups in the US, who are acting on behalf of the current fascist government of Israel, have now made sure that the US foreign policy in the so-called Middle-East is a carbon copy of the Israeli foreign policy. This is demonstrated in how the US is actively getting involved in Israel’s agenda of degrading Iran’s nuclear capability, to ensure that Israel remains the only country with nuclear weapons in the region. It is also demonstrated, in the fact that Trump has escalated the US’s hostility towards South Africa primarily because of



South Africa's case against Israel at the International Court of Justice.

It is now a little more than a year since the Government of National Unity (GNU) was established, which is another way of saying that the seventh administration is a Government of Neoliberal Unity. We were told that the GNU would be good for the country because it would raise the investors' confidence, yet quarter after quarter since the GNU was established, the unemployment rate keeps on increasing. With official unemployment now been recorded at a third of the workforce, clearly there can be no doubt anymore that we are on a disastrous trajectory, in which it would be difficult to see a U-turn in terms of the macroeconomic policies given the dynamics of the GNU. This catastrophic rate of unemployment is even more horrifying when it is broken down in terms of the dimensions of gender, race and youth unemployment.

Yet, in the midst of all these unfolding and intertwined crises of hunger, unemployment, homelessness, inequalities and poverty, the GNU continues with austerity, which this year included an attempt to impose an additional tax that would be harsher on the working class. It is now a decade since the start of the implementation of austerity measures, during the first year of the fifth administration under Jacob Zuma. Yet, 10 years later the Treasury has dismally failed to meet its own budget-deficit and debt reduction targets, whilst the compensation of workers throughout the public sector has basically remained stagnant.

The practical impact of these rolling austerity measures has taken a toll on the capacity of the public service and the state in general. For example, today's total number of public servants at 1,3 million, serving about 64 million people is equal to that of 1994, when the public service served 44 million people. This means that the public service remains the same in size and with the same capacity 31 years later, despite the additional 20 million people in the population. Another example, which has serious implications for the security of the country, is the fact that this year the Border Management Authority only has 2,600 employees, when its mandate to properly secure our borders requires about 11, 000 employees.

So, austerity has been devastating on the capacity of the state, including in terms of policing, healthcare, provision of housing, and so on. Yet, in the meantime, the ANC component of the GNU is prioritising endless discussions through the National Dialogue, at the time when our people are looking for decisive action. It is as if the ANC does not have answers or does not know the key challenges facing the country or it was not elected with a manifesto.

If we are indeed a class-oriented trade union movement under the umbrella of COSATU, then we have to ask as to why there are some amongst us who



believe that we must continue to blindly follow and support the ANC-led Neoliberal agenda of austerity and its consequences of more unemployment and poverty. Why do comrades believe that the contradiction between our historical mission and positions to transform our society can be reconciled with this Neoliberal project, when we have empirical evidence in our own lived experience of a disastrous pattern of socioeconomic degeneration. Let alone the fact that this Neoliberal project, has hollowed out the state, in which significant amounts of its functions have now been transferred to the private sector, through the tenders, which in turn generate large scale corruption. Yet the ANC is still paying lip-service to the notion of the so-called capable developmental state. There are already enough reasons to doubt as to whether the National Health Insurance and the Basic Income Grant would ever be implemented, even though the ANC has campaigned in several elections promising to introduce these transformatory projects.

So, the key question that must be answered is what are the political tasks for the organised working class under COSATU in the current conjuncture of the GNU? It is a pity that despite our consistently broader perspective as NEHAWU, we have found ourselves been dragged into a narrow and endless discussion about voting, when the last COSATU congress has already clarified the matter. The resolution to campaign and vote for the SACP is an integral part of a strategic response of the organised working class, in the face of the deepening multiple socioeconomic crises, massive corruption, austerity and the marginalisation of the organised working class in the ANC-led Alliance. The other components of the key political tasks of the moment that is facing the organised working class in COSATU relates to how to build our own capacity organisationally, to work with other radical forces in the form of the Popular Left Front and in this regard to particularly work with the South African Communist Party (SACP) – with the drive to rescue our country from the current unsustainable and disastrous Neoliberal trajectory and the National Democratic Revolution itself.

In short, these political tasks are part of the imperative of strengthening strong workplace organisation as a



foundation for working class power; and at the societal level they require building a powerful proletarian movement of the working class and the poor in communities. Therefore, our answer to the challenges of the current moment does not narrowly lie in merely voting for the SACP but in ensuring that a successful SACP election campaign is intertwined with the strengthening of COSATU locals and SACP branches, through which we would be able to re-orientate ourselves back to our roots as a community trade union movement to ensure that the basic municipal services are addressed and a civic movement plays its role.

WFTU 80 FIGHTING YEARS

Yesterday, we celebrated the 80 years of WFTU's resilience and its consistent anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist historical track-record. We must continue to have such events in our provinces culminating on the 3rd October. Because trade unions traditionally fight for workplace reforms with regard to the terms and conditions of work and the rights of workers, it is inherently easy for unions to be trapped in reformism, even ideologically and politically. Hence, since the Second International up to the current conjuncture there has always been the co-existence of reformist or class-collaborationist trade unions on the one hand and the trade unions that are class-oriented and revolutionary in outlook on the other hand. In general, WFTU and ITUC represent these two contradictory ideological lines in the international trade union movement, and the same situation can be found in almost every capitalist country.

COSATU 40 FIGHTING YEARS

We are also here in this conference in the context of celebrating COSATU's 40 Fighting Years – a giant federation which was founded on the 29-30th November 1985 and launched on the 1st December 1985 in Durban, which was fitting place on the back of re-emergence of the militant trade unions nationally, sparked by the 1973 Durban strikes. The rise of this giant class-oriented federation put a final nail in the coffin of the class-collaborationist federation called the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), which had to dissolve itself at a Special Congress in December 1986. At its birth COSATU was almost exclusively a federation based in the private sector, until the launch of NEHAWU and SAMWU in 1987. The death of TUCSA heightened the conviction that COSATU's founding principle and strategic vision of 'ONE-FEDERATION, ONE-COUNTRY' and ONE-INDUSTRY, ONE-UNION was possible.

ONE-INDUSTRY, ONE-UNION

COSATU was created by 33 trade unions with a strategic vision to build a giant federation on a foundation of Industrial Unionism, at the sectoral level. Many of



these founding trade unions, like our own predecessors in SAAWU and GAWU, were General Unions, which means that they were not anchored in any industry – as they were recruiting any and all workers across multiple sectors. So, Industrial Unionism was a founding principle outlined in the adopted resolution through which the affiliated unions were directed to build the federation based on 12 industries in order to practicalise the vision of ONE-INDUSTRY-ONE UNION. This meant that the founding unions were to engage in discussions to facilitate mergers in order to consolidate their structures and to forge worker unity along the related economic activities or value-chains or under the same companies or employers in order to end up with 12 super-industrial unions. To compel the implementation of this resolution of the founding congress on the demarcated organising scopes to form Industrial Unions as a basis of realizing the objective of ONE-UNION-ONE-INDUSTRY, COSATU constitutionalised this organisational imperative and modality. Thus, Clause 1.4.3 of the constitution of states that:

‘The aims and objectives of the Federation are to encourage industrial unions by forming broadly based industrial unions in all industries where none exist; and assisting unions’ operation in the same industry to merge into broadly-based industrial unions.’



Furthermore, the constitution makes provisions that empower the federation to:

1. Unify national industrial unions, under COSATU's leadership. This is outlined in the Preamble to the constitution.
2. Encourage Industrial Unions by assisting unions operating in the same industry to merge into broadly based Industrial Unions. This is outlined in Clause 1.4.3, read with Clause 1.4.3.2 of the constitution.
3. Resolve disputes between affiliates and within the federation. This is outlined in Clause 1.4.4, read with Clause 1.4.4.4 of the constitution.

When NEHAWU and SAMWU were launched in 1987 as products of processes of union consolidation, the federation had placed a condition that General Unions would not be allowed to attend the Second National Congress in 1987, if they still had not reorganised themselves along industrial scopes. The creation of NEHAWU and SAMWU in their designated scopes was informed by where their predecessor unions were already organising in the public sector and therefore this was an interim arrangement and a start of a big project of building a super industrial union in the public sector - to unite workers across the board within the state, including national, provincial, local governments, entities and parastatals.



Post 1994 the process of mergers decelerated and eventually grounded to a halt. Unfortunately, in the 1990s, COSATU continued to admit unions unconditionally, including craft unions such as SADTU, DENOSA and POPCRU. This happened despite the fact that COSATU did not have and still does not have a resolution for separate or distinct occupationally based unions such as teachers, nurses, police, emergency service workers, etc.

As a result of the failure on the part of the CEC to establish the Demarcation Committee and to exercise authority according to the designated scopes, craft unions proliferated, especially in the public service, as many of them, including their predecessor or parent unions where not even there at COSATU's launching congress in 1985. This laid the basis for the current and persisting problem of the so-called "overlapping scopes", competition and membership poaching that are negatively affecting the unity and cohesion of COSATU today.

Today most of the affiliates that organise in the private sector have expanded their scopes by amending their constitutions without adhering to the due process of the federation. Hence, each private sector affiliate is at least organising in four major sectors rather than only within its own originally demarcated organising scope as set out in the resolution of the founding congress. In other words, on average these unions are encroaching into at least three other organising





scopes in which they are not supposed to be. Similarly, whilst there has been a phenomenal growth of COSATU's affiliated unions in the public service, their growth potential has not been maximised at the expense of the non-COSATU unions.

Unfortunately, almost all COSATU's affiliates have deviated from the model of Industrial Unionism envisaged by the founding congress. We can only make the following conclusions with regard to the state of COSATU as measured by the yardstick of the resolution of its founding congress - which set out the strategic organisational and political objectives of building ONE-UNION, ONE-INDUSTRY:

- That there is not even one industry amongst the 12 demarcated organising scopes in which the federation managed to build a single Industrial Union.
- That the failure to achieve super Industrial Unions in the designated organising scopes has automatically meant that even the objective of building ONE-FEDERATION-ONE-COUNTRY would remain elusive and deferred.
- That the failure to comply with the designated organising scopes is more prevalent amongst the private sector unions, in which most unions have organising scopes that span at least four major sectors.
- That the extent of the overlapping organising scopes amongst some unions, for example between SACTWU and AFADWU, almost make them duplicates

or to resemble each other, even though these two unions are not equal in size and capacity.

• That whilst NEHAWU was the first union of COSATU to be launched in the public sector (followed by SAMWU some few months later) it is still far from resembling the envisaged super Industrial Union. However, NEHAWU must be credited as one of the few, if not the only union within COSATU that has not amended its constitution to expand its organising scope in order to deal with the challenge of declining or stagnant membership. Therefore, NEHAWU can be proud to have steadfastly adhered and remained disciplined within the original organising scopes when it was admitted in the spirit of COSATU's founding forbearers.



The Current Trade Union Landscape

At the macro level, in addition to COSATU currently the South African trade unions are fragment into the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), the Federation of Unions of South Africa



(FEDUSA), National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) and the Confederation of South African Workers' Unions (CONSAWU). This landscape of the trade union movement in South Africa has serious manifestation of divisions as underlined by union fragmentation and membership stagnation, as well as decline in some sectors. Unionization or the rate of density is generally recorded to be between 3 and 4 million or around 30% of the workforce. In this regard COSATU members accounts for about 37% of the unionised workers.

Our general characterization of the trade union landscape in South Africa elevates the following key features:

- Fragmentation - in 2022, the year of the 14th COSATU Congress, there were about 225 registered trade unions. Today, as at March 2025, the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) has about 204 registered trade unions in its records. It would be misleading to assume that this marginal decline in the number of registered unions represents a positive trend of consolidation and reduction of fragmentation in the trade union landscape. The fact of the matter is that the phenomena of the mushrooming of new and splinter unions from the established unions have been one of the enduring features of the post-Apartheid trade union landscape. Yet, the sustainability of trade unions lies in forging greater unity of the workers through mergers and in turn converting strong workplace organisation in a consolidated form into super Industrial Unions.
- Ideological divergence—COSATU's birth killed TUSCA, which was predominantly a home of reactionary unions. During the 1980s the real divide in the trade union movement was between those affiliated to COSATU, championing SACTU's ideological and political traditions and NACTU, which was predominantly influenced by the ideology of Pan Africanism, alongside Black Consciousness. Whilst it is now internally contested, the socialist-oriented COSATU remains the only ideologically coherent federation, with some of its affiliates such as NEHAWU and NUM openly and consistently subscribing to the hegemonic outlook of Marxism-Leninism. In general, SAFTU is politically active in so far as it is outspoken in its criticism of capital and the government's Neoliberal policies. But SAFTU is internally diverse ideologically in which NUMSA stands out as a union that openly and consistently subscribes to Marxism-Leninism. Otherwise, the rest of other affiliates in that federation are ideologically unclear and apolitical and narrowly concerned about the bread-and-butter issues.
- Predominance of General Unions - outside COSATU, the trade union landscape is currently characterized by the prevalence of General Unions. The General Unions vary in size and in South Africa they now include the relatively large unions such as AMCU, NUMSA, FAWU and Solidarity as well as the relatively



medium-sized unions such as NUPSAW, GIWUSA and UASA.

- Arguably, at the subjective level these features of fragmentation, ideological divergence and the predominance of General Unions in the broader trade union landscape underscore the challenges that COSATU and its affiliates had in building Industrial Unions as a foundation for a single federation. However, these features arguably also reflect the effects of the objective reality of the changes that came with the 1994 democratic-breakthrough and the demise of the Apartheid regime.

The same happened at the political level whereby there has been a massive proliferation of political parties, to which workers have associated allegiances.

There is also a generationally related decline in class consciousness amongst workers, especially the young entrants in the labour market. At the same time, as a result of the loose regulatory regime of the LRA when it comes to the establishment of trade unions also engenders this proliferation of trade unions, in particular the trend of the creation of General Unions outside COSATU. The growing trend of General Unions is magnified by the fact that unions that were originally founded within the limits of specific industries, are able to merely amend their constitution and to easily receive approval from the Register in order to expand their scope. Some of the examples of such unions are AMCU, NUMSA and the South African Chemical Workers' Union (SACWU). Whereas all COSATU unions have clear industrial or occupation focus or identity, even though some have encroached into industries or sectors in which they don't belong. However, from a historical perspective it is interesting to note that the general composition of COSATU's membership and organisational form has fundamentally changed since 1985 and prior to the 1994 democratic-breakthrough. COSATU has now been inverted from a federation that was almost exclusively formed and dominated by private sector unions into a federation that is today dominated by the public sector unions.

The Labour Relations Act (LRA), which is the overarching regulatory framework used by the DEL, is inherently conducive to fragmentation and therefore to perpetuate disunity amongst workers. Sections 95-97 of the LRA deal with the registration and certification processes. There is no provision in these sections or in any part of the LRA itself that require a trade union to indicate a specific sector or sectors it wishes to organise in. Thus, a union can organise in any sector of its choice, provided this is specified in its constitution. This engenders the easy mushrooming of new and splinter unions, including the opportunist amendments to constitutions by some of the existing unions to justify their encroachment into other organising scopes or sectors in which they were not originally created to organise.



One of COSATU's setbacks during the CODESA negotiations on the country's constitution is the fact that the federation could not win the demand that the constitution must compel employers to bargaining with trade unions. Because of this setback, the labour laws have set up a collective bargaining system that is based on voluntarism and majoritarianism. With the bosses having no constitutional obligation or duty to bargaining, this means that the trade unions must use the organisational rights provided for by the LRA and rely on their own organisational power at the workplace to compel the bosses into engagement in collective bargaining. The judgement of the Constitutional Court on the 28 February 2022 to invalidate clause 3.3 of Resolution 1 of 2018 of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), declaring it as unlawful and unenforceable, underscores the far-reaching consequences of this constitutional setback.

Nonetheless, the unions must be sufficiently representative to enjoy the minimum organisational rights set out in the LRA. Given our historical mandate from our foundation in terms of the COSATU's principle of building Industrial Unions, as NEHAWU we cannot be satisfied with merely being sufficiently representative. In every workplace in which we organise it is our duty to ensure that our members constitute a decisive majority to gain maximum organisational rights, which in turn would further enables the union to strengthen its workplace organisation. In gaining majority membership of the workers at the workplace, practically we are able not only to claim our bargaining rights but also to gain the power to bind



minority unions to the concluded collective agreement. Hence, in our recruitment strategy, we must always elevate the need to claim a decisive majority wherever we do not have it. In addition to the 1.3 million public servants, our organising terrain includes an additional 614 000 workforce that is in the public sector but outside the public service and local government. NEHAWU has indeed tapped into this space but there is by far still a massive headroom for growth.

Whilst NEHAWU has phenomenally grown in membership during its 38 years of existence, it can still take advantage of its scope to expand in the government agencies as well as state administration, if it is to get closer to the objective of a giant public sector union. Currently, COSATU unions are highly concentrated in the public service, and all these other unions have been formed well after NEHAWU was already in existence. Therefore, these COSATU unions were supposed to have been absorbed into NEHAWU in terms of COSATU's organising scope. Nonetheless, given the vast potential that exists in the broader public sector, only NEHAWU has the possibility of setting itself on the road of a super Industrial Union as envisaged by COSATU's founding congress.

It is unfortunate that despite the founding resolution on the organising scope within COSATU, it is now accepted that there are overlapping organising scopes between NEHAWU vs. SADTU, DENOSA, PAWUSA, SAEPO, POPCRU and even SAMATU, when this should not be the case, actually. These unions should have been absorbed into NEHAWU, as a nucleus of a public sector Industrial Union, as part of their admission into COSATU in the 1990s, given the fact that NEHAWU was the first to be established in line with the demarcation of the organising scopes.

UNION LANDSCAPE

There is also a generationally related decline in class consciousness amongst workers, especially the young entrants in the labour market.

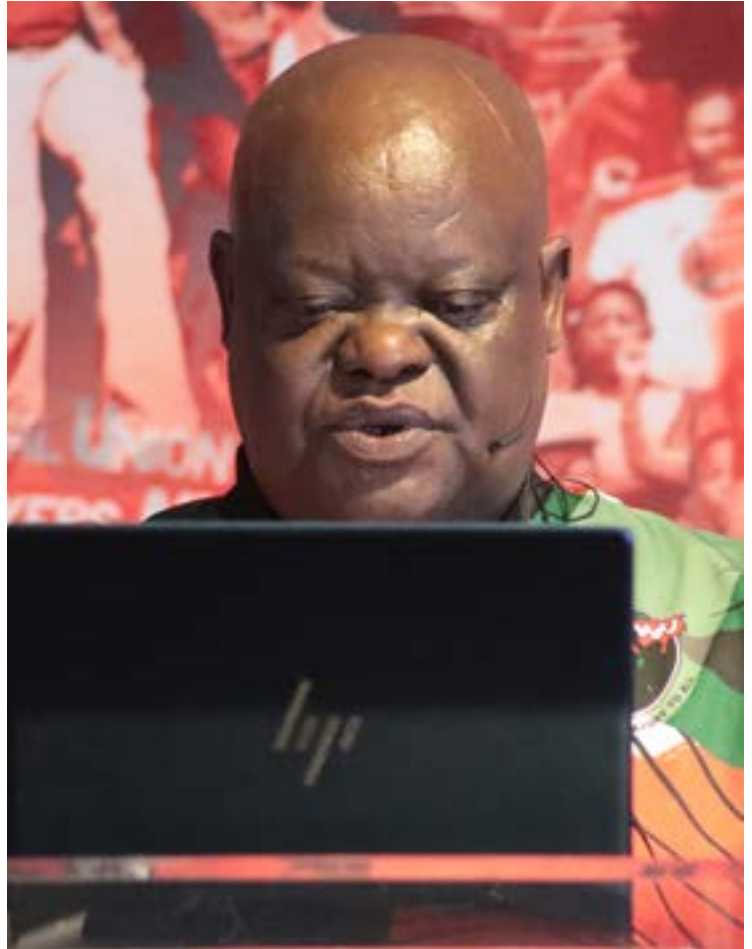


OVERVIEW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANISING, SERVICING AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Deputy General Secretary:
Cde. December Mavuso

Introduction:

- The aim of the presentation is to evaluate the progress made regarding the implementation of our organising, servicing and recruitment strategies as adopted in the 2013 conference. We shall also reflect on the achievements and challenges which can be considered for further engagements in the commissions.
- The 2013 conference adopted an overarching recruitment, organising, servicing and bargaining strategies to be implemented across sectors of the union.
- Therefore this Organising, Servicing and Bargaining Conference provide us with an opportunity to review our own organizational strength in the workplace, our capacity in representing and bargaining on behalf of our members as well as campaigning for workplace transformation.
- From its formation NEHAWU organised in 5 sectors inherited from the parent organisations that merged to form NEHAWU; HAWU, HAWU and SAWU. The 5 sectors are:
 - State Administration
 - Health (Public & Private)
 - Education (Universities, TVET & CET and SETAs)
 - Parastatals & Entities
 - Social Development (Public & Private)
- The complex nature of our sectors and diverse membership inherited from inception requires continues review of how we conduct our operations.



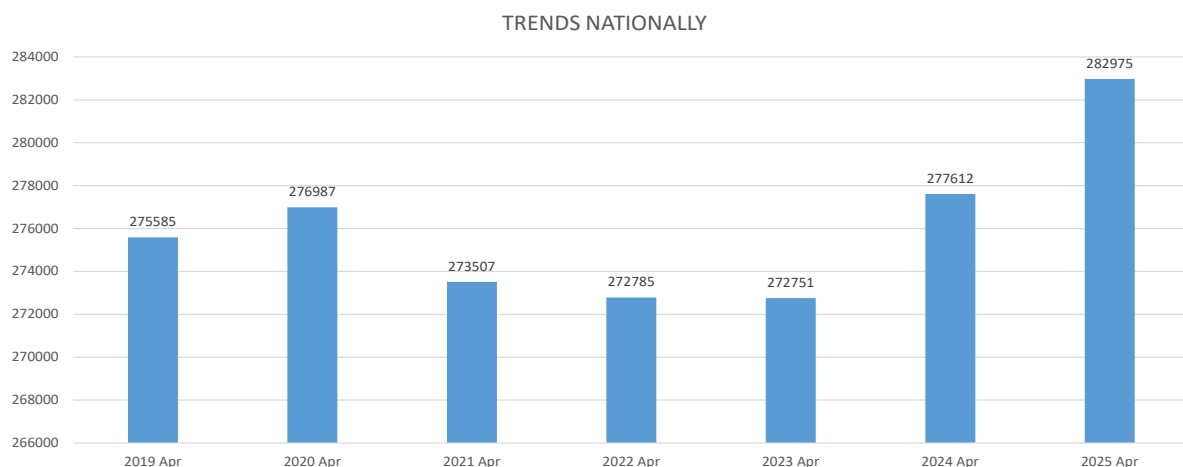


- So, over the past four years the union occupied itself with the strategic objective of strengthening the workplace organisation, at the centre of which has been driving the Close Ranks Defend the Base campaign.

Membership and Recruitment:

- The members are the lifeblood of the union, in February 2019 our membership was 275 501.
- At the end of February 2025 we were 285 623 strong, we have not succeeded to surpass our growth target of 300 000.
- Between February 2019 and February 2025 the membership grew by 10 000 members.
- Yet we know that despite the relatively high union density in our sectors, there is still room to pursue and eventually achieve our cherished goal of fifty-plus-one across the board.
- Therefore, with this strategic goal in perspective, in the coming period we must pledge to intensify our recruitment campaign in order to achieve the 300 000 target.

National Membership Trends:

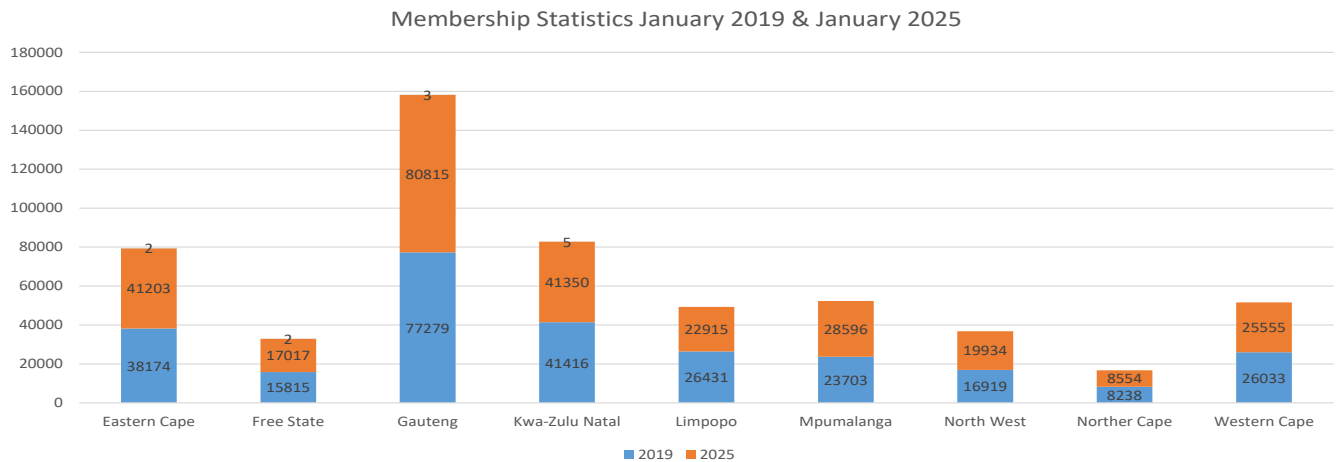


Membership Trends per Province:

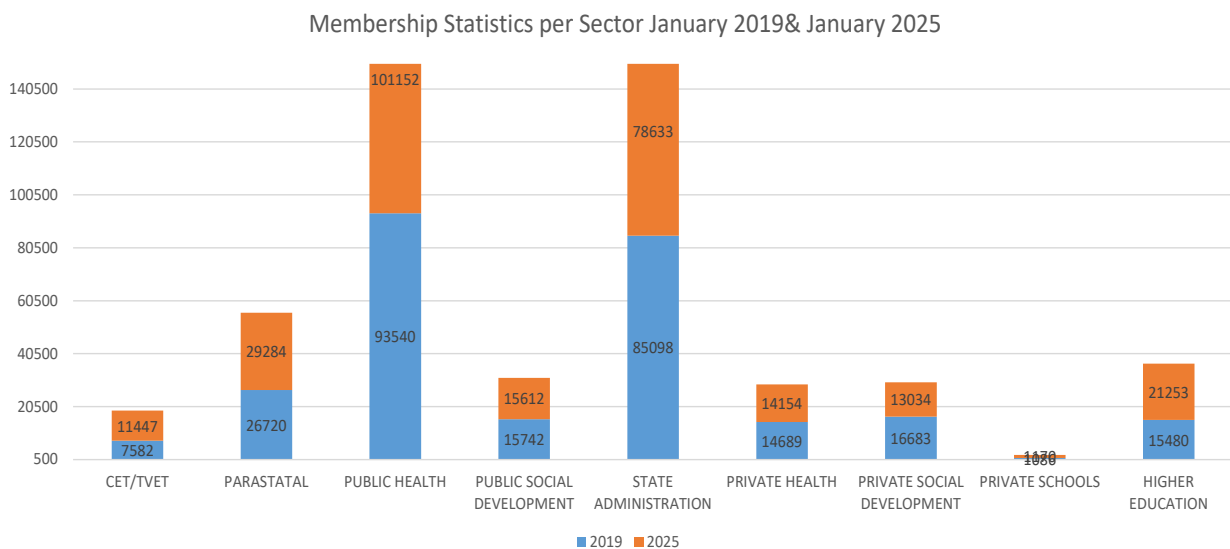
- The graph below shows the Provincial membership trends from 2019 to 2025.
- When comparing 2019 to 2025 all but two provinces (Limpopo & Western Cape) started on a low (2019) and ended on a high (2025), even though they were all below the recruitment targets



Membership Statistics January 2019 & January 2025:



Sectors:



Sector Growth:

- The public health sector between 2019 and 2025 has registered the highest growth of 7812
- TVET/CET grew by 3865
- Higher education grew by 5773
- Parastatals grew by 2564
- State administration declined by 6462 members



MEMBERSHIP PER AGE, GENDER AND RACE – FEBRUARY 2024 AND JANUARY 2025

February 2024

- Gender Breakdown:

GENDER	TOTAL PER GENDER	TOTAL %
FEMALE	171 297	61.97%
MALE	97 567	35.34%
UNKNOWN	7 545	2.73%
GRAND TOTAL	276 409	100%

Age:

AGE BRACKET	TOTAL PER AGE BRACKET	AGE BRACKET %
0-20	10	0.36%
21-30	12 590	4.55%
31-40	82 918	30.00%
41-50	96 565	34.94%
51-60	67 783	24.52%
OVER 60	13 283	4.81%
UNKNOWN	3 260	1.18%
Grand Total	276 409	100.00%

Age Category:

- The January 2025 NEHAWU membership by age, gender, and race and is important for several reasons - from a strategic and equity-focused perspective



as well as our targeted recruitment drives.

- 18 to 30 Years - In this category we are seeing that we have 9 207 members representing 3.22% of the total 285 939 members of the union.
- 31 to 40 years – In this category there is a total of 73 823 members representing 25.82% of the total membership
- 41 to 50 Years – This category has 107 938 members representing 37.72% of the total membership.
- 51 to 60 Years – In this category we have 76 655 members representing 26.81% of the total membership
- 61 to 65 Years – This category of membership we have 14 131 members representing 4.94% of the total membership of the union.
- Over 65 Years – in this category we have 3 278 members representing 1.15% of the total membership.

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM:

- The NEC took a decision that we must migrate the membership administration system from Bytes to Qlink in order to eliminate the challenges of the past.
- The migration was successfully completed with the data take on from the old membership system to the new system and the system went live with effect from the 1st October 2018.
- All head office staff members who are responsible for capturing of membership forms were taken through training on the new system and subsequent to that Provincial Finance Administrators, PHOSECs and Provincial Secretaries in 2019 were also trained.

Decentralization of Membership Administration System (MAS):

- In 2021 the MAS was centralized to regions and Regional Administrators were trained
- However, since 2021 to date the system it is yet to be fully utilized by the majority of administrators and other users in provinces and region
- The decentralization of the NEHAWU MAS gives regions and provinces access to their detailed monthly membership data and this means that they can retrieve from the NEHAWU MAS:
- How many members were processed in the region – i.e. new, re-instated and updated members in a particular period
- How many members cancelled their deductions with the employer in the region – Persal cancels membership and we are not provided with proof of cancellation.
- How many members in Persal are serving the cancellation notice period per workplace – this can be used to re-recruit those members by addressing their concerns.



- How many members were terminated by the employer, which talks to membership service and retention in regions.
- And how many members transferred out of Persal – these members need to be followed up and be given membership update forms and retained in the regions
- All in all, the NEHAWU MAS is capable of producing for the regions and provinces all sorts of reports for all kinds of meetings including constitutional ones
- Also assisting in servicing our members and attributing to the growth of the region / province and ultimately the national union – it is not just a capturing tool

Management of Cancellations and Fall-Offs:

The national union has developed a process of dealing with cancellations and fall-offs. However, this process has not been followed by many of branches and regions. The process entails the following:

- Cancellations are received via fax, email or hand delivered.
- These cancellations are then checked on the MAS by a Membership Officer or Regional Administrator or Provincial Administrator to see if the member is active.
- A communication is sent to the Province or Region on the cancellation form for purpose of making follow-up with the member. In the process the following comrades are copied: PHOSEC, Provincial Secretary, Provincial Finance Administrator, National Organiser of the sector; OSEC Officer and Head of OSEC are copied.
- The Regional Organiser and in some cases the National Organiser has 7 days within which to reply to Head Office, Provincial Office or Regional Office to confirm if they have spoken to the member and convinced the member not to resign or find out the reasons for cancellation.
- If there is no response received from the Regional Organiser and in some cases the National Organiser then the member is cancelled on the 10th day.
- On weekly basis the Regional/Provincial/ Membership Officer compiles a report on cancellations using the template below:

Name of the User	Name of the member cancelling	Branch of the member	Region	Indicate whether or not there was a follow-up after communication was sent



- The MAS then automatically calculates 3 months from the date of cancellation, for this reason we only delay cancellation by 8 days to avoid any refunds that may arise.
- NB: Upon noticing that other unions were not processing the cancellations we sent to them, we were instructed to stop cancelling members. What we are now doing is to inform the Regions first of these forms we are receiving from other unions so that they counter that process and then we acknowledge receipt from the other unions and referring them to Section 13, sub-sections 3 and 4. These sub-sections are specific as to who is ultimately responsible for processing cancellation forms and it's the employer and not the union.
- From March 2022, when we receive a detailed monthly output report from Persal, which includes the number of our members that are serving the 3 months cancellation notice period and that information is automatically uploaded to the Provinces (PFA's) on a monthly basis in or around the 11th of the new month for the previous month. And the PFA then shares this data with its Regions (RA's) who are in turn supposed to share with their Secretaries and Regional Organizers.

NEHAWU DIGITAL MEMBERSHIP, RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING SYSTEM EOS:

- In collaboration with MHA, we developed an online membership boarding system in order to be in line with the 4IR dispensation. The process started with an application to Persal in 2021/2022 to allow processing of new members application forms digitally which was given a go ahead. The digital processing of forms doesn't replace the manual application forms.
- The historical challenges in our traditional and recruitment system were: Manual Paper Recruitment Process, Inefficient Tracking, Data Inaccuracy, Limited Reporting, Delayed Onboarding, Inadequate Member Engagement and Payment Authorization challenges.

The new system of EOS we have now improved to EOS Online Solution which means the following:

- That we can now do digital on boarding
- We are able to do real-time tracking
- We are able to accurately manage our data ensuring that there are no duplicates
- We are now able to do member reinstatement quickly prior to membership query
- We are able to do comprehensive reporting without hassles
- We are able to swiftly do membership activation
- Enhanced member engagement
- Digital payment authorization

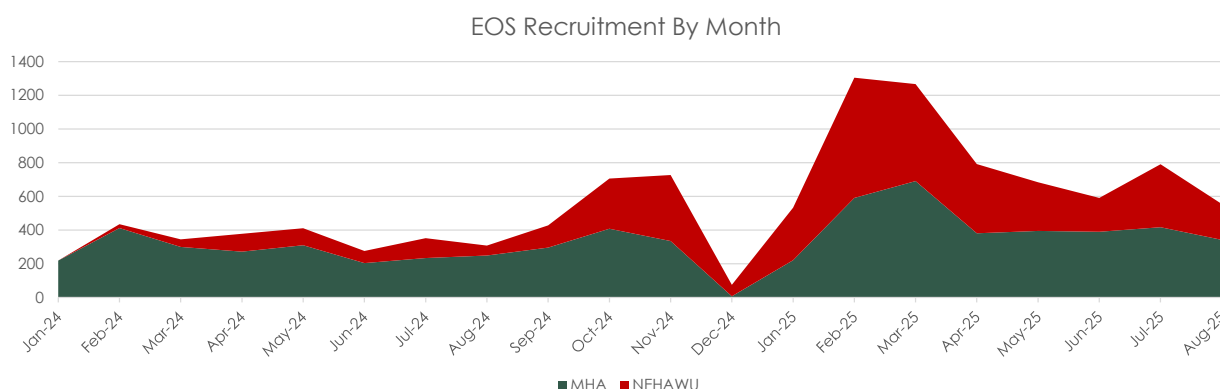


- In activating the On-boarding system and linking the Registration-Onboarding Gap with Q-Link Integration we have worked with MHA in launching our recruitment drive and we used the launch for MHA to introduce the system to our branches/ officials as users and MHA has set up user profile & reporting structures.
- When the user logs into the EOS NEHAWU, He/she will be able to do the following:
 - EOS NEHAWU checks member's status through Q-Link
 - Membership details captured.
 - On-boarding process completed.
 - MHA uploads details to Q-Link.

In rolling out the program we have done it in phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Kick-start & Adoption: We trained MHA/ NEHAWU network personnel (recruiters) in March 2023, initiating the use of the EOS system. This initial training led to 116 members being on-boarded in March via the system, setting a foundation for growth.
- Phase 2: Increasing Member Enrolments: An additional MHA/NEHAWU network personnel were trained and began using EOS NEHAWU in May 2023 causing an increase in membership enrolments month by month. More individuals have since been registered which resulted in higher member enrolments.
- NEHAWU EOS Recruitment:
 - Recruitment through the EOS platform has had a record year, with 7,910 new recruits submitted through the platform in the year to date.
 - Adoption of the EOS platform has increased in 2025, shown by the increasing number of recruits that are being recruited by NEHAWU officials.

The graph below, indicates the total number of recruits recruited via the EOS Recruitment platform since it launched in January 2024.

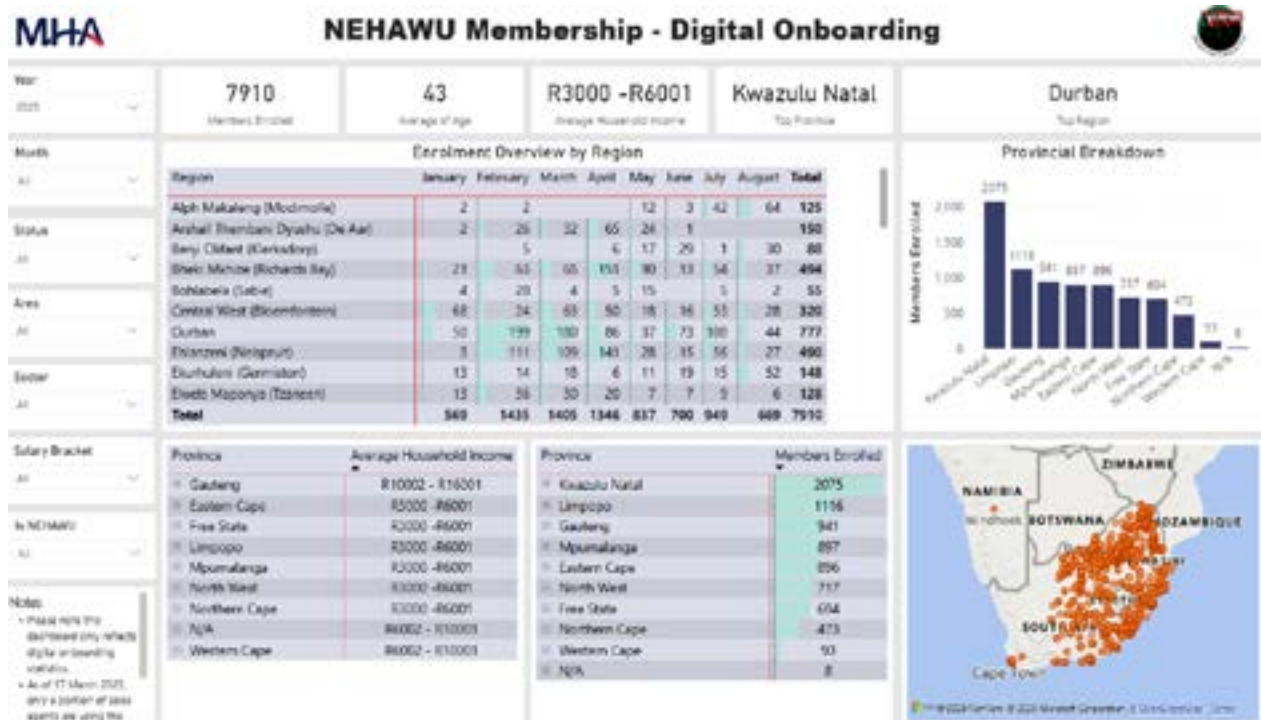




EOS Recruitment Total (MHA + NEHAWU):

MHA monitors recruitment and reports on it using a dashboard. The dashboard below shows the provinces, and regions that have seen the strongest recruitment in 2025

PROVINCE	TOTAL RECRUITS
KwaZulu-Natal	2 075
Limpopo	1 116
Gauteng	941
Mpumalanga	897
Eastern Cape	896
North West	717
Free State	694
Northern Cape	473
Western Cape	93





EOS Recruitment (NEHAWU Only):

PROVINCE	TOTAL RECRUITS
KwaZulu-Natal	1 941
Limpopo	695
Gauteng	83
Mpumalanga	154
Eastern Cape	131
North West	56
Free State	280
Northern Cape	177
Western Cape	93

Active Regions:

REGION	TOTAL
Durban	911
Kenny Phalandwa (Thohoyandou/Venda)	665
Bheki Mkhize (Richards Bay)	660
Harry Gwala (Pietermaritzburg)	620
Magwaza Maphalala (Ladysmith)	249
Ehlanzeni (Nelspruit)	217
Mafikeng (Mafikeng)	151
Maluti (Phuthaditjhaba)	125
John Taolo (Kuruman)	108
Central West (Bloemfontein)	104
Mike Tauyatswala (Polokwane)	103

REGION	TOTAL
Thabo Moshoeshe (Port Elizabeth)	100
Alph Makaleng (Modimolle)	90
West Rand (Krugersdorp)	80
Thabo (Thaba Nchu)	65
Tshwane (Pretoria)	64
Francis Baard (Kimberley)	60
Bohlabela (Sable)	30
Rustenburg (Rustenburg)	28
Motswahae Lebitsa (Vryburg)	17
Yure Mditlogolo (East London)	15
Arshall Thembani Dyushu (De Aar)	14

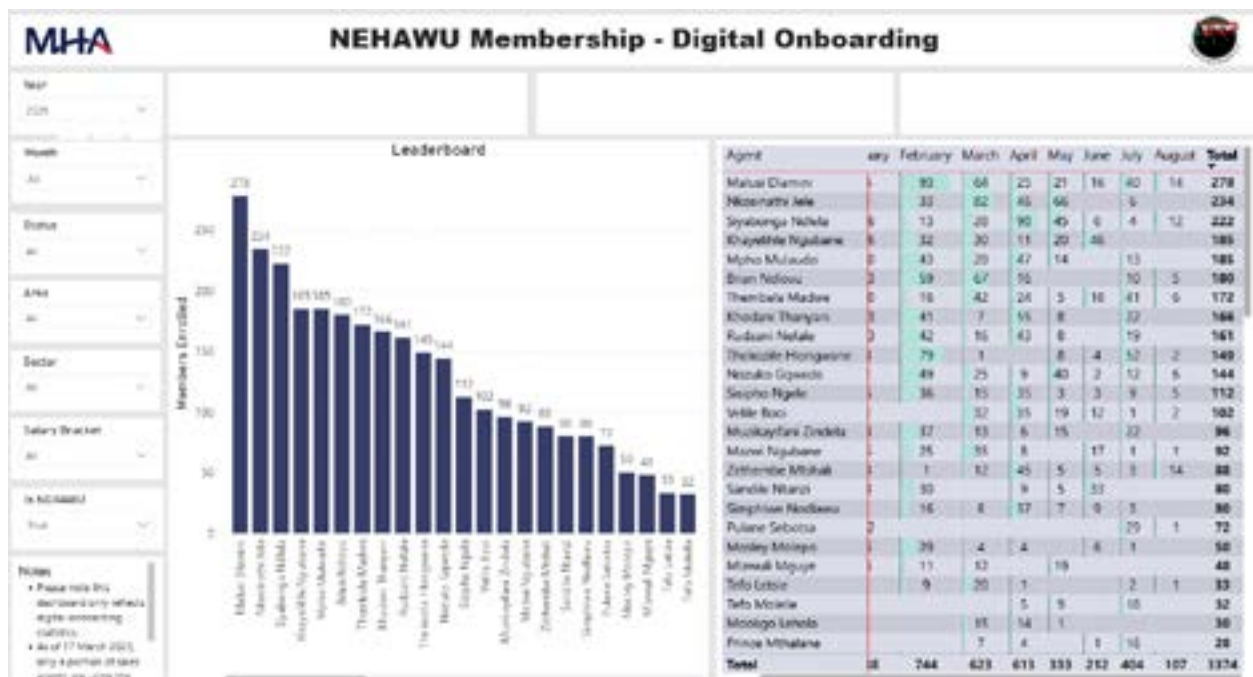
REGION	TOTAL
Tlokwe (Potchefstroom)	13
Oliver Reginald Tambo (Kokstad)	11
Elwels Maponya (Tzaneen)	6
Peter Nchabeleng (Jane Furse)	6
King Sabata Dalindyebo (Mthatha)	4
Kopano (Kroonstad)	4
Gerl Sibande (Ermelo)	3
Max Madlingozi (King Williams Town)	3
Ekurhuleni (Germiston)	2
Nkangala (Witbank)	1
Vuyani Mabasa (Johannesburg)	1



BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISING, SERVICING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 26TH TO 29TH OF AUGUST 2025

Inactive Regions:

REGION	TOTAL
Aubrey Beakues (Upington)	0
Benji Olifant (Klerksdorp)	0
Boland Overberg (Paarl)	0
Ikapa North (Bellville)	0
Ikapa South (Cape Town)	0
Joe Gqabi Region	0
Klein Karro Southern Cape (George)	0
Maluti Region	0
Matthew Goniwe (Queenstown)	0
Sedibeng (Vereeniging)	0
Western Coast Winelands (Worcester)	0





Administrator Training & Capacity Building:

- Develop and roll out a national training programme for MHA administrators.
- **Define the dual role of administrators:**
 - Revitalize inactive users – actively re-engage dormant members.
 - Recruit & register nominated users – on-board new recruiters, train, and support them.
- **Establish administrators as decentralized helpdesks, providing:**
 - Basic troubleshooting and user support.
 - Training manuals, content, and video guides for standardization.
 - Refresher sessions and mentorship opportunities.

Recruit & Win Campaign Expansion:

- Scale the campaign to include regions, and provinces.
- Build grassroots momentum by embedding recruitment and rewards integration across all union structures.

Organizer Enablement:

- Create dedicated training modules for organizers to strengthen their role in mobilization.
- Provide organizers with practical tools for recruitment, registration, and retention.
- Align organizer activity with broader campaign objectives to ensure consistency and focus.

Private Sector Recruitment Initiative:

- Build the next phase of NEHAWU EOS by enabling private sector recruitment to ensure that all NEHAWU recruiters are able to benefit from NEHAWU EOS.

Union Regalia & Care Campaign Continuation:

- Planned roll out of new regalia and refresh existing branding at all major events.
- Extend the Care Campaign and its activities into 2026.

Leave No Member Behind Campaign:

The campaign has sought to ensure no member is left behind by:

- Confirming and updating all details of the members.



BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISING, SERVICING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 26TH TO 29TH OF AUGUST 2025

- Introducing WISH Fulfilment and the improved NEHAWU Rewards Program for all NEHAWU Members.
- Remind the members of the membership benefits available to all members of NEHAWU i.e. Funeral Plans and Value Plans for NEHAWU Members.

The Leave No Member Behind Campaign began in April 2025 and has shown success in updating member details. The campaign has updated over 2000 members, with more than 15,000 fields updated. The agents are successfully updating at least 1 in every 4 members that they attempt to contact.

The Leave No Member Behind Campaign social media post and video by NEHAWU has given the campaign credibility amongst the membership, and we have seen strong success as a result.



The campaign, in its current form is making 80+ successful calls per day, with strong success in Public Health and State Administration. Since inception, over 24,000 calls have been made:





- During the campaign, we have noticed several reasons for members contacted, that did not want to update their details:
- Members are uncomfortable sharing details telephonically
- Comrades would rather speak to a field representative. Some members stated that because they signed up as NEHAWU members at the district office, they will update their details there
- Members were not aware of the LNMB campaign and want to confirm with a colleague or shop steward

The NEHAWU initiated marketing campaign, and website update has given the campaign a tool to address these challenges experienced



The NEHAWU Call Centre is up and running!





The next phase of the Campaign will focus on:

• Campaign Centre Expansion

- Add two new agents to strengthen capacity and extend outreach.
- Roll out call centre services into the North West province, supporting geographic expansion.

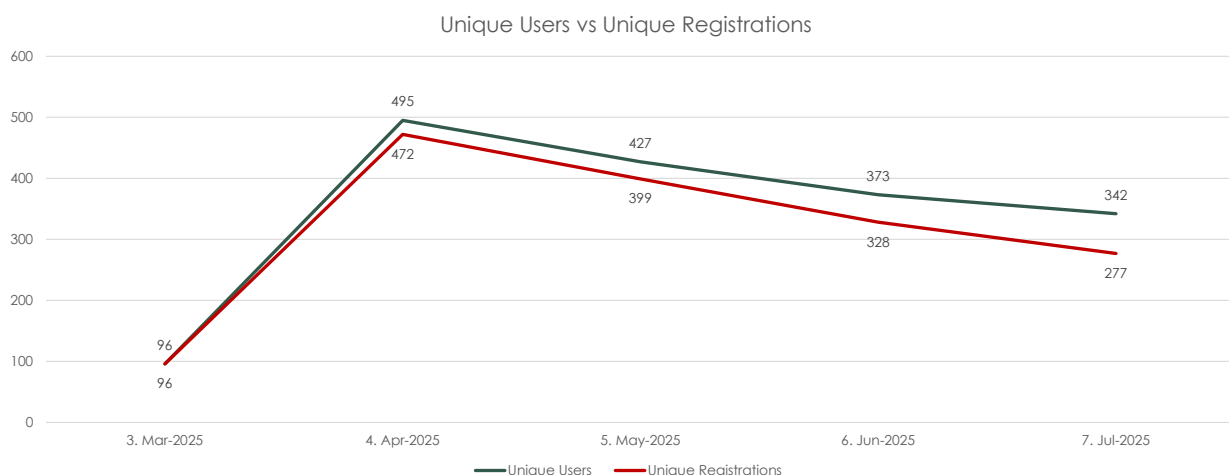
2. Marketing & Communication Drive

- Launch a communication campaign clearly explaining the Leave No Member Behind campaign, its purpose, and member benefits.
- Use multiple channels (SMS, social media, union events) to ensure members understand how the campaign directly supports them.

NEHAWU Rewards:

- NEHAWU Rewards, officially launched in April 2025, was introduced as an inclusive and impactful benefits program for all NEHAWU members, aligned with the Leave No Member Behind campaign.
- The program ensures that Comrades engaging with the campaign are made aware of the benefits and are encouraged to register and redeem them.
- Membership Engagement:
 - Unique Logins Since Launch: 1,568
 - Members Redeeming Benefits: 309
- Conversion Rate: ~20% of logged-in users have actively redeemed at least one benefit.
- Primary Driver of Registrations: SMS outreach during the Leave No Member Behind campaign's member contact activities

Unique Users vs Unique Registrations:





Access for All NEHAWU Members:

Every NEHAWU member, regardless of location or role, has access to NEHAWU Rewards. This is central to ensuring fairness, inclusivity, and the program's alignment with NEHAWU's broader vision of solidarity and care. The program is designed to be:

- Nationwide: Accessible in all provinces via both urban and rural-friendly retailers.
- Simple to Use: Login, select benefit, redeem at partner stores.
- Data free: No data barrier to use NEHAWU Rewards
- Continuously Expanding: More benefits to be added in the coming months.

Key Retail Partners and Benefits:

NEHAWU Rewards offers tangible value to members through established partnerships with leading South African retailers:

- Shoprite/Checkers
- Discounts on essential groceries and household goods.
- Wide national footprint ensuring accessibility.
- Usave
- Value-friendly options for staple foods and daily essentials.
- Perfect for members in rural and semi-rural areas.
- Dis-Chem
- Savings on health, wellness, and personal care products.

We consistently monitor benefits redeemed to ensure that that benefits remain in line with what the members are using. The below shows the top 15 vouchers/ coupons that have been redeemed.

Voucher/Coupon description	Total Redemptions
Members get 10% discount when booking with INTERCAPE!	60
R20 off Parmalat 850g (Cheddar or Gouda)	31
R3 off KOO Baked Beans 410g	28
Parmalat Everfresh Milk 6 x 1L (All Vari	24
Sunbake Everyday Bread 700g (All Variant	19
R10 off Black Cat Peanut Butter 800g	17
R10 off Dairymaid Country Fresh 1.8L	17
Save 5% with Defy	17
Sunlight Dishwashing Liquid 750ml	17
R20 off Rainbow Simply Chicken Original	16
Selati Sugar 5kg (All Variants)	16
Crosse & blackwell Tangy Mayonnaise 750g	15
R10 off Sunfoil Sunflower Oil 2L	15
Comfort Perfume Deluxe Fabric Conditione	13

These partnerships have been chosen based on their nationwide availability, affordability, and alignment with member needs.



Intention for Growth

There are several initiatives that are currently considered to ensure that NEHAWU Rewards continue to meet the objectives set out by leadership:

- **Training**
 - Provide structured training for administrators, organizers, and call centre agents to ensure full understanding of the Rewards platform.
 - Integrate rewards training into broader EOS and LNMB initiatives.
- **Marketing & Communication Drive**

Address current weaknesses by rolling out a comprehensive marketing and communication strategy, which would include:

- Social media campaign, field activations, and community events.
- Branded banners and materials to boost visibility.
- Develop and distribute brochures highlighting NEHAWU Rewards, and the benefits to members.
- Promote via union meetings and regional structures.

The launch phase has shown promising uptake and strong interest from members. With ongoing awareness campaigns and continuous expansion of benefit options, NEHAWU Rewards has the potential to become a cornerstone member benefit—both supporting household budgets and reinforcing member loyalty.

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN:

- The 2013 organising, servicing and bargaining conference adopted recruitment strategy was based achieving 50% plus one across the board in our sectors and workplaces.
- The Organisers at all levels were tasked to a biannual review of the sector landscape to determine the target of 50% plus one.
- The coordination of the recruitment programs to be done through war rooms at regional, provincial and national level. It was also determine that regional secretaries should anchor the recruitment programs as regions are the closest layer to branches and their engines of service delivery.
- In addition to membership stagnation and decline, a second cause for concern was the decline in the Nehawu vote weights in the bargaining councils.

Research & Planning:

- A preparatory phase of research was done to understand the conditions for



recruitment.

- The conditions for recruitment covered key challenges such as trade union competitors, benefit needs that members wanted, the actual potential for growth, and how to go about recruiting new members.
- It is important to develop a plan that had greater potential to succeed.
- The organizing service center produced a conceptual document to take into account all the practical implications of implementing such a strategy.
- A checklist was developed to assist all war rooms in their planning and implementation processes.

Implementation of the recruitment campaign:

- In the period between February 2019 and February 2020 the union grew by 2745 members and started decline from February 2021 with drastic drop in February 2023.
- It is for this reason the CEC directed that the union must develop a comprehensive recruitment campaign for the implementation on the ground.
- It was determined that the recruitment must increase our membership with 2000 members on a monthly basis in order to achieve a target of 300 000 members by December 2023.
- The rollout of the recruitment drive was conceptualised to eventually cover all the provinces and regions in a phased approach.
- The staggered approach meant that we could concentrate on getting things right in each region by identifying the challenges that had the potential to derail the rollout of the campaign and take appropriate action to maximise success.
- The campaign was aimed at the strategic sectors with the greatest potential for growth - namely the State Admin, TVET/CET and Public Health sectors.
- The campaign was not only supposed to be driven from the centre through National War Room but this arrangement was to reinforce the decision to build the seamless machinery.
- This structure is responsible for planning and coordination, and identifying the material needs and resource requirements for the campaign. Throughout the campaign the National War Room, must periodically meet to assess and evaluate the campaign and decide on what course of action was required to strengthen and sustain the recruitment campaign.

Union Density in Sectors and Vote Weights:

- The union has resolved that we must have a 50% plus one representativeness in all the sectors we are organising.
- This old decision on the national union is informed by the principle that says numbers influence growth and growth influence power in the sectors.
- The table below illustrates our representativeness in most of the sectors we



BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISING, SERVICING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 26TH TO 29TH OF AUGUST 2025

are organising in as off 2025:

SECTOR	TOTAL WORKFORCE	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	VOTE WEIGHTS %
Public Service (PSCBC)	1 274 099	199 665	15.67%
State Admin: with 47 Departments (GPSSBC)	382 316	78 828	20.62%
Public Health: (PHSDSBC) Nurses	143 684	39 198	27.28%
Public Health : NHLS	6258	4348	62.58%
Public Health: CHW	45 457	10 387	22.85%
Private Health Sector Netcare	18 000	1957	10.87%
Afrocentric	4020	1957	48.68%
Parastatals : SARS	10 423	4420	42.41%
Parastatals : Legislature	1308	932	71.25%
Parastatals : ACSA	2567	870	33.89%
Parastatals: IEC	878	715	81.43%
Parastatals: IDT	353	143	40.51%
Parastatals : SIU	658	275	41.79%
Parastatals: BMA	2569	892	34.72%
TVET/CET Sector	27031	11 394	42.15%
SETAs	3041	1628	53.54%
Higher Education	65 482	21 058	32.16%

State Administration:

- The table below reflects the membership of union in the state administration sector vs the total workforce or un-unionised workers.
- This is an illustration of need to focus on State Administration as directed by the CEC. The State Admin sector at the GPSSBC vote weights has a total membership of 23 906 with PSA at 58 710.
- PSA is dominating in most of the departments, and NEHAWU is leading in four departments which are DWS, DIRCO, STATS SA and DPSA.
- The union should recruit 36 021 in these strategic departments in order to achieve 50+1%.



SECTOR	TOTAL WORKFORCE	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	VOTE WEIGHTS %
Public Service (PSCBC)	1 274 099	199 665	15.67%
State Admin: with 47 Departments (GPSSBC)	382 316	78 828	20.62%
Public Health: (PHSDSBC) Nurses	143 684	39 198	27.28%
Public Health : NHLs	6258	4348	62.58%
Public Health: CHW	45 457	10 387	22.85%
Private Health Sector Netcare	18 000	1957	10.87%
Afrocentric	4020	1957	48.68%
Parastatals : SARS	10 423	4420	42.41%
Parastatals : Legislature	1308	932	71.25%
Parastatals : ACSA	2567	870	33.89%
Parastatals: IEC	878	715	81.43%
Parastatals: IDT	353	143	40.51%
Parastatals : SIU	658	275	41.79%
Parastatals: BMA	2569	892	34.72%
TVET/CET Sector	27031	11 394	42.15%
SETAs	3041	1628	53.54%
Higher Education	65 482	21 058	32.16%

Membership Report:

- The membership report as presented above has demonstrated our failure to drive the targeted recruitment campaign, the strategy and approach of “one shopsteward, one member” has not been implemented.
- There are regions that made attempts to drive recruitment but couldn't sustain the work because of various challenges, including lack of focus from our organisers who are supposed to be team leaders and rendering support to BECs.
- The work done by some regions is undermined by the fact large part of the union is not recruiting but losing members.
- The distribution of member paraphernalia and bereavement benefit provided to members doesn't seem to help the union to recruit new members as expected. The question is whether we are really capitalising on the provision of benefits to members in order to attract new ones.

Community Health Workers:

- According to the Department of Health, the total workforce of CHWs as verified in July 2025 is 43 781, this number declined by 1676 since July 2024.
- 27000 have matric whilst 16 781 do not have matric.



Total workforce vs our membership:

Province	Workforce	Membership
EC	3971	1407
FS	2379	789
GP	5603	49
KZN	9794	1153
LP	7147	1305
MP	5260	2852
NW	4283	2564
NC	1644	921
WC	3700	75
TOTAL	43781	10387

The union membership is growing very slowly within CHWs and we must be concerned that even on the strength of the court order we are not making inroads.

War Rooms:

- In as much as we appreciate the reports received on this work, the impact of convening these war rooms is minimal. From the reports all provinces seem to be saying all is well and we are convening as directed.
- Some regions and provinces are not following what the CEC in December 2023 said we must do, the point is that even those that are saying we are convening their reports in as far as implementing the pillars of the CRDB program paints a different picture.
- In the period under review we have struggled with the convening of membership meetings in the public service, BMA, SARS and many other sectoral activities.
- There are no monthly plans produced by many of our regional and provincial war rooms which can be tracked and monitored weekly. The focus and priority of the war rooms differs from one region to another. The targeted recruitment campaign doesn't feature as priority of the war rooms.
- The question then becomes if war rooms are convened and functional why we have we failed to meet the target of recruitment as set by the CEC



STRENGTHENING WORKPLACE ORGANISATION:

- The union has long agreed that a strong branch must have a full complement of BOBs, a properly constituted BEC, regular meetings of the BOBs and BEC, running monthly general meetings, meeting management and establishing key functional and strategic substructures.
- The union has established two types of Branches namely; Workplace/ Institutional and Cluster branches.

Workplace vs. Cluster Branch:

Workplace Branch: is established in departments, institutions or companies where there is a minimum of 50 and more members of the union in good standing

Clustered Branch: is established by means of grouping together a number of institutions or companies where one or more of them does not have the minimum number of members required but are in good standing.

The establishment of this typical branch must take into account limited proximity of clustered institutions in order to ensure proper functioning of the branch.

Shop stewards election:

- The election of shop stewards in a workplace or branch is guided in the first instance by Union's Constitution and further shall be in line with the recognition agreement signed by the union and the employer or any other policy and/or established practice that does not contradict the provisions of the union's Constitution and policies.
- In terms of Section 26 of NEHAWU Constitution, shop stewards are elected from among the members in good standing in a workplace/branch. The BOBs are elected from among the shop stewards. This implies that the two processes must be conducted distinctly but in such a manner that each one flows into the other.

Shop stewards shall be elected in the following manner:

- In institutions/branches where members work in different constituencies, members' meetings must be convened to elect shop stewards before the date of the BC or on the day of the BC depending on the size of branch or workplace.
- The constituency elections will happen in the following branches; Hospital, Education (Higher Education & FETC), Cluster Branches and where members work shifts.



BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISING, SERVICING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 26TH TO 29TH OF AUGUST 2025

- Substructures and Forums:
- The union has identified key substructures and professional forums to be established in order to enhance the work of constitutional structures.
- The substructures and forums are also be used to service members:
- Nurses Forum
- Public Service Bargaining Forums
- Gender substructures
- Health and Safety
- Paralegal
- Education and Training

Functionality of Sub-Structures:

- The functionality of the substructures is uneven across the board. If the substructures they should meet before the constitutional meetings.
- During the most recent public service wages negotiations the union was exposed because of the dysfunctionality of the bargaining forums.
- We have not build enough capacity of this substructures through training programs hence some they collapsed. We need functional nurse's forums in order to recruit and service nurses.

Branch Data:

- The branch data is important for union in terms its planning hence the CEC directed that as we run branch congresses.
- And that we must consolidate the information of newly elected BEC's and continuously update every quarter.
- Amongst the activities the data is used for, it is the shop steward training.

Below is the recent updated data from provinces:

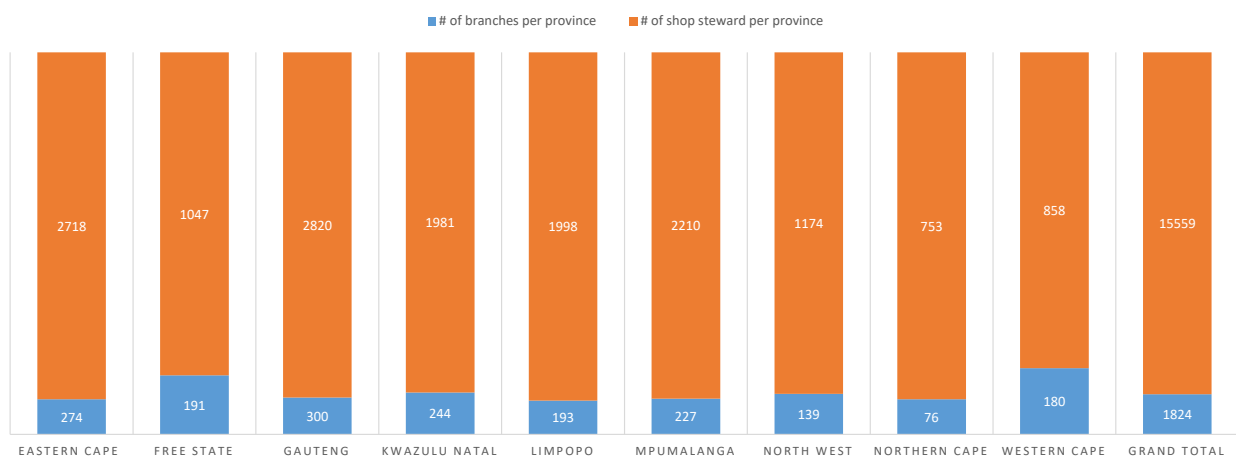
Province	# of branches per province	# of Shop Stewards per province
Eastern Cape	274	2 718
Free State	191	1 047
Gauteng	300	2 820
KwaZulu-Natal	244	1 981
Limpopo	193	1 998
Mpumalanga	227	2 210
North West	139	1 174
Northern Cape	76	753
Western Cape	180	858
TOTALS	1 824	15 559



- The above table indicates that the national union has as a total of 1824 branches that all went to their branch congresses and submitted by provinces,
- We have 15 559 number of Shop Stewards nationally.
- The graph below presents the graphic presentation of the National Picture in terms of total number of branches and total number of shop stewards per province as illustrated in the table above.

Branches per region vs. number of membership we have per region. These membership figures are not stagnant and are changing from time to time:

NATIONAL DATA OF BRANCHES AND SHOP STEWARDS:



Branch Questionnaires:

- In supporting the work of regions and provinces to assess the state of organisation and compliance with constitutional imperatives, we developed the branch questionnaire that was shared with provinces.
- The questionnaire serves two things; update branch data of shop stewards; asses the functionality of the branch office bearers; branch executive committees and substructures.
- This information is supposed to analysed and discussed in each and every BEC meeting and updated on a quarterly basis. However, we must indicate that there is lack of compliance from our regions
- Close Ranks Defend the Base (CRDB)-Our Organising and Servicing Strategy:
- The CEC of December 2022 evaluated the progress in terms of implementing the CRDB campaign and directed that going to the new year 2023 full attention which is an integral part of our organising and bargaining pillar which is an overarching focus of the national union as encapsulated in our battle-cry:

Strengthen Workplace Organisation to Defend Collective Bargaining, Deepen Class Consciousness and Advance Internationalism.

- Therefore, the CRDB programme as our organising strategy shall be the anchor of all the activities located in the work of our War Rooms across the



spheres of the union.

This programme is an essential and practical means of assessing the state of the union at the workplace, of servicing members, stimulating and firming up branch activities and providing oversight on the work of our regions at the workplace.

- Strengthening workplace organisation
- Membership service through workplace/branch visits on a monthly basis
- Education and Training of shop stewards
- Recruitment campaign in order to grow the union across sectors
- Defending collective bargain in the Public Service and state agencies
- Case Handling and Management
- Public service delivery campaign

As part of our organisational strategy in carrying out the strategic task of strengthening workplace organisation, the CEC directed that:

- Our regions as the engines of service delivery must to coordinate and drive our programme of Closing Ranks and Defend the Base to cover all sectors and branches over the coming year.
- Therefore, the Closing Ranks and Defend the Base programme shall be the overriding focus in our regional monthly plans and a permanent in feature in the agenda of the meetings of all our Branch, Regional and Provincial Executive Committees.
- All Provinces must ensure that the ROB's and organisers have clear and supervised monthly plans to drive service delivery in all branches and workplaces and that support is provided to the elected BECs to ensure that branch executive committees, shop steward committees and membership meetings are regularly convened monthly and substructures are functional.
- The program must also be used to prepare the ground for recruitment of new members to the fold of the union.
- Lastly, as directed by the constitutional structures the program must be used to clarify our resolution on the SACP and state power

The branch executive committees amongst other things should do the following:

- To update the branch data of all elected BEC members and co-ordinators. This include membership data of all branches (Branch Questionnaire)
- Appoint outstanding substructure co-ordinators in line with the guidelines
- To develop the schedule of monthly meetings to be convened as reflected and explained above
- To prepare reports of the state of each branch to the coming RECs
- To receive the CEC program of action for 2023 which will be translated to a



national work plan

- All public service branches to prepare to resuscitate the campaign on the public service dispute through convening branch general meetings and continuation with demonstrations
- So, in order to comply with the constitution it was agreed that going forward there should be no REC taking place unless majority if not all BECs have taken place in all regions.
- ROBs and Organisers have responsibility to enforce this decision.
- If compliance is achieved all branches will be in a position to submit reports to the REC for the REC to assess the state of organisation at the branch level and intervene timeously where it is required.

Summary and Challenges:

- The program as per the mandate of the 12th national congress and articulated further by the central executive committee was supposed to be ongoing and part of our daily work.
- The convening of BECs and BGMs has not become the permanent feature in the life of the organisation.
- In the period between 2022 and 2023 the national office bearers led the program working with provinces.
- However, soon after that there was a lull in many of our regions and branches up to a point where national office in August 2023 directed provinces to develop programs targeting certain regions.
- Our assessment is that many of our regions have not fully internalised this organising and servicing strategy of the union.
- The failure to implement the CRDB program in many of our branches has brought to the fore the fundamental organisational and ideological questions of shop floor organisation, service to members, workplace transformation, worker control and class consciousness.
- Equally, it has put the organisational weaknesses of our regions and branches in focus, which in keeping with the mandate of our 12th national congress we shall continue to fight for and help strengthen the organisational engines of our union.

We reflect below are some of the challenges identified during the implementation of the program:

- Provincial and Regional war rooms have not been institutionalised because in most instances they are meeting only when directed so by national office. The inconsistencies in convening regular war room meetings results in collapsed programs and makes it impossible to co-ordinate, monitor and assess the program
- The demand for extra budget outside the allocation that is meant for



servicing is also barrier because regions see the program as additional work. The question that must be answered is whether the allocation is used for membership service or not?

- Our programs largely focused on the public health sector across the provinces despite the decision to focus on state administration, TVET and Parastatals. This is a weakness hence the decline in membership in state administration and private sectors as they feel neglected by the union.
- Although there was focus on public health mainly through the public service delivery campaign. The weakness in the sector is non-existence of key substructures i.e Nurses Forums and other Allied Professions.
- The failure to visit workplaces in line with close ranks defend the base program result in the collapse of branches as we discover late that BOBs and BECs no longer constitute a quorum. Regular assessment of the state of the union at the workplace can prevent this situation by ensuring timeous interventions
- We have fairly new shop stewards in many of our branches which underlines the need for intensive branch based education programs

CASE HANDLING AND MANAGEMENT:

- The paralegal strategy is a tool to ensure that the union establishes teams from branch to national level in order to represent members in cases but also to strengthen their capacity in handling cases.
- Despite the fact that the national paralegal meeting was convened in February this year, it established deeply embedded challenges pertaining to the dysfunctional and /or non-existent structures.
- The paralegal meetings are not held regularly and this partly caused by the fact that some comrades who are not shop stewards are appointed as coordinators and end up with no time offs to attend to cases.
- Coordinators are supposed to be elected amongst BEC members. A paralegal coordinator has to be comrades who are disciplined and have a passion to take cases.
- The union must consider whether the composition of regional paralegal teams has to be reviewed, as things stand they are as big as an REC.
- There is also confusion about who has to chair these meetings, this is despite the fact that the paralegal strategy is clear that it would be the chairpersons at all levels, with the national one being chaired by the president.
- On the training of the appointed paralegal team members the first port of call is for regional organisers and provincial paralegal officers to take them along on cases in order to build their capacity.
- The electronic case management system is available and some provinces are already utilising it however more comrades need to be brought on board in terms of utilising the system.
- The collective bargaining cases that have recently troubled the union have been the no work no pay which is often confused with unlawful deductions.



- Collective bargaining drives workers to industrial action in those instances, often when this ensues, the no work no pay also takes effect.
- However in recent times we have seen the employer in the Legislature resorting to self-help in the North West which saw the union win in the landmark case in the Labour Appeal Court to stop all deductions directing the employer to comply with the Basic Conditions of the Employment.
- The Department of Public Service and Administration was also interdicted and ordered to release withheld salaries of workers after the 2023 Public sector strike.
- The Labour Appeal Court clearly stated that no work no pay occurs during the strike and if it is a claim to deduct after the strike it becomes a deduction under the Basic Conditions of the Employment Act.
- There is an urgent need to attend to organised methods of industrial action, collective agreements need to encompass these contentious areas such as the no work no pay issues, the picketing rules in order to enable an obstacle free process to industrial action.
- Importantly collective agreements also need to contain an enforcement procedure, which is something the Labour Relations Act is currently battling with because section 33A only addresses enforcement of bargaining council agreements. The CCMA disputes around collective agreement compliance a facing a lacuna in the law.

Conclusions:

- As we indicated at the beginning that the union has made some strides in implementing our organisation priorities but there are also serious weaknesses, in particular on the shop floor organisation.
- The close ranks defend base program is meant to root the union on the ground hence we must scale up the work of servicing members and recruitment campaign.
- In the true tradition of COSATU, our federation, we ensure that we adhere grassroots democracy, worker participation in decision making, accountability and mandating.
- The commissions must discuss in detail how to revitalise our strategies across sectors.



NEHAWU Collective Bargaining System, Approach and Practice – a Historical and Current Account

Challenges of Trade Unions or Collective Bargaining in Post- Apartheid South Africa

The literature points to a number of problems within trade unions which have begun to emerge, especially after 1994. Amongst others these are the challenges: decline of worker involvement in union affairs, demobilization of union members, lack of a clear vision of changing society and most unionists are now being driven by individualism and a quest for upward mobility.

The failure by unions to deal with such problems has led many of their members to join new rival unions. {NUM loss to AMCU – 2012}

Therefore a debate or a discussion should ensue within the national union as to which concept amongst the listed suit us most: Social unionism; Bread and butter unionism; strategic unionism; corporatism; societal corporatism and/or state corporatism.





NEHAWU 1990-1992 General Strikes

The withdrawal of labour by general assistants, cleaners, laundry workers, clerical staff and kitchen staff started on the 08th June 1990 in Baragwanath hospital affected (59) hospitals across the country. NEHAWU members defied a Supreme Court interdict barring workers from hospital premises except when on duty. 1 500 general assistants, workers openly defied the court interdict.

A Historical and Current Account of the Evolution of the System, Approach and Practice of Collective Bargaining

The content below covers a NEHAWU historical and current account of the evolution of the system, application and practice of the collective bargaining. {EVOLUTION} The implementation of the collective bargaining system. {PROCESS} The practice, which is collective bargaining by NEHAWU. {APPLICATION} Future considerations for improvements in collective bargaining. {FORESIGHT}.

NEHAWU Collective Bargaining Levels

Collective bargaining takes place within all the sectors of the national union which are the following: {Higher Education, Public Health, Private Health, State Administration, TVET/CET, Public Social Development, Private Social Development and Parastatals}

Collective bargaining takes place at the following levels:

Collective bargaining at plant/local level;

Collective bargaining at provincial level;

Collective bargaining at national company level;

Collective bargaining at sector level;

Problem Statement towards Establishment of a Collective Bargaining System

Collective Bargaining System

In preparation for collective bargaining in all our sectors where we are organized, the national union must conduct a research or a benchmarking exercise, to ensure and help our members to demand achievable demands.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BARGAINING FORUMS
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BARGAINING



CO-ORDINATORS

Collective Bargaining: Practice

Public Service

The public service bargaining forums were established successfully and are revived periodically after branch congresses. The sector bargaining forms have not been established as per the collective bargaining system and lastly the Departmental Bargaining Forums also have not been 100% established.

Public service bargaining forums were rolled out between February and March 2020 aimed at reviving them, electing Regional, Provincial and National Bargaining Coordinators.

Private Sectors {Higher Education, Private Health, Private Social Development and Parastatals}

The private sectors of the national union have not fully rolled out the establishment of collective bargaining system that is practiced or applicable in the Public Service.

Therefore, the collection of demands and consolidation process, election of coordinators and negotiating teams, reporting and mandating are not transparent in these sectors and not easy to monitor. The National Organizers in these sectors are still running collective bargaining outside the involvement of properly elected worker leaders as per the collective bargaining system.

Our Collective Bargaining System and its Impact in Assisting the National Union

Future Considerations for Improvements

Our collective bargaining system is still relevant in that, all the weaknesses flagged by the strike assessment report in 2010 and the 09th national congress remains unresolved. Therefore, a full roll out of the system to all private sectors of the national union, informed by the sector specific demarcations must be prioritized.

We must consider to use the system to run more campaigns – currently the national union has been managing national strikes in particular from 2017 – 2019



but not using the system to run for example campaigns on: Health and Safety, Wellness, NHI, Public Service Delivery campaign etc.

The Strategic Approach to Collective Bargaining {Conclusion}

Our strategic approach is to develop a practical and systematic implementation plan that takes us through all the levels of collective bargaining within NEHAWU sectors, to amongst others:

Revisit and prioritize the collective bargaining priorities within sectors, research needs and practical implementation plans;

Evaluate the functioning of bargaining Councils at sector level and the necessary interventions;

Evaluate the functioning, representation, coordination and mandating of chambers of the respective bargaining councils within the Public Service both Nationally and Provincially and necessary interventions;



MESSAGES OF SUPPORT

CDE. PAMBIS KYRITSIS

**WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE
UNIONS (WFTU) BY ITS GENERAL
SECRETARY**

The conference received messages of support from the General Secretary of WFTU Pambis Kyritsis and in his address he said that “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.

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. Global geopolitical and economic rivalries continue to directly threaten world peace and security, even with the risk of nuclear destruction. Imperialist wars, interventions, sanctions, and blockades continue and intensify.

It must be added that recently, after Trump's election in the USA, the trade war which uses tariffs as a weapon to maintain their dominant position on the global economic and geopolitical stage. The genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza and the murderous attacks in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iran, with the support and encouragement of the USA, the EU, and their allies, has once again revealed in all its grandeur the hypocrisy, cynicism, and inhumane nature of imperialism.

As it has already been announced, a new operation is underway with the sole goal of the full occupation of Gaza and the completion of the ongoing systemic ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, the UN is raising urgent concerns, noting that the number of malnourished children in Gaza has tripled, while Israel continues to restrict critical humanitarian aid, using famine and starvation as a weapon. This new

escalation, in combination with the formalization of the intentions to build new settlements in the West Bank, cutting it off from East Jerusalem, is added to the long list of crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli government.

It is clear that there is a deliberate and organized plan to displace and annihilate the Palestinians from their land, in order to expand Israeli occupation and settlement in the Palestinian territories, thus nullifying the UN resolutions that provide for a two-state solution. This is part of the broader Israel-U.S. plan for a violent reconfiguration of the entire Middle East to their own measures. We are proud because, under the banner of the WFTU, millions of workers in dozens of countries around the world have mobilized in solidarity with the Palestinian people, demanding justice and freedom for Palestine, and condemning not only the barbaric Israeli aggression but also the complicity and encouragement of this aggression by the ruling circles of imperialism.

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 new 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. Worldwide, the deepening

labor from vulnerable workers, as well as anti-popular and anti-labor legislative measures, have significantly undermined labor with rights, regulated by collective agreements. At the altar of profit human sacrifices continue, as safety and health at work



of the capitalist crisis makes the attacks against the labor and social achievements and democratic and trade union freedoms becoming even harsher and intense.

Individual contracts, privatizations, outsourcing, teleworking, and “service leasing” are just some of the forms taken by this harsh neoliberal attack. Temporary, precarious, and unsecured employment is expanding and the overexploitation of cheap

are seen by employers as undesirable costs that reduce their profits. 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 encouraging and hopeful element in the depressing picture of today's world is the fact that workers do not passively accept the neoliberal capitalist,

resistance of workers strengthens and the struggles become more massive and militant, so do the phenomena of authoritarianism and repression, and the police persecution of trade union leaders, as well as the attack on trade union freedoms, particularly the right to strike, intensify.



At the same time, employers and governments are attempting to manipulate labor struggles, betting on the role of yellow unions and surrendered trade union leaders. United workers' struggles often face not only employers and the state but also unions aligned with class collaboration and system integration—a path which, as shown in the arrest of former ITUC and ETUC Secretary Luca Visentini, breeds careerism, bureaucracy, and corruption in the ranks of the trade union movement.

Dear comrades, brothers and sisters,

One of the fields of struggle in which the WFTU has given particular importance since its foundation is intervention through the International Organizations it participates in, as the decisions of these organizations affect the working and living conditions of workers in one way or another. This intervention must promote the positions of the Trade Union Movement and, at the same time, expose the anti-labor policies and the phenomena of subjugation of these organizations to interests contrary to the expectations and interests of workers. One such international organization of particular importance is the ILO. Today's ILO certainly does not meet the demands and expectations of workers. The more pleasant the slogans for consumption

anti-popular, and anti-labor offensive. Guided by class-oriented trade unions, millions of workers around the world are choosing the path of struggle to defend their rights. With militant mobilizations in every corner of the globe, they are demanding work with rights that ensure the satisfaction of their modern needs. The class-oriented trade unions, members or friends of the WFTU, have led and supported large mass and militant struggles that have made us all proud. As the



become, the more in practice the content and impact of their decisions on the protection of labor rights and collective bargaining are shrinking and being limited.

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 ILO’s slogan for a new social contract and “decent” work 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. Moreover, a discussion has started within the ILO’s governing bodies, described as a discussion on the democratization of the ILO’s governance. For us, any discussion about the issue is devoid of meaning if it does not start with the abolition of the unacceptable regime of monopolization of workers’ representation by a single International Trade Union Organisation.

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. 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.

Dear comrades, brothers and sisters,

This year, the international class-oriented Trade Union Movement proudly celebrates the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the World Federation of Trade Unions. We recently also celebrated the 80 years since the great victory of the peoples against the fascist-Nazi horror. It is certainly no coincidence that these two glorious anniversaries coincide chronologically. The fresh air of the great anti-fascist victory, the peoples’ demand for a new world with peace, democracy, and social justice, also activated the process for a new type of united and class-oriented international trade union movement. One that had no dependence on the dominant circles of global capitalism, but served only the cause of the working people.

Under its banner, massive global solidarity campaigns were developed for peoples’ fighting for national and social independence. It stood with the peoples of China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and South Africa, strongly supported decolonization struggles, and actively participated in fights for peace, democracy, and social justice. It helped



establish class unions in dozens of countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America and contributed significantly to forming major regional trade unions such as OATTU in Africa and ICATU in the Arab world, the CPUSTAL of Latin America, and organized many international sectoral unions. It has negotiated and left an indelible mark on all the key ILO Conventions which to this day constitute the basis of industrial relations. Convention No. 87 of 1948 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and Convention No. 98 of 1949 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining remain to this day the cornerstone of the trade union movement's achievements concerning the rights to organize, to bargain collectively, and to strike. Convention No. 95 of 1949 serves as the basis for all subsequent legislation on wage protection, and Convention No. 100 of 1951 underpins all later legislation on the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value.

The WFTU, throughout its 80-year history, has consistently stood in solidarity, shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of Africa. It has wholeheartedly supported their fight to overcome colonialism, oppression, and the looting of the African natural wealth. Nowadays, this struggle remains relevant in the face of neo-colonialism and imperialist interventions. WFTU today includes member organizations representing about 110 million workers in 134 countries around the globe. It builds workers' solidarity, mobilizes class unions defending rights and achievements, supports the Palestinian people, defends socialist Cuba and the spirit of the Cuban Revolution, and

fights for a world without imperialist interventions, wars, exploitation, discrimination, and inequality.

Organization and struggle are the only paths that can overturn the existing realities of misery, exploitation, and social injustice. It is obvious that in our era, the prerequisites for truly dignified working and social living conditions for all workers exist in abundance. The rapid development of science and technology has led to a leap in the productive capabilities of human labor. What we are fighting for these capabilities not to be utilized to increase the profits of capitalists and create unimaginable wealth for a few, but to ensure dignified living and working conditions for those who, through their labor and toil, are the true creators of the produced wealth. The weapon of the working class everywhere is solidarity and internationalism. The WFTU remains firmly committed to these principles. It continues its 80-year path with the same vision that inspired its founding: for a world without wars and imperialist interventions, without exploitation and discrimination, where work will be permanent, stable, regulated, and safe. Once again, I wish you every success in your conference and in your struggles for a better tomorrow for South African workers. Be assured that you will never be alone in these struggles. As in the past, you can count and rely on the solidarity and support of the international class-oriented trade union movement.



CDE. SOLLY PHETOE

**CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN
TRADE UNIONS (COSATU) BY ITS
GENERAL SECRETARY**



Comrades, esteemed guests

I bring you warm greetings from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). We are delighted to be part of this significant bargaining conference, and we commend NEHAWU for organizing this crucial event.

As workers, we understand the importance of collective bargaining in advancing our interests and improving our working conditions. We believe that this conference will provide a platform for meaningful discussions, strategic planning, and collective action to address the challenges facing workers in your sector.

Comrades, the World of Work is changing at an accelerated pace and this requires our collective effort including being agile, we must be ready to respond accordingly in defence of workers' rights and gains and improve their working condition including eliminating Decent work deficit...

Here are some of the glaring changes



in World of Work both in Public and Private Sectors

- a. Precarious work has increased as permanent employment has decreased. Yet there is a low level of union organization amongst precarious workers.
- b. The overwhelming majority of precarious workers are black women and youth
- c. Traditionally labour law protections and benefits do not generally apply to precarious workers.
- d. The system of male domination has a social and economic basis, characterized by racism and capitalist exploitation
- e. Women only earn on average 70% of what men earn in South Africa
- f. One in three women experience physical or sexual violence, most often from their partner or someone they know. Gender-based violence also occurs in the workplace and domestic violence affects work.

What must we do?

- a. We must increase our membership amongst precarious workers, -organizing and fighting for the rights of precarious workers is key for trade unions
- b. We should use worker solidarity and collective worker strength to help deal with the precariousness of work and identify legal gaps that allow precarious work and casualization.
- c. Gender and women's issues are union issues and taking up issues that affect women may encourage more women to join unions
- d. Collective bargaining is never gender-neutral. Bargaining can make a significant difference for women workers, by reducing the gender pay gap, combatting low pay, valuing women's work, and addressing gender discrimination and safety in the workplace
- e. The state and bargaining councils have been slow to implement equal wages for work of equal value including reducing income differentials and unfair discrimination. The principle of equal wages for work of equal value also applies to workers in precarious work.
- f. We should defend the rights of LGBTI+ workers & ensure they have equal access to benefits, uniforms, bathrooms, etc. and that recruiting and hiring policies and practices do not discriminate against LGBTI+ workers
- g. ILO Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work covers all workers, including informal economy workers, and as is now ratified, we must monitor its implementation and enforcement.
- h. Parental rights are important for all workers to ensure that women are not discriminated against on the grounds of pregnancy and women and men can participate in all aspects of family and working life.

COSATU stands in solidarity with NEHAWU and its members, and we pledge our support for your efforts to negotiate better wages, improved working conditions, and enhanced benefits. We are confident that your collective efforts will yield positive outcomes and contribute to the growth and development of your sector.

We wish you fruitful deliberations and successful conference and set an agenda



for the up-coming Bargaining Period.

Labour law amendments

Since 2022, government and business have launched the biggest attack on our hard-won labour rights since 1994. They want to make it easier to fire and retrench workers, exclude small businesses from labour laws, and weaken our power to embark on protest action. This is nothing less than an assault on the working class by capital and its allies in the state.

COSATU has fought back! Through our strength and struggle, we have made strides in defending and advancing workers' rights. Through our many meetings in NEDLAC:

- We stopped the neo-liberal assault to make it easier to retrench workers. We defeated government's and business's proposals to have a 2 year moratorium on section 189, to exempt small business from section 189 or having to pay retrenchment packages, and attempts to reduce consultation and the consultation period for section 189A. While we blocked the assault on our labour law, we also advanced workers' interests - now, severance pay has increased to 2 weeks per year of service, and workers can challenge all aspects of retrenchments directly in the Labour Court.
- We blocked the exclusion of small businesses from labour laws. We blocked the neo-liberal assault which wanted separate special codes for small businesses and changes to labour law that would make it easier to fire workers in small businesses. We succeed – and ensured that all workers (whether in big or small businesses) must be protected!
- We protected the National Minimum Wage. Labour law is being amended to ensure that there are no more tricks to deduct bonuses and reduce the National Minimum Wage. Our struggle in NEDLAC, and our victory, has protected the most vulnerable workers.
- We forced government to drop plans to seriously curtail our right to embark on protest action under Section 77. We have ensured that if socio-economic problems are not fully rectified, we can embark on protest action.
- Through our proposals that we took to NEDLAC, we extended the definition of 'employee' to include dependent contractors. This means more workers can now join unions, engage in collective bargaining and strike. We also advanced the position of on-call workers.
- But, comrades, the struggle is not over. Capital and government still want to:
- Make it easier to fire young workers with a 3-month qualifying period – Business had wanted a 12 month qualifying period and have not agreed to reduce this.
- Limit fair procedure in dismissals to being only giving an employee a fair opportunity to respond – which means that employees may not in fact respond or even be represented.
- Limit what counts as unfair labour practice.
- Provide for an inquiry by an arbitrator in a dismissal case – without written



consent of the employee.

- Extend fixed-term contracts and labour broking.

There are serious assaults on our previously hard won gains and labour rights.

While we can celebrate our advances, we must continue to fight the ongoing assault. Our struggle is far from over and we say: No retreat! No surrender! The working class must be united and militant. We must continue to fight hard for:

- Full protection for all workers, including those in small businesses and the gig economy.
- Stronger enforcement against bosses who steal wages and benefits.
- No weakening of existing labour law and workers' rights.
- No limiting of what is currently defined as an unfair labour practice.

What's next? The proposed laws are now with the State Law Advisor. They will then be released for public comment likely before the end of 2025. They will then return to NEDLAC for further engagements, before being tabled at Cabinet and then Parliament. Parliament too will hold public hearings in both Houses where we will further engage.

Engagements are taking place at NEDLAC on amendments to the UIF and Compensation of Occupational Injuries and Diseases Funds where it is critical that we ensure that the UIF and Compensation Fund are overhauled and cleansed of corruption as well as to ensure that all workers, including atypical workers, are covered by these two Funds.

We cannot hope that the outstanding issues will be resolved in our favour in Parliament where the ANC lacks an outright majority and hence we are engaging the Minister for Employment and Labour to ensure we reach a full and progressive agreement on the full package before it gets to Parliament.

We must mobilize, educate, and organize workers to defend every gain and push for more. We must demand that all outstanding disputes are resolved before any law is passed. The bosses and their allies are united. They are strong but when we are united and militant, we are stronger.

We must resist attempts by neo-liberal forces and other Federations to confuse and divide labour. We must build our unity, advance our knowledge and understanding, sharpen our political consciousness, mobilise workers and other progressive forces and show our strength and determination. We must fight for a future where no worker is left behind, for the power of the working class and for socialism.

We should not be distracted by the attacks of some on COSATU, including SAFTU. Let us be honest comrades, we had more than 30 meetings on the labour laws at NEDLAC. SAFTU attended three and then disappeared leaving it to COSATU alone to stop the proposed weakening of our labour laws by the former Minister



for Labour, to divide government from business and to secure key victories.

This is not new. SAFTU rarely attends NEDLAC negotiations, preferring to convene press conferences, claim false victories on the media and travel overseas. Our task is to do the work and ignore armchair populists. But when COSATU is attacked, we will defend the Federation without fear or favour.

Update on COSATU's Readiness to Host the Central Committee

As we gather here today, we are also preparing to host our Central Committee meeting in September. We can confirm that all logistical arrangements are finalised and we are confident that the meeting will be a success.

The Central Committee is a crucial platform for COSATU, where we assess implementation of previous national congress resolutions, discuss with a view of finding solutions to key issues affecting workers, make important decisions, and chart the way forward for our organization. We are committed to ensuring that this meeting is productive, inclusive, and action oriented.

We invite all comrades who will be delegates and stakeholders to participate actively in the Central Committee meeting and contribute to the discussions that will shape the future of our organization."

Update on COSATU's 40th Anniversary Celebrations

"As we look ahead, we are also preparing to celebrate a significant milestone in COSATU's history – our 40th anniversary. This momentous occasion will take place on December 6, 2025, at Dobsonville Stadium in SOWETO and we are working hard to ensure that it is a fitting tribute to our organization's legacy and contributions to the labour movement.

We hope that all members of NEHAWU will come in their numbers and be part of the celebration at the Stadium on the 6th December.

The 40th anniversary celebrations will be a time for reflection, celebration, and rededication. We will reflect on our achievements, challenges, and lessons learned over the past four decades. We will celebrate our resilience, solidarity, and collective strength. And we will rededicate ourselves to the principles of worker unity, social justice, and economic transformation.

We invite all comrades, stakeholders, and allies to join us in this momentous celebration and to share in the joy and spirit of this significant occasion."

The conference was also addressed by the Minister of Public Service and Administration who said that:

ADDRESSES AND PRESENTATIONS

CDE INKOSI MZAMO BUTHELEZI

ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER
OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION



During the budget speech, as a Ministry, we reaffirmed our commitment to strategically support and invest in the public service to enhance governance and service delivery, addressing inefficiencies, low productivity, corruption, and accountability.

This conference takes place at the back of the conclusion of a 3-year multi-term wage agreement which is a testament to improved relations between labour

and government. This milestone is one of the fundamental pillars of foregrounding a capable, ethical, and developmental state that truly meets the needs of all South Africans. We value our partnership with organized labour because it is vital for the continuous improvement of the welfare of public servants.

On professionalization of the Public Service



To reiterate what we said during the budget speech, we are fully engaged in implementing the Professionalization Framework, which is vital for developing professionalism beyond political terms - building public trust and enhancing service delivery.

This comprehensive approach includes merit-based appointments, competitive recruitment processes, continuous training, and a strong commitment to digitally transform public service delivery.

As part of our professionalization agenda, we continue to support departments in implementing Institutional Reviews and Skills Audits.

The revitalization of Batho Pele principles through the implementation of the service charter forms the basis for rebuilding public trust through a renewed and purpose-driven public service that truly works for all. The public service charter remains important because it encapsulates our reciprocal and complimentary obligations in relation to creating a conducive environment for service delivery.

The department is committed to the full implementation of the Public Service Summit Declaration. Some of the summit declaration commitments must be undertaken collectively at the level of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) and in that

regard, the Council has established relevant committees to deal with those commitments. I will reflect briefly on some of the commitments that must be advanced the employer.

Reversing the fragmentation of the public service through privatization.

A report on costs of Hospital Catering, Laundry and Security Services across provinces was submitted to the council as per the Public Service summit declaration. The report assesses cost-effectiveness and efficiency of laundry, security, and food services and compares insourced vs. outsourced models across provinces and hospital clusters. The Key findings of the report are:

The following Limitations were encountered during the compilation of the report:

- Incomplete and inconsistent data from hospitals and provinces.
- Poor survey response rates.
- Expenditure data often not clearly linked to specific services.
- Recommendations emanating from the report:
 - Improve data collection and reporting.
 - Investigate inefficiencies in provincial laundries.
 - Develop and enforce national SOPs for food and security services.
 - Consider outsourcing where



economies of scale can be leveraged.

the PSCBC once formal processes have been concluded.

It is hoped that both labour and the employer will interrogate this report and develop a road map to ensure that the recommendations of the report are implemented.

Government Employees Housing Scheme (GEHS)

Since the inception of GEHS, Employees homeownership has increased from 305 193 to 830 070 – This amount to 71% homeownership, however, this might be at an extremely high cost (unfavourable conditions). Rental has also decreased from 569 000 to 157 703 in 2025.

The summit resolved that a GEHS roadmap must be developed. And mandated the GEHS Working Committee to approach GEPF & PIC to conduct a feasibility study on a funding model for affordable and accessible housing products for public servants.

The GEPF Board has approved an intervention which will focus on a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to create a housing fund and a Rent-to-buy solution while the PIC brings about solutions that will cover housing supply and affordable products at prime minus. These interventions by the GEPF and PIC will be subjected to further consultation with Organised Labour at

Government Employees Medical Aid Scheme (GEMS)

The legislative and regulatory framework governing medical schemes including GEMS is very worrisome, the law seemingly makes it virtually impossible for the Minister for the Public Service and Administration to make any meaningful contribution to how GEMS administers a medical benefit for public servants on behalf of the state as employer. The Minister's role is reduced to issuing a determination on the medical allowance, including its annual adjustment as negotiated at the PSBCBC. Even when GEMS erodes the allowance through premium increases, seemingly, there is nothing the Minister can do, worse, the Minister must beg to attend a GEMS AGM. It is important for NEHAWU and all of us as stakeholders to interrogate how we arrived at this undesirable situation, and what needs to be done going forward.

Despite the subsidy increasing steadily over the years, member benefits seem to be declining as evidenced by hefty co-payments and day to day benefits being exhausted in the middle of the year, leaving large numbers of members out of pocket and without adequate cover for the better part of the year. Therefore, the adequacy or otherwise of the subsidy might not



necessarily be the issue. Is the GEMS ecosystem design consistent with its founding mandate, if not, could this be the proverbial Achilles heel?

I want to implore the conference, the responsible policy managers and the PSCBC to reflect on this and develop recommendations on how, we can collectively redirect GEMS to its founding mandate of providing affordable and quality medical aid benefit to public servants.

Notwithstanding these limitations, we will continue to engage GEMS to ensure that the scheme remains circumspect about premium increases whilst enhancing member benefits.

I understand that the PSCBC has established working committees to process the implementation of the entirety of the Public Service Declaration. On my side, I will keep the department accountable for the implementation of the Public Service Summit Declaration through regular reports and specifically on the impact of this process. I also want to suggest that at the level of the leaders, we need to meet regularly, as Principals to the Parties to the PSCBC so that we can collectively take stock of progress registered, especially, preparations towards Public Sector Summit as resolved by the summit.

President, it will be remiss of us not to reflect on woman's month and the important role women play within the

public service. We are inspired by the continued rise of women in leadership roles within the public service, from senior admin officers all the way to senior management, including the legislatures and cabinet. As we celebrate these milestones we must continue to deal with and eliminate all forms of harassment in the workplace, as these undermine the transformative strides we have made as a country.

As a department we remain committed to improving the health, wellness and overall lives of Public Servants as we believe that a healthy public servant is a productive public servant who is committed to effective service delivery and the betterment of the lives of the citizens of South Africa.

As we wish you healthy, yet robust engagements during this conference, we also look forward to partnering with you in the institutionalisation of the public service charter where we are proposing that the implementation of the Public Service Charter should be a standing item in the provincial and departmental chambers of the PSCBC and its sectors respectively.

MR. FRIKKIE DE BRUIN

PRESENTATION OF PSCBC BY ITS
GENERAL SECRETARY



Context and Legislative Framework

Collective bargaining in the public service is rooted in Section 23 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to union membership and collective bargaining, regulated through national legislation. The Labour Relations Act (LRA) establishes the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) as the central platform for public service negotiations.

The PSCBC's mandate covers:

- Matters governed by uniform rules across the public service.
- Terms and conditions of service affecting multiple sectors.
- Issues assigned to the state as the employer.

The Public Administration Management Act (2014) expands the scope of public administration to municipalities and



entities, while the Essential Services Committee regulates the right to strike through minimum service agreements.

Recent amendments to the LRA risk rolling back worker protections, requiring unions to strengthen their role in defending and advancing worker rights.

Economic Constraints

South Africa faces severe fiscal pressures:

- National debt exceeds 70% of GDP, and debt servicing absorbs a large share of state revenue.
- Public sector wages consume 30–35% of government expenditure.
- Austerity measures and frozen posts are the state's response, constraining negotiations.

The 2018 wage agreement collapse—when government reneged on its commitments in 2020—still undermines trust between unions and the state.

Union Dilemmas:

- Negotiators face narrow fiscal mandates with little room for increases.
- Members experience salary stagnation, blocked career progression, and rising living costs.

Recommendation Focus:

While the state continues to cite fiscal austerity as the main barrier to wage increases, unions must proactively pursue non-monetary or “soft” benefits. These interventions can deliver meaningful improvements in workers’ lives at a fraction of the cost of across-the-board salary hikes. They also address long-term issues of morale, productivity, and equity in the public service.

I. Improved Leave Provisions

Introducing additional categories of leave—such as extended family leave, study leave, or wellness days—can significantly improve the well-being of public servants. Unlike permanent wage increases, these benefits have manageable budgetary implications while signaling that the state recognises the human and social needs of its workforce.

- Family leave acknowledges the dual roles that workers, particularly women, play in balancing care and work responsibilities.
- Study leave promotes lifelong learning and supports skills development within the public sector.
- Wellness leave addresses mental health and stress, which are increasingly critical given the high-pressure environment of public service delivery.

II. Career Development and Training

A robust programme of state-funded up skilling, bursaries for dependents, and



structured career pathways would create a culture of professional growth. This approach turns bargaining gains into long-term investments for both workers and the state:

- Workers gain new skills and a clearer sense of career progression, boosting morale and retention.
- The state benefits from a more capable workforce, which enhances service delivery and productivity.
- Bursaries for dependents create intergenerational benefits, easing financial pressures on families while reinforcing loyalty to the public service.

III. Permanent Absorption of Contract Workers

The widespread use of temporary contracts in the public sector perpetuates job insecurity and inequality. Converting these workers into permanent employees—without necessarily expanding headcount or salary bills—would provide:

- Stability and security for thousands of workers who currently live with uncertainty.
- Fairness and equality, as contract staff often perform the same duties as permanent colleagues but with fewer benefits.
- Reduced labour conflict, as precarious employment is a major trigger for disputes and grievances.

IV. Transport Allowances

With rising fuel prices and the unreliability of public transport, workers—especially in lower salary bands—face significant financial and logistical burdens simply getting to work. Transport allowances or subsidies could help:

- Offset the costs of commuting for health workers, teachers, police, and other frontline staff.
- Improve punctuality and attendance, as many workers struggle with transport disruptions.
- Demonstrate the state's recognition of the real economic pressures faced by its employees.

V. Meal Subsidies or Food Vouchers

Small-scale interventions like meal subsidies or food vouchers can have outsized effects on worker well-being. This is particularly true for frontline workers who often endure long and irregular shifts. Such measures:

- Ensure that staff in schools, hospitals, and security services remain nourished and productive.
- Alleviate some of the pressure from rising food prices, especially for workers in lower pay grades.
- Reinforce a sense of dignity and appreciation, contributing to morale and worker satisfaction.



These benefits represent a strategic approach to bargaining under austerity: they cost less than wage increases, but they deliver tangible, everyday improvements in workers' lives, helping unions maintain credibility and relevance while building a foundation for long-term gains.

(A) Non-Compliance with Agreements

One of the biggest threats to collective bargaining is the state's failure to implement agreements. Key examples include:

- Housing scheme (GEHS)
- Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS)
- Public Service Charter
- Public Sector Summit commitments
- Professionalisation frameworks
- In-sourcing and wasteful expenditure investigations

Consequences:

- Breakdown of trust between workers and government.
- Rising disputes, litigation, and industrial action.
- Declining morale and weakening of collective bargaining credibility.

Recommendation Focus:

- Unions must launch worker-driven campaigns for enforcement of agreements.
- Develop accountability mechanisms that escalate non-implementation beyond legal remedies into political and public domains.

(B) Membership Challenges – Dual Membership and Agency Fee Payers

Dual Membership

- Over 148,000 employees belong to more than one union.
- This fragments worker representation, dilutes bargaining power, and fuels competition among unions.
- Growth in multi-union affiliation categories (3–4 unions per worker) worsens division.

Agency Fee Payers

- Over 135,000 employees benefit from collective bargaining without union membership.
- The majority (59%) are youth aged 20–39, representing untapped recruitment potential.

Recommendation Focus:

- Offer greater value to members to discourage dual membership.



- Launch targeted youth recruitment campaigns focusing on agency fee payers.
- Promote unity within unions to avoid adversarial competition in councils.

(C) Strategic Recommendations and Way Forward

To sustain and strengthen collective bargaining, NEHAWU and PSCBC unions must adopt a multi-pronged strategy:

Defend and Expand Bargaining Scope

- Resist regressive LRA amendments.
- Advocate for inclusion of public entities and agencies under bargaining frameworks.
- Develop strategies for minimum service agreements that still protect the right to strike.

Adapt to Economic Constraints

- Push for non-monetary benefits to supplement wage negotiations.
- Prioritise job security and conversion of temporary contracts.
- Enforce Compliance
- Mobilise around implementation as a worker-led struggle.
- Build political and social pressure to compel government adherence.
- Rebuild Worker Unity
- Address dual membership fragmentation by improving service offerings.
- Strengthen solidarity within PSCBC to enhance bargaining power.
- Grow Membership and Youth Engagement
- Convert agency fee payers into active members, focusing on younger demographics.
- Rebrand union culture as modern, dynamic, and responsive to new worker needs.



MR. GEORGE MTHETHWA PRESENTATION OF LABOUR RESEARCH SERVICES

Context

The presentation outlined the experience of collective bargaining in different sectors, with emphasis on water, public sector, higher education, and private sector negotiations from 2018 to 2025. The speaker emphasized the necessity of accurate information, preparation before bargaining, and unity of workers in the face of employer tactics of segmentation and divide-and-rule.

The report reflected that while victories were secured in some periods—particularly where nominal wage increases exceeded inflation—the general picture is one of uneven progress, with losses in real wages, erosion of conditions of employment, and deferred or collapsed demands.

Key points raised

1. Water Sector

- Between 2018 and 2021, nominal wage increases were above inflation. However, in 2022 wages fell below inflation, undermining workers' living standards.
- The absence of a unified minimum wage framework in the water sector weakens bargaining, since negotiations rely on percentages



without a clear baseline. This produces distorted gains (e.g., 8% of a very low base).

- The housing allowance increased significantly—from R1,400 in 2018 to R3,900 in 2025 (a 578% increase)—but this is insufficient without wage floor protections.
- Women negotiators face contradictions: while being initiators of equality struggles, they often end up defending weak positions, leading to the collapse of gendered demands.

2. Public Sector

- The sector has suffered severe real wage losses due to wage freezes,



below-inflation settlements, and deferred demands.

- The public service housing allowance increased modestly, but wage erosion far outstripped such gains.
- Inflation targeting by the employer and state has been used to discipline wage demands, leaving workers worse off in 2018–2019, 2022–2023, and only partially recovering in 2024.
- Conditions of employment are consistently ignored, with negotiators often reduced to signing one-page agreements that lack substantive clauses.

3. Higher Education Sector

- Universities showed above-inflation settlements in 2018–2019.
- From 2020 onward, data became scarce, and wage settlements often fell below inflation (notably in 2021–2022).
- Information management is weak: reliance on media reports, leaked tables, or partial data compromises bargaining capacity.
- Many universities submit only percentage figures without specifying the minimum wage or conditions of employment. This undermines clarity and bargaining leverage.

4. Private Sector

- Fragmented and inconsistent data

collection, often reliant on media or selective employer disclosures.

- Many agreements neglect conditions of employment entirely, reducing collective bargaining to narrow wage discussions.
- The persistence of one-page agreements reflects weak bargaining power and employer dominance.
- Challenges Identified
- Weak Information Management: Reliance on fragmented data and employer-provided summaries undermines worker power.
- Collapse of Conditions of Employment: Most non-wage demands are either deferred or entirely abandoned.
- Fragmentation of the Trade Union Movement: Multi-union politics in the public sector weaken bargaining outcomes.
- Employer Manipulation of Inflation: Inflation figures are weaponized against workers, and negotiators often capitulate without clear mandates.
- Gender Contradictions: Women negotiators face double oppression—expected to lead on equality, yet disarmed in practice.

Recommendations

1. Develop a Centralised Bargaining Database: NEHAWU, with LRS, must build a repository of agreements (2018–2025) to ensure information



is systematically captured and analysed.

2. Standardise Minimum Wage Demands: All sectors must adopt a unified approach—setting minimum wage floors before negotiating percentages.
3. Prioritise Conditions of Employment: Agreements must expand beyond wages to housing, maternity, leave, working hours, and gender-sensitive clauses.
4. Advance Worker Education: Shop stewards and negotiators must be trained in understanding inflation, nominal vs. real wages, and employer tactics.
5. Combat Multi-Union Fragmentation: NEHAWU must strengthen alliances with progressive unions while isolating employer-friendly unions.
6. Women's Equality in Bargaining: Ensure gender equity clauses are non-negotiable and defended consistently in all bargaining forums.
7. Rebuild Class Discipline: Negotiators must enter bargaining armed with mandates from the membership and avoid employer-influenced compromises.
8. Actions
 - Establish an Information Management Task Team between NEHAWU and LRS to capture,

analyse, and publish bargaining outcomes annually.

- Convene a Bargaining Policy Conference to adopt the principle of minimum wage floors plus percentage increases across all sectors.
- Introduce a Negotiators' Training Programme by 2026 to strengthen bargaining power and worker education.
- Mandate gender audits of agreements to ensure that women's demands are not sidelined.
- Mobilise for mass campaigns in the public sector to recover wage losses and secure above-inflation settlements in 2025–2026.]

Conclusion

The struggle in collective bargaining is a reflection of the broader class struggle. Employers and the capitalist state use inflation, data fragmentation, and division of unions to weaken worker gains. NEHAWU must consolidate unity, discipline, and revolutionary vigilance to turn bargaining into a weapon for working-class power, not a forum for compromise.

ADVOCATE CAMERON SELLO MORAJANE

PRESENTATION OF CCMA BY ITS
DIRECTOR,

The intervention emphasized that while universities, colleges, and training institutions provide theoretical knowledge, it is **practical experience in the trenches of worker struggles** that serves as the highest school of learning. Theory, when disconnected from lived class struggle, is hollow. Workers do not approach us with abstract problems—they come with urgent material grievances that require concrete resolution.

The presentation stressed that the **essence of representation, recruitment, and organization lies in understanding the context**. Without situating our strategies within the broader material conditions of the working class, the union risks misdirected efforts. Context gives strength, clarity, and direction to the struggle.

Legislative Framework

The **Labour Relations Act (LRA)** remains a cornerstone of workers' rights. However, its application is under strain due to uneven enforcement and contradictions within the system. It was highlighted that:

- Section 41 (Severance Pay) has undergone significant proposed changes. While the old provision ensured one week's pay for every completed year of service, new proposals shift toward three weeks for every year completed. This represents a **substantive shift in worker protection**,



though clarity is required on its implementation and scope.

- **Jurisdictional challenges** often arise where councils and constitutions are not explicit. Disputes are delayed when employers raise objections around jurisdiction. The need for precise constitutional provisions and council resolutions is critical.
- The **inclusion of bonuses** in severance or benefit calculations remains contested. Employers often exclude bonuses, arguing they are discretionary. However, evidence from case law suggests that where bonuses are structured as contractual, they must form part of severance calculations.
- **Case law and precedent**



from the CCMA and Labour Court continue to shape interpretation. The importance of educating shop stewards and worker leaders on these evolving interpretations was stressed.

Challenges Identified

1. **Weak enforcement** of labour protections despite progressive legislation.
2. **Financial constraints** undermining implementation of worker protections.
3. **Employer manipulation** of definitions (e.g., on bonuses, severance, and contracts) to weaken workers' claims.
4. **Jurisdictional disputes** delaying worker justice.
5. **Need for contextualized organizing**—without rooting strategies in actual worker struggles, the law alone is insufficient.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Worker Education:** Intensify training for shop stewards and members on labour legislation, case law, and dispute resolution processes. Knowledge of Sections 26, 36, and 41 of the LRA must be widespread among cadres.
2. **Defend and Expand Worker Protections:** NEHAWU must mobilize against any legislative amendments that dilute severance, dismissal, or benefit protections. Instead, campaigns must push for the **universal inclusion of bonuses and allowances** in benefit calculations.
3. **Tighten Union Constitutions and Resolutions:** Ensure that all bargaining councils and union constitutions are explicit on jurisdiction to avoid employer manipulation.
4. **Develop a Class-Oriented Legal Strategy:** CCMA interventions must be paired with political and

mass action. Legal struggles alone are insufficient—the **power of organized workers must be the decisive weapon.**

5. Monitor Employer Practices:

Establish a dedicated NEHAWU monitoring team to track cases of unfair dismissals, non-payment of benefits, and jurisdictional objections, and to escalate systemic issues to the Department of Employment and Labour.

Actions

- **National Secretariat** to convene a **legal and collective bargaining workshop** with the CCMA, unions, and worker leaders within 3 months.
- **Provincial structures** to launch a campaign ensuring all shop stewards are trained on Section 41 and current amendments by year-end.
- **Legal Unit** to draft a position paper on the inclusion of bonuses in severance calculations, to guide union negotiations and disputes.
- **Organizing Department** to embed legislative education into every recruitment and servicing program.
- **Conference Resolution:** NEHAWU commits to defending workers from erosion of protections by employers and the state, through **combined legal, organizational, and political struggle.**

Conclusion:

The CCMA delegate reminded the house that legislation is only as strong as the organized power of the working class. The struggle must be rooted in context, guided by clarity, and fought through both **law and mass action.**



CDE.BARRY JAMES MITCHEL

PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL
HEALTH INSURANCE BY
PARLIAMENTARY OFFICER (PDU)



Context Setting

In an unprecedented overhaul of policy, the Sixth Administration of South Africa passed 124 bills from 2019 to 2024. 86% of these Bills were introduced by the Executive, with the remainder introduced by individual Members of Parliament (13%) and Committees (1%). Since the commencement of the Seventh Administration (June 2024 – present), under the pretext of a so-called Government of National Unity (GNU), 10 Bills have been passed. This rapid consolidation of Neoliberal reform also finds resonance with the dictates of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), who have called for immediate economic reform in South Africa to mitigate a Debt-to-GDP crisis, whilst ironically providing a \$1.5 Billion loan to South Africa in April 2025. This also comes at a time when National Treasury has solidified the introduction of what they refer to as a ‘fiscal anchor’, another euphemism for austerity budget cuts.

For over 10 years, there has been a concerted effort, through an open and emboldened alignment of the private sector (business) and government, to regressively reform many of South Africa’s hard fought and progressive policies and laws. These Neoliberal policy machinations and the



concretisation of alignment between business and government have found expression in National Treasury's policy trajectory in the form of the leaked 2021 treasury memorandum instilling austerity budget cuts in all departments, in the reneging of Resolution 1 of 2018, in falsely attributing the public service wage bill to low growth, in insisting that National Health Insurance (NHI) is unaffordable, in privatising State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and the public service through Operation Vulindlela and through creating a false dichotomy between choosing either the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant or an increase in Value Added Tax (VAT).

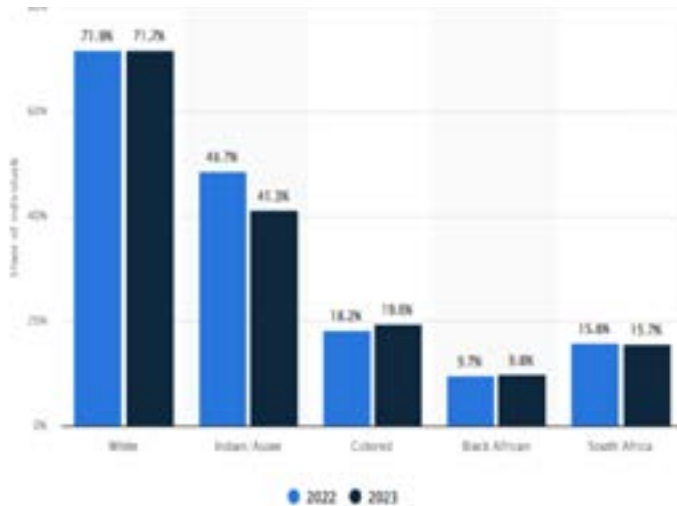
The GNU represents the most committed elements of Neoliberal Capitalism, with strong links to the Washington and Wall Street consensus, who are opposed to the emerging multipolar geopolitical order and have now found convergence through Operation Vulindlela, Public-Private partnerships and through the reforming of our Labour Laws. It must be remembered that in May 2024, the Democratic Alliance (DA) marched to COSATU House, calling for the scrapping of the National Minimum Wage. It must also be recalled that one of the cornerstone principles that the GNU is based upon is its commitment to implementing structural reforms, particularly in network industries like energy, water, transport, and digital communications. These reforms are designed to boost investment and improve the business environment.

Our members must be very concerned with these rapid and regressive Neoliberal policy shifts. The objectives of Neoliberalism are to reduce the capacity of the state to provide public services and place these functions under the ownership and control of the private sector. Neoliberalism is implemented through National Treasury's austerity budget cuts, by creating false narratives around a bloated public service, through capping the filling of vacancies and through legislative reform.

In the 1970's and 1980's in England and America, Neoliberal policy was used to shatter trade unions, outlaw collective bargaining and reform labour to allow bosses to super exploit workers. Neoliberalism also attacks all existing progressive, transformational and developmental laws and policies through its political actors in the DA or, through right-wing civil society organisations, like Afriforum and Solidarity.

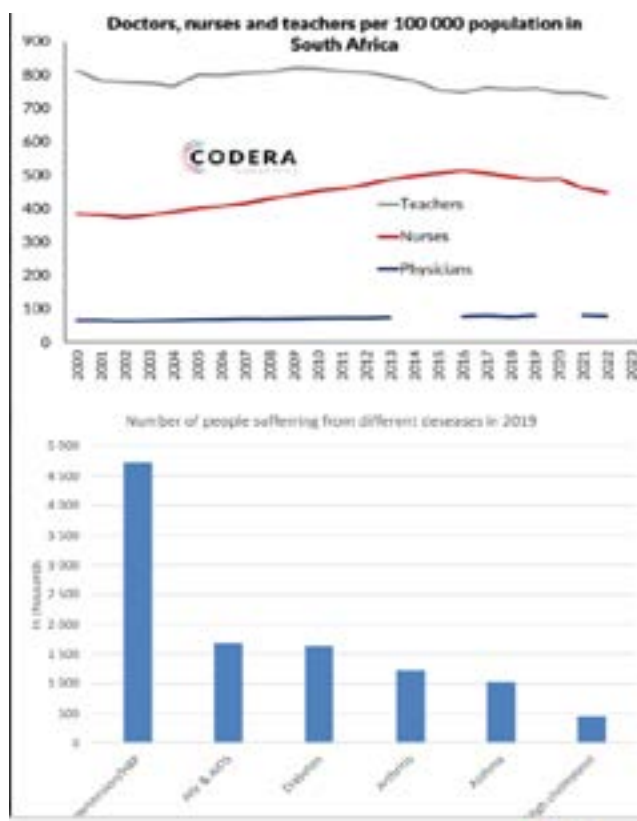
Neoliberalism has become emboldened through the political and economic alliance of the GNU partners, this has also given confidence to anti-transformational in challenging the Basic Laws Amendment Act (BELA), the Expropriation Act and the NHI Act.

Class War



South Africa's Healthcare System still maintains the highly unequal two-tiered healthcare system, despite 31 years of democracy. This unequal system is an extension of the apartheid-era healthcare policies, when the racist minority government spending on health care in white areas was more than three times what was spent on black areas. The public

healthcare sector spends 4.2% of the budget on health which caters for 85% of the population (those not covered by private medical aid. In contrast, the Private healthcare sector spends 4.5% of the GDP on health, which only provides care to only 15.7% of the population. This represents a contradiction in terms of the application of Section 27 of the Constitution.



It is in this context of an unequal healthcare sector in which the private sector is prioritised, despite only catering for a small portion of the population that the state of health in South Africa deteriorates. This can be seen in the warlike conditions and statistics that are released annually. South Africa has a growing population of 64.1 million people. The female population equates to 51% of the population with youth making up 34%. There are approximately 8.15 million people (12.9% of the population) living with HIV AIDS in 2025. In 2023, 56 000 people died of tuberculosis, this equates to 1 in 5 South Africans die of TB every year (6 million annually in Africa). Working class families also face increasing levels of poor nutrition,

outbreaks of cholera, cases of hunger/ starvation & increasing socio-economic and psychological illnesses and communicable diseases. In February 2025, the Minister of Health provided the following breakdown in relation to doctor patient ratios. In the Public Sector, there is 1 doctor per 3000 patients. In the



Private Sector, there is 1 doctor for every 300 to 571 patients.



The road travelled in ensuring that NHI is developed and signed into law with the objective of the full implementation of Universal Health Care has taken over 25 years. This struggle, launched through the work of NEHAWU, progressive health professionals and activists, has always been informed by our historical theoretical and practical principles, such as the Freedom Charter, which aspires for the establishment of a preventive health scheme that shall be run by the state; Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children. Further, Section 27 of the Constitution states that everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care; sufficient food and water; and social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance. In this regard, the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights.

In May 2024, the NHI bill was signed into law by the President. This was a culmination of over two-and-a-half decades of struggle, led by NEHAWU and other progressive health activists and professionals in South Africa. Prior to the signing of the bill into law, NHI had also gone through years of stringent scrutiny and negotiation at NEDLAC. Subsequent to this, the NHI bill was presented and discussed in all nine provinces through public hearings, both through the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces (NCOP). During this process, the NHI bill was also endorsed and supported by two Presidential Health Summits (2018 and 2022) and two Presidential Health Compacts (2019 and 2024).

Regardless of the mass democratic support for the NHI, private sector interests



through business representatives in NEDLAC and through the DA in Parliament have launched a massive offensive against the rollout of NHI, now that it is an Act. As it stands there are seven legal challenges launched against NHI. These include: the racist right-wing grouping Solidarity, the Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF), the South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF), the Hospital Association of South Africa (HASA), South African Medical Association (SAMA), Health Funders Association (HFA) and the Western Cape Government. The National Department of Health (NDoH) has recently indicated that the eighth court case will soon be lodged by the Mayor of the City of Cape Town.

These seven, soon to be eight, legal challenges are all being lodged by organisations and entities that represent the most regressive and anti-worker tendencies in South African society. These elements are the purest characterisation of our class enemy and the key drivers of Neoliberalism and policy regression. These groupings make billions of rands annually through the private healthcare sector and its linked supply chain. These groupings will take the NHI Act all the way to the Constitutional Court to defend the highly unequal two-tiered healthcare system. These groupings have thus launched a massive well-funded and media supported campaign to maintain the unjust National Treasury apportionment of the majority of health spending to the private healthcare sector, which only caters for 14% of the population.

NHI Campaign

“What you cannot win in the boardroom, you can win in the streets.”

As NEHAWU, we have been at the forefront of defending NHI, this has taken the form of organising progressive health fronts, workshopping NEHAWU public and private healthcare workers and busting the myths against NHI and in other terrains of policy and programmatic struggles. In addition to this, in



March 2025, NEHAWU made a submission on a private members bill introduced through a DA member of parliament. The bill proposed the introduction of the public-private participation programme involving medical/ healthcare graduates. The bill cunningly used the impact of austerity budget cuts on the annual challenge of non-placement of young medical graduates into public healthcare facilities, as a ruse to undermine the important principle behind the mandatory community service of graduates in public facilities. NEHAWU rejected this ridiculous bill, raised the root cause of this challenge as it relates to the cuts to Government spending on Health and incorporated input and advice from the Minister into our submission. As it stands, the bill seems to have been muted and therefore redundant.

On 06 June 2025, NEHAWU made a submission on the NHI Fund: Proposed Governance Regulations for public comment. These regulations are set out in terms of section 55 (l) (x), (z), and (Za) of the Act which seek to establish the structures and processes for the NI Fund's governance. The submission by NEHAWU was based upon the historic genesis of the conception and formulation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Act. Our submission outlined the historic struggles in uniting clinicians and general staff around a common strategy based on the ideals of a universal health coverage, as expressed in the ANC's African Claims (1943) and the Freedom Charter (1955) of the Alliance. Our submission provided recommendations for strengthening the proposed provisions in the regulations, this included input and suggestions on interpretations of the regulations, the establishment of the Ad-Hoc Advisory Panel of the fund, the appointment and removal of board members, the regulations related to the dissolution of the board and other substantive provisions in the proposed regulations.

This is only one aspect of how Neoliberal policy regression is impacting the health sector in South Africa. Decades of austerity budget cuts have decimated our public healthcare sector. The infrastructure of our clinics, hospitals and health facilities have been intentionally neglected and are now collapsing. Vital vacancies required to provide essential health services to our communities are purposefully not filled, leading to the deterioration of the health of workers and services in these facilities. One of the most inhumane impacts of Neoliberalism on workers is the continued undignified treatment and exploitation of Community Healthcare Workers, despite our court victory.

In summary, NEHAWU will be leading a multi-tactical approach to our campaign in defence of NHI. **In this regard we will be focusing on 4 key campaigning areas -**

NEHAWU Educational Workshops on NHI (Private/Public)

AIM - conscientise members on the NHI, garner support from members & clarify questions related to NHI.



July - December 2025: Workshops will concentrate on Private Healthcare workers. Providing an update on NHI, clarifying falsehoods around NHI & campaigning in defence of NHI.

2026: Workshops will concentrate on Public Healthcare Workers.

Public Service Delivery Campaign

AIM: Campaign for improved quality service to our people in order to better their lives particularly, the working class and the poor as well as contributing to the building of a capable and developmental state that intervenes to societal needs.

Provincial/ District visitations/ interventions at public healthcare facilities.

Campaigning includes a direct assault on austerity budget cuts - call for sustained increase in infrastructure resourcing, filling vacancies etc.

Friends of NHI

AIM: To build a broad progressive, people driven health front to: Defend NHI Act, Champion Universal Health Care (UHC), dismantle the unequal two-tiered system & call for the political and financial will to implement NHI.

Composition: COSATU, SACP, NEHAWU, DENOSA & SAMATU - to include broad front participants.

Campaigning includes support NDoH in court cases defending NHI, in calling for immediate interventions in collapsing infrastructure & in filling vacancies (Human Resources for Health).

Litigation

There are currently 7 court cases lodged against NHI (soon to be 8), likely to go all the way to the Constitutional Court.

NDoH urgent appeals to unions and progressive groupings and individuals to join Amicus Curiae (Friends of the Court) in defence of NHI.

NEHAWU must mobilise our support from CHWs, public/ private healthcare workers during court hearings. In conclusion, the National Union is required to play a vanguard role in defending the NHI and in ensuring that the law is not repealed by the emboldened alliance between the state and white capital interests. The NHI is the most revolutionary and transformational law that has been adopted since the 1996 Constitution, the current legal challenges to the NHI must be counteracted by mass mobilisation, popularization and conscientisation of the NHI.



CDE.CASPER NANTO

**PRESENTATION BY HEAD OF
ORGANISING ON GEMS**



The Right to Housing

The right to adequate housing is an important basic human right which is recognised in the Constitution and international human rights instruments. Housing provides shelter from the elements, a place to eat, sleep, relax and raise a family. The right to adequate housing ensures that people enjoy physical and mental health and live in a safe place in peace and dignity. Human rights are indivisible and interdependent, so the right to adequate housing cannot be separated from the other rights such as sanitation, water, education, and healthcare.

The right to housing is also inextricably linked to broader developments in the economy, labour markets, migration, demographic and other trends, which affect access to housing. Failure to realise these rights and provide socio-economic goods and amenities in turn compromise the progressive realisation of the right to housing.

This presentation aims to assist in outlining the important components and



milestones for the union towards realisation of the comprehensive housing scheme for the public servants within the bargaining scope of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council.

The overwhelming majority of public service workers are without their own homes. Too many of our members and public service workers in general have lost hope of owning homes because of indebtedness and exclusion by monopoly financial institutions. Those that obtained bonded-houses, the banks have imposed extremely heavy interests.

The Plight of Public Servants

Acting together with other unions, as NEHAWU we are committed to addressing this housing crisis, which for example is reflected in the fact that:

- Households earning between R5 000 and R15 000 gross monthly income don't qualify for a fully subsidised RDP house.
- Resultantly, about 850 000 public sector employees do not have their own homes.
- Instead, about 566 563 public sector workers are forced into unsustainable renting arrangements.
- Financial institutions are reluctant to give bonds in rural areas and often impose heavy interest in township areas.

Our primary objective is to ensure that our members and public sector workers in general have access to housing and realise their own homes. As a militant and transformatory union we also see the creation of the GEHS as a strategic mechanism to disrupt the current housing-bond landscape that is dominated by monopoly financial institutions, majority of which are partially foreign owned. Factors contributing to market failure in affordable housing for government employees:

- Lack or unwillingness of private sector financial institutions to provide adequate finance
- Insufficient affordable housing stock to meet demand
- Insufficient rental stock from private sector and government agencies

PSCBC Resolutions on GEHS

In 2010 the union informed by the constitutional right to adequate housing signed the PSCBC Resolution 4 of 2010 that directs that:

4.2: "we must develop and implement a sustainable home ownership scheme for public service employees. That the new scheme to be developed in collaboration with department of Human Settlements, Government Employees Pension Fund and Public Investment Cooperation".

4.3: "That the research, investigation and development of the models were to be completed by December 2010 and agreed to by 31st March 2011".



4.4: "That the homeowner scheme must commence with implementation upon conclusion of investigation and negotiations by the 01st of April 2011".

In terms of the PSCBC Resolution 2 of 2011 parties agreed that the following objectives must be realised for the public servants:

- Access to the affordable housing different from the current products that are offered by the banks
- Access to financial support at prime minus
- Access to rent houses with the view to own ultimately

There have been many resolutions signed at the PSCBC that were talking to this matter and almost 23 years later public servants are still struggling when it comes to housing. The provisions of clause 4.2 of PSCBC Resolution 4 of 2010, clause 3.3 of PSCBC Resolution 2 of 2011, clause 19 of PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2012 and clause 4.1.3 of PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2015 introduced the Government Employees Housing Scheme (GEHS). All these clauses including the GEHS it has been hijacked by various parties including the leading department which has embarked in various processes outside these clauses.

Clause 3.3.4 of the PSCBC Resolution 2 of 2011 speaks of the technical working committee that was supposed to do the following:

- Make recommendations role to the work of the GEHS
- Make recommendations of the composition of the board of trustees for the GEHS

This is not the case as we have seen the employer on its own running with processes outside all the resolutions that have been concluded and it is now high time that the following must happen:

The GEHS is established in terms of PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2015. Clause 4.1.3 of the Resolution states: The Employer is responsible to operate, administer and manage the GEHS with due consideration of Labour as the key partner to be represented in the governance there of. The Objectives of GEHS are:

- To support, educate and advise employees on housing options and opportunities;
- To enhance employees' access to affordable housing;
- To promote home ownership and facilitate asset security among employees;
- To assist employees to access affordable housing loans and finance; and
- To assist employees to rent houses with a view to buy and own homes.

In terms of the PSCBC resolutions in particular clause 3.3.4 of the PSCBC Resolution 2 of 2011 and clause 4.4.4 of PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2015 parties has agreed to establish a technical working committee or consultative committee



respective within the PSCBC to drive the process towards the realisation of the scheme.

Establishment of the Entity

We have then seen processes unfolding outside the PSCBC processes, the employer will report on such processes and even conclude on deals outside the resolutions. Later on parties in the PSCBC have agreed on the establishment of the GEHS Committee within the PSCBC and the Committee comprises of the Employer, Labour, GEPF, GPAA, PIC, and Treasury.

The challenge that has been with the committee was that only DPSA was attending the meetings of the committee and following a number of meetings held by the Committee with no agreement on the issues, parties hoped that the 2022 public service Summit will unlock the engagements on the processes. Post the summit this has changed and we have now seen GEPF and PIC participating but their want to detect terms in terms of what must happen and what is also a challenge is that they are not going the route of disrupting the current housing-bond landscape that is dominated by monopoly financial institutions.

The unions in the PSCBC must advocate for the correction of what was agreed on and how the composition of the GEHS committee must be. The 16-member team must be capacitated so that they understand their role and that of the committee correctly and account to council. The union in since last year has been advocating for the resetting of the whole process through a COSATU JMC workshop and later PSCBC workshop to ensure that we all have the common understanding of what we want to do.

What is needed is an institution that can ensure that a comprehensive scheme that will ensure that employees within the bargaining scope and those outside the scope are in ownership of affordable houses but also those who already have bonds are assisted in their current debt they have with financial institutions. PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2025 says that “Parties shall continue to engage in the GEHS Consultative Committee as established in terms of clause 4.4.4 of the PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2015. This means that we must fast track the design and establishment of the institutional and administrative architecture of the GEHS by 30th June 2025”.

This is the reason why the union in its 2024 December Central Executive Committee said we must drive a campaign to fast tract this work. What must be the work of the Entity?

Just like GEMS and GPAA parties in the council must agree on the establishment of this entity. We already have many of such entities in the country like Agricultural Research Council, Community Schemes Ombud Services and Government Employees Medical Scheme to mention the few.



- The GEHS shall be located within government rather than outsourced or created as a stand-alone entity.
- The employees' pension fund and savings shall be used to back up housing financing for employees.
- Using market power, the GEHS shall work with financial institutions that are prepared to agree on prime-minus interest, rather than the current prime-plus interest arrangement of the South African Home Loans.
- The medium to long-term objective is to use the GEHS to facilitate the realisation of a state-bank, as a catalyst for the transformation of the economy.
- The GEHS shall provide value-added service such as insurance, maintenance and repairs, estate planning, conveyancers, etc.
- The GEHS shall provide a comprehensive financial wellness solutions for employees that are highly indebted so as eventually to access housing finance.

PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2015 noted that the need to assist employees in accessing adequate and secure housing in a sustainable and affordable manner. Further that around 70% of them who were receiving housing allowance were not owning houses, whilst many of them were struggling to get or access loans from the banks. This noting led to parties agreeing in a new dispensation wherein a savings mechanism was agreed upon which was called Individual Linked Saving Facility (ILSF).

As of 31 March 2022, a total of R14 879 522 716 was saved in the ILSF and as at 31 March 2023, R19 billion (R 19 318 844 860, 42) was saved in the ILSF by approximately 189 856 employees. Approximately R300 million (R 375 968 785, 10 for March 2023), is being saved in ILSF monthly. This money has increased more and this is the money that can be used to kick start the entity.
The Program of Action for the GEHS

Phase 1- Launch

Launch the campaign at the Collective Bargaining and Organizing Conference

Phase 2- Leadership Workshop

Conduct a workshop on the campaign to the leadership at the JMC level, the workshop will be based on the PSCBC resolution 1 of 2007, Resolution 7 of 2015, and Resolution 1 of 2025

The same workshop must happen at the PSCBC in the month of September and October 2025

Phase 3 – Awareness

Convene the public service campaign through the regional war rooms and bargaining forums to consolidate the mandates and directives from branches.

CDE. CLEMENT MARULE

**PRESENTATION OF THE PUBLIC
SERVICE DELIVERY CAMPAIGN BY
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OFFICER**



Historical Background

The public service delivery campaign was officially launched in a Public Service Delivery Summit held on the 21 – 23 April 2006. The campaign was a building block towards our 18-20 August 2006 collective bargaining conference. These two high level meetings, prepared the union for a 2007 public service strike and the 2008 ANC elective conference in Polokwane – Limpopo.

Key amongst demands made in the summit, which were later in August 2006 confirmed by the collective bargaining conference were the following:

- A continuing mobilization of our members around collective bargaining issues remains our fighting principle.



- Strengthening the collective bargaining structures, especially the PSCBC.
- A demand for job creation and job security.
- All funded vacant posts must be filled as well as establishing appropriate ratios for staffing in all sectors.
- The summit demanded an immediate moratorium on employer initiated retrenchments and outsourcing of support services.
- A demand for a living wage and narrowing of the wage gap.
- Demand to push for our historical demand for 1:12 ratio as a measure to narrow the wage gap.
- A resolve that our ten-year collective bargaining agenda be interlinked with our ongoing public service delivery campaign launched in April 2006.

Resuscitation of the Public Service Delivery Campaign.

On the 17th February 2023, exactly 17 years ago this campaign was launched targeting the Gauteng province and Eastern Cape province. The revival of this campaign in February 2013 refocused the union under the following pillars and demands:

In Gauteng the primary focus was Charlotte Maxeke hospital and on the 12th March 2023 followed the Sedibeng region focusing to Johan Heyns hospital. Amongst many other demands that were not responded to thus far, were the following: corruption allegations against the CEO of the hospital to be investigated; the abuse and victimization of workers by the CEO; the hazardous building which was a risk to patients and employees; the unfriendly casualty area in Kopanong hospital, which was a disservice to the community of Sedibeng; the workers have been working without PPEs; the abuse of power by Acting Chief Director by suspending NEHAWU shop stewards; the filling of vacant senior management posts in the district; all Community Health Workers be placed back to the department of health facilities and be moved from all NPOs supervision and facilities. All the demands in Gauteng province were not responded to, to-date.

Eastern Cape Province

The campaign in the province was re-launched on the 17th February 2023 which was rolled out through the war rooms. The province visited various public service workplaces and compiled challenges affecting our members and communities in the province. Amongst workplaces visited were the following: hospitals, forensic pathology services, EMS, CETs, Civic Centre, NHLS, Home Affairs, SASSA



and TVET.

Through a provincial day of action a memorandum of demands was handed to the MEC of Health and the demands which were a consolidation of challenges received from the above visited workplaces were the following: A demand for compliance with occupational health and safety; demand to investigate corruption and maladministration; attend to infrastructure challenges and office accommodation; permanent appointment of CHWs; non-payment of overtime and allowances; cancer of nepotism; provision of working tools and better working conditions and filling of vacant posts.

In the Eastern Cape majority of these demands have not been responded to, regardless of having many meetings with the department.

North West Province

The province has not had a dedicated provincial day of action to address challenges in various regions and workplaces. However, regions have had sporadic interventions including protests and management meetings to address the following public service delivery issues: in Benji Oliphant region there were restructuring issues identified in the TVET College; in Tshepong hospital there are occupational health and safety issues; in the Klerksdorp labour office the state of the building is not compliant with OHS. In Rustenburg is the issue of payments of TVET employees; Bojanala is the non-filling of vacant posts; in the forensic pathology the region closed down the workplace for non-compliance with OHS. In Mafikeng the region had demonstrations during the budget speech of the MEC, regarding austerity measures and issues of maladministration.

Free State Province

The province embarked on three various marches during this public service delivery campaign. The one march was in Bethlehem, Maluti region in April 2023, which was targeting Phekolong hospital. Union demands were mainly about victimization of union members by hospital management; violation of workers' rights; service delivery failure affecting staff and patients; the campaign resulted in the CEO being removed and transferred to Senekal. The second campaign which was also in a form of a march was in July 2023, which was targeting the department of human settlements buildups were in a form of lunch hour pickets and demands were as follows: Poor treatment of staff and low morale; allegations of corruption and nepotism and irregular appointments of contractors.

The most recent march was in December 2024 addressing the following critical issues in the province; Fight against austerity budgets; job security; termination



of contract workers in Premiers office; termination of COVID-19 contract workers in Department of health and exploitation of Ex-pioneers in Department of Social Development. In January 2025 another march was held to the office of Premier advancing issues of the provincial department of health.

Mpumalanga Province

During the period 2022-2025 Mpumalanga has been the busiest province in implementing the public service delivery campaign. The regions of the province had various campaigns in different public service workplaces as follows; Bohlabela region had its campaign in August 2022 in Mapulaneng hospital targeting the department of health and public works. There was also other campaign in various departments, which the region submitted memorandums.

Enhlanzeni region had a campaign on the 18th August 2022 targeting the Department of health, Basic Education and Public works. Lunch hour pickets and the handing of memorandums to employers. In June 2023 the region also had a campaign targeting Mpumalanga Tourism, Economic development, Office of Premier, Themba hospital and Education. A memorandum of demands had the following; Union bashing, staff shortage, poor working conditions and inconsistent application of the recruitment provisions. Other campaigns in the regions included Mega, Enhlanzeni district of health, M'Africa clinics, Nelspruit town CHC, Rob Ferreira hospital, Bongani TB Specialized hospital, White hazy circuit, Public works roads and transport, Themba hospital and Mpumalanga College of nursing.

Gert Sibande region had a campaign on the 18th May 2022 targeting the Department of health, lunch hour pickets were observed and the ultimate handing of memorandum of demands. Other campaigns in the region included DHET – Gert Sibande TVET College, Ermelo hospital, Balfour and Pixely Ka Seme DSD Offices.

Nkangala region had its campaign on the 06th September 2022 targeting the Department of health. Other campaigns in the region included the Department of Culture Sports and Recreation, Community Safety Security, Middleburg regional library, Steve Tshwete boarding school, Moloto CHC, Witbank TB hospital and Moses Kotane branch.

The provincial days of action in August 2021 demanded the absorption of CHWs; construction of new Mapulaneng hospital and pharmaceutical depot. This provincial day of action had the following memorandum of demands; Removal of the HOD for DCSR and Acting HOD for the DCSSL, decentralization of bursaries, disposal of state owned houses, safety of employees in government facilities, insourcing of services pharmaceutical depot, security cleaning and



gardening, placement of R171 graduate nurses and the translation of nurses, payment of overtime for CHWs, rescue plan for MRTT and separation of functions for provincial Treasury and DEDT.

KwaZulu Natal Province

In the province the public service delivery campaign was re-launched on the 05th August 2022, which took place in Phoenix mortuary, Ladysmith regional hospital, Harry Gwala regional hospital and Ngwelezane hospital. The relaunch of the campaign was held on the 03rd March 2023 as part of close ranks defend the base. Over and above the launch and relaunch of the campaign, the province had various campaigns in regions and respective workplaces as follows; A campaign at UNIZULU, at Empangeni on permanent absorption of CHWs, at Mhlathuze water, Ngwelezane hospital, King Cetshwayo Education, Itshelejuba hospital, Nkonjeni hospital, Department of Education Mzimkhulu, Umgungundlovu Forensic Pathology Services.

In the year 2025 the province had campaigns in the form of lunch hour demonstrations and submission of memorandum of demands in various workplaces. The memorandum of demands included the following; shortage of staff, poor working conditions, dilapidated infrastructure, restructuring, victimization of workers, lack of provision of uniform, downgrading of salary levels of heavy duty driver's positions, arrogant management and termination of fixed terms contracts of employees.

In conclusion, the reporting on the public service delivery campaign was not holistic and conclusive in that other provinces have not accounted for the roll out of the campaign as resolved. Equally, the provinces that have accounted their demands submitted to employers have not been meaningfully responded to. We therefore recommend to this National Organizing, Servicing and Collective Bargaining Conference to direct all our war rooms to prioritize this campaign as a follow-up to our demands not responded to. Post this conference, our midyear review session held on the 5-6 August 2025 has resolved as follows:

NEHAWU will be re-launching the campaign in the Eastern Cape, targeting Thabo Moshoeshoe region and in particular at Livingstone hospital and Dora Nginza hospital. This dedicated campaign will be re-launched in September 2025, immediately after this conference.



CDE. DECEMBER MAVUSO

PRESENTATION OF PROGRAM OF ACTION BY DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

Introduction

The National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) convened its Organising, Servicing, and Collective Bargaining Conference, to assess the current challenges facing the union and to develop a comprehensive programme of action in response. The union continues to operate in a complex environment characterised by austerity policies, outsourcing, precarious employment, and a political economy that prioritises private profit over public service. Members across all sectors face threats to job security, unequal working conditions, gendered discrimination, and cuts to essential services. In addition, the union itself contends with structural weaknesses, uneven membership growth, and the need to strengthen its branches and substructures for effective organising, servicing, and bargaining.

Guided by the resolution of the 12th National Congress, the conference reaffirmed the **Close Ranks – Defend the Base** campaign as the principal organising and campaigning platform for national union. This campaign is the basis of all union activities around strengthening structures, growing membership, and defending members'





rights. The programme of action is structured around five key pillars: Policy and Legislation, Recruitment, Organising, Servicing, and Bargaining, supported by a cross-cutting focus on Education and Training. These pillars provide a coordinated and coherent framework to defend public services, improve members' conditions, and consolidate the union's capacity to act decisively in the evolving public and private sector landscape, in the interest of our members.

The following are the main pillars of our program of action

- 1. Policy and Legislation:** Identifying key policy interventions and legislative campaigns to defend public services, combat austerity, and protect the rights of our members.
- 2. Recruitment:** Growing our membership, targeting strategic sectors, and updating recruitment systems to reflect the evolving workforce.
- 3. Organising:** Strengthening union structures, enhancing coordination across branches and regions, and ensuring the union can mobilise effectively in defense of our members rights.
- 4. Servicing:** Improving the union's capacity to service our members, by providing material, legal, and educational support in pursuit of their interests.
- 5. Bargaining:** Improve member's living conditions, Secure wage increases, safe working conditions, job security, gender equity, while strengthening union representation and enforcement of collective agreements

As such the Collective Bargaining, Organising and servicing conference adopts the following program of action:

1. Policy and legislation

- **Health Sector and NHI:** Defend NHI implementation to ensure job security, equitable resource allocation, and protection of workers in private health. Push for worker representation in NHI governance and regulatory oversight.
- **Anti-Austerity and Funding:** Campaign against austerity budgets across all sectors and advocate for increased budgets and the filling of all funded vacant posts. In carrying this task the union should link austerity to poor service delivery as the basis for many problems faced by our communities.
- **Employment Conditions:**
 - o Enforcement of Section 198B of the labour relations act to combat outsourcing and precarious contracts.
 - o Deepen the campaign for the absorption of Community Health Workers (CHWs) into formal employment with career-pathing opportunities and improved working conditions.
 - o Fight for full Occupational Health and Safety compliance.



- **Legislative and Enforcement Gaps:** The union should also address several gaps in the LRA Section 33A dealing with enforcement, recognition of paralegal/worker representatives, strike procedures, and picketing rules.

2. Organisational Structures

- **Close Ranks – Defend the Base:** We shall scale up our program to strengthen all our branches, substructures, and the functioning of our regions by institutionalising monthly branch executive (BEC) meetings, branch general meetings (BGMs), and War Room meetings. Regions should monitoring , compliance and accountability
- **Monitoring and Compliance:** regions should ensure that
- **Election of substructures:** We shall elect and train all coordinators for all substructures to enhance the servicing of our members. Revive professional forums e.g Nurses Forums, EMS, Social Workers, Ensure consistent support from the regions and provinces.
- **Linkage between Education and Organising:** There should be mandatory induction and branch-based education for all new shop stewards, integrating education with recruitment, servicing, and bargaining activities.
- **Boards and Oversight:** ensure union representation on parastatals and private sector boards; monitoring restructuring, budgets, and service delivery.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Use governance crises to mobilise members, expose corruption, and link anti-austerity and anti-privatisation campaigns with organising.

3. Recruitment and Organising Strategy

- **Targeted Recruitment:** The union shall scale up recruitment in order to achieve and surpass our cherished target of 300 000 members targeting CHWs, State Administration, Parastatals, TVET/CET, Private and Public health. All war rooms will ceased with this task until the end of the year 2025. The rollout of the recruitment campaign to eventually cover all sectors in a phased approach from the beginning of 2026.
- The union should conduct induction sessions and ensure the expansion of digital on-boarding platforms to other workplaces.
- **Unity and Consolidation:** We should initiate campaigns to unify fragmented workforce, expose union-bashing, and integrate new members into constitutional structures.

4. Servicing

- **Shop Steward Training:** Focus on bargaining, legislation, workplace transformation, arbitration, gender and anti-austerity campaign.
- **Workplace Safety and OHS:** Implement campaigns for safety, protective



equipment, danger allowances, and psychosocial support.

- **Community Engagement:** Institutionalise worker–community solidarity and ensure union representation on hospital boards, clinic committees, and conduct joint campaigns against service cuts.
- **Digital and Resource Support:** Ensure that we prioritise membership service when budgeting, introduce digital tools for servicing and grievance handling.

5. Collective Bargaining

- **Priorities:** Living wage, fair staffing ratios, danger allowances, maternity protection, gender responsive provisions in agreements, career-pathing, recognition of prior learning, and equitable OHS implementation.
- **Sector-Specific Strategies:**
 - Public Health: Staffing ratios for nurses, EMS, CHWs; alignment of CHW salaries with DPSA norms
 - Parastatals: Centralised bargaining forums, harmonised wages and benefits, continuous mandate-taking and reporting.
 - Social Development: Implementation of 2018 settlement agreements (OSD, rural allowance, danger allowance, tools of trade).
 - Finalise the review and standardisation of recognition agreements in the private Health sector, Higher education, Parastatals and Private Social development in the next six months
- Develop union bargaining manuals and train shop stewards in the management of strikes.

6. Education and Training

- Strengthen the National Education Forum (NEF), and provincial training teams. Ensure regular participation and functional education structures.
- **Branch-Level Education:** Mandatory induction for all new shop stewards and develop sector-specific training modules (health, state administration, Parastatals, TVET) and other sectors.
- **Link Education to Organising:** Education outcomes must lead to measurable organising results (recruitment growth, improved servicing and strengthen substructures).
- Strengthen the capacity of coordinators and shop stewards to lead campaigns, represent members, and report effectively to branch structures.
- Deepen the roll out of paralegal strategy across all provinces.



CDE. ZOLA SAPHETHA

**PRESENTATION OF CONCLUSIONS
AND WAY FORWARD BY GENERAL
SECRETARY**



- Our resounding and successful National Organising, Servicing and Collective Bargaining Conference was preceded by a prestigious international seminar in celebration of the 80th anniversary of our glorious international centre, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) together with its biggest sector component 76th anniversary of Trade Union International Public Service and Allied which NEHAWU is an affiliate to. Over this period this class-oriented trade union movement survived critical moments in which its resilience was put to the test, in particular in 1949 when the capitalist-oriented unions of the west exited to form a class-collaborationist international centre and in the immediate period after the collapse of the Soviet Union during the 1990s, in



the context of the unfolding capitalist counter revolutions when some of the federations in the former socialist countries in Eastern Europe existed to join the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU), which subsequently became the current International Trade Union Council (ITUC). We shall continue to organise different types of events in our provinces to celebrate WFTU which would culminate to the 3rd October 2025 with national event and an international event in Paris. In this regard, we are pleased that the seminar provided us with an opportunity to listen to a lecture on the history of the WFTU by none other than our Honourary President, Cde George Mavrikos. Similarly, we are also pleased that our conference was addressed by our General Secretary, Cde Pambis Kyritsis, on the contemporary challenges and tasks facing the international workers and the working class in general.

- In appreciating the address by the WFTU General Secretary, the conference unanimously agrees that the historic WFTU must remain a vital force for international working-class solidarity, offering a model for resisting fascism and defending worker's rights world-wide.
- The conference was also graced by the presence of some of our international and continental fraternal trade unions as well as by the address by the Cde Solly Phetoe, the General Secretary of our federation, COSATU, whose 40th anniversary we shall participate in its celebration culminating at the national event on the 1st December 2025 in Soweto.
- The conference provided the union with an opportunity to review our work, the gains and setbacks as well as our organisational strengths and weaknesses, since our 12th National Congress. Thus, the key outcomes of this conference shall enrich our Strategic Policy Framework, as part of its review and update for adoption at our 13th National Congress in 2026.
- At the same time, leading to the 13th National Congress we shall ensure that the outstanding tasks in the mandate from the previous congress and the last year of our four year programme of action are fulfilled. At the same time, we shall also ensure that some of the key short to medium term tasks arising from this conference, including achieving the regional, sectoral and national targets of our target driven recruitment campaign; follow up work with the student movement to ensure an active front is launched nationally and provincially and a joint programme is driven next year, as part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of June 16.
- The conference mandates the union to intensify its overarching campaign of close ranks defend the base in an improved and well-coordinated manner across all our sectors taking into account of peculiar organizational challenges per sector as opposed to one size fits all approach.



- Leading to our 2025 Central Executive Committee we shall launch our national public service delivery campaign focusing on health issues at the Nelson Mandela Health District, to highlight the crisis of governance and management that is very acute at the Dora Nginza Regional Hospital and Livingstone Tertiary Hospital, but which must be implemented across all provinces in which similar crisis in institutions such as Helen Joseph in Gauteng are targeted. The programme must be linked to the demand for a revised plan of the National Department of Health on the implementation of the provisions of the National Health Insurance Act and the preparatory phase to ensure the accreditation of the institutions by the Office of Health Standard and Compliance in terms of improvement on the quality of infrastructure, staffing norms, compliance with health and safe legislation, safety and security of healthcare workers and patients, etc.
- The conference took place ahead of the COSATU 8th Central Committee taking place next month and thus it provided the union a better preparatory platform on the core business of the trade union movement, i.e. on how to improve organising, servicing and in collective bargaining in line with our mandate on strengthening workplace organisation to defend collective bargaining.
- The conference noted that the Government of National Unity (GNU) is deepening the Neoliberal trajectory based on a three-pronged programme, namely austerity measures, the so-called structural reforms pertaining to the public infrastructural network industries and the labour law reforms. These three streams of Neoliberal reforms reflect the government's concession to the long-standing demands of the organised business as a condition for investment.
- As its posture after this conference, the union shall remain firm in rejecting neoliberalism and strongly oppose government austerity measures, dismantling and privatization in the public service and other sectors and policies that weaken labour rights. Through the Popular Left Front, the union will also pursue a joint campaign against corruption and austerity across all our sectors as part of public service campaign.
- The rolling implementation of austerity measures, which started during the first year of the fifth administration in 2015, has resulted in the blatant disregard of the public service collective bargaining agreement in terms of clause 3.3. of Resolution 1 of 2018 as the Treasury sought to achieve its budget-deficit and public-debt ratios by particularly sacrificing the remuneration of public servants. We now face with a judicial precedent from the Constitutional Court since the 2022 judgement, which is now being used in the public and



private sector to further weaken collective bargaining, as exemplified by the ongoing dispute in the City of Tshwane and in SARS. In our participation within our federation, NEHAWU shall canvass the federation to take up a mandate of strengthening the provisions on collective bargaining in the LRA to ensure that employers cannot dishonour collective agreements, under any circumstances or excuse, as part of the ongoing labour law reforms. This amendment must include a provision making it mandatory for the employers to engage in collective bargaining with representative unions at the workplace and in the sector.

- The structural reforms are intended to further roll-back the role of the state in public infrastructure in order to open space for private ownership and provision. In this regard, as NEHAWU we are particularly affected by these structural reforms at the upstream level of raw water under the Department of Water and Sanitation. To effectively resist the privatisation of the production and provision of water, which is a public good and whose access to the people is guaranteed by the constitution, we shall engage within COSATU for the adoption of a campaign to resist these Neoliberal structural reforms, particularly to work with the federation's unions that are equally affected in other infrastructure network industries.
- We note that the initiative to engage in labour law reforms is from the side of the employers at NEDLAC, namely government and organised business, rather labour. We believe that this is an agenda that is using the false narrative that the country's labour market regime is rigid and discourages investment and economic growth and therefore must be streamlined. We note the embedded potential gains and setbacks in the NEDLAC agreement. Nonetheless, we look forward to engage on this agreement within COSATU guided by the yardstick as to whether these labour law reforms strengthen the rights of workers, the unions' organisational rights at the workplace, including the constitutional right to strike, as well as collective bargaining.
- The conference noted that the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, has publicly made a commitment to implement the resolutions of the Public Service Summit. NEHAWU welcomes this commitment and shall ensure that it participates in all the task teams at the PSCBC to ensure that maximum gains are extracted out of the implementation process for workers, including the implementation of the Government Employees Housing Scheme, the review of budget allocations on goods and service, which is a channel of corrupt procurement, with a view of reducing the baseline of this budgetary item and to reverse outsourcing.
- We also note that the Minister of Public Service and Administration is paying much needed attention to the Government Employees Medical Scheme



that has become a burden to the public servants and will work with the Minister in the transformation of GEMS.

- As part of the COSATU Jobs & Poverty Campaign, to maximise the impact beyond the current limited approach of marches during the Budget Speech Day in Cape Town, in the buildup as NEHAWU we shall organise pickets in workplace, particularly those that are affected by budget cuts in a manner that affects service delivery such as hospitals, home affairs, etc. to highlight the consequences of austerity in terms of the prevailing high levels of vacancies, shortages of medical supplies, the causes of long queues, as part of engaging our communities who are made to believe the narrative that the public servants are lazy.
- Going forward, our point of departure in collective bargaining as a principle with regard to the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) shall be negotiating only on improvements above the forecasted inflation rate, rather than allowing employers to force us into negotiating around adjustments that are potentially lower than the forecasted inflation rate. This will include tabling demands that cut across all sectors as raised in the conference.
- Immediately, the union should campaign vigorously for the establishment of TVETs and CETs bargaining council with our sister union, SADTU as well as campaigning for the finalisation of centralized bargaining for SETAs.
- The union through Education Front should work hard in its call for a National Education Conference to assess the transformation of education since 1994 democratic-breakthrough against the features of People's Education for People's Power as a yardstick to measure progress.
- In a week from the conference, the Secretariat will lead the drafting team to clean-up the outcomes of the conference as adopted for processing through the National Executive Committee culminating into rectification by the Central Executive Committee in December 2025. The clean-up process will result into notes for the union going to COSATU 8th Central Committee as well as possible sponsored resolutions for consideration by the 13th National Congress of the union in 2026.

CDE. MICHAEL SHINGANGE

CLOSURE



Comrades we have successfully convened the organising, servicing and collective bargaining conference as directed by the 13th National Congress and subsequent central executive committees including the 2024 one. We have managed to bring together 323 delegates to this conference constituted by the bargaining coordinators from all the sectors we are organising, provincial office bearers, regional secretaries, national office bearers and service centers from head office and our 9 provinces. It was not easy but as usual we managed to steer the ship as national office bearers assisted by the national executive committee members who attended this conference. You have seen all the numbers of people who are utilizing public health and the number of people who are using private health.

You have seen the number of people who are utilizing public health and the number of people using private health. You now



know that most of us use public health institutions. Now, when **Operation Vulindlela**, as it has already started, comes into the state to open the way for private interests and private hands to come into every sphere of the state, it means the denial of the citizens' right to public service.

Operating in public service, we are representing those recipients of the service offered by the state. We have to run with the public service campaign to protect and defend public service. Through our public service delivery campaign, we need to reach out to the communities. The alliance of all communities and their workers is more important because it is the community who receives the services we provide, but also it is us who live in those communities.

It is us who know the challenges we are faced with every day when we provide our services. The public is not often aware. That is why most of the time they blame us when there is no medication in hospitals. They blame us when there is no queue moving in SASSA or in Home Affairs, or even in schools, because they are not aware of the hurt that comes upon us every day when we do that. We are aware that the reconfiguration of the departments by the 7th administration doesn't bring good news for the bargaining terrain in our departments. Because as you configure, you amalgamate others and make others to destabilize the stability and the jobs of people and the working conditions of our workers there. But at the same time, it causes confusion and instability in the bargaining chambers and departmental units.

Therefore, we will rise and go out there and ensure that our members are not worse off because of this process that happens every five years when there's an election. A new policy comes. This is the system that we have to stop if we are really to move forward as a country.

There was a time, and it should be in our address here, when we kept making the point that public servants are worse off in terms of the cost of living, in terms of standards of living, since that fateful day of 26 February 2020 — Resolution 1 of 2018. It was made clear by the LRS that actually, as public servants, you are 9% poorer. It was put in percentage. We always said, "No, comrades, we have suffered inflation erosion. We didn't get the salary." We will now show it in percentage. But whatever you do moving forward, we must all appreciate that you are actually at the bottom of the poverty line by 9% because of what happened in 2020. So, it's not a slogan. It's not an obsession. It's a live reality of the public service.

And when did this thing happen? Ever since democracy has happened? It happened over a very short period, in the sixth administration. It is only in the sixth administration that we have experienced the most committed, brutal administration against workers. We have fought against the system, we have fought against the state before, and we have had many, many battles with the government. But we have never experienced a very committed, very serious,



very determined administration to defeat or crush workers like the sixth administration. That's the reason why, in order to ensure that they achieve that, they had to end up taking us into the Constitutional Court.

So, the highest court in the land had to assist this administration to defeat workers, to take away what was rightfully their living wage. And as we go towards the 13th national congress we must ask how do we, in each sector where we bargain, try to tackle head-on the challenges we face? Because you can be given a 6% increase today — it will deal with today's inflation, but it will not deal with the backlog. So, in every bargaining process we are going to engage in, we must keep in mind to try to lift up the 5.7% from the 9% poverty that we are dealing with.

We are here for this battle because it is going to be very important. Why do we continue to be poor when we are getting 5.5% in 2025? It is because we are 9% down and the negotiators we have must know that. Of course, today, as a transition of the state, it is an enemy of our people. It is an enemy of our communities. When you can't manage the borders — as police, as SARS, and so on — you create an agency. When you can't give our people the social grants, you create an agency. One day, we're going to have an agency of policing because the government is saying we're going to have an agency of education.

In other words, we are stripping the state of its capacity and its responsibility to provide services to our people. Our policy against privatization and agencification is aimed precisely at defending our people and pushing back as much as we can from this trend.

So, our public service delivery campaign and our close ranks defend the base campaign, also named CRPD, and must include public awareness for the committees that will act on their behalf. Indeed, the context in which we are going to bargain for the next three years is going to be within the context of the Government of National Unity. Political engagement and political intervention are going to be very minimal.

We got some calls on the first day of our conference when the minister came here to speak. Some people were not very happy with the fact that we invited that minister to come and address us. In any case, under whose administration did our workers and members become worse off? Under whose minister's authority was Resolution 1 of 2018? Under whose ministers and political parties did the collective bargaining get attacked?

So, you are not going to come to us and tell us about the political party that the minister comes from or where he comes from. We're going to engage employer by employer, irrespective of political parties and affiliations. But it needs us to strengthen our capacity. It needs us to know our story so that we rely on our capacity and our knowledge of the subject continuously in order for us to gain an advantage for our members.



Of course, to close ranks and defend the base, it's going to need this type of unity. Close ranks with the people on whose behalf we are supposed to be doing this revolution — the community. We are saying we are an instrument of revolution in the hands of our people, the workers in particular, and members of the public in general.

It means we cannot run a campaign on behalf of people who are not aware of it and are not buying into it. In fact, they feel inconvenienced by our actions when we do these campaigns because they don't know why we are not at work.

They campaign must first includes our communities so that people know tomorrow they are going to be inconvenienced. This is what our community must become accustomed to every time we have a campaign that inconveniences the public. The public must sympathize with the struggles of the workers.

We must implement the “close ranks and defend the base” strategy because even the very same community we come from is actually a base that needs to be defended. There should be no gaps between us and the community — people like yourselves. I'm sure we are energized to go and implement where we left off, to strengthen and to establish where we are not yet organized, so that our structures remain strong.

Our campaigns must be known by all our structures. I'm sure we are motivated to go and implement them, including the very same question of international solidarity. Indeed, just yesterday, Israel bombed a hospital in Palestine, killing hundreds of patients, nurses, and journalists — yet it was not reported as an atrocity.

We believe our campaign as NEHAWU must continue to clarify that. When we've done this statement, as I conclude, no one and nothing is going to stand in the way of NEHAWU. No system, no power of government, no split or breakaway union is going to deter the growth and march forward of NEHAWU.

I am very positive that when NEHAWU is focused on these campaigns, and the structures of the union are focused on these programs, they are united in purpose and in action. There will be no space for divisions within the ranks. Therefore, we rise from this conference proud of our collective and individual contributions — to this union, to one another as members — and confident in our continuous contribution, individually and collectively, to the growth and strength of this union in the future. Thank you very much.

