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BOOK 6

COSATU & NDR, REVIEWED POLICIES ON GENDER & COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA



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COSATU AND THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

1 INTRODUCTION

The current international conjuncture in which the 13th National Congress of the National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) is taking place, is principally marked by the contradictory tendencies of the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the one hand, and the decline of the United States of America (USA) in particular and the West in general, on the other hand. This is intertwined with the emergence of a multi-polar world order in which the political dictates of the West and the Neoliberal economic policies of their multilateral institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are increasingly challenged and the sovereignty of the global-south is asserted. Alternative international channels for sourcing development finance are now displacing the WB and IMF. The PRC (hereunder, also China) is already established as an alternative pole around which an increasing number of countries of the global-south are converging and finding new opportunities to advance their socioeconomic development. Amongst others, they are taking advantage of platforms and institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, BRICS New Development Bank and the Silk Road Economic Belt to affordably finance their development.

South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the genocide in occupied Palestine, perpetrated with western collaboration, is but one example of the growing instances of countries of the global-south demonstrating their assertion of political sovereignty. The nationalisation of mineral resources by the countries of the SAHEL Alliance is another example of the growing economic self-determination in the global-south and these countries have successfully uprooted French neo-colonialism.¹ Similarly, the rising confidence of patriotic and left-wing forces in the global-south marked by electoral victories in countries such as Chile, which is the latest left-wing electoral swing in South America, are also influencing the emergence of a multi-polar world order.

A year after he was elected as the Chairman of the PRC, in 1949 Mao Zedong made a bold and ambitious proclamation setting out one of the long-term strategic objectives of the Chinese Revolution. He stated that:

"Our goal is to catch up with America, and to surpass it.... Exactly how many decades would this take depends on everyone's efforts. At least fifty years, perhaps seventy years. Seventy-five years means fifteen five-year plans. We will finally breathe easily when we can catch up and surpass America."

Seventy-one years later, the USA (hereunder, also America) still has the largest economy in the world as it is currently worth about \$32.28 trillions, whereas the Chinese economy is worth about \$20.85 trillions as the second largest economy in the world. But this is only the case when each of these countries' economies are measured using the nominal value of the currency – a measurement that is based on the dollar calculation of the total market value of economic activities in a given year. This means that the ongoing devaluation of

¹ The SAHEL Alliance was established in 2017 as a geopolitical, economic and military confederation comprising Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Surprisingly, many western institutions have joined in as observer members and partners in the development projects.

the dollar, mainly because of the petrodollar crisis, is simultaneously shrinking the nominal value of the USA economy and thus reducing the gap between the two economies.² However, rather than the measurement in nominal value terms, in real terms China already has the biggest economy in the world when it is compared to that of America using the measurement of the purchasing-power-parity. This is another way of calculating the size of the country's economy in comparison with others and in this regard the size of an economy is derived after adjustments of each country's economy in terms of the cost of living. Thus, based on this measurement of the purchasing-power-parity the Chinese economy had already surpassed the American economy in 2014. This is about 16 years ahead of Mao's prediction of seventy-five years.

In addition, the debt owed by the American government is by far bigger than the size of that country's economy, which technically means that it is already a broke empire.ⁱ The American government's debt of \$39 trillion is double that of China's government and currently the latter is by far a global leader in technological innovation and advancements. What is more, China nearly commands a global monopoly (91%) on the refinement of the technologically important rare-earth elements, which drive the production of advanced new technologies and products of the future. This reality underscores the fact that America's imperialist project of containing China has now dismally failed and it is a matter of time before the latter surpasses the former in all respects. Thus, the recent China-America Summit that was held in May 2026 became a little more than a ceremonial event. It achieved or resolved nothing substantial; hence it has been characterised as a symbolic summit whose purpose was the confirmation and handover of global economic leadership from Donald Trump to Xi Jinping.ⁱⁱ

But the American empire is still desperately scrambling to remain the richest and most powerful country in the world, even though it is forced to retreat and reinforce its domination of the Western Hemisphere, in terms of the so-called Donroe Doctrine as set out in the 2026 National Security Strategy.³ Hence, in his second stint as president Trump did not waste time - in January 2026 he started by abducting the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores, to reverse the nationalisation oil production in order for the American oil monopolies to take over the country's oil extraction. This happened alongside his threats to annex Canada and the Greenland. Now Cuba and the international radical movements are faced with the monumental challenge of how to defend the revolution in the face of a planned invasion by America – based on fabricated charges already levelled against Commandant Raul Castro as part of a deceptive ploy to abduct him too. Trump has already intensified the criminal blockade against Cuba - causing humanitarian crisis amidst shortages of fuel, electricity, water, food, medicine and other essential goods and services – having deployed an aircraft carrier around the Caribbean Sea to enforce it.

It is unfortunate that the tragic outcomes of our seventh national elections in May 2024 were followed by the election of Trump as a president of America in November 2024. The results of the 2024 national elections put the writing on the wall that the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is no longer just on the cross-

² In 1970 the USA entered into an agreement with Saudi Arabia, which is the largest producer of oil, to sell oil only through the dollar. The dollar then became the monetary standard for exchange or trading in oil, as much as other commodities at international level. Countries found themselves having to keep dollars in reserve for their international trade. The America-Israel war against Iran has accelerated the de-dollarisation as China, Russia and Iran are now no longer using the dollar to trade, particularly regarding trade in oil.

³ Trump's "Donroe Doctrine" is an imperialist foreign policy that redirects US to revert back to the stance proclaimed by the US President James Monroe in 1823, which declared the Western Hemisphere an exclusive zone of American domination and off-limits to the Europeans.

roads, but that it is poised to be derailed and indeed it is verging on being defeated. It is against this background that the Afrikaner-led counter-revolutionary forces gained confidence and became emboldened, particularly in the wake of the election of Trump for his second stint.

The Democratic Alliance (DA), whose strategy is always caught up in the horns of dilemma between trying to block the inroads being made by the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) amongst white voters since the dissolution of the New National Party (NNP) and taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the declining support for the ANC, is actually a significant component of these counter-revolutionary forces. Just as the AfriForum and Solidariteit (hereunder, Solidarity) are appealing for Trump's interventions in South Africa's domestic affairs on land reform, which can only be through sanctions or military invasion, we must not forget that during the period leading to the 2024 elections the DA made a stunt of calling on the American government to observe, monitor and certify the national elections in South Africa.

As NEHAWU we are a trade union that is proudly born out of the traditions of Marxism-Leninism, class-orientation and shopfloor militancy bequeathed to us by predecessors in the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU) and the Health and Allied Workers' Union (HAWU) thirty-nine years ago. We are proud to unwaveringly uphold and respect our revolutionary roots which are also consistent with the founding ideological and political principles of our federation, the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Unfortunately, the revolutionary traditions and identity of our federation have recently been challenged. In fact, we can even say that the revolutionary traditions and identity of our federation have already been corrupted by expedient moves to dilute the ideological outlook of the federation by a rightwing opportunist tendency – whose reformism has put it under the pressure of political patronage from a dominant faction within the African National Congress (ANC). Such is the pathetic state of the degenerate ANC, which has been rhetorically mouthing its renewal since 2012 at its 53rd National Conference in Bloemfontein, that it is willing to create some factional divisions within a workers' organisation. The ANC claims to be the strategic political centre of the Alliance and a leader of the nation but it is unashamedly divisive in courting a section of our federation and encouraging it to undermine the authority of its own congress - in favour of the narrow interests of a largely petty-bourgeois dominated party that has been driving a bourgeois-oriented transition since 1996 and unleashing a rolling austerity offensive since 2015.

But as NEHAWU we are nothing if we are not the steadfast adherents of Marxism-Leninism. It is against this background of our unwavering commitment to this ideological outlook of the class-conscious proletariat that we celebrate with other class-oriented unions around the world in our family of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the one hundred and fifty-five years anniversary of the 1871 Paris Commune. This was the historic attempt by the working class not merely to protest or put pressure on the ruling class but in fact to install the first revolutionary and proletarian government. When the Communards took over, amongst other revolutionary measures, they:

- Abolished the standing army of the capitalist government and replaced it with armed people.
- Established the principles of elections and recallability of public officials.
- Removed bureaucratic and bourgeois privileges.

Hence, in his analysis of the experiment of the Paris Commune, in his *Civil War in France*, Karl Marx stated that through the Commune "the political form at last was discovered under which to work out the economical

emancipation of labour.” At the same time, in analysing the causes of the demise of the Paris Commune, Marx established a scientific law of the proletarian revolution, that: “The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.” In other words, the revolutionary proletariat must smash the bourgeois state and build a revolutionary proletarian state. In this regard, Marx left us with some knowledge based on three key lessons drawn from the practical experience of the Communards, from which the Bolsheviks have actually learned. These lessons remain very valuable even for us in our current conjuncture - in which we have been fixated in the debate around the question of the “SACP and State Power”, that:

- The emancipation of the working class could not be accomplished through parliamentary reforms or change of government within the existing capitalist order. Indeed, we now know from the collapse of the Second International in 1914 that reformism within the working class movement eventually leads to it tailing behind the bourgeois-oriented ruling labour and social democratic parties in charge of capitalist governments.
- In a capitalist society the state is not a thing standing above classes. The capitalist state is inherently not class neutral whereby it could serve the interests of whichever class that occupies it at a given moment upon multiparty elections. The state in a capitalist society is a relation that normally gives expression to the interests of the ruling capitalist class, however disguised.
- And therefore, upon its seizure by the class-conscious proletariat – the capitalist state must be smashed and a proletarian state must be created to advance and defend the revolution.

This means that the SACP’s contestation of elections in the context of our capitalist democracy provides a tactical terrain to elevate the presence of a resolute proletarian voice and to build hegemony in key sites of power. An overwhelming electoral victory by the SACP under the current capitalist conditions would not automatically lead to socialism, without a revolutionary insurrection by the masses against the ruling class. Hence, the key strategic task remains that of build a powerful socialist movement of the working class and the poor, which can include tactical alliances with other working class organisations in the form of the Left Popular Front (LPF), as a basis of building capacity and momentum for a socialist revolution under objective revolutionary conditions.

The 14th June 2026 marked the 30th anniversary since the launch of the Neoliberal trajectory with the imposition of an economic strategy called Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) within whose parameters all the macroeconomic policies pursued by seven consecutive ANC governments have been located. As a template of all the economic policies that have been implemented, the results have neither been a sustainable economic growth, employment creation nor the redistribution of the country’s wealth to the masses as promised by GEAR! If anything, the key economic performance indicators exploded into crises proportions, as the redistribution of wealth was inverted in which the poor became even poorer and the rich became even richer.

Unfortunately, the domestic economic situation has been primarily characterised by the implementation of a rolling austerity programme since 2015, which on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was intensified from 2021 onwards by the sixth administration. Hence, since 2022 GDP per head slipped below the same ratio in 2007, which underscores the fact that the average living standards have been uninterruptedly falling over all these years.

The public sector workers were not spared the rolling austerity offensive and the declining living standards. At the 12th National Congress in 2021 we were reeling from the intensification of this austerity offensive, as the sixth administration had taken an unprecedented decision of dishonouring the implementation of the final year (2020) in the collective bargaining agreement that was signed as Resolution 1 of 2018 at the Public Service Collective Bargaining Council (PSCBC). Hence, the previous congress elevated the defence of collective bargaining into our theme, whilst throughout its tenure the sixth administration continued the butchering of public servants with unilateral wage adjustments that were de-coupled from the rates of inflation - complemented with pathetic cash-gratuities. Unfortunately, during this time some of the long suppressed ideological cracks surfaced within the ranks of the COSATU public service unions, as one craft union exposed its true and inherent ideological colours in finding a common course with other similar unions outside the ranks of the federation.

Nonetheless, in the overall and over the period under review as a union we arguably have stepped up our work pertaining to the organising pillar. In this regard, we reaffirmed the centrality of the War Rooms as a permanent feature in our mode of operation to enforce seamless coordination. Admittedly, this has been uneven, inconsistent and sometimes ritualistic rather than purposeful. We have piloted the implementation of our innovative Close Ranks Defend the Base Programme in selected regions, which means that we are still far from internalising this programme and getting it to a level of synchronisation across provinces in the process of its implementation. We cannot continue to go from one congress cycle to the next with stagnant membership when the Close Ranks Defend the Base Programme was meant to empower all our provinces to step up the work. Across all provinces, the War Rooms must become the flywheels to position our regions as the coalface engines of service delivery at the workplace and to change the membership growth trend into a sharp upward trajectory.

We are pleased to report that in 2023 we attended a resoundingly successful 14th World Congress of the Public Service and Allied (PS&A) in Bogota, Colombia. The PS&A is now a Trade Union International (TUI) that is steadily moving from strength to strength within the gallant family of the class-oriented international trade union movement of WFTU since we were accorded the responsibility of initiating its rebuilding through the office of the General Secretary in 2019 at the 13th World Congress in Larnaca, Cyprus. Similarly, we are proudly reporting and reiterating our congratulations to our President, Cde Michael Madala, on his election as the Vice President of WFTU and a full member of its Presidential Council, replacing the former COSATU General Secretary, Cde Bheki Ntshalintshali.

3 THE NATIONAL POLITICAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This year marks the 50th anniversary of June 16. In paying homage to the students' uprising that erupted in SOWETO and spread to other parts of the country from the 16th June 1976 onwards, we should not consider that tragic but heroic historical moment in isolation. A meaningful understanding of June 16 is not one that is narrowly focused on a specific day in that year's calendar. June 16 was part of the broader reawakening of the masses of our people on the back of the 1973 Durban strikes that catalysed the re-emergence of the

black trade unions throughout the 1970s. At the same time, this organic development of workplace organisation of black workers was a manifestation of a growing defiant consciousness amongst the broader black masses after more than a decade of sustained draconian repression during the 1960s.

On the 1st September 2026 it would be the 35th anniversary of the founding of SASCO at Rhodes University, as a product of the merger between NUSAS which was founded in 1924 and SANSCO which was founded in 1986 as a predecessor of AZASO. Unlike June 16, this is not supposed to be a subdued commemoration but indeed a joyous celebration of the founding of a progressive non-racial student movement, which would now be coming of age after 35 years of existence. The current generation of students should draw inspiration from the pioneering activism of the founding generation of SASCO that succeeded in placing the overarching question of the transformation of institutions of higher learning at the centre of the national discourse, even before the demise of the Apartheid regime in 1994. Apart from the active role that these two predecessor organisations of SASCO have played in the struggle as affiliates of the UDF, some of their key achievements through their joint Right To Learn Campaign ahead of the founding of SASCO include demands around access for students from the then DET schools, funding and accommodation for black students particularly in what was then called the Ivory Towers or what today are called the historically white institutions. SASCO must be proud of the fact that it was exclusively the sustained Right To Learn Campaign driven by SANSCO and NUSAS that forced the regime to establish TEFSA in 1991 to fund students from poor households and which in turn pushed forward the gradual change in admission policies and therefore gradually caused demographic change in the student body of the Ivory Towers.

Throughout the 20th century the battleline in our modern anti-colonial resistance and the national liberation struggle has always been clear - there was no confusion as to who the enemies of the revolution were. More so during the rising and intensifying revolutionary arc of the struggle that escalated and peaked over the last three decades of that century. This escalating revolutionary arc in the trajectory of the national liberation struggle was sparked by a wave of workers' strikes that started on the 9th January 1973 at the factory called Coronation Brick and Tile in Durban. This strike of about 2 000 workers who were demanding a wage increase from R8,97 to R30 per week, a demand that was flatly rejected by the employer, unleashed an eruption of a rolling national wave of strikes in different sectors that gave birth to a new generation of the militant trade union movement. These fledgling militant trade unions later connected with the broadening resistance to the imposition of Afrikaans as the official medium of instruction on the back of the 1976 Students' Uprisings.

The founding of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 was a strategic organisational response to the upsurge of the raging militant youth and civic movement's struggles in the townships as well as the contemporaneous students' struggles in tertiary institutions. All these developments became cumulative factors that created conducive revolutionary conditions for the emergence and rise of the giant workers' federation with the launch of the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985 whose impact in the rest of the decade and leading to the 1994 democratic-breakthrough significantly tilted the balance of forces, at the political level. These revolutionary processes and events sharply drew the battleline even clearer between the peoples' camp led by the ANC and the enemy camp which comprised the Apartheid regime, white monopoly capital, the puppet Bantustans and black local authorities and western imperialism.ⁱⁱⁱ

As we seek to proceed in waging the struggle to advance and deepen the NDR, then we have to answer questions as to where the battleline is now drawn and indeed who are in the people's camp and who are in the enemy camp, in the current conjuncture after three decades of the ANC rule? Answers to these questions would clarify the phase at which the NDR is as a socialist strategy for the South African working class. By implication answers to these questions would also clarify not only the question of the motive forces but also

the organisational spearhead of the struggle to advance and deepen the NDR beyond the post-1994 strategic cul-de-sac.

3.2 The persistent settler-colonial economy

The ANC's dogmatic adherence to economic policies that have locked the transition in a Neoliberal trajectory has meant that the fundamental features of the inherited settler-colonial economy and society basically remain the same. To some extent, the Neoliberal trajectory has even aggravated some of the features in some respects. The persistent settler-colonial economy is characterised by politically untenable and unsustainable racialised and gendered equalities, such as:

- The indigenous African majority who constitute approximately 82% of the population still owning the least share of the land after thirty-two years of ANC rule. Yet, land ownership is a central question that determines whether or not the national liberation struggle has or is resulting in overcoming a basic colonial feature of land dispossession – as envisaged in the Freedom Charter. Leaders of the ruling party in government speak as if the struggle is over when the African majority only owns less than a tenth of the land, whilst the whites who constitute only 7.3% of the population still command a massive 72% share of land. The land ownership share of the African majority who constitute four-fifths of the population is even less than that of the Coloureds and Indians, who are very small minorities with each group being less than the tenth of the population. The first generation of our people who were born in the democratic South Africa has now been replaced by the second generation still not having seen tangible strides being made on the central question of land restitution, restoration and land reform to facilitate real and productive economic empowerment through agrarian interventions supporting people's organic agriculture, husbandry and other productive and socially purposeful use of the land.
- The persistence of the Apartheid spatial development pattern, in which the vast majority of the African population in particular, and the black people in general, are trapped at the periphery. This includes the underdeveloped former Bantustans and the remote peri-urban areas known as the townships. Spatial marginalisation which engenders a vicious economic cycle is compounded by the mushrooming of the sprawling informal settlements, decaying Central Business Districts (CBDs) and inner cities in many of the metropolitan cities and secondary towns. The perpetuation and even reinforcement of the Apartheid spatial dichotomies is inefficient and expensive for service delivery and it undermines the reduction of inequalities and the creation of social cohesion.
- The high rates of racialised, gendered and geographic intergenerational poverty and hunger that are increasingly becoming entrenched and reproduced across all the provinces, especially in Free State and Northern Cape. As a result, even cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) are surfacing and increasing in the post-Apartheid era as a result of the Neoliberal trajectory. It is estimated that SAM is currently at the rate of about 1000 children perishing annually because of the high prevalence of malnutrition, with the highest prevalence rates, often exceeding 6 cases per 1000 children under the age of five.
- A weak post-Apartheid state that is ravaged by corruption and shortages of skilled personnel, with under-resourced and incompetently managed state agencies, State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), national and provincial departments and municipalities. The weaknesses of the state are reinforced by the dominant Neoliberal policy paradigm that is geared at facilitating the takeover by the private sector of key socioeconomic functions of the state, as highlighted by the ongoing so-called structural reforms. The structural reforms started under the sixth administration and their implementation is driven by joint structures between private capital and the state, which further underlines the pervasive over-reliance on the private sector – in addition to the use of the outsourcing contracts, including the PPPs and concessions.

- A country that is only formally free or nominally liberated because economically it is still subjected to the colonial strictures of the inherited economic relations with the global-north. The post-Apartheid state has failed to advance industrialisation due to its passive role in the economy engendered by its Neoliberal straightjacket. This has allowed for the perpetuation of the massive extraction of unprocessed mineral resources by international monopolies that have now relocated back to the former colonising countries, whilst maintaining the colonial pattern of ecological destruction and cheap labour for the benefit of other countries in the global-north. Today, there is a trail of the super-exploited and impoverished communities around the unrehabilitated and abandoned mines living in the insecurity of geological instability and crime. The industrial policy is deliberately underfunded by the Treasury and there is no active regulatory measures to force the beneficiation of mineral resources and the provision of the necessary support to build strategic industries and research centres for technological innovation for the advancement of manufacturing - in taking advantage of the country's vast mineral endowments. Thus, despite the rhetoric from the leaders of this Neoliberal state about building a Developmental State, there has been abject failure with regard to the dismantling of the inherited oversized and old white monopolies that choke competition and that push out new black owned enterprises seeking to enter the sectors.

As a consequence of the ANC's dogmatic adherence to Neoliberal economic policies, at the political level we are in a conjuncture in which:

- The ANC itself is now objectively no longer capable to lead a thoroughgoing NDR and therefore can no longer legitimately claim to be the political centre of the Alliance and even the leader of the nation.
- The ANC that has again abandoned the shared perspective of the radical second phase of our transition that was adopted in 2012 at the 53rd National Conference in Bloemfontein. The fourth administration abandoned this commitment in 2015 when it got back to the austerity measures that have been pursued by subsequent administrations since then and thus further worsening unemployment, inequalities and poverty year after year. Even on the back of the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ANC continued presiding over a deep and rolling austerity programme resulting in severe cuts on social spending, including dishonouring a signed collective agreement to chop the public service wage bill.^{iv}
- A pervasive sense of disillusionment and hopelessness amongst the masses of our people, especially the youth, which has engendered confusion, alienation and disengagement from politics and elections as such. Unfortunately, this disillusionment benefits reactionary opposition parties due to the demographic impact of voter stay-aways which are disproportionately severe in the ANC's historical constituencies.^v This has caused a drastic collapse in the ANC's electoral support in the major urban centres and thus making the ANC to resemble the ZANU Patriotic Front voter profile, which heavily supported by the rural masses and rejected by the working class in the urban centres. This is an untenable and sorry state of affairs, more so when viewed against the backdrop of the fact that two decades ago the ANC was running the country commanding two-thirds electoral support during the third administration.

So, at the political level, the intersection of these factors signifies an unfavourable and qualitative shift in the balance of class forces - heavily weighted in favour of monopoly capital. This shift in the balance of class forces is now underlined by the fact that private capital is basically co-governing when it comes to the implementation of the structural reforms through joint structures.

3.3 Neoliberal State

Even though the state is constituted and structured by different institutions such as government, legislatures, agencies, courts, infrastructure, etc., from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint, the state is not a thing that exist or hovers above classes. On their own these different components and institutions are meaningless when

considered in abstraction from the socioeconomic context in which the state is located. Thus, the state is a class relation. Hence, in 1917 Lenin published a pamphlet entitled, *One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution*, in which he stated that 'the key question of every revolution is undoubtedly the question of state power. Which class holds power decides everything.' Indeed, the state is a class relation because whichever class controls or dominates the state it is the ruling class; however, as Lenin himself together with the Bolsheviks have shown, for the proletariat to put a stamp of its revolutionary authority in terms of its hegemony and dictatorship, it must smash and transform the bourgeois state and build the revolutionary proletarian state.

Under capitalism, the ruling class (meaning the class that owns the means of production) does not have to occupy political offices or the judiciary for it to exercise control or to exert the power of its class rule or dictatorship. For over four centuries of its existence, as it evolved capitalism has always been able to fashion a particular form of a bourgeois state that is best suited under certain conditions. In other words, at different phases of the development and evolution of capitalism, there have been particular forms of the capitalist regimes of accumulation in terms of the character and socioeconomic role that the state would assume. Thus, the capitalist state becomes a regime of accumulation aligned to a particular socioeconomic context because central to its role would always have to be the creation of conducive conditions, including through coercive instruments and incentives, for stable and maximum extraction of profits and the creation of wealth by the capitalist class.

In the aftermath of the second imperialist war (World War II) the Welfare State was created as a new regime of accumulation suitable for reconstruction following the physical destruction and social devastations caused by the war. Hence, the Welfare State was characterised by major concessions to the working class by the ruling class – in a sense that it provided very generous social security system and social wage, including free public transport, education, healthcare, housing, etc. These concessions had to be made partially because of the pressure created by the rising socialist block around the Soviet Union and the unfolding socialist revolutions in the global-south, in addition to the pressure from the raging internal class struggles on the back of the social ravages and instability created by the war.

However, over time the internal contradictions of capitalism made the Welfare State as a regime of accumulation unsustainable when the average rate of profit was declining in all the advanced capitalist countries. Hence, the Welfare State was dismantled during the 1970s when these countries experienced stagflation as most of the post-war socioeconomic gains of the working class were withdrawn or stripped away.⁴ The Welfare State was then gradually replaced by the Neoliberal State whose primary mandate was to reverse the socioeconomic gains of the working class, including through the casualisation of labour, privatisation, slashing of subsidies, suppression of wage adjustment, de-unionisation, etc. The Neoliberal State is best suited because globally capitalism is facing systemic, chronic and regular crises. Hence, the commonly used term of polycrisis – denoting the slowing down of economic growth rates as a result of the declining profitability and increased regularity of the cycles of economic meltdowns as fundamental and in turn causing multiple social crises, including the ecological emergency. The Neoliberal regime of accumulation was meant to address this protracted trend of declining profitability and aggregate economic growth rate, by facilitating cuts in the cost of doing business, weakening the power of trade unions and cuts in government social spending in exchange for corporate tax cuts.

Informed by the Leninist understanding that the state is a class relation, since 1994 the post-Apartheid state has been increasingly controlled by our class enemy – the ruling class that controls the commanding heights

⁴ Stagflation is a blended concept from two words to denote the simultaneous and combined existence of economic stagnation and high inflation, which is not a common scenario because the slowdown of economic activity is usually accompanied by the slowdown of the inflation rate.

of the economy – despite the ANC's occupation of political office. This is reflected in the extent to which the finance monopoly capital openly dictates the framework for the ANC's governments Neoliberal macroeconomic policies as implemented by the Treasury and South African Reserve Bank (SARB). In addition to the influence exercised by monopoly capital, together with the imperialist instruments such as the WB, IMF and Sovereign Rating Agencies, the emerging black capitalist class is also exerting its own sectional influence on the state. The black capitalists influence the state as a whole – not just in government but also across the agencies and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) through structures such as the Progressive Business Forum (PBF), Black Management Forum (BMF), Black Business Council (BBC), etc.

Indeed, the post-1994 South African state is a capitalist state and its overarching architectural design, macroeconomic policies and role in the economy makes it a Neoliberal regime of accumulation, hence for short we call it a Neoliberal state. Since the ANC's 50th Conference in Mafikeng held in 1997, consecutive ANC governments steadfastly ensured the implementation of a resolution that prioritised the use of procurement and outsourcing to build a black capitalist class, even though this has been at the expense of the working class in terms the associated deterioration in pay and benefits offered by the contracted private sector companies.

Outsourcing is bad for the working class because permanently employed workers are replaced by casual labour from the private company. Similarly, service delivery under the private sector always deteriorates in quality because tenders make the contracted companies monopolies for the duration of the contracts, which allows them to seek every available opportunity or loophole to maximise financial returns and to reduce costs.

The dumping of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in favour of GEAR – which was an earthshattering concession to capital epitomised the shift that was beginning to unfold in the balance class forces in the wider struggle and in terms of the correlation of class forces within the movement, in which the working class was being relegated. Thus, since 1996 the ANC increasingly marginalised the interests and influence of the working class despite the fact that it was in an alliance with the SACP and COSATU. Hence, the Alliance has been dysfunctional since then and over the past 15 years or so both the SACP and COSATU have been seized with deliberations on the overarching question of the working class and state power as well as the imperative of building working class hegemony in key sites of power. Indeed, every political party has an inherent strategic vocation to claim control the state in order to exercise political power primarily in the interests of its own class. This is more so on the part of a vanguard party of the working class that seeks to deepen and advance the revolution.

The post-Apartheid state is a product of a process of the integration of elements that constituted the Apartheid state through the adoption and implementation of the Constitution from 1996 and the restructuring of the government apparatus along Neoliberal lines. This included the transformation of the Bantustans through their incorporation into provinces, the creation of unitary municipalities to undo the former separated black and white local authorities and the reduction of the overall personnel in the public service. This process took place at the height of the Neoliberal paradigm internationally as propagated by the WB, IMF and the Sovereign Rating Agencies. Hence, not only in South Africa but across many parts of the global-south the Neoliberal reforms of the state were imposed and foisted on governments, using debt conditionalities and the risk ratings for investment grading.

Having adopted GEAR as the country's long-term economic template and with the ANC's first administration being desperate to stop capital-flight, to win the confidence of the investors and to attract foreign direct investment, inevitably the character of the state that was to emerged from these factors and processes of the 1990s was bound to be in a form of a Neoliberal state. This meant that the role of the state had to be

minimised through privatisation, outsourcing and PPPs. The architectural reconfiguration of the state had to lead to its dismemberment and fragmentation through the creation of the corporatised SOEs and the stand-alone agencies with their own governing boards and minimal political oversight by the Cabinet and Parliament. The latest of these stand-alone agencies to be created over the past three decades is the Border Management Authority (BMA), which is performing the work that was mandated to several departments such as health, agriculture and home affairs at the border posts. Like other such agencies, the BMA has executive managers whose pay packages are comparable or match those in the private sector as a way of recruiting and retaining “the best talent”.

The same applies to the provincial and municipal entities dealing with infrastructure and service delivery whereby the mandates that were previously located in departmental divisions have been relocated to the stand-alone agencies and public corporations such as the uMngeni-uThugela Water in KwaZulu-Natal and City Power in Johannesburg which resemble private sector companies. One of the characteristic features that makes these entities to resemble private companies is their top-heavy pay structures and being outside the public service they tend to easily outsource many of their mandated functions as private businesses do. Their managing executives generally earn way in excess of the president and ministers, and are comparable to those of executives in private corporates. With regard to the SOEs, their executives would still get bonuses even when their incompetent and corrupt practices destroyed or weakened the entities, whilst the Treasury happily continues to grant them the bail-outs often without conditions.

The implementation of the resolution on procurement and outsourcing for black economic empowerment from the ANC’s 50th National Conference created a vicious cycle in which the tenderpreneurs steadily played a considerable role in the destruction of the ANC as a radical and mass-based spearhead of our revolution. Thus, just as the Mbeki-led cabal of the 1996 Class Project was the first faction after 1994 to openly operate within the leadership structures of the ANC, the resolution to use outsourcing and procurement to build a class of black capitalists turned the ANC into an organisation of personality-based factions. Leadership contests could not even be political, let alone ideological, as the Neoliberal trajectory was internally uncritically accepted as its ramifications in shaping the public service and the state created vested interests amongst politicians due to the contracting out of functions and services to the tenderpreneurs. This parasitic capitalist stratum conditionally selects who they would finance in determining the outcomes of the ANC’s leadership.

When the ANC’s 52nd National Conference adopted the perspective of building the Developmental State in 2007, an opportunity opened up to shift away from the Neoliberal trajectory because the 1996 Class Project was dislodged in the leadership of the ANC. However, it is one thing to adopt an alternative developmental perspective within the ANC, but it is quite another to translate this into a shift in the government’s policy. The Treasury and SARB persisted with their Neoliberal economic policies even in the face of Jacob Zuma’s populism. More recently, despite the fact that both the 54th National Conference in 2017 and the 55th National Conference in 2022 reaffirmed the objective of building the Developmental State as an alternative developmental path from the current Neoliberal trajectory, these twin bastions of Neoliberalism still prevailed.

Today, the notion of the Developmental State as an alternative and progressive regime of accumulation has generally been abandoned in government and the Neoliberal State prevails and persists. At the same time South Africa has now entered a new conjuncture of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the politics of coalitions across all spheres. The capitalists and the rest of the Neoliberal elite have welcomed the establishment of the GNU. Indeed, the ANC wasted no time in selecting the DA as its main partner in the

Cabinet given their shared Neoliberal consensus as captured in the seventh administration's Medium-Term Developmental Plan (2024-2029) which essentially is a basis of this partnership between the centre-left ANC and centre-right DA.^{vi}

President Cyril Ramaphosa has gambled on a coalition government with the DA as a trade-off - hoping for higher business confidence and therefore higher rate of investment. Indeed, in his inauguration of the GNU Cabinet, he asserted that "economic growth lies at the heart of everything else that we seek to achieve". For good measure, addressing asset managers in Britain, his deputy, Paul Mashatile, even declared that "privatisation is no longer a swear word" on the part of the ANC. Hence, the implementation of the so-called Operation Vulindlela jointly with the private sector since the sixth administration - to roll-back the role of the SOEs in the economy and to liberalise the infrastructure networks in order to open them for private ownership and operations.^{vii}

The festering crisis of immigration, in terms of the increased inbound migration of people from the continent and parts of Asia into South Africa is not going to go away – it is going to occupy a central focus in the country's body politic for a long time as long as this society itself remains engulfed by extreme and multiple socioeconomic crises of unemployment, poverty, hunger, crime, etc. In some instances, the foreign nationals are unfairly scapegoated for all kinds of the country's socioeconomic ills in a manner that deflect accountability on the part of the politicians across all tiers of government. But the root cause of the unfolding political crisis around illegal immigration is the severely eroded capacity of the country's Neoliberal state to enforce its laws – be it in terms of:

- Securing the borders and strictly applying immigration laws – so as to even avoid the huge financial and other costs involved in the deportations.
- Enforcing the law in combating rampant corruption at the border posts and in the Department of Home Affairs.
- Securing the borders and strictly applying the law in combating cross-border human trafficking, theft and smuggling of drugs, vehicles, undeclared imported goods, protected animals and plants species, etc.
- Enforcing the labour laws against unscrupulous employers who take advantage of the flood of vulnerable undocumented migrants – using them to substitute for South Africans workers for super-exploitation.

3.4 Current National Political Landscape

As we were heading to the seventh national democratic elections in May 2024, in August 2023 there was a noteworthy development in the national political landscape pertaining to the establishment of the Moonshot Pact, which was later branded as the Multi-Party Charter (MPC). The MPC was initiated by the DA and it became composed of reactionary parties although in some respects these parties still represent divergent agendas and interests. The MPC included Inkatha Freedom Party, FFP+, ActionSA, Spectrum National Party, ISANCO, United Independent Movement, African Christian Democratic Party, Build One South Africa, African Christian Democratic Party, etc.

All formations of the ANC-led Alliance and the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) in general seem to have fallen into some complacency of assuming that the MPC was a fleeting phenomenon whose existence was only tied to the 2024 elections. It may well be the case in appearance but this is a grave conceptual mistake!

In the current conjuncture, our fundamental claim is that at the political level the MPC represents a block of the enemy camp that is led by parties that are deeply opposed to a thoroughgoing NDR. In fact, whether some of the small parties of the MPC are aware or not, the MPC is the main counter-revolutionary political tendency in the current conjuncture, in particular its leading elements of the DA, FF+ and the black-led ActionSA. They are all united in their opposition to the fulfilment of some of the transformational and core socioeconomic rights in the Constitution. For example, Section 27 enjoins the state to work towards the realisation of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) but they are opposed to the National Health Insurance (NHI) without providing alternative ways of realising UHC. Section 23 of the Constitution provides for “fair labour practices” and in Section 7 it enjoins the state fulfil these rights, yet these parties are vehemently opposed to the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Indeed, none of the white parties support the constitutional provisions on land reform. To underscore their moral bankruptcy, these parties unreservedly support the settler-colonial Zionist project and its genocidal entity.^{viii}

We are reflecting on this counter-revolutionary block because in one form or another it is going to collectively regroup again as long as there is more that unites it than that divides it and as long as their original and primary objectives of “defeating the ANC and keeping out the Economic Freedom Front (EFF)” are still not achieved. To begin with, it must be appreciated that the founding agreement of the MPC was regarded as a legal contract that is binding on its signatories – as it is explicitly stated that it is a contract in perpetuity rather than a limited-term contract. Therefore, this is clearly a long-term commitment to block a thoroughgoing NDR which all the components of the ANC-led Alliance, MDM and other progressive and radical forces outside our movement must take into account.

To be sure, the following are some of the principles and objectives stated in it MPC’s “Declaration of Intent” that unites the parties and through which they have nailed their counter-revolutionary colours to the mast:

- That “our mission is to unseat the ANC, keep out the EFF, and usher in a multi-party government following the 2024 National and Provincial Elections.”
- The parties agree that there shall be no “any agreements with the ANC, EFF or any rival formations”.
- The parties shall contest the elections with their own manifestoes and then dissolve them into a “collective Pact manifesto” after the elections.^{ix}
- The parties agree on the fight for the decentralisation of powers and the withdrawal of the state from economic activities - which means that they all agree on massive privatisation.
- The parties of the MPC seek to maintain the current inherited structure of the political economy, with its hideous features that makes ours the most unequal society in the world.

As stated above, it is a mistake to assume that the formal dissolution of the MPC after the 2024 elections due to the fact that these parties failed to unseat the ANC means the disappearance of this collective counter-revolutionary force that is hell-bent not only on defeating the ANC but the NDR itself as a revolutionary course. To some extent, the dissolution of the MPC partially epitomised the fact that it was newly formed and thus had not been ideologically and politically congealed, except around their collective vehement anti-ANC attitude. The MPC also embodied parties that were products of the deepening fragmentation in the national political landscape as reflected in the mushrooming of the one-leader parties created for the fulfilment of the narrow personal ambitions of their founding leaders. Even the decision of the DA and IFP to join the GNU does not erase the fact that they are committed to engineer the downfall of the ANC and the defeat the NDR in the long term.

The opportunism of the DA and IFP in joining the GNU and therefore undermining one of the clauses of their Declaration of Intent - that there shall be no "any agreements with the ANC, EFF or any rival formations" – is due to the desperation arising from their disappointing performance at the national level. For example, the DA's vote share came out stagnant in 2024 elections when compared to the 2019 elections. However, the breach of one of the principles of the Declaration of Intent caused the ActionSA to withdraw from the MPC but this does not mean that many of these parties would not regroup in the future when another realistic opportunity arises to defeat the ANC; more so given seeming convergence of the EFF and uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP) who are desperately intent on displacing the DA as the main opposition block and to place themselves on the cusp of dislodging the ANC in key and vulnerable provinces such as Gauteng, Free State, North West, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape.^x

3.5 Immediate threats to the NDR

As NEHAWU for a long time we have consistently maintained that in addition to the counter-revolutionary domestic and imperialist forces, the ANC itself was beginning to pose a threat to itself and the possibility of a thoroughgoing NDR – because of its Neoliberal deviation, internal embeddedness of corrupt networks of tenderpreneurs that foment its personality-based factions and its arrogant aloofness from the masses of our people. In the foregoing we have identified and elaborated on our fundamental assertion that in one form or the other the political parties that constituted the MPC would collectively continue to pose a long-term counter-revolutionary threat to the possibility of a thoroughgoing NDR in the current conjuncture. But, in the immediate and medium-term, our revolution is facing a three-pronged potential counter-revolutionary threats:

- Firstly, it's the potential convergence between the MKP and EFF fueled by their common agenda of settling scores with the ANC. These two parties are controlled by individuals who have been expelled by the ANC and who also have the natural politician's ambition of seeking to take over political power and causing the demise of those they consider to be their primary detractors and enemies.
- Secondly, it's the ambiguous position of the DA on the campaign for the independence of the Western Cape, which seems to be gathering some momentum currently. The Cape Independence Advocacy Group (CIAG) led by a loud-mouthed British national, Phil Graig, who has even established the Referendum Party is engaging Trump to get him to support their breakaway agenda.
- Thirdly, it's the alliance of the Neo-Fascist Afrikaner movement under the umbrella of Solidarity and its alignment with the US and European Neo-Fascist forces, including Elon Musk and Trump.

4. THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

4.1 Introduction

What is the origin of the theory of the NDR and its strategic objectives? Within the ANC-led Alliance and the broader democratic movement it has often been assumed that the NDR is a uniquely South African theory for the national liberal struggle. This is true in terms of the particularity of the historical and material context characterised as Colonialism of Special Type (CST). The dominant right-wing opportunist tendency within the ANC has taken advantage of this mistaken assumption to even justify the Neoliberal trajectory and reducing the NDR to just another form of the struggle for freedom or independence - not dissimilar to what has

transpired in other countries in Africa.^{xi} Accordingly, the NDR could just be another freedom struggle without the inherent class content and ideological orientation. In this regard, at best the NDR would merely be about addressing the plight of the poor in terms of the historical socioeconomic deprivations from settler-colonialism.

In joining the Communist International (Comintern) in 1921, the Communist Party of South Africa (now SACP) linked the South African struggle to the international Marxist-Leninist debates on the colonial question in the worldwide struggle against capitalism in the imperialist stage. Vladimir Lenin had laid the theoretical foundation that led to the adoption of a report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions by the time of the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920. But the debate continued and evolved over decades - marked by a theoretical shift from the characterisation of the anti-colonial struggles as 'bourgeois-democratic' to 'national-revolutionary', in which the working class was now positioned, at least theoretically, as the leading motive force. The South African dimension of this theoretical work included the 1928 resolution on the Black Republic Thesis adopted by the sixth congress of the Comintern; however, at the seventh congress of the Comintern held in 1935 the Black Republic Thesis was abandoned.^{xii} Nonetheless, the theory and practice of the proletarian-led anti-colonial struggles continued to be enriched in the unfolding struggles of the oppressed in the colonies even after the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943.

In the aftermath of the second imperialist war (World War II) of 1939 to 1945, the anti-colonial struggles intensified and the imperialist powers were in retreat. The practical experience and success of the communist-led 1949 Chinese Revolution, in which the working class supported by the peasantry was the primary motive-force, increasingly became a prototype of the NDR.^{xiii} This revolution negated the earlier bourgeois-democratic character of the national liberation struggle led by the Kuomintang and elevated the class content of the anti-colonial struggles for Marxism-Leninism internationally.^{xiv} Hence, the concept of the NDR and its radical content increasingly became accepted across the international communist movement from the 1950s and it was extensively used in the documents of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in the 1960s. Karen Brutents, who was one of the leading theoreticians in the then Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on the question of the anti-colonial struggles confirmed the origin of the NDR from the international communist movement.^{xv} In this regard, in one interview he referred to 'the introduction by Communist Parties...of the category of "national democratic revolution" into their militant political vocabulary'.^{xvi} He went on to say that "these revolutions which lead to the elimination of colonial and semi-colonial oppressions are also latent with anti-capitalist tendency... not only weaken the imperialist system...when the leadership comes from political forces representing the interests of the proletariat" but also that "these revolutions ... grow directly into socialist revolutions."^{xvii}

Throughout the 1960s the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties was very influential on the revolutionary forces in the global-south in terms of the definition of the class content, strategy and tactics and strategic objectives of their anti-colonial struggles. In fact, the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in 1960, attended by 81 parties including the SACP, laid the foundation in espousing the NDR as a proletarian-led "united national democratic front of all patriotic forces of the nation" to achieve "revolutionary democracy". This became the general conceptualisation of the character of the anti-colonial struggles, whose content must lead to a transitional "non-capitalist path" in the context of the "national democratic state".

Hence, the SACP's 1962 programme, *The South African Road to Freedom*, broadly outlined the characteristics of the national democratic state or the "state of national democracy" as espoused by the 1960 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. In this regard, the SACP directly quoted from the Declaration of the 1960 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, which defined the "national democratic state" as one that:

'consistently upholds its political and economic independence; fights imperialism and its military blocs; against military bases on its territory; fights against new forms of colonialism and the penetration of imperialist capital; rejects dictatorial and despotic methods of government; ensures the people's broad democratic rights and freedoms (freedom of the press, speech, assembly, demonstration, establishment of political parties and social organisations) and the opportunity of working for the enactment of agrarian reform and other domestic and social changes; and for participation of the people in shaping government policy.'

The SACP further added, that "such a state will provide the most favourable conditions for advance, along non-capitalist lines, to socialism". Later, the 1967 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties redefined the nature of this strategic objective of the NDR, i.e. shifting the "national democratic state" or the "state of national democracy" from being a "non-capitalist path" to a clearer position that it must be a "socialist-oriented path".

4.2 The South African National Democratic Revolution

It cannot be denied that the SACP's 1962 programme significantly influenced and shaped the character and content of the national liberation struggle in South Africa from the 1960s onwards - through the adoption of the theory and practice of the NDR by the ANC and other components of the MDM later. It must also be remembered that throughout the next three decades from the 1960s the closest international ally of the ANC itself was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which unfortunately was dissolved in 1991. The SACP's programme, *The South African Road to Freedom*, was formulated based on the thesis of Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) characterising the nature of the South African oppressive system. Through this programme, the SACP adapted a Marxist-Leninist theory of the NDR to the unique material context of the CST.

The Freedom Charter which was already adopted in 1955, became a shared minimum programme for the national liberation movement led by the ANC. It articulates a vision, demands and ideals that in their totality clearly go beyond the formal and "bourgeois-democratic" character of the earlier version of the international anti-colonial struggles. Therefore, as a vision for the post-Apartheid state, the Freedom Charter was in line with the perspective of the "national democratic state" or the "state of national democracy" as the outcome of the NDR - thus laying the foundation for the non-capitalist or socialist-oriented path as envisaged by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

For its part, in 1969 the ANC convened its first national conference in exile, which was held in Morogoro, a town in Tanzania. The Morogoro Conference adopted a strategic perspective in a resolution on the Strategy and Tactics. Thus, the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics underscored the growing strategic convergence between the SACP and ANC, having jointly already accepted that the struggle had entered a new phase after

the adoption of the armed struggle in 1961.^{xviii} To underline the ideological orientation of the NDR in South Africa, the ANC's Morogoro Strategy and Tactics opened its introduction with the characterisation of the international context in a manner that was aligned with that of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, when it stated that:

"The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the socialist system, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolutions and the fight for social and economic progress by the people of the whole world".

Therefore, based on the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics and drawing from *The South African Road to Freedom*, the ANC and SACP theoretically converged and were in practical agreement with regard to the principles underpinning the NDR, at least as far as the immediate strategic objectives were concerned:

- That the South African context of colonial oppression was peculiar in that, 'whilst at one level it is an "independent" national state, at another level it is a country subjugated by a minority rule. What makes the structure unique and adds to its complexity is that the exploiting nation is not, as in the classical imperialist relationship, situated in a geographically distinct mother country, but is settled within the borders'.
- That the 'main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group, the African people' and the black people in general.
- That within the national character of the NDR in which there is a historic task of uniting all oppressed people, of necessity the ANC is the leading component of the national liberation alliance.
- That in the line-up of all the oppressed, including the revolutionary white compatriots, the working class is the primary motive-force. Thus, according to the ANC's Morogoro Strategy and Tactics "the perspective of the speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness."
- Lastly, that the South African struggle was not merely about freedom for a formal and independent statehood. Instead, there was a minimum programme in the form of the Freedom Charter which express the political and socioeconomic content shared between the SACP and ANC. This is better captured in the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics, when it states that the South African national liberation struggle is about 'the complete political and economic emancipation of all our people and the constitution of a society which accords with the basic provisions of our programme the Freedom Charter'. Furthermore, that 'in our country – more than in any of other part of the oppressed world – it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy.... Our drive towards national emancipation is therefore in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation.'

In the foregoing, the Marxist-Leninist origins of the NDR couldn't be clearer, so is the fact that this strategic perspective has inherent class and ideological orientation. In other words, from the beginning the NDR was never a theory for a bourgeois democratic revolution as even the ANC's own strategic perspective and objectives converged with the original and international Marxist-Leninist perspective, which was contextualised and formulated in the South African conditions by the SACP through its 1962 programme. This is underlined by the fact that the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics conceived the national liberation struggle as directly linked to the class struggle when it stated that 'our drive towards national emancipation is therefore

in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation'. This was reinforced by the fact that the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics also drew from the international communist movement in terms of its characterisation of the international context being one of the transition to the socialist system.

This strategic convergence between the SACP and ANC is best expressed in one of the most important conclusions of the ANC's "Green Book".^{xix} In this regard, the book stated that:

'The aims of our national democratic revolution will only be fully realised with the construction of a social order in which all the historic consequences of national oppression and its foundation, economic exploitation, will be liquidated, ensuring the achievement of real national liberation and social emancipation. An uninterrupted advance towards this ultimate goal will only be assured if within the alignment of revolutionary forces struggling to win the aims of our national democratic revolution, the dominant role is played by the oppressed working people.'

To emphasise this strategic convergence, there could be no authoritative figure than President Oliver Tambo, who in his address to the 24th Congress of the CPSU in 1971, proclaimed that the ANC was leading the NDR for the overthrow of the Apartheid regime and seizure of power to build a "socialist society".^{xx} These sentiments by President Oliver Tambo were subsequently confirmed or reiterated in his article in the World Marxist Review, in which he stated that:

'It is important that the world opinion should understand the true nature of the people's movement in our country. Some people are still inclined to think that the struggle of the black population is a struggle for civil rights. But this obscures the national liberation character of our movement. Perhaps this partly due to the over-emphasis at certain times on the struggle against apartheid, instead of the struggle against the entire system of national and class oppression...'.^{xxi}

This original and radical perspective of the NDR outlined in the foregoing was sustained by the ANC-led Alliance from the Morogoro Conference throughout the escalation of the arc of the revolutionary struggle in the 1970s and 1980s up to the negotiations with the Apartheid regime in the early 1990s. The 1991 ANC's 48th Conference held in Durban was the first inside the country after the unbanning. Interestingly, it was convened under the theme: "Advance to National Democracy" which denoted a transitional state of national democracy or the national democratic state in terms of the NDR as espoused by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. The discussion document of that conference, which was called *The Guidelines on Strategy and Tactics*, reaffirmed the NDR's correlation of class forces, in which the working class is conceived as the primary motive force - in stating that:

'Various classes, strata and social groups constitute the coalitions of forces struggling for national democracy. Black workers occupy a special place among these forces...In the field of organisation and struggle, they have emerged as the leading force'.

Similarly, this was followed by the 49th Conference held in Bloemfontein shortly after the historic 1994 elections in which the ANC won an overwhelming majority support based on a transformatory platform of the RDP. Again, at this conference, on the Strategy and Tactics the ANC still upheld this radical perspective in terms of the class content of the struggle - as it reaffirmed that:

'While continuing to strive to represent the black people as a whole, the movement must however ensure that, at all times, and in the first instance, it represents the interests of the workers, rural masses and the middle strata, those who constitute the majority of people in this country.'

This brief theoretical outline in the foregoing deliberately sought to illustrate the NDR's strong historical links to Marxism-Leninism and its adaptation to the South African struggle. In addition to being a necessary theoretical grounding in the current conjuncture, the idea was also to debunk the falsehoods peddled by the dominant right-wing opportunism within the ANC, which has proven to have a significant influence within the ranks of our federation in terms of diluting or even corrupting the meaning of what the NDR is about. It is a narrative that has poisonously revised the content of the NDR so much that even Neoliberal policies are presented as consistent and integral in the pursuit of the NDR - when such policies represent a right-wing deviation. After more than three decades in which the ANC presided over the administration of Neoliberal policies, the political economy remains untransformed and unable to respond to the run-away crises of unemployment, poverty, inequalities, hunger, etc. Unfortunately, in the overall the socioeconomic features of the CST remain intact.

5 THE ANC-LED ALLIANCE

At the ANC's 49th National Conference held in Bloemfontein in 1994, the same year of the first national elections, the Strategy and Tactics document that was adopted correctly acknowledge that:

'...we must recognise the fact that there is a social differentiation between these black masses which at times will lead to the various classes and strata to express different aspirations and pursue separate objectives.'

However, it is indeed a cruel irony that in the same year of the democratic-breakthrough, a year that required maximum unity amongst the revolutionary forces in the face of a violent counter-revolutionary threat from the ultra-rightwing Afrikaner forces, that it was the ANC itself as the spearhead of the revolutionary forces that was already anticipating an ideological and strategic rupture within the Alliance.

Yet, the ANC had consistently upheld the unifying strategic perspective that was adopted at the Morogoro Conference in 1969 and further elaborated at the Kabwe Conference in 1985. We reiterate, that this unifying strategic perspective called for "the speedy progression from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more by the existence in our country of a large and growing working-class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness." This means that the realisation of the ANC's vision of "a genuine and lasting emancipation" beyond "formal liberation" was premised on the continuous leading role of the primary motive-force constituted by the "large and growing working-class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness."

Undoubtedly, in 1994 the broad-base of all the classes and strata standing behind the ANC-led Alliance and the broader MDM were united around the policy platform of the RDP to drive socioeconomic transformation. What then was the basis of anticipating or predicting an ideological and strategic rupture as early as 1994 at the very first ANC conference convened in a democratic South Africa? This was bizarre considering the fact that the base document of the RDP was originally conceived within COSATU and it became a popular

development strategy as soon the ANC took over the process of the further elaboration and consultations beyond the MDM.^{xxii}

Clearly, there was something that the authors of the Strategy and Tactics document of the ANC's 49th National Conference knew that the rest of the movement did not know. It is inconceivable that when COSATU internally initiated the development of a socioeconomic strategy that eventually became the RDP there would have been nothing initiated within the ANC itself on economic policy in anticipation of the 1994 elections and the establishment of the first ANC administration. This lends credence to the claim that covert meetings were taking place between what the SACP subsequently labelled as the 1996 Class Project and white monopoly capital - working on the development of GEAR which the writers of Strategy and Tactics of the 49th National Conference knew that it would engender class contradictions. Nonetheless, it is now well known that such meetings did indeed take place behind the back of the Alliance, including the ANC itself, parallel to processes of the formulation of the RDP.

The SACP labelled this very first faction to emerge within the leadership of the ANC in the post-Apartheid era as a class project because it was primarily oriented towards forging a partnership with white monopoly capital on the basis of far-reaching economic policy concessions in exchange for the creation of black capitalist class through black empowerment schemes – as underscored in 1996 when the RDP was abandoned and an elite consensus on the Neoliberal economic policy template emerged. Politically, this major and unilateral economic policy concessions were accompanied by the rise of Cde Thabo Mbeki's authoritarian leadership within the ANC and the marginalisation of working-class components of the Alliance, as well as the MDM. This rightwing-turn drastically shifted the correlation of the class forces within the movement and reduced the influence of the SACP and COSATU. The proletarian masses were to be reduced to demobilised and passive beneficiaries of the crumbs trickling down from Neoliberal policies. Therefore, the Morogoro vision of "a genuine and lasting emancipation" beyond "formal liberation" resting on the leading role of the working class was also summarily dumped.

To sum up, there were three decisive developments and factors that occurred at the beginning of the democratic transition that have since plunged the Alliance into disarray strategically. These decisive factors are the following:

- Firstly, it was the imposition of GEAR and the abandonment of the RDP in 1996 in collaboration with white monopoly capital - using a fabricated currency crisis as an excuse.
- Secondly, it was the Alliance Summit held in 1997 in which the crystallisation of the strategic-rupture occurred - as deliberations on GEAR broke down into a complete disagreement. No attempt was made to synthesise perspectives or to make compromises on some of the aspects as a gesture to unify the Alliance.
- Thirdly, it was the 1997 ANC's 50th National Conference held in Mafikeng. This conference ideologically and politically consolidated the right-ward shift within the ANC, with the election of Cde Thabo Mbeki as the President and the revision of the Strategy and Tactics document to incorporate the emerging black capitalist class as a motive-force of the NDR as well.

These three interrelated factors objectively and permanently undermined the unity and cohesion of the ANC-led Alliance, regardless of the subjective intensions of the leadership of the Alliance formations. Indeed, from that moment it became Cde Thabo Mbeki's (and other members of the 1996 Class Project) preoccupation to unleash a hostile offensive on the SACP and COSATU, seeking to either force them to bow down or to provoke

the break-up of the Alliance. This ploy included rendering the Alliance dysfunctional or almost non-existent outside the electoral cycles. Anyway, the Alliance had to be dysfunctional because there was no longer an economic policy consensus, thereby there was also no longer a shared strategic vision of the NDR or a shared political strategic perspective.

Effectively, there was nothing that substantially constituted a minimum programme justifying the continued existence of the ANC-led Alliance – at least in the form that it was historically forged during the heat of the struggle against the Apartheid regime. The dysfunctionality of the Alliance and the influence of the above-mentioned factors continued and manifested in different guises of sharp contradictions and disagreements. These disagreements increasingly took the form of public mudslinging in the media and during the leadership of Cde Thabo Mbeki, the weekly ANC Today bulletins became platforms for the vilification of COSATU and SACP, as well as any dissenting voices inside the ANC itself. Unfortunately, the fundamental and legitimate issues that caused sharp contradictions on the NDR were dismissively reduced to the so-called “irritations” even after the dislodgement of Cde Thabo Mbeki in the ANC in 2007 at the 52nd National Conference held in Polokwane.

What is more, ideologically and politically the ANC was now guided by a framework of the revised Strategy and Tactics document adopted at the 1997 Mafikeng Conference - which did not even mention the Freedom Charter as a vision of the NDR. Instead, the so-called “National Democratic Society (NDS)” became a new vision of the NDR and for the first time the tiny black capitalist class that was emerging largely through business deals based on personal political connections became part of the “forces of transformation” or the motive-forces to drive the NDR.

Thus, in contrast to the Freedom Charter, the overarching vision of the NDR from then onwards was reduced to the “deracialisation of capitalism”. Indeed, this represented a drastic departure or deviation from the conclusions of the 1985 Kabwe Conference, at which the ANC had affirmed the end-state vision of the NDR as follows:

“This type of democratic state we envisage is spelt out in the ten clauses of the Freedom Charter. Though we place equal weight on the separate clauses, the first five, setting out the most pressing political, economic and social reforms a democratic state will have to embark on, can be said to be its core.”

So, in the light of the above, we must disabuse those within our ranks and inside COSATU who still harbour some illusions about the ANC as if it is still a glorious movement that it used to be. The ANC’s gallant revolutionary days are now behind it and unfortunately today it may still continue to honour and celebrate historical landmarks such as the anniversaries of the Freedom Charter. In reality, as far as the Freedom Charter is concerned, the ANC has neither commitment, interest nor inclinations to implement this vision of the Congress of the People - particularly when it comes to the economic clauses.^{xxiii}

After three decades since the right-ward ideological and strategic shift and the strategic-rupture within the Alliance, we now find ourselves in a new conjuncture marked by the unprecedented reality in which the ANC no longer enjoys the confidence and electoral support of more than half of masses of our people. Considering the fact that over 13 million eligible voters did not register or over 11 million voters did not participate in the 2024 elections, in the year of the 30th anniversary of our freedom and democracy, the picture is even more

miserable from the standpoint of the “ANC-led NDR”. Consequentially, in addition to the fact that the ANC has now lost more than half of its electoral support, we also find ourselves in new conjuncture of the so-called Government of National Unity (GNU) constituted by about 10 parties. The ANC did not even waste time in choosing the DA as its main partner in the GNU given their shared centrist Neoliberal consensus as captured in the Medium-Term Development Plan (2024-2029). This is the basis of the partnership between the Neoliberal centre-left ANC and centre-right DA over the tenure of the seventh administration until 2029.

In this conjuncture of the full-blown Neoliberal GNU and so-called structural reforms, arguably there is no basis of claiming that the NDR, properly so-called in terms of the perspectives of the Morogoro and Kabwe conferences is still going on. The general economic policy convergence between the ANC and DA underscores the fact that we are in a new conjuncture also because it is a period marked the objective process of ideological and political realignment – increasingly changing the national political landscape. It is becoming impossible for the ANC to legitimately claim to be the exclusive strategic political centre of the Alliance, whilst it continues to be locked in a headlong pursuit of a bourgeois-oriented economic trajectory.

This reality makes the ideologically confused section of COSATU that is completely devoid of class-consciousness to be caught up in a limbo. It can only revert to the default tactic of relying on bureaucratic manoeuvres rather than open ideological contestation – to make its case in front of the workers as to why they must continue to have their federation being marginalised whilst at the same time tailing behind the same rulers who have been butchering the broader working class – in unleashing a rolling austerity offensive for more than a decade, whilst making tax concessions to monopoly capital.

As NEHAWU we have long recognised the fact that there is an ongoing objective processes of ideological and political realignment in the national political landscape. This process has already reached an advanced stage within the Alliance in terms of the correlation of class forces due to the accumulation of disagreements since the strategic rupture in the 1990s. We are now in conjuncture whereby the evolving fundamental contradictions within the Alliance have come to a head and a qualitative change is emerging as the SACP has already moved ahead in firmly casting a strategic shift, whilst the flat-footed and ideologically confused COSATU is caught up in ideological confusion.

The SACP has now strategically reposition itself – by shifting away from its historical vanguard role of devoting its advanced cadreship and energies on building and strengthening the ANC as part of exerting working class influence within what was then the spearhead of the NDR - to a focus of strengthening itself and aspiring to build a powerful socialist movement of the working class and the poor, including a Left Popular Front. In short, the SACP is now resolute in seeking to directly contest elections, with or without a reconfigured Alliance, as the interests of the working class are not represented by the bourgeois-oriented ANC. So is NEHAWU, and the ideologically confused lot within COSATU have the duty to cogently counter this assertion rather than relying on the unsustainable and divisive bureaucratic manoeuvres.

The fact is that ANC can no longer meaningfully claim to be a strategic political centre of the Alliance when it has become just a vassal of personality-based factions that are linked to external capitalist “blessers”. In the context of the current conjuncture characterised by ideological and political realignment it is delusional to even call for the “renewal of the Alliance”, let alone to call for the reconfiguration of the Alliance, when COSATU together with the SACP have been seized with this matter since the 9th National Congress in 2006 – to no avail. The ANC itself has evolved - not only has its political power been significantly diminished, as a

political organisation the ANC has now reached a point whereby practically it is no longer functioning as a mass-based liberation movement representing different class forces and strata. The reality is that the ANC has become a conventional parliamentary party that is now increasingly based on a clear and narrow class ideology of Neoliberalism, regardless as to whether most of its leadership and members are aware of this fact or not.

6 THE SOCIALIST-AXIS

6.1 Introduction

We have already asserted that if as the organised and class-conscious proletariat we seek to proceed in waging the struggle to advance and deepen the NDR, there are important questions that must be answered. The first question is which class forces, in addition to the capitalist class, must be taken to be part of the enemy camp in the current conjuncture. Secondly, we also have to answer the question as to which class forces should be regarded as the secondary motive-forces - to be mobilised and rallied behind the class-conscious proletariat, in seeking to advance and deepen the NDR. We have stated that answers to these questions should clarify the phase at which the NDR is at the moment - as a socialist strategy for the South African working class led by the SACP.

These questions arise against the backdrop of the Neoliberal trajectory that started on the 14th June 1996 - when a Neoliberal cabal within the ANC engineered the dumping of a popular development programme, the RDP, and unilaterally imposed the unpopular Neoliberal economic strategy, GEAR. As a result, over the past three decades the ANC has been committed to Neoliberal economic policies – that are largely responsible for the multiple socioeconomic crises facing the working class and the broader masses of our people. In the light of this, as NEHAWU we have consistently maintained that the ANC is posing a fatal threat to itself, the Alliance and the NDR itself. We further warned that the ANC's Neoliberal economic policies could potentially foreclose the possibility of a thoroughgoing NDR because they are divisive and their consequences weaken the organised working class in the trade union movement and the masses in general.

In the foregoing, we have pointed out that the ultra-rightwing Afrikaner organisations under the umbrella of Solidarity and the coalition of counter-revolutionary parties mobilised under the MPC by the DA in 2024 constitute the primary enemy camp poised against a proletarian-led struggle to advance and deepen the NDR towards socialism. This is at the level of the political terrain but monopoly capital and imperialism remain the ultimate stumbling block in our struggle for socialism.

The overarching strategic task that is facing the organised and class-conscious working class in the current conjuncture is how to forge a proletarian-led struggle to advance and deepen the NDR towards socialism. The precondition in positioning the working class to execute this task is building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor, at the core of which ought to be the SACP and COSATU. A proletarian-led struggle to advance and deepen the NDR towards socialism would also require a shared strategic clarity on the implications of the following factors:

- Firstly, that South Africa remains a capitalist society that has somewhat evolved from what was characterised as the CST. That there has not been fundamental change in the character of the settler-colonial economy that predominantly is still under the ownership and control of the white minority. The

above is the summation of the reality that we face as the basis to regroup, rebuild capacity and reimagine our strategic perspective to advance the NDR.

- Secondly, in developing the strategic perspective for proletarian-led struggle to advance and deepen the NDR towards socialism, we must come to terms with the fact that as a revolutionary organisation the ANC has become a spent force in the current conjuncture. We must accept that despite the fact that the majority of the ANC's constituency comprise the working class and rural-poor, it is no longer strategically postured as a revolutionary agency. Instead, the ANC is now comfortably settled as a conventional centre-left political party that is no longer even trying to forge a radical agenda to fulfill the historically shared minimum programme of the Freedom Charter. Indeed, based on its track record over the past three decades it is now undeniable that the ANC is a party of Neoliberalism that no longer has the motivation nor capabilities of driving the NDR for the realisation of a "genuine and lasting emancipation" as it has been historically committed.
- Thirdly, within the ANC-led Alliance we have had the twin components of the working-class organisations in the SACP and COSATU as the Socialist-Axis, based on their historical and collective commitment to socialism. Yet there has not been a sustained joint programmatic expression of this commitment, despite COSATU's congresses passing numerous resolutions to that effect. The reason for the existence of the SACP is nothing but to wage class struggle to overturn capitalism and to build socialism. Whilst throughout its history COSATU has firmly adhered to Marxism-Leninism, its political practice of class-orientation, organisational practice of shopfloor militancy and commitment to help build and work with the SACP as the vanguard of the South African working class. But despite the strategic political direction provided by COSATU's 13th and 14th congresses in 2018 and 2022 respectively – today and leading to its 15th Congress - we have a federation that is ideologically and politically confused. The federation is very confused because it is led by a section that is flip-flopping and zigzagging when it comes to the mandate of supporting the SACP as a vanguard party of the working class in the electoral contestation. This is a mandate that is derived from resolutions (13th and 14th congresses) that were informed by the understanding that elections are a site of class struggle, yet in the current conjuncture there is no an unambiguous working class voice in the formal political terrain.
- Fourthly, as we appreciate the strategic importance of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor and forging a Left Popular Front (LPF) as an organisational vehicle to unite radical and working-class organisations, unfortunately at the same time we must come to terms with the fact that COSATU is now ideologically degenerated and diluted. We can no longer honestly and convincingly talk about the Socialist-Axis, given the state of COSATU today. We must accept that we are dealing with a COSATU which is now dominated by a rightwing opportunist section that is even willing to sacrifice the medium to long-term interests of the working class or the class struggle as such - at the altar of the expedient ANC's Neoliberal agenda. This rightwing opportunist section regards itself as leaders of the workers, yet it is pulling all the stops to keep the federation toeing the line and tailing behind the ruling ANC's Neoliberal agenda, even at the cost of undermining the authority of the federation's highest constitutional organ. This rightwing opportunist section regularly sheds crocodile tears in the media - decrying the catastrophic socioeconomic consequences of the ANC's Neoliberal agenda - amidst crises levels of unemployment, inequalities, poverty and hunger - whilst simultaneously wanting the workers to betray their own class interests as voting cattle of the Neoliberal ANC.

6.2 COSATU on the SACP contesting elections

Despite the fact that the ANC had won the 2004 national elections by a very overwhelming two-third majority, NEHAWU's 8th National Congress which took place in the same year still adopted a far-sighted political resolution calling for "Building a Popular Movement Towards Socialism". That congress also resolved to call

on COSATU and SACP to use “the 2015 Plan and Medium-Term Vision to synergise their programmes to give concrete expression to the deepening of the NDR as a revolution towards socialism.”

COSATU’s 9th National Congress took place two years later in 2006 and that congress unanimously adopted the following strategically important resolutions:

- Firstly, the resolution on “The SACP and State Power”, in terms of which the congress resolved to call on the SACP to unite the progressive left formations, including left-wing political formations committed to radical transformation and socialism. In addition, the 9th National Congress further resolved, that: “COSATU and the SACP must have a clear programme on a path to socialism that would encourage individual members to make financial contributions to the SACP” and “COSATU leadership must lead by example and be card-carrying members of the SACP”.
- Secondly, on the resolution “The National Democratic Revolution and Socialism”, amongst others, COSATU’s 9th National Congress resolved to:
 1. ‘Adopt an official position that rejects the separation of the NDR from socialism and asserts that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the only guarantee that there will be a transition from NDR to socialism.’
 2. ‘A popular movement towards socialism, located within a restructured Alliance and involving a range of mass movements, must be formed to assert the leadership of the working class in the NDR.’

Parallel to discussions that have been taking place in COSATU since the 9th National Congress in 2006 on the SACP and elections or state power, the SACP itself has been long seized by the same discussions - from its own 12th National Congress in 2007, 13th National Congress in 2012, (with the 4th Special Congress and 5th Special Congress in between) culminating at the 15th Congress in 2022. It was out of the deliberations that took place at the 15th National Congress that the SACP concluded the matter – in terms of finally resolving to directly and independently contest elections, with or without a reconfigured Alliance. In this regard, it declared that “the SACP will certainly contest elections, the exact modality in which we do so needs to be determined by way of a concrete analysis of the concrete reality and through the process of active engagement with worker and progressive formations.”

6.3 Is COSATU Flip-flopping and Zigzagging?

Since the COSATU’s 14th National Congress in 2022, but particularly since COSATU’s CEC held on the 24-26 February 2025, we have observed some flip-flopping and zigzagging on the implementation of the mandate of supporting the SACP in electoral contests. We now face an unprecedented development whereby a minor constitutional structure, namely the 8th Central Committee, came out with the outcomes that effectively undermine the resolution of a higher constitutional structure, namely the 14th National Congress, with regard to the mandate of supporting the SACP in electoral contestations.

This is a development that raises questions as to whether there is a Socialist-Axis that still exist in the first place. Indeed, whether COSATU has broken away from its long-held and historical ideological outlook of Marxism-Leninism? The implications of this flip-flopping and zigzagging also raise a question as to whether COSATU’s CEC is now dominated by worker leaders who are devoid of class-consciousness and are captured by the patronage of the ruling but fading Neoliberal-oriented ANC or not?

The political outcomes of COSATU's 9th National Congress laid the foundation for the resolution to support the SACP in the election contests eventually to be passed by the 14th National Congress. Therefore, the political outcomes of the 9th National Congress are the point of departure since all the other congresses that followed generally reiterated and echoed its perspective. Indeed, there is none that deviated from the framework of the strategic perspective laid out by the 9th National Congress.

As NEHAWU we embrace and reaffirm COSATU's strategic perspective that emerged from the 9th National Congress, as we have actively shaped and sponsored it. Indeed, COSATU's 14th National Congress represents a logical continuity with the political outcomes of all the congresses that have taken place after 2009, especially the political resolution of the 13th National Congress in 2018.

Indeed, the resolutions of the 9th National Congress on "The SACP and State Power" and "The National Democratic Revolution and Socialism" underscored the federation's ideological and strategic consistency as well as the principled commitment to working class independence in the context of a multi-class Alliance in pursuit of a minimum programme of the NDR as part of the proletarian socialist struggle. Our 2022 CEC was satisfied that the union had successfully carried out the political mandate from our own 12th National Congress with discipline - as highlighted by the outcomes COSATU's 14th National Congress.^{xxiv} COSATU's 9th National Congress in 2006, 13th National Congress in 2018 and the 14th National Congress in 2022 were groundbreaking landmarks, politically.

Interestingly, the Political Report of COSATU's CEC meeting held on the 24-26 February 2025 is very important as it provides an instructive and honest historical account on the federation's political mandate from the 14th National Congress, for the record. In this regard, in itself that CEC Political Report is a testimony of the flip-flopping and zigzagging that is now going on in the federation, on the mandate of supporting the SACP on its direct contestation in elections. That report also acknowledged and reaffirmed the political resolutions of COSATU's 8th and 9th congresses, including the resolution on the need to build a strong and independent SACP as an instrument of the working class and accordingly the need for the provision of resources to the SACP by the federation and affiliates.

The same report of the February 2025 CEC went on to illustrate that COSATU's 13th National Congress revisited the same issue raised at the 8th and 9th congresses and reaffirmed their resolutions. The 13th National Congress had committed the federation to continue to work with the SACP in engaging the ANC on the reconfiguration of the Alliance. Indeed, ahead of the 2019 national elections the federation's 13th National Congress in 2018 adopted a resolution that clearly stated that COSATU is mandated to continue to work with the SACP on the question of the reconfiguration of the Alliance "but if it fails [meaning if the engagements with the ANC on the reconfiguration of the Alliance fail], **the federation shall work hard to ensure the SACP's electoral victory beyond 2019**" [our emphasis].

Again, it is also important to take into account the fact that the same Political Report of the February 2025 CEC maintained that the 14th National Congress resolved that "**COSATU shall engage the SACP to contest state power in the 2024 general elections and ensure full support by all means possible towards that end**" [our emphasis]. Thus, clearly in this regard, the 14th National Congress was building on the mandate from the 13th National Congress on the endeavour to engage the ANC regarding the reconfiguration of the Alliance. Unfortunately, the ANC was resolutely dismissive, hence the SACP and COSATU did not succeed on the matter of the reconfiguration of the Alliance. The February 2025 CEC report concludes on

the political mandate of the 14th National Congress by stating that “the previous congresses [meaning the 12th and 13th congresses] also resolved on the support for the SACP to contest for state power, as and when the party makes such a resolution”.

To sum up, it is now a matter of historical record that:

- The patient endeavours on the part of COSATU and SACP in engaging the ANC on the reconfiguration of the Alliance have dismally failed and the ANC still considers itself as the exclusive political centre of the Alliance, even though the latter has been deliberately rendered useless.
- After a protracted debate at the 14th National Congress, that congress decided to democratically settle the debate using a constitutionally available and most democratic means of resolving protracted debates, i.e. a vote by the eligible delegates – which resulted in COSATU committing to support the SACP’s direct and independent electoral contestation.
- At the 14th National Congress some affiliates did not oppose nor had alternative positions to propose what ended up being the political resolution of that congress. Indeed, there were affiliates that claimed that they did not have the mandate on the matter, despite the fact that the resolution of the 13th National Congress had already provided a mandate and a clear direction in the event COSATU and SACP failed in their attempts - in engaging the ANC on the question of the reconfiguration of the Alliance.

At this moment - between the COSATU’s 8th Central Committee held in September 2025 and the 15th National Congress, the importance of COSATU’s CEC Political Report presented in February 2025 cannot be overemphasised. Its importance lay in the fact that it was written by COSATU’s Secretariat and was presented to the CEC and the fact that it was an honest capture of the political mandate given by the 14th National Congress. It was not NEHAWU’s own subjective interpretation of the political position of the federation - it was federation’s report that was discussed and adopted by that CEC. The importance of this Political Report becomes even more elevated because after that CEC in February 2025 mysteriously things took a strange turn at the 8th Central Committee in September 2025.

The 8th Central Committee was ironically convened under the theme, “*Build Working Class Unity for Economic Liberation Towards Socialism*” whilst the Political Report that was presented was now vacillating and equivocating on the mandate of the 14th National Congress - on COSATU supporting the SACP in elections contests. The 8th Central Committee’s Political Report was loudly silent – providing no update or feedback on the implementation process regarding the mandate of the 14th National Congress. Similarly, the 8th Central Committee’s Political Report was also silent on other mandated strategic political tasks - particularly related to the joint work with the SACP and this is a resolution that has been consistently reaffirmed since the 9th National Congress.

In failing to make any reference and to provide an update or feedback regarding the implementation process on the political mandate of the 14th National Congress, the Secretariat was pretending that the political resolution did not exist. This is despite the fact that the same Secretariat had made extensive reference to that resolution in the Political Report that it presented to the CEC held in February 2025. This is an undisguised and disgraceful act of flip-flopping and zigzagging - using a constitutionally inferior organ of the federation (the 8th Central Committee) to undermine the constitutionally supreme organ of the federation (14th National Congress). In short, this represents an extreme case of ill-discipline and opportunism. It is extremely ironic because the same Political Report of the 8th Central Committee correctly started by acknowledging the fact that the Central Committee as a structure of the federation, is a “Mid-Term Conference of COSATU, which

receives reports, do a thorough assessment and develops a clear way-forward to advance the strategic and programmatic tasks of the working-class”.

To be clear, it must be emphasised though that this defined purpose of the Central Committee is carried out in the context of taking forward the existing and live mandates from the previous congresses, particular the recent one. The Central Committee does not have the authority to change the resolutions or mandates from national congresses, nor can it pretend that they do not exist just because the Secretariat may be unhappy or disagreeing with them. The 8th Central Committee’s Political Report stated that “the next CEC should develop a programme to embark on **a deeper consultative process, to discuss the 15th SACP National Congress Resolution**” [our emphasis]. So, this is now a matter of “**the 15th SACP National Congress Resolution**” and not a matter of a resolution adopted by COSATU itself at its 14th National Congress in 2022. The 8th Central Committee’s Political Report went on to rhetorically and ritualistically put across the following:

- It reaffirmed “COSATU’s role in advancing the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as a route to socialism” and its “alignment with the SACP as a vanguard party of the working class”.
- It acknowledged “the regression of the NDR, resulting from a protracted neoliberal austerity trajectory”.
- It condemned the ANC on forming the GNU “with forces of monopoly capital”.

We have highlighted above the fact that the Political Report of the 8th Central Committee was talking about a “deeper consultative process” that was focused on COSATU’s own political resolution as adopted by the 14th National Congress - as logically connection with the resolutions of the 13th Congress - read together with the 8th and 9th Congress resolutions. In other words, despite asserting that “COSATU’s role in advancing the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as a route to socialism” and its “alignment with the SACP as a vanguard party of the working class”, the 8th Central Committee’s Political Report provided a falsified picture in giving the impression that the federation did not have any political resolution from its previous congress. The COSATU Secretariat implied that the federation had nothing to say and remained unclear and silent on the SACP directly contesting elections, ever! It was as if the Political Report presented at the February 2025 CEC by the same COSATU Secretariat was lying when it stated that the 14th National Congress resolved that “COSATU shall engage the SACP to contest state power in the 2024 general elections and ensure full support by all means possible towards that end.” Again, an impression is created that this matter of the SACP contesting elections is solely a matter that was exclusively discussed and is derived from the SACP and that it has nothing to do with COSATU.

As stated before, in 2022 at the 14th National Congress some affiliates claimed that they lacked mandates to support the SACP in elections. Yet it was three years later or after 36 months in September 2025 that COSATU’s Secretariat only started to remember and suggest at the 8th Central Committee that the CEC should draw a programme for “deeper consultations” – “on the SACP’s 15th National Congress resolution”, as if its new issue. Again, COSATU’s Secretariat is talking about “deeper consultations” not on a matter that the federation has been seized with since 2006, substantially discussed at the 13th National Congress in 2018 and concluded at the 14th National Congress in 2022 – but on something that it presented as if it’s a new matter. COSATU’s Secretariat does not even explain as to why on this matter there should be “deeper” consultations.

The Declaration of the 8th Central Committee ended up merely regurgitating that: “the CEC immediately following the 8th CC should develop a framework that guides the completion of the consultation process by affiliates in preparation for the 15th National Congress. There should be urgent engagement with the SACP

and the ANC, and these engagement processes will facilitate a discussion towards a decision at the 15th National Congress.” The relevance of an engagement with ANC is not even explained, when no such mandate was given by the 13th and 14th national congresses, except that the 13th Congress directed the federation to engage with the ANC solely on the question of the reconfiguration of the Alliance. The idea of embarking on a consultation with the ANC makes no sense because the latter flatly and categorically rejected the proposal for the reconfiguration of the Alliance. Our 13th National Congress was very clear in its resolution that as a federation we were going to campaign in support of the ANC in the 2019 elections - on a clear precondition that the reconfiguration of the Alliance is materialised - failing which we would campaign in support of the SACP thereafter.^{xxv} **However, the bottom-line is that there is no standing resolution and it is not the policy of COSATU to campaign in support of the ANC as matters stand given the resolution adopted by the 14th National Congress!**

Therefore, the following statements made in the Declaration of the 8th Central Committee are irrelevant because they completely disrespect the authority and mandate of the 14th National Congress, when it stated that:

1. “COSATU calls for an urgent engagement, which must include both COSATU and SANCO, as equal alliance partners in their own right, to be included in these discussions and deliberations, especially on the implications of contesting state power and the unity of the alliance, as well as on the unity of workers and the motive forces of the NDR.”
2. “The federation and its affiliates should take the political discussion on the SACP 5th SNC resolution to their respective members, to seek a clear mandate from branches and members on the posture of workers and COSATU on the electoral contest.”

COSATU’s resolution on supporting the SACP’s electoral contests did not and still does not depend on some consultations processes with third parties or organisations. It was a resolution underlining class independence! The exception in this regard is the resolution of the 14th National Congress directing the federation to meet with the SACP as part of the work to support it in elections. The notion of the “deeper consultations process” is nothing but a naked bureaucratic manoeuvre, a flip-flopping and zigzagging tactic - seeking to use processes to undermine the already existing mandate of congresses! [our emphasis]

7 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

We are now in a new conjuncture of the GNU. From our perspective as part of the class-conscious proletariat, we are also in a conjuncture in which whilst the NDR sets out to resolve the three intertwined contradictions of race, gender and class, the current correlation of class forces within the movement and society mean that the class contradiction is now primary in terms of deepening and advancing the revolution. Therefore, the primary strategic objective for the class-conscious proletariat is to build a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor to wage the struggle for deepening and advancing the NDR as our strategy towards socialism.

The directives of an inferior structure of the federation (8th Central Committee) on the so-called “deeper consultative process”, “urgent engagement with the SACP and the ANC” to “facilitate a discussion towards a decision at the 15th National Congress” signify nothing but a disrespect of the political mandate from 14th

National Congress. As far as we are concerned, on the question of supporting the SACP in its direct contestation of elections, at best the 15th National Congress can only review progress on the implementation of the 14th National Congress resolution.

It is unfortunate that since COSATU's 9th National Congress the resolution calling on the federation and SACP to use "the 2015 Plan and Medium-Term Vision to synergise their programmes to give concrete expression to the deepening of the NDR as a revolution towards socialism" was not implemented. Similarly, the resolution calling for "Building a Popular Movement Towards Socialism" was not implemented. Again, in the Political Report of COSATU's 14th National Congress we have adopted the proposal to jointly synchronise and synthesise medium-term programmes of the socialist-axis, including committing to support the party's programme of building a powerful socialist movement of the workers and the poor.

The COSATU's 14th National Congress furthermore cast its eyes ahead in the coming period and adopted a Political Report that made the following proposals, that:

1. Our immediate strategic outlook is to resist the deepening of the Neoliberal trajectory and to continue to fight for an alternative developmental path around the perspective of the Developmental State. This means that we must continue to resist and oppose the unfolding offensive on collective bargaining, pay-cuts and widening wage-gap in the public and private sector, campaign against the current wave of austerity and budget-cuts on public and municipal services and fight against corruption and for accountability. [It is worth noting that this posture was adopted 14th National Congress way before the DA could even be in a position of joining the ANC as a fellow Neoliberal partner in the GNU].
2. Recognising the reformist limitations inherent in this alternative developmental path, we also said that we must combine this immediate strategic posture with our anti-capitalist agitation and ideological offensive, working with our revolutionary vanguard of the South African working class. This means that our critique of Neoliberalism must be combined with practical campaigns on issues and demands that place socialist solutions at the centre and thus challenging the capitalist logic and the system itself.

Based on what has transpired since 2022, as part of our resistance to the Neoliberalisation of the state, we can add the necessity to mobilise and fight against the liberalisation and takeover of public infrastructure by private capital through the infamous Operation Vulindlela in the drive to implement the so-called structural reforms.

Endnotes

¹ Currently, the USA's Debt-to-GDP ratio is about 124% and in 2026 the government debt is worth \$39 trillion. This is double that of China's \$18.7 trillion.

¹ In the course of the summit, President Xi even boldly and openly stated that America was a "declining power". These remarks were not necessarily derogatory as they are based on the often careful analyses that China would undertake. Trump's response to these remarks through the social media signified that the USA itself was painfully aware of this reality as he did not even dispute the assertion. Instead, he indirectly confirmed this trend by blaming the previous USA President, Joe Biden.

¹ Politically, the enemy camp was a line-up that was led by the neo-fascist National Party and the Apartheid-liberals in the Progressive Federal Party (the predecessor of the DA) which represented the core white monopoly capital. They

were followed by the sell-out Bantustan political parties, Mayoral puppets in black local authorities, the sell-out Coloured and Indian parties in the Tricameral Parliamentary system, reactionary unions such as the Public Service Association (PSA), a vast network of propaganda institutions and organisations, including other minority organisations such as the South African Indian Council - as well as imperialist countries such as the United States and Britain.

¹ The ANC even had the audacity of launching an ideological offensive against the workers during NEHAWU's 2022 strike at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and during the historic NEHAWU strike in the public service in 2023.

¹ The bourgeois media and the political elite describe the voter stay-away, which is a passive but still a political act in itself, as "voter apathy" to deflect attention away from the deep-seated crisis of South Africa's capitalism and its Neoliberal state that are failing the discontented and disillusioned youth and the masses of our people.

¹ The GNU has a very bloated Cabinet, which is nearly double the size of the first GNU of 1994-1997. This is the largest Cabinet ever (since 1994), with a record 75 ministers and deputy ministers. Together with the support staff it is estimated that the GNU costs the fiscus at least about R670 million annually.

¹ Led by the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Discovery Adrian Gore and Rothschild South Africa, Martin Kingston, since the sixth administration more than 160 CEOs from multiple sectors, representing R11 trillion market capitalisation at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), have thrown their full weight behind the implementation of the "structural reforms". In addition, about 20 CEOs have been actively involved almost on a daily basis in government's work, participating and making decisions in the four workstreams of the structural reforms – working on ending loadshedding, fixing the ports and freight rail, dealing with crime and corruption and the question of youth unemployment.

¹ They enthusiastically condemned Hamas's attacks on Israel on the 7th October 2023 but have been very silent on the unfolding genocide over the past 33 months. Indeed, the media has been covering up for them, especially the DA's *shtum* (silence) knowing that the overwhelming majority of South Africans are morally outraged, are politically opposed to the Zionist entity and pledge solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinians.

¹ This was based on the deluded assumption that out of the 2024 elections the collective share of their seats in Parliament would unseat the ANC. This illusion was based on the polling surveys that have been desperately trying to create expectations and therefore psychologically seeking to influence the electoral outcomes over several cycles of elections since the fourth administration under Jacob Zuma.

¹ On the macroeconomic policies, objectively there is so much that is in common between the DA and ANC. Hence, the DA did not hesitate in joining the GNU in the first place. However, its alienation of other parties of the MPC such as ActionSA can make it review its attitude - given the consequences of its opportunism when it joined the GNU which caused it to lose control of key metros such as Tshwane and Ekurhuleni where it was unseated.

¹ The Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) was imposed in 1996 as "non-negotiable". This was the first of many instances to come, as outline in this report, in which a popular electoral mandate would be summarily abandoned after the ANC is elected. Through GEAR the rationale and parameters of the Neoliberal macroeconomic management were set and they persist up to today, even when circumstances changed and economic policy was given a new name.

¹ Irina Filatova (2012) 'The Lasting Legacy: The Soviet Theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa', South African Historical Journal, Vol. 64 No. 3.

¹ The NDR in Vietnam culminated with the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976, which had drawn from the transitional experience of the revolution in China.

¹ Mao Zedong conceptualised this experience as a new type of revolution led by the proletariat or with the participation of the proletariat in the leadership and having as its aim, in the first stage, the establishment of a new democratic society and state under the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes – under a transitional phase called "national democracy".

¹ Karen Brutents was one of the heads of the CPSU's International Department under the Central Committee and was part of a committee that worked on theoretical matters pertaining to anticolonial struggles.

¹ Irina Filatova (2012) 'The Lasting Legacy: The Soviet Theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa', South African Historical Journal, Vol. 64 No. 3, p 50

¹ Ibid.

¹ Accordingly, the first phase of the anti-colonial struggle in South Africa ended with the Bambatha rebellion in 1906, then followed a second phase which was characterised by the establishment of the more modern and national political formations to build unity amongst the oppressed using different forms of protests that were largely peaceful but escalating in their intensity and mass character.

¹ The Green Book was a report drafted in August 1979 by a six member committee of the Politico-Military Strategy Commission, which included Comrades Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki and Joe Slovo and it was mainly based on a study of the Vietnamese revolution.

¹ CPSU, Bulletin no 10 (Moscow: Pravda, 1971), 54.

¹ World Marxist Review, December 1975.

¹ However, the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme which was tabled in Parliament in November 1994 was diluted and denuded of its radical thrust. This was a strong indication that there was a Neoliberal agenda that was already crystallising into a faction even before the publication of GEAR 1996.

¹ Celebrations by the ANC over such anniversaries merely signify a decent gesture of paying homage to the iconic historical moments and events as well as its own contribution in the struggle.

¹ In fact, the 2022 CEC stated that "the union played a leading role in sponsoring and influencing the adoption of the resolution on "The National Democratic Revolution and Socialism". Indeed, the CEC appreciated that "the thrust of this resolution [COSATU's 14th National Congress] articulated the logical step consistent with the unanimously adopted resolution of COSATU's 13th Congress on "The SACP, State and Popular Power" regarding the SACP and elections.

¹ The fact the February 2024 CEC was compelled under the circumstances in which the SACP was not in a position to mount its own election campaign to proclaim that "the ANC is our option and the SACP is our choice" does not mean that an even more inferior structure in the form of the CEC can permanently change or erase a resolution of the 14th National Congress.

GENDER REVIEW POLICY

1. PURPOSE

While NEHAWU has a proud history and been at the forefront of gender struggles within COSATU, at the workplace and society as a whole, but still lacks a comprehensive gender policy that is responsive to the new challenges arising from significant milestone achieved as a result of gender transformation since the dawn of our democracy. The prevailing material conditions dictates to the union the need to review its gender policy as we venture into a radical second phase of our transition – the radical economic transformation of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). This policy must be regarded as a statement of the union that affirms its commitment to gender equality in practice through its activities and targets. Indeed, the aim of this policy is to cover all that we struggle for in the first place in the union, the federation, the workplace and society as a whole.

Through this policy, we envisage a future where women participate equally in the economy and society without barriers, and where women are emancipated from all forms of oppression in the household, the workplace and in broader society. This policy calls for a trade union movement that is a home for all women workers.

This gender policy seeks to address the systematic inequalities between men and women in society that are reproduced in the union and the workplace. It also prioritises the specific empowerment of women as a way of achieving gender equality. It is premised on the fact that gender inequality is all about power relations, and that any policy, plan or practice that seeks to achieve gender equality must transform those relations.

The purpose of a policy is to bring a gender perspective into all aspects of planning, policy, implementation and transformation. This means looking not only at women alone, but rather at the relationship between women and men and how societies are structured along gender lines.

Our specific objectives are to ensure that the union is gender friendly and lead by example to the whole trade union movement. It should also guide all of our members and shop stewards in striving for gender equality at the workplace. The policy should help to educate and raise awareness on gender and become a tool in building gender structures and ensuring equal gender representation at all levels of the union, the workplace and broader society.

This policy captures the strategic goal of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) - the resolution of the three basic and interrelated contradictions of Colonialism of a Special Type in South Africa particularly the patriarchal relations of power. This policy as a product on the ongoing debates and discussion since the inception of the union in 1987 understood the antagonism of the triple oppression of the masses of women as based on race and class.

2. VISION

A society free of sexism, racism, class exploitation and other forms of oppression

This vision means that women and men must live together in dignity, mutual respect, harmony and social justice; thrive in an enabling environment in which they are able to achieve their full potential, in full enjoyment of their human rights. The union therefore should strive to ensure that women and men are equal partners in taking decisions to shape political, economic, social and cultural development, in determining the values that guide and sustain such development and equally enjoy its benefits in the society as a whole. The union as an integral part of the key players in the broad political landscape towards a democratic South African society, recommit itself into gender struggles not only as a matter of theory but of practice in all union decisions and activities. This policy outlines how the union intends to realise this ideal or vision.

3. OUR CONTEXT OF GENDER STRUGGLE

Firstly, it is important that we understand exactly what we mean by 'gender' because too often, the concept of 'gender' and 'sex' are used interchangeably while they are quite different. Often, 'gender' is seen as referring only to women. Another common misunderstanding is that it simply means addressing men and women's concerns equally. This ignores the unequal power between men and women and undermines the central objective, which is the emancipation of women. Secondly, it is imperative to give meaning to the following words or concepts:

- Sex refers to biological differences between men and women.
- Gender on the other hand refers to differences between men and women that are created by society and culture. They are no natural differences but created through socialisation by using institutions such as the family, the church, religion, education and schools, the state and the economy. When we refer to 'gender relations' we are referring to the fact that there is an unequal power relationship between men and women.
- Gender roles are expectations of how men and women should behave in ways that are defined by society. For example, men are supposed to be natural leaders, decision makers and providers; women are expected to be caregivers, supporters and followers of men.
- Gender relations in our society are defined by the capitalist-patriarchy in which we live. In the current context the two systems reinforce each other, which mean patriarchy cannot be resolved without addressing capitalist relations.
- Patriarchy refers to the system of male domination and control at all levels of society. Capitalist patriarchy has a material basis in the sexual division of labour, exploitation of women's unpaid labour and their subordination in the household. It is supported by the patriarchal ideology that sees women as inferior to men. In terms of this sexual hierarchy men and women are accorded different roles. For instance, women role is conceived as being a nurturer and caregiver, while men are entrusted with decision-making.

For a variety of complex reasons, women cooperate with this system. We know, for example, that without the cooperation of slaves, slavery would not have lasted for so long. It is the same with women. They have internalised the system and its values, and in some cases, particular women benefit from it. A complex set

of relationships keeps their cooperation. In order to retain privilege, women are continually renegotiating their bargaining power, sometimes at the cost of other women. Examples of this include women who treat their sons better than their daughters, deprive their daughters of education, restrict their freedom and mistreat their daughters-in-law.

Patriarchy manifest itself in all aspects of society including the economy, political institutions and ideologies, the legal system, the religion, social and cultural institutions, such as the family, the media, education system and so forth. The nature of patriarchal relations varies from society to society. At the same time women's oppression takes various forms depending on race, class, religion, marital status and age.

- Capitalism is a mode of production based on private property where one class – the bourgeoisie owns and controls the means of production and the working class (a dispossessed labouring class that provides labour for production) owns nothing but its labour power. Capitalism benefits from the oppression of women under patriarchy, by virtue of the fact that employers pay low wages to women because of patriarchal ideology, which sees men as the breadwinner. Capitalists benefit through the separation of unpaid labour in the home from waged work, as it means that the labour force is reproduced at no cost to the employers, but at a tremendous cost to women.

Furthermore, the capitalist state also avoids its responsibility of providing for the reproduction of society (through infrastructure and child care) because of the patriarchal system, which makes this a private responsibility. Against this background the gender division of labour and patriarchal ideology are the focal issues in combating women's subordination under capitalism. For this reason, a clear understanding needs to be developed of the oppressive nature of the gender division of labour, and the associating ideology and concepts perpetuating it, such as the concepts of work and skills.

Under apartheid, race, gender and class oppression were combined in an intricate system of oppression. On the surface, it appeared to be simply racial and gender domination, but this served to hide the underlying economic logic – the exploitation of the black working class. Race and gender oppression are not about mere prejudice, but ultimately about using power and control in the interest of capital. Apartheid capitalism also benefited from women's oppression in that large numbers of African women worked as domestic workers and cleaners under extremely exploitative conditions. Furthermore, women's unpaid labour in the rural areas enabled bosses to pay extremely low wages to migrant workers.

Apartheid laws set out limited and impoverished roles for African women. In particular, s they enforced migrant labour, they defined the role of African women in society and the economy. At the same time, the colonial system in South Africa, as throughout the continent, intensified the gender oppression found in the pre-colonial systems. The combination of colonial and customary oppression denied women basic social and economic rights in the family and the community. Many women were barred from living in the cities, owning land, family planning, inheriting, borrowing money or participating in political and social struggles. The system led to widespread abuse of women, both inside and outside the family. African women were confronted by triple oppression-oppression on the basis of their race, of their gender and also of their class. Black working class women bore the brunt of apartheid, capitalist and patriarchal oppression.

Women's emancipation is therefore a central feature of the struggle against apartheid and capitalism. As Samora Machel stated, women's emancipation is 'not an act of charity but a precondition for the liberation of society'. Our society cannot be free if half the population is still oppressed.

The NDR therefore seeks to address gender, race and class oppression not one after the other, but all at the same time. It is important that this struggle be led by the bulk of the oppressed-women. Women should be empowered to challenge the system of patriarchy. While it is important to recognise that men have an important role in the struggle for gender equality, the leading role of women should always be emphasised – this however, should not be confused with making gender issues a 'women's issue'.

in order to consciously combat sexism and gender oppression in our organisational policies and strategies and in broader society, these must be infused with a gender consciousness. A 'gendered perspective' aims to mainstream and integrate gender struggles, rather than seeing these struggles as women issues that are treated in a separate and isolated way. A gendered perspective has the strategic objective of the fundamental transformation of society and unequal power relations. It also means a gender analysis is applied at all levels with regard to policies, programmes, planning strategy and evaluation. However, a gendered perspective still recognises the central role of women's leadership.

It is also important to emphasise the fact that the struggle to transform gender relations will benefit both men and women by creating an enabling environment for all in order to realise their full human potential. Gender equality will also bring visible benefits to society by drawing half of the population into productive activities. Gender equality however, cannot be realised without conscious strategies to redress unequal power relations between men and women in organisations and in the broader society. As emphasised above, the NDR aims to bring an end to this form of oppression.

4. OUR ANALYSIS OF GENDER RELATIONS

To put our policy statement in a context, we provide an analysis on the state of affairs broadly in the country, labour market, trade union movement and the union.

The new democratic dispensation and the adoption of a progressive Constitution have brought visible changes for the majority of the formerly oppressed. The Constitution outlaws' discrimination of women and calls for measures to redress the past imbalances in terms of race, sex and disability and other prohibited grounds of discrimination. The adoption of the Employment Equity Act will go a long way in overcoming discrimination and inequality within the workplace. In addition, the Promotion of Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination Act will also contribute towards gender equity in all spheres of society. Thus legislative measures are now in place to address all forms of discrimination and inequality. Linked to this, the provision of basic services such as water and health care has brought visible relief for millions of people especially women in the rural areas.

Yet, despite these advances, gender inequality remains entrenched in our society. To understand this, it is important to analyse gender relations in the labour market and within the organisation. It must also be noted that, in general access to basic services is still skewed in racial, gender and geographic terms. Further, the majority of the poor are women – particularly African women. Women tend to be vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and job losses. Unpaid labour continues unabated.

4.1 State of Gender relations in the labour market

The labour market is still segmented in terms of race and gender. It is characterised by a sexual division of labour in which women are largely associated with domesticity and servicing, while men are associated with machinery and technology. Women, particularly black women, are concentrated in low paid-jobs and the service sector where they face wage discrimination. They tend to be concentrated in vulnerable sectors such as domestic work and the farms as well as in survivalist activities in the informal sector.

Senior, highly paid jobs are occupied mainly by males, particularly white males. As a result of inherited wage inequities and the fact that women are concentrated in low paid jobs, women's share of income is substantially lower than men. Discrimination also takes the form of differences in the value placed on men and women's jobs-which translates into wage disparity. The majority of the unemployed are women particularly black women.

Women also face hardship in finding and keeping jobs. The majority of women have to juggle careers and domestic responsibility such as cooking and taking care of children. The shortage of childcare facilities and the sexual division of labour in the home impose serious burdens on women. Maternity leave and pay provision are also inadequate, and in some cases women are not even paid minimum wage.

4.2 Gender Relations in the Public Service

There have been significant changes in the employment of women in the public service since 1995. There has been an increase of more than 100% of women employed at senior management level. However, women still only make up to 12.8% of senior managers in the public service, and 50% of total employment. It is also possible that the increase at higher levels can be accounted for by the fact that the government took on more teachers and nurses, which are traditionally seen as women's jobs. In this regard, our policy recognises and makes a reference to the "White Paper on Transforming the Public Service".

4.3 Gender Relations within the Trade Union Movement

While women contribute about 37% of COSATU members, leadership structures are predominantly male from shop floor to national levels. In addition, employment patterns in the unions reproduce the sexual division of labour in society. Most influential positions, such as educators, organisers and regional/general secretaries are overwhelmingly male-dominated, while the majority of women employed in unions are in administrative positions.

Women are confronted by barriers, which impact on their participation in the union and which partly explain the lower representation of women in union leadership structures. The sexual division of labour in the home impose a double burden on women. Shop steward and union meetings are often held after working hours making difficult for women to participate. The language and jargon used in meetings are often alienating to women. Union members and leadership (and broader society) often have fixed attitude about women's roles. Stereotypes about a "woman's place" often contribute to discouragement and discrimination directed at women in unions.

The male-dominated image and culture of trade unions sometimes results in women not being taken seriously, and translates into a glib, lip service commitment to gender issues, and a general lack of sensitivity

to women's particular organisational needs. Further, women are confronted with resistance at home and experience discouragement and abuse from their partners who feel threatened by the fact that their wives/partners are activist and becoming more assertive, and would like to see them remaining in the home. Some of these attitudes are perpetuated by males in the unions.

The role of sexual harassment in discouraging participation cannot be discounted. Many vulnerable and marginalised sectors dominated by women. A common concern is that collective bargaining demands are often not gender-sensitive. Where demands are taken up, they are easily compromised in negotiations. The lack of women organisers and the lack of gender sensitivity on the part of male organisers contribute to these problems. Nevertheless, some affiliates have made good progress in taking up collective bargaining campaigns, particularly on parental rights.

4.4 Gender Relations in NEHAWU

NEHAWU, as an integral part of the society in transition, does not differ from the broad labour movement in that it reproduces the gender discrimination found in the broader labour market. The leadership does not reflect the number of women members and the majority of women employed by the union in administrative positions.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 Promoting Gender Equality in the Union

This gender policy moves from the premise that gender inequality will not disappear on its own accord rather through conscious and political strategies aimed at eliminating gender inequality within organisations and broader society in general. This policy will take the form of specific measures to promote women leadership and plans to address inequality in the union and workplace. The development and empowerment of women workers and the elimination of discrimination and stereotyping are central goals in building gender equality. The measure of gender equality is women's full and equal participation at all levels of trade union organisation.

5.2 Promoting gender equality in union structures and staffing Quota

62% of NEHAWU's members are women, and women have played a crucial role in the struggles to build the union and to represent the interests of its members. These numbers are not reflected in the leadership structures of the union.

To ensure that women are represented at all levels of the union, NEHAWU has adopted a quota system. This is one of the most important aspects of our policy, and proof of our commitment to the serious tackling of under-representation of women. NEHAWU has adopted this quota for all its activities, seminars, workshops, meeting, and deployment, elections of shop stewards and also in leadership at all levels of the organisation. In December 1998, the CEC took a decision that in all structures of the union, either the secretary or the chairperson should be a woman.

The objective of this strategy is to achieve a higher representation of women in senior positions providing effective and quality leadership to the union.

The implementation of the quota is in itself a struggle – in implementing it, we are directly challenging gender power relations within the organisation. There is a great deal of male resistance to the quota system, when they are faced with losing positions that have in the past been held by men, and as a result of the patriarchal mind-set that continues to exist.

We also face the challenge of dealing with the internalised oppression of women that divides women and perpetuates a lack of confidence in women leaders (within and amongst themselves).

Furthermore, there are still a number of structural, practical and material barriers to women's full participation in leadership, most important of which is the sexual division of labour, which makes women responsible for childcare, unpaid reproductive labour and caring work. Our policy deals with these barriers below.

We also acknowledge that the quota system should be used in combination with other strategies to ensure qualitative leadership. In other words, our aim is to build real and meaningful participation of women and not to simply put women in leadership positions without addressing the challenges that women face once in those positions.

5.3 Women Leadership Development

In tandem with the 50% quota principle, NEHAWU has a policy of building and supporting women as leaders, so that they are confident and perform well in those positions the policy is to target groups of women for leadership development, and to take them through an ongoing education and empowerment programme. The programme covers the following;

- Equip gender coordinators with the skills to implement and run educational activities
- Run political schools for women shop stewards to enhance their participation in political debates
- Train office bearers in leadership and presentation skills to build their confidence
- Raise awareness on sexual harassment amongst women (and men)
- Train gender coordinators and negotiators in collective bargaining and negotiating skills
- Train gender coordinators and constitutional structures in gender studies
- Train women at all levels of the union on specialised areas, such as labour law, economics etc.

The women leadership development programme should be part of the broad education and training strategy that includes induction, shop stewards' foundation course, specialist and advanced training and membership training. Women must be well represented on these courses too, in line with the quota policy.

5.4 Career Paths

The programme to develop women as leaders must include a programme that would provide certificates for participants. This would apply to women leaders, as well as staff members such as administrators and organisers, and would open up avenues of opportunity outside the union. For women who take up full time positions in the union, this would contribute to their development both within the union and at the end of their term of office. The SETAs where NEHAWU is represented would be partners in this programme.

5.5 Elimination of barriers facing women in NEHAWU

There are various organisational challenges facing women workers in the union that prevent them from participating fully in union activities and taking up leadership roles.

5.6 The nature of shop steward work

The extensive responsibilities of a shop steward are a big deterrent to women who already have to combine their housework and childcare with a job. Even though the need for both parents to be responsible for childcare has been an ongoing demand in COSATU and affiliates, in practice women remain the primary child-minders. Shop stewards have to attend to a range of meeting at their place of work, in the union and in the federation. So although the new Labour Relations Act makes provision for shop steward time off, a number of meetings are either held after working hours during the week, or over weekends, times when it is very difficult for women to attend.

In order to create an environment that encourages and supports women to attend meetings and participate fully in the life of the union, NEHAWU's policy is to:

- Provide child care at meetings
- Provide transport at meetings
- Arrange time off for women workers and when this is exhausted:
- Schedule meetings at times most suitable for women with families
- Promote equality in the home with regard to domestic responsibility

6. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The national union recognises that sexual harassment is not just a combination of acts of an individual misconduct, but a manifestation of patriarchal power relations inherited from bourgeois class society. Sexual harassment is reproduced within workplaces and organisations unless consciously challenged with political education and ideological rebuttal. Under capitalism, women workers experience both exploitation as members of the working class; and gender oppression rooted in patriarchy. The national content of our national democratic revolution constitutes another front of blatant women oppression on the basis of race, colour or creed, from which sexual harassment can find expression.

Sexual harassment is a counter-revolutionary relic of bourgeois ideology which undermines the unity of the working class, stifles democratic participation. It is a betrayal of women's leadership in the process of their development and ruins the revolutionary integrity of the class-oriented trade union movement.

Genuine liberation, class oppression, gender equality and socialism are impossible working class ideals, if the struggle against sexual harassment is not integrated in them.

As such the union sexual harassment is incompatible with the values of the working-class movement. It is a contradiction of the values of solidarity, equality and is an intolerable deviation which the union should eliminate by advancing women leadership and strengthening women's role in class struggle.

In order to combat sexual harassment, the union shall create safe organisational environments for all members, integrate gender equality into political education programmes, conduct regular awareness campaigns on sexual harassment, ensure women's meaningful participation in structures and activities and actively dismantle patriarchal practices within union culture.

The union policy shall entail very specific reporting, disciplinary and corrective mechanisms for dealing with sexual harassment complaints including guaranteeing confidentiality and protecting witnesses.

In the final analysis it is strong political education interventions aimed at challenging patriarchal attitudes, promoting socialist ethics and working class morality, building gender consciousness among members and developing women cadres and leaders that best helps us address sexual harassment.

6.1 Eliminating gender division of labour in NEHAWU

NEHAWU must implement employment equity legislation, firstly by conducting an audit of employees in terms of race, gender and disability, and then by developing employment equity plans in consultation with all staff. NEHAWU must apply the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and this must be driven by the General Secretary on behalf of the National Office Bearers.

Administrators must be seen as part of the organisation, the union should value their work and contribution, and ensure that they are drawn into the activities of the union. They should have access to political education and capacity building, and the gender structures should monitor this.

6.2 Organising women workers

Recruiting more women workers into the union requires a shift in mind-set, style and approach. New organising strategies need to be developed and more women organisers should be considered for employment. Organising and serving strategies should take into account the specific conditions of women workers.

Organising of women workers should go hand in hand with an annual campaign to elect women shop stewards as a matter of principle in order to balance the gender. Organisers and education officers should be at the forefront of this campaign and draw up a list of women available to be elected as shop stewards. Annual programmes and campaigns should be developed by the union to raise awareness of gender stereotypes. The union must be vigilant by preventing employers from undermining women shop stewards and organisers who harass new women shop stewards must be disciplined.

Workplace gender activities and campaign programmes must be designed to empower women and challenge gender inequality in the workplace. The gender coordinators should monitor these programmes consistently and provide overall support to the workplace gender structures.

7 GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LABOUR SPACE

7.1 Promoting gender equality in the workplace

As we have already seen, women have traditionally been discriminated against in the workplace. They have suffered exclusion from certain types of jobs, inadequate provisions for childcare facilities, lower wages for work of equal value, inadequate maternity benefits and sexual harassment. NEHAWU 's policy is to challenge these issues on behalf of all women and to prioritise them when bargaining on behalf of its members.

The trade union movement must view campaigns as an important element in mobilising women around concrete issues and have a key role to play in raising consciousness and awareness. Campaigns must be an important role of gender committees and should be driven by an ongoing integrated programme. They should be linked with education, empowerment and mobilisation of women around the transformation of gender relations.

7.2 Parental right and childcare

Employers have not seen parental rights and provision of child-care as an economic issue. But the economy is not just what is produced in the factories, it is how the whole society is organised to reproduce. Parental right and provision of childcare supports and reproduces the workforce, by enabling women and men in waged work to combine a career with a fully family life, while infants are given all the care and attention required.

Fighting for the provision of parental rights and childcare will deliver concrete benefits for working women, it will play an important role in challenging and addressing women's oppression, it will contribute towards the proper care and early childhood development of infants and children, and it will enable women to be more active as unionist. Such a campaign should be linked to broader issues of social services such as the child maintenance grant. The objectives of the campaign include highlighting the responsibility of both employers and the state in the provision of childcare.

The following are the core demands:

- Paid maternity leave
- Paid and unpaid parental leave
- Childcare leave
- Flexible working time
- Provision of childcare
- Breaks and facilities for breastfeeding mothers
- Job security and health and safety for pregnant women.

Adequate support must be given to negotiators and organisers in conducting this campaign. This includes education programmes, research backup and a parental rights negotiators manual. The campaign should be conducted at a political and ideological level.

7.3 Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value

NEHAWU will continue to press for more progress in securing equal pay for work of equal value. Emphasis should be placed on the following:

- Skills acquired by women on the job and within the family must be more highly valued and reflected in remuneration.
- Promoting and securing legislation on equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.
- Incorporating equal pay principle in collective bargaining for full-time workers and for part-time workers (proportional to their employment).
- All casual workers, whatever their employment contract, to be covered by collective bargaining so that the above principle is respected.
- Upgrading of low wages and salary categories where women traditionally work.
- Eliminating barriers that prohibit women from entering jobs traditionally held by men.
- Deepening the understanding of this issue amongst membership and leadership.
- Developing specific campaigns to promote equal pay.

7.4 Employment Equity Agreements

Employment Equity legislation can contribute to transforming occupational segregation in the workplace if effectively implemented. The gender dimensions to employment equity needs to be integrated in the approach of unions and the promotion of black women should be emphasised. Furthermore, trade unions can exploit the provisions for the elimination of barriers to women's employment as a space to push for advances for women workers. Plans should be developed with specific reference to women in the following key areas:

- Remuneration and promotion
- Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value
- Sexual harassment
- Parental rights and childcare facilities
- Violence against women

7.5 Health and Safety

There is a need to address reproductive health demands of women in the workplace. For example, access to pap smears, provide safe working conditions that do not affect the reproductive health of women, and conducive working conditions for women that are pregnant and breastfeeding. In order for these issues to be addressed, women should be part of health and safety committees at the workplace.

8. HIV/AIDS

The unequal power relations create a context within which adolescent women have been socialised by societal arrangements and cultural and religious beliefs to put their own desires and wishes below that of their male counterparts, including their sexual partners.

Men hold power within families and girls are socialised from an early age to obey men whilst boys are socialised to give orders to women. There are very strong cultural and religious beliefs that women are owned by men which results in women being disempowered from sexual decision-making and instead listening to and obeying their husbands under all circumstances.

The threat of HIV/AIDS to women's lives by associating the spread with women's subordination in sexual relationships. Any gender-related intervention is incomplete without a mention of this life-threatening syndrome-HIV/AIDS. The struggle against HIV/AIDS remains an enormous challenge for the women's movement – joining hands with men. The unions campaign against HIV/AIDS must reinforce the message that women must take control of their lives, their bodies and their health- they must say no to sex and insist on using a condom.

The campaign is critical in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and as such the union must embark on mobilising its members, workers and the broader society in achieving the United Nations 95-95-95, which is centred on prevention, testing, and treatment. The UNAIDS 95-95-95 strategy seeks to ensure that 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of those diagnosed are on treatment and 95% on treatment achieve viral suppression. The union through the campaign must strongly advocate for everyone to join in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The union must continuously drive and promote educational awareness programs on HIV/AIDS, encourage testing, continue fighting the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.

The union must provide support for its members to deal with this issue in the workplace, with a strong emphasis on women, as the disease affects women in greater numbers than men. Women are more vulnerable

because they lack access to information about the disease. They are sometimes blamed as carriers of the disease and face more discrimination, stigma and violence than men simply because they are women. Often, women have only one sexual partner and believe they are not at risk, even though they know their partner is not faithful.

Every workplace should provide training on preventing the spread of the disease, and should make condoms available. Each workplace should have a policy and programme on HIV/AIDS, jointly developed with the workers, and the policy should stress that testing is the choice of the individual worker, and that the results remain confidential. NEHAWU shop stewards should be trained to provide counselling for workers who tests.

When a worker becomes too ill to work, the employer should provide the same kinds of working conditions as any employee with a disability. This could include flexible or part-time working schedules, leave of absence for illness, and changing the job if necessary.

Education and training programmes need to provide a gender perspective on preventing the disease, as it is the unequal power in relationships between men and women that prevent women from saying no to sex or to insisting on the use of condom.

9. WORKPLACE ON GENDER STRUGGLES

Workplace gender activities and campaigns are necessary mechanisms in empowering and developing women, from creating conditions for the election of female shop stewards to shaping a gender programme for the trade union movement. Active union support and assistance would give grassroots activities a kick-start. This will include establishing gender committees presided over by the branch gender coordinator at the workplace level to focus on grassroots activism.

An important role of gender structures and the union movement more broadly is to promote a radical theoretical perspective that is appropriated to the union context and that reflects the organisational and workplace challenges facing women. It is important that women take the lead in developing and promoting this perspective. Another important role of gender structures is to play consciousness-raising, political education and capacity development role. This refers to building the capacity of gender coordinators to participate in union debates on the economy, legislation and political environment, but also to enable them to insert a gender perspective into all these debates. Also it is about building a feminist consciousness amongst activists in the gender structures and the union movement more broadly.

A key element to being effective is the ability to read, analyse organisations, policies and debates from a gender perspective and to be able to present an articulate critique and make active strategic interventions on that basis. The gender structures should focus on building women worker leaders in the trade union movement, as well as the development of a cadre ship of gender activists that are committed to promoting and taking forward transformational gender struggles.

10. EQUALITY FOR LGBTQI+ PERSONS

The Union affirms that all workers, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, are equal members of the working class and are entitled to dignity, safety, and full participation in union life.

Discrimination, harassment or exclusion directed at LGBTQI+ workers is incompatible with the principles of the union and its principles of solidarity, equality and democracy.

The Union recognises that LGBTQI+ workers often face multiple forms of oppression, including workplace discrimination, social stigma, violence and economic marginalisation, which undermine collective struggle.

The Union therefore commits itself to promoting equality, dignity and respect for LGBTQI+ members in all union structures and activities, prohibiting discrimination, harassment, bullying or hate speech based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, ensuring safe and inclusive participation in meetings, campaigns, education programmes and leadership structures, integrating LGBTQI+ equality into political education and organisational programmes, supporting workplace policies that guarantee non-discrimination, equal benefits and protection from victimisation.

The national union upholds the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. The struggle against sexism, homophobia and all forms of discrimination forms part of the broader struggle for workers' emancipation against oppression and capitalist exploitation.

11. WORKING WOMEN AND WOMAN MOVEMENT – a class reality and a uniting movement

The gender perspective of the union as contained in this policy recognises that the gender question coexists as an important aspect of the class question. Women, while similar in their gender roles in modern society, exist in a class society that organises them in terms of their class position. A woman who is a worker has a different consciousness than a woman who belongs to the ruling class. The sense of urgency for the liberation of women in the class society is not singular but differentiated, in that overarching social and class forces beyond the woman and her gender determine the forces that drive it. Working class woman and her work place struggles are unique to her economic condition. A working woman's radical inspiration in her daily struggles cannot be equivalent, at least from an economic and political standpoint, to that of a woman whose inspiration is framed by bourgeois ambitions to equate economic and social standing to that of a bourgeois man. Working women's experience and consciousness is built on a cross cutting experience of being a worker exploited for her labour and a woman politically and socially oppressed in a patriarchal society.

In a society as South Africa composed of class, gender and class oppression the woman is faced by triple oppression. The union the aims therefore, as perspective on gender relations and the elevation of the working woman's condition in the workplace, to build an enduring programme to make specific and relevant demands on women specific issues and workplace specific matters ensuring that women are not professionally disadvantaged on the basis of their status as women. Part of that work is the aim to cultivate an environment for women workers that promotes effective participation in decision-making, taking into account needs for redress as necessitated by legacy of patriarchy. Understanding the class nature of the gender dynamic, the gender programme of the NEHAWU takes into consideration women disadvantaged in the economic scale of the particular workplace.

For our own internal organisational operations, NEHAWU will seek to diversify, from a gender point of view, those that deliver the work of the union from representation to leadership.

It is therefore essential for the union to develop strategy to encourage and support grassroots activism among women members. They need to encourage and support active organising and mobilising around concrete issues. Gender coordinators and workplace gender committees could play an important role in this.

A strategy to link the child-care facility campaign with grassroots activism and collective bargaining is therefore essential. As the alliance, we have not been mobilising men and women to become activists in the forefront of a campaign against rape and violence against women and children. These campaigns have a huge potential to rally people behind the women's movement.

These struggles for working women in the workplace are the foundation of a wider women's movement that wages an expansive struggle against patriarchy and capitalism. The woman's movement builds a cross cutting solidarity among the progressives to raise society's consciousness on social, economic and political issues that find expression on women and therefore society more widely.

The building of a strong mass based women's movement led and driven by the working class and rural women is part of our struggle for the emancipation of women of our country. It must be conscientised and schooled in the politics and theory of the working class in order to understand the class content of women's oppression and wage struggles together with other popular forces to rid society of all forms of patriarchy.

This movement must be built around concrete programmes dealing with issues affecting women at work and in rural communities. At the centre of a Popular Movement for Transformation must stand this movement of women workers and the rural poor. Organised working class women would need to challenge the patriarchal practices and power dynamics in all spaces including the working class movement itself.

The struggle for gender equality in the broader society needs to shift into a higher more of functioning. A broader social movement is needed to accelerate women's struggles for full citizenship and human, social, political and economic rights to enable them to participate actively in the national political discourse.

Once workers are better organised as women, we should develop strategies to wage the struggle against abuse of women, children and babies. It is unlikely that a transformation of the position of women in the economy will take place without a strong movement spearheaded by women. Women's position in the economy, and the tendency for women to be squeezed out of the labour market, originates in their lack of power in a patriarchal society. Any substantial change to this situation is likely to be accompanied by a change in power relations in the society, economically or politically. In all likelihood such changes will be resisted, particularly by individuals or interested groups who hold any power in the current situation and who feel threatened by the possibility of such change.

In order to overcome such resistance, it is important that organised women drive the process of change themselves. Organisations of working women must be sure that their representatives not only are part of, but also play a leading role in, policy-making and decision making for job creation programmes and strategies intended to transform the marginalised position of women in the labour market.

We need to play a strategic role in the establishment of the national women's movement led by working class women. We conceptualise the building of a women's movement not as an organisation, but as an integrated gender awareness within all democratic formations, and building of a consciousness in the membership and

throughout the entire society, as well as visible woman development programmes and active campaigns to change power relations between men and women.

We must monitor the participation of our female shop stewards and officials in the ANC Woman's League, COSATU, SACP and other structures of the democratic movement. We should indeed take a lead in producing outstanding women leaders who lead the entire society.

12. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN SOCIETY

We have a vision of a trade union movement as a home for women workers, a movement which they know will fight for justice women in the workplace and the economy. This will forge a movement for gender equality in the labour market, and must be seen as an integral part of our vision of a strong union, socially, politically and economically.

None of this can be achieved without taking into account the unequal division of labour in the household and ensuring that NEHAWU fights for socially provided childcare facilities and equal participation in household labour. We have a vision of a trade union movement that plays a crucial role in empowering women and in challenging the unequal power relations between women and men – a trade union movement that forges a movement of women workers.

The relationship between gender, racial and class oppression needs to be studied and explained, so that a clear strategy can be developed. The challenge is to ensure that the working class is unrelenting in the fight against women oppression.

Women are rendering services to humanity but the work they do is not recognised and is therefore undervalued. It is simply invisible, for it goes unrecorded. At the end of the day it is the daily acts of making a living that keep countless household alive.

13. GENDER BASED VIOLENCE HARASSMENT AND FEMICIDE (GBVHF)

The scourge of gender based violence against women and children continues to persist, and requires all in society to play a meaningful role towards the elimination of the GBVF in our society.

The World Federation of Trade Unions asserts that the violence against women is never an individual or private matter and is rooted in the power structures of capitalism, economic and social inequalities, patriarchal culture and the militarisation of territories. Women continue to face systemic oppression, exclusion and discrimination. Women are in a constant struggle against power-relations that continue to be perpetuated by patriarchy and are daily confronted with the scourge of gender based violence, Femicide, rape, and violence which continues to be on the rise.

NEHAWU, as part of the labour movement has an ongoing campaign to raise awareness and educate workers and their communities on this issue. Indeed, as progressives, we must prioritise the struggle to eliminate violence directed at women and children and further condemn violence against women.

The campaign is geared towards preventing and eliminating violence against women and children, and to deepen our level of consciousness and activism in the struggle for gender and women's emancipation and

intensify the fight against gender based violence, Femicide, rape and violence directed at women and children.

Indeed, the union must work with progressive organisations to combat interpersonal violence and bringing gender-based violence to an end to build secure and safer communities. The union must foster strong community engagement and engage with progressive for organisations for better ways of organizing the working class to fight gender-based violence against women and children.

Equally, the union must consistently reiterate its pledges against gender based violence, Femicide, rape and violence directed at women and children. The pledges focus on the following:

- Campaign for the establishment of gender based violence forums in workplaces.
- Gender-based violence to be declared a national emergency.
- Campaign for the building of capacity of the justice system to be able to assists victims in gathering evidence in rape cases and ensuring that rape and paediatric evidence collection kits are available at every police station.
- Raising awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue at the local, national and international level.
- Campaign to extend the 16 days of activism on no violence against women and children from 16 days to 365 days. The campaign will also include violence directed at the Lesbian Gay Transgender Bisexual Intersex Queer [LGTBIQ] community and speak to the issue of corrective rape as well.
- Every police station to have at least one police officer who has extra training around rape and sexual violence.
- Establishing a clear link between local organisations and international work to end violence against women.
- Providing a forum in which organisations can develop and share new and effective strategies.
- Demonstrating the solidarity of women in our union against gender based violence.
- Creating tools to pressure government to implement promises made to eliminate gender based violence against women.
- Strengthening our work against violence on women

14. POSITIVE MUSCUNILITY

Positive masculinity means promoting constructive, non-violent, and fair forms of masculinity that advance gender equality. It challenges traditional norms that sustain sexism, dominance, and aggression, advocating instead for behaviours and attitudes that foster gender justice and mutual respect among all genders.

1. Male members as gender champions in the workplace

Positive masculinity encourages men and boys to embrace healthier, more respectful behaviors while rejecting harmful norms. It emphasizes empathy, accountability, and gender equality — enhancing respectful relationships and encouraging men to become allies in advancing gender justice. Engaging men in this way promotes healthier family dynamics, safer workplaces, and more responsive policies that benefit entire communities.

2. Challenging gender-based violence (GBV) in workplaces

The partnership is not only to see men end physical violence in spaces such as homes and workplaces, but also to curb non-physical aggression including harassment in digital and physical spaces. NEHAWU's gender policy can use positive masculinity to require male members to actively call out and report GBV incidents rather than remaining silent bystanders.

3. Transforming power dynamics in union structures

Positive masculinity is about men being their best selves standing up when they see harassment or violence, being allies for gender equality, and doing their portion of care work. In NEHAWU's context, this translates to male members supporting women's equal representation in leadership, collective bargaining teams, and decision-making structures.

4. Education and awareness programmes

To encourage healthier, nonviolent forms of masculinity that foster characteristics like empathy, care, and respect, social attitudes related to dominant masculinity and gender roles need to be positively transformed. NEHAWU branches can run workshops and dialogues where male members reflect on how patriarchal norms affect their behavior towards women colleagues.

5. Aligning with COSATU and national frameworks

NEHAWU continues to advance and advocate the principle of non-racialism, gender equality and democracy in the workplaces in particular and also in society in general. Positive masculinity supports this mandate by making gender equality an active male responsibility, not just a policy statement.

6. Men as role models in the union

The positive masculinity approach focuses on involving men in positions of leadership and influence to engage other men in efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls and end gender inequalities, as a critical means to transform structural and institutional inequalities. Senior male NEHAWU officials can publicly model and promote these values.

Practical Steps for NEHAWU POSITIVE MASCULINITY Campaign

- **Attend and support** gender equality workshops and programmes within your branch
- **Speak up** against sexist language, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace
- **Participate in 16 Days of Activism** campaigns organized by NEHAWU's Gender Structures

- **Mentor younger male members** on respectful workplace conduct

15. INTERNATIONAL

The Union situates its gender policy within the international struggle of the working class and aligns itself with the class-oriented global trade union movements advancing women's emancipation and gender equality. In line with campaigns and resolutions adopted by the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the union recognises that the oppression of women workers is inseparable from capitalist exploitation, imperialism, austerity policies, precarious employment and attacks on public services. Women workers across the world continue to bear the burden of unemployment, low wages, unpaid care work, migration insecurity and workplace violence. The struggle for gender equality is therefore part of the broader international struggle for dignified work, social justice, peace and sovereignty of peoples.

The union supports international working-class solidarity initiatives that advance the rights of women workers, including campaigns for equal pay, maternity protection, universal public healthcare, accessible childcare, social protection systems and the elimination of gender-based violence in workplaces and communities. Guided by WFTU positions, the union affirms that women's participation in trade unions, collective bargaining processes and leadership structures strengthens the unity and militancy of the labour movement globally. International Working Women's Day on 8 March remains a day of struggle, mobilisation and working-class solidarity rather than a symbolic celebration detached from the struggle against capitalist exploitation.

The national union commits itself to strengthening cooperation with progressive trade unions and women's organisations internationally, exchanging experiences, supporting global campaigns defending workers' rights, and opposing war, occupation, racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination affecting women and marginalised workers. The national union shall also play an active role in the WFTU's Women's Commission. Through working class internationalism, the union advances the principle that the emancipation of women workers in South Africa is linked to the emancipation of women workers of Palestine, Cuba, Western Sahara and everywhere.

Working women of the world unite.

16. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

16.1. Gender Structures

There must be gender structures at all levels including the workplace. Gender structures and coordinators should be represented in all constitutional structures. In addition, the union should provide space for women to strategies in separate forums – this is important for women's empowerment and unity.

The dedicated gender project must be located in the organising and bargaining service centre which interfaces members and structures on day to day and responsible for the overall coordination of union campaigns. In line with seamless approach, all departments should reflect and integrate the imperatives of this gender policy into their departmental work. The gender officer located in organising and bargaining service centre should coordinate and monitor the overall implementation of this policy.

There should be a national machinery with multi-pronged approach for the advancement of the equality in the union with the capacity to monitor the implementation of this policy, drive campaigns that are gender related, ensuring the functioning of the provincial gender structures and make recommendations on possible policy changes to the central executive committee.

16.2 National Gender Committee

Comprised of:

2nd Deputy President
General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary
Head of Secretariat
National Gender Officer
National Gender Coordinator (Chairperson)
Provincial Gender Coordinators
Head: EDUSEC
Collective Bargaining Officer
Skills Development Officer
Policy Development Unit
EDUSEC
International Relations Unit
Paralegal Unit

16.3 Provincial Gender Committee

Comprised of:

Provincial Deputy Chairperson
Provincial Gender Coordinator (Chairperson)
Regional Gender Coordinators
Provincial Secretaries
PHOSEC
Provincial Administrator
Provincial Education Officers
Provincial Paralegal Officers

16.4 Regional Gender Committee

Comprised of:

Regional Deputy Chairperson
Regional Gender Coordinator (Chairperson)
Branch Gender Coordinators
Regional Secretaries
Regional Organisers
Regional Administrator

16.2 Other Structures

16.2.1 Constitutional Structures

The constitutional structures are responsible, in overall, for supervision, evaluation and monitoring the implementation of decisions taken by the national union. The central, national, provincial, region and branch executive committees should provide and give political direction on the implementation of resolutions through the plan of action. The role of constitutional structures should be to:

- Monitor the implementation of resolutions and gender policy, through detailed reports provided by provinces and service centre EDUSEC to Secretariat.
- Ensure that all structures at all levels abide by the policy and implement the plan of action, by providing support, advice, setting of targets, provision of financial and human assistance including deployment of leadership and staff.
- Integrate gender plans into the main six months' work plan of the national union.
- Ensure an adequate budget for gender activities is allocated to finance and support the successful implementation of gender plan of action guided by priorities and targets set by the national gender committee.
- Encourage the mainstreaming of gender related activities into the overall work of all NEHAWU service centres and structures.
- Incorporate the gender report into the Secretariat report.
- Encourage the participation of male leadership in gender sensitive training through leading by example.
- Supervise the implementation of the gender policy.

16.2.2 Designated Office Bearers

The 2nd Deputy President, Provincial, Regional and Branch Deputy Chairpersons as part of the responsibilities will lead gender related matters through playing a leading and strategic role in the planning of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the gender policy. The leadership role will include amongst others the following:

- Represent the union in gender structures or committees of the Federation, COSATU.
- Represent the union on gender issues to the public
- Assist structures with implementation of the policy by attending and participating in gender/women forums and other activities.

16.2.3 Gender Coordinators

All appointed coordinators from branch to national level shall chair the meetings of the gender structure in their respective levels. Together with National Gender Officer will prepare gender meetings including drafting the agenda and compiling the documentation supported by the Secretariat at different levels of the national union.

The National Gender Officer should work with coordinators in developing gender plan of action guided by targets as set by the national union including ensuring that continuous research is done about the position of women, work closer with our Policy Development Unit (PDU), with COSATU and also with NALEDI Woman and Work Research in this regard.

16.3 PRIORITIES AND SETTING OF TARGETS

A Plan of Action must be developed after the reviewed gender policy has been adopted by the 1st central executive committee of the 11th national congress with clear priorities, timeframes and budget. This should be integrated into the programme of action for each year as directed by the central executive committee and budget for each year.

16.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Generally, monitoring and evaluation are measures that are often forgotten when implementing plans of action. Effective monitoring and evaluation serves as the basis for assessing progress or lack of progress and as such could determine corrective measures in time.

Monitoring consists of continuous follow-up through setting gender indicators as they shall depend on the context and the plan of action. This role of monitoring should be the task of the National Gender Officer working with the National Gender Coordinator and National Gender Substructure.

Evaluation will take the form of questionnaires, survey, verbal and written reports and should be tabled at the National Gender Substructure and Constitutional Structures. A comprehensive evaluation report shall be tabled at the national congress. The National Gender Officer shall use, for purposes of evaluation, any possible and relevant instruments in order to give us accurate results and impact on gender as the national union.

17. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all service centres in NEHAWU, all the political heads, the national leadership, provincial leadership, as well as all members of the organisation. To achieve gender equality, the organisation must embark on a rigorous gender mainstreaming strategy. To this end, much of the responsibility of women's empowerment and gender equality will rest with key structures of the organisation. Integration of gender activities in all service centre work is crucial i.e. there would be areas that would directly be done at Secretariat, in Education, Administration and Finance, in Organisation and Collective Bargaining, in Policy Development Unit and International Relations Unit.

Uncertainty and fear about the change in the status-quo will prevent the implementation of this policy, as will lack of commitment of the leadership, lack of resources and lack of capacity, in the light of such constraints, NEHAWU may default in fulfilling its plans for gender equality.

Unless certain areas of policy are written in the law, that is the Constitution of NEHAWU, the gender policy will remain a theoretical exercise that never translates into practice. For example, the 50% quota has been "policy" of NEHAWU since its inception, but there are no measures to enforce it. We can achieve the objectives of this policy only when there are firm commitments such as agreed action plans and conditional agreements such as the release of funding or other resources on the attainment of specific targets. On the other hand, incentives can be given for the attainment of identified targets and standards.

Other ways of ensuring implementation include amongst others:

- Pressurising national leadership and members to adhere to agreements and identified action plans and targets
- Providing gender coordinators with the skills for implementation, such as skills for managing resistance to change, advocacy, negotiation and lobbying skills, organisational gender analysis skills, training skills and

material preparation skills, skills in data collection and methods of appraisal, assertiveness training and training in organising consciousness-raising programmes for woman.

18. CONCLUSION

We are confident that this reviewed gender policy shall assist NEHAWU and its structures to achieve gender equality firstly in the union, in the workplace, at home and in the society as a whole in pursuit of National Democratic Revolution as a direct route to Socialism. As part of strengthening workplace organisation, deepening class consciousness and advancing internationalism, all structures of the union shall adhere to this policy and ensure effective, practical and programmatic implementation.

NEHAWU DIGITAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. PURPOSE, CONTEXT AND THE BRIEF

- This Digital Media and Social Media Policy provides a unified framework to guide NEHAWU's engagement with traditional media, digital platforms, and social media spaces.

- This policy moves beyond top-down dissemination. It establishes Communications as a Strategic Service Centre designed to foster two-way dialogue, building trust through active engagement with members and the public.
- Battle of Ideas: Communication is recognised as a tool for transformation, aimed at advancing class consciousness and projecting NEHAWU's ideological orientation to a global audience.

1.1 The Brief

The brief of this policy is to formulate an additional, modernised layer to the existing NEHAWU Communications Policy. It serves to establish clear protocols, assign structural responsibilities, and set firm boundaries for the union's media engagements and digital footprint.

1.2 What We Seek to Address

Through the implementation of this policy, the national union seeks to directly address and manage the following:

- The reputational and legal risks associated with unauthorised, fragmented, or undisciplined communication by union structures or individuals on public and internal digital platforms;
- Shifts in media consumption from print and broadcast to digital and social platforms;
- The rapid news cycle and risks posed by misinformation and disinformation;
- Optimising high-impact, low-cost digital first strategies to alleviate financial burden;
- The need for disciplined, coherent, and politically grounded messaging across all spheres of the organisation;
- The strategic task of defending and advancing working-class interests in a contested ideological environment.

The policy builds on existing NEHAWU Communications Policy principles while modernising tools, processes, and accountability to ensure relevance, efficiency, and impact.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- National, provincial, regional, and branch leadership structures;
- All elected office bearers and appointed officials;
- Communications Department staff and volunteers;
- Any member acting on behalf of NEHAWU in media or digital spaces.

It governs:

- Media engagement (print, radio, television, online news);
- Official NEHAWU digital platforms (website, mailing lists);
- Social media platforms (including but not limited to Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp broadcast channels/groups, YouTube);
- Virtual Communication Platforms (including but not limited to Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet for meetings, webinars, and internal briefings).
- Crisis and rapid-response communication.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All media and social media work shall be guided by:

1. A working-class and anti-capitalist perspective grounded in NEHAWU policy.
2. Political discipline, collective leadership, and constitutional accountability.
3. Accuracy, clarity, and consistency of message.
4. Centralised strategic control with decentralised operational support.
5. Ethical communication that avoids defamation, hate speech, or unverified claims.
6. Cost-effectiveness, prioritising high-impact, low-cost platforms.
7. Compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and the Promotion of access to Information Act (PAIA) to ensure that the union remains a transparent, accountable, and legally sound institution that respects the right to information while protecting organisational integrity
8. Promoting active citizenry by providing feedback mechanisms that allow members to influence policy and union activities.
9. Ensuring information is timely, clear, and available in multiple official languages and platforms of choice to prevent exclusion.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Strengthen and protect the public profile of NEHAWU;
- Ensure message discipline across all platforms;
- Expand reach to members and the public through digital-first communication;
- Support campaigns, collective bargaining, and political struggles;
- Mitigate reputational, legal, and security risks;
- Build internal communication capacity within financial limits.

5. GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY

5.1 Political Authority

- The General Secretary is the principal political authority
- The Spokesperson is the designated national spokesperson who acts under the political guidance and authority of the General Secretary and the Office of the Secretariat.
- National Office Bearers may speak on behalf of the union when mandated.
- Provincial Secretaries are the official provincial spokespeople.

5.2 Communications Authority

- The Office of the Secretariat exercises overall political oversight.
- The Communications Department is responsible for implementation, coordination, and compliance.
- The Spokesperson manages media enquiries and releases in consultation with the General Secretary.

5.3 Restrictions

- Regional Secretaries, Branch Secretaries, shop stewards, and members may not issue media statements or present themselves as official spokespersons without written authorisation from the General Secretary, The Office of the Secretariat or the respective Provincial Secretary.
- Personal social media accounts may not be used to announce policy, positions, or decisions of the union.

5.4 The Communications Committee

- The Committee or Editorial team to assist with internal review of publications shall annually develop a national communication strategy, coordinate project briefings, and prepare impact reports to measure platform growth and messaging efficiency.
- Operational Stability: To ensure continuity, the communicator's role is recognised as a permanent, stable function of the union, shielded from internal political volatility.

6. VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND DIGITAL CONVENING

6.1 Strategic Purpose

Virtual platforms (including but not limited to Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet) are recognized as strategic tools for inclusive participation. They enable bottom-up engagement by connecting leadership or representatives with members across all geographic regions, ensuring that distance is no longer a barrier to union democracy and real-time consultation.

6.2 Official Usage and Security

- Institutional Continuity: Only official, union-licensed accounts shall be used to host constitutional meetings, webinars, or briefings to ensure data security and administrative control.
- Security Protocols: To protect the integrity of union deliberations, all official virtual meetings must utilise security features such as waiting rooms and passcodes. Links to internal meetings must not be shared on public social media platforms unless the event is a designated public-facing webinar.

6.3 Virtual Presence and Branding

To maintain a professional and unified image during digital convening, officials representing the union should:

- Utilise approved NEHAWU virtual backgrounds or wearing of official union regalia where possible.
- Ensure display names follow the standardised format: [First Name] [Last Name] & [Designation/Structure].

6.4 Recording and Consent

- Mandatory Notification: In accordance with POPIA, no virtual session may be recorded without the host explicitly announcing the recording at the commencement of the meeting. This ensures all participants are aware of the digital record for transparency and archival purposes.
- Consent: Participation in an announced recorded session constitutes consent for the purposes of minute-taking, internal record-keeping, and constitutional accountability.

6.5 Storage, Privacy, and Archival Integrity

- Data Protection: Recordings containing sensitive union information or personal data of members must be stored in secure, password-protected environments.
- Statutory Alignment: To ensure a balance between transparency and privacy, these records shall be managed in strict compliance with POPIA (for data protection), PAIA (for lawful access), and the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (for retention and historical preservation). This ensures the union's digital memory is preserved legally while respecting the privacy of its members.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

7.1 Official Accounts

- Only the Communications Department may create, administer, or close official NEHAWU social media accounts.
- Login credentials are institutional property and must be centrally controlled.
- Recognising that various union structures and offices may have established social media accounts bearing the NEHAWU name before the formal adoption of this policy, a union-wide digital audit shall be conducted.
- The administrators of all such existing accounts must immediately surrender their login credentials, recovery emails, and administrative rights to the national Communications Department to ensure institutional continuity and centralised control.
- Any account that fails to comply with this handover, or is deemed unauthorised by the Secretariat, shall be subject to forced closure, platform reporting, or public disavowal by the national union.
- To maintain Domain Integrity, all official social media accounts must be registered using a @nehawu.org.za email address. Personal emails or third-party domains are prohibited for official use to ensure institutional continuity.
- For credential management, Password rotation for all accounts must occur at least biannually, adhering to IT security standards (minimum one special character/number).
- To safeguard organisational identity and combat misinformation, the Communications department shall actively pursue and maintain official verification status through verification badges for all primary national and provincial social media platforms.

7.2 Content Strategy

Priority shall be given to:

- Campaign messaging and mobilisation;
- Collective bargaining updates;
- Political education and ideological content;
- Defence of public services and workers' rights;
- Rapid response to misinformation affecting the union.

7.3 Tone and Conduct

All official content must:

- Reflect discipline, dignity, and political clarity;
- Avoid insults, factionalism, or personalised attacks;

- Be accessible, multilingual where possible, and inclusive.

7.4 Personal Accounts

- Members and officials retain freedom of expression but must:
 - Not present personal opinions as NEHAWU positions;
 - Avoid sharing confidential information;
 - Avoid content that damages the union's reputation.
- Handle Restrictions: Members may not use usernames that imply official status (e.g., "NEHAWU_Marxist").
- Post-Alignment: Upon vacating an official position, individuals must update their social media bios to reflect they are no longer representatives of the union.
- Staff members are strictly prohibited from using information acquired during the course of their duties for personal social media engagement; such actions constitute a breach of confidentiality and professional conduct. Disciplinary processes may be invoked where conduct violates the constitution or this policy.

7.5 Internal Digital Communication and Messaging Groups (e.g., WhatsApp)

- While the union relies on the established discipline of its structures, platforms such as WhatsApp groups, broadcast channels, and other internal messaging apps used at national, provincial, and regional levels must be strictly regulated.
- These channels are reserved exclusively for official union business, operational coordination, and the dissemination of approved information.
- To protect the unity of the organisation, the sharing of divisive, factional, unverified, or derogatory content on these internal platforms is strictly prohibited.
- Administrators of these digital groups are responsible for enforcing these rules, removing violative content, and ensuring that the collection and sharing of any member's contact details comply fully with POPIA regulations.

7.6 Engagement Standards

- Response Windows: Digital administrators should aim to acknowledge electronic enquiries within 48–72 hours.
- Empathetic Interaction: Responses to the public must demonstrate empathy and transparency, avoiding agenda-setting in favour of helpfulness.

8. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

8.1 Ethical and Strategic Adoption

- While generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be utilised to assist in drafting, translating, or brainstorming content, their use must be aligned with the union's ideological commitment to digital sovereignty and the protection of working-class interests. AI is an assistant to human labour, not a replacement for political judgment.

8.2 Verification and Accountability

- All AI-generated material must be rigorously fact-checked, reviewed for political alignment, and subjected to standard editorial approval processes before publication. The union remains wholly responsible for any content published under its name; the use of AI does not bypass the need for human oversight and constitutional accountability.

8.3 Transition to Comprehensive Governance

- NEHAWU recognises that the rapid evolution of AI presents unique challenges regarding data privacy, job security, and misinformation. Consequently, this clause serves as an interim framework. The union shall develop a standalone AI Governance and Ethics Policy to provide detailed protocols on the technical, legal, and ideological implications of AI within the organisation.

9. CRISIS AND RAPID RESPONSE COMMUNICATION

9.1 Definition

A crisis includes any situation that threatens:

- The reputation, credibility, or unity of the union;
- Legal or financial standing;
- Safety of members or officials.

9.2 Procedure

- Immediate notification to the Office of the Secretariat and Communications Department;
- Centralised message development;
- Designated spokesperson only;
- Continuous monitoring and correction of misinformation.
- During high-stakes events (e.g., strikes), a Command Centre will be established to coordinate bulk SMS alerts and real-time monitoring.
- Lower structures must immediately inform the Secretariat of local crises via a formal letter detailing the situation and specific support required.

No independent statements may be issued during a crisis.

10. DIGITAL EFFICIENCY AND COST CONTAINMENT

Given financial constraints, NEHAWU shall:

- Prioritise organic social media reach over paid advertising;
- Reduce print runs in favour of digital publications;
- Reuse and adapt content across platforms.

10. LANGUAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY

- English shall remain the primary language of external communication.
- Other official languages must be used where capacity allows.

- Content must be accessible to persons with disabilities where reasonably possible.

12. BRAND, LOGO, OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE, AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- The NEHAWU logo and name may not be used without authorisation.
- Social media graphics and publications must comply with approved brand guidelines.
- Virtual Presence: When representing the union on virtual platforms, officials must utilise the approved NEHAWU virtual background and or wear official NEHAWU regalia. Further ensure their display name follows a standard format: [First Name] [Last Name] – [Designation/Structure].
- All content produced by officials or service providers on NEHAWU platforms remains the exclusive intellectual property of the union unless a prior copyright-sharing agreement exists.
- To protect the union identity and integrity of the union, all official correspondence must be conducted on the official NEHAWU letterhead. The official letterhead must remain uniform across all structures and adhere strictly to the standard design as approved by the General Secretary. No unauthorised alterations to the design, layout, or branding of the letterhead are permitted. To ensure disciplined and authoritative communication, the right to draft and issue official correspondence on the union's letterhead is strictly restricted to the following administrative offices:
 - National level: The Office of the General Secretary;
 - Provincial level: The Office of the Provincial Secretary;
 - Regional level: The Office of the Regional Secretary.

13. MONITORING, COMPLIANCE, AND DISCIPLINE

- The Spokesperson and Publications officer shall monitor media and social media activity.
- Adherence to this policy is a mandatory condition of service for all appointed officials and staff members. To prevent unauthorised disclosures or reputational damage, this policy shall be integrated into the NEHAWU Staff Manual and organisational induction programs. Any violation shall be processed in accordance with the union's disciplinary code and relevant labour legislation.
- If an official engages in unauthorised or defamatory communication, they are deemed to be acting in their personal capacity. This aligns with the Public Service Act (Act 103 of 1994) and the union's Code of Conduct. The union reserves the right to formally distance its brand from such utterances to protect the collective interest.
- As the principal political authority of the union, the Office of the General Secretary retains ultimate oversight and the final right of approval over all communication outputs. This includes the power to issue, retract, or override any messaging across all structures to ensure that the union's voice remains strategically aligned with its constitutional mandate and the collective interests of its members.
- Should such unauthorised or negligent utterances result in civil claims, defamation lawsuits, or legal proceedings against NEHAWU, the union reserves the right to formally repudiate the statements.
- Furthermore, the union may institute internal recovery processes to hold the responsible individual personally liable for any resulting damages, settlement costs, and litigation fees incurred by the national union.

14. STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

- This policy is governed by and must be read in conjunction with:

- Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000: All requests for information under PAIA must be referred to the Spokesperson to manage public domain implications.
- POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act): For data privacy in digital groups.
- National Archives and Records Service of South Africa
- Copyright Act, 1978: For protection of union assets.
- Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002.
- Use of Official Languages Act, 2012.

15. REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

- This policy shall be reviewed every three years or as directed by constitutional structures.

Endnotes

ⁱ Currently, the USA's Debt-to-GDP ratio is about 124% and in 2026 the government debt is worth \$39 trillion. This is double that of China's \$18.7 trillion.

ⁱⁱ In the course of the summit, President Xi even boldly and openly stated that America was a "declining power". These remarks were not necessarily derogatory as they are based on the often careful analyses that China would undertake. Trump's response to these remarks through the social media signified that the USA itself was painfully aware of this reality as he did not even dispute the assertion. Instead, he indirectly confirmed this trend by blaming the previous USA President, Joe Biden.

ⁱⁱⁱ Politically, the enemy camp was a line-up that was led by the neo-fascist National Party and the Apartheid-liberals in the Progressive Federal Party (the predecessor of the DA) which represented the core white monopoly capital. They were followed by the sell-out Bantustan political parties, Mayoral puppets in black local authorities, the sell-out Coloured and Indian parties in the Tricameral Parliamentary system, reactionary unions such as the Public Service Association (PSA), a vast network of propaganda institutions and organisations, including other minority organisations such as the South African Indian Council - as well as imperialist countries such as the United States and Britain.

^{iv} The ANC even had the audacity of launching an ideological offensive against the workers during NEHAWU's 2022 strike at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and during the historic NEHAWU strike in the public service in 2023.

^v The bourgeois media and the political elite describe the voter stay-away, which is a passive but still a political act in itself, as "voter apathy" to deflect attention away from the deep-seated crisis of South Africa's capitalism and its Neoliberal state that are failing the discontented and disillusioned youth and the masses of our people.

^{vi} The GNU has a very bloated Cabinet, which is nearly double the size of the first GNU of 1994-1997. This is the largest Cabinet ever (since 1994), with a record 75 ministers and deputy ministers. Together with the support staff it is estimated that the GNU costs the fiscus at least about R670 million annually.

^{vii} Led by the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Discovery Adrian Gore and Rothschild South Africa, Martin Kingston, since the sixth administration more than 160 CEOs from multiple sectors, representing R11 trillion market capitalisation at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), have thrown their full weight behind the implementation of the "structural reforms". In addition, about 20 CEOs have been actively involved almost on a daily basis in government's work,

participating and making decisions in the four workstreams of the structural reforms – working on ending loadshedding, fixing the ports and freight rail, dealing with crime and corruption and the question of youth unemployment.

viii They enthusiastically condemned Hamas's attacks on Israel on the 7th October 2023 but have been very silent on the unfolding genocide over the past 33 months. Indeed, the media has been covering up for them, especially the DA's *shtum* (silence) knowing that the overwhelming majority of South Africans are morally outraged, are politically opposed to the Zionist entity and pledge solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinians.

ix This was based on the deluded assumption that out of the 2024 elections the collective share of their seats in Parliament would unseat the ANC. This illusion was based on the polling surveys that have been desperately trying to create expectations and therefore psychologically seeking to influence the electoral outcomes over several cycles of elections since the fourth administration under Jacob Zuma.

x On the macroeconomic policies, objectively there is so much that is in common between the DA and ANC. Hence, the DA did not hesitate in joining the GNU in the first place. However, its alienation of other parties of the MPC such as ActionSA can make it review its attitude - given the consequences of its opportunism when it joined the GNU which caused it to lose control of key metros such as Tshwane and Ekurhuleni where it was unseated.

xi The Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) was imposed in 1996 as "non-negotiable". This was the first of many instances to come, as outline in this report, in which a popular electoral mandate would be summarily abandoned after the ANC is elected. Through GEAR the rationale and parameters of the Neoliberal macroeconomic management were set and they persist up to today, even when circumstances changed and economic policy was given a new name.

xii Irina Filatova (2012) 'The Lasting Legacy: The Soviet Theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa', South African Historical Journal, Vol. 64 No. 3.

xiii The NDR in Vietnam culminated with the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976, which had drawn from the transitional experience of the revolution in China.

xiv Mao Zedong conceptualised this experience as a new type of revolution led by the proletariat or with the participation of the proletariat in the leadership and having as its aim, in the first stage, the establishment of a new democratic society and state under the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes – under a transitional phase called "national democracy".

xv Karen Brutents was one of the heads of the CPSU's International Department under the Central Committee and was part of a committee that worked on theoretical matters pertaining to anticolonial struggles.

xvi Irina Filatova (2012) 'The Lasting Legacy: The Soviet Theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa', South African Historical Journal, Vol. 64 No. 3, p 50

xvii Ibid.

xviii Accordingly, the first phase of the anti-colonial struggle in South Africa ended with the Bambatha rebellion in 1906, then followed a second phase which was characterised by the establishment of the more modern and national political formations to build unity amongst the oppressed using different forms of protests that were largely peaceful but escalating in their intensity and mass character.

xix The Green Book was a report drafted in August 1979 by a six member committee of the Politico-Military Strategy Commission, which included Comrades Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki and Joe Slovo and it was mainly based on a study of the Vietnamese revolution.

xx CPSU, Bulletin no 10 (Moscow: Pravda, 1971), 54.

xxi World Marxist Review, December 1975.

xxii However, the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme which was tabled in Parliament in November 1994 was diluted and denuded of its radical thrust. This was a strong indication that there was a Neoliberal agenda that was already crystallising into a faction even before the publication of GEAR 1996.

xxiii Celebrations by the ANC over such anniversaries merely signify a decent gesture of paying homage to the iconic historical moments and events as well as its own contribution in the struggle.

xxiv In fact, the 2022 CEC stated that "the union played a leading role in sponsoring and influencing the adoption of the resolution on "The National Democratic Revolution and Socialism". Indeed, the CEC appreciated that "the thrust of this resolution [COSATU's 14th National Congress] articulated the logical step consistent with the unanimously adopted resolution of COSATU's 13th Congress on "The SACP, State and Popular Power" regarding the SACP and elections.

xxv The fact the February 2024 CEC was compelled under the circumstances in which the SACP was not in a position to mount its own election campaign to proclaim that "the ANC is our option and the SACP is our choice" does not mean

that an even more inferior structure in the form of the CEC can permanently change or erase a resolution of the 14th National Congress.