

NEHAWU

National Education Health and Allied Workers Union



10TH NATIONAL CONGRESS

{26-29 June 2013}

DECLARATION OF THE 10TH NEHAWU NATIONAL CONGRESS

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At this stage, the newly elected General Secretary, Comrade Fikile Majola presented the declaration for the 10th national congress which read as follows:

We the 583 delegates gathered at the 10th national congress of NEHAWU, a giant public sector union representing 276 456 members across the post-school education, parastatal, public service, private health and private social development sectors - proclaim that over the next four years our union shall underpin its programme of action around our theme: *"build strong workplace organisation, class consciousness and internationalism"*. We emerge from this congress as a maturing 26th year old affiliate of our federation COSATU with confidence and determination to build on what we have achieved over the past three years.

Indeed, our union continues to grow, whilst its constitutional and operational structures steadily align their work across all levels of the organisation. Our influence in socioeconomic transformation especially on health and post-school education is increasingly finding expression in our movement and government, as is our international work within the federation and amongst solidarity organisations in the country and beyond.

Our 10th national congress has taken place under the shadow of the continuing hospitalisation of the very finest embodiment of our revolution and the best of our people, our beloved Isithwalandwe-Seaparankwe, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who continues to be critically ill. Nonetheless, throughout his life and in the course of our struggle this death-defiant and gallant fighter to the end inspired us to overcome challenges in the course of the struggle, as he puts it: *"after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb"*.

We are honoured by the attendance to our 10th national congress by about 40 fraternal international trade unions and parties from Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and Asia, and we received messages of support and congratulations from many others, underlining the growing international influence of our union. Our international delegates had an opportunity to join a national demonstration against the visit of the United States (US) President Barack Obama to South Africa, highlighting the aggression of US imperialism in pursuing a hegemonic geopolitical and strategic agenda of domination and control of world strategic mineral and energy resources.

As an important symbol of our internationalism, an invitation to congress was extended to the heroic Cuban 5, Ramon Labanino, Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez Rene Gonzalez who are unjustly condemned to American jail for defending the Cuban revolution. Congress welcomed and pledged its support for efforts by the Cuban government and the people in defending the revolution and in updating the Cuban economic model with the aim of improving it and preserving the basic principles of socialism.

Congress discussed the international situation and noted the deep, multiple, systemic and structural crisis of neoliberal capitalist globalisation. The all round crisis in the economy, energy, climate, food, water, finance, draws our attention to the historic failure of the capitalist mode of production in resolving challenges facing humanity. As the crisis deepens it underlines more and more the endemic nature of crisis in the capitalist system. As such we resolved on the strategic necessity for the labour movement to build strong fraternal relations with progressive organisations and unions across the world in contributing to the analysis of the crisis, imperialism and contribute to the overthrow of the capitalist system worldwide. Our congress identified the

emergence of BRICS (Britain, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as a potentially new anti-imperialist political pole that must be welcomed by the revolutionary forces the world over.

As ever 10th national congress expressed solidarity with workers struggling against super-exploitation by global corporations and defined specific programs of mobilisation in support of anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist struggles of workers across the world, including in Cuba, Palestine, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Western Sahara, the Basque Country, in Greece and across Europe. We resolved to work with other parties to develop a strategic position on the African revolution, to deepen progressive regional integration in order to promote peace, democracy and the sovereignty of our countries.

Building on the work of the previous congress, our 10th national congress has placed the challenge of building strong workplace organisation at the centre of the union's programme of action over the next four years. As such we have pledged to continue with the work of rebuilding our branches, cementing our seamless machinery, intensifying our recruitment programme and our education and training of shop stewards. This organisational work shall be accompanied by a dedicated approach to ideological and political training geared at raising class consciousness amongst members, shop stewards, officials and leadership of the union. Similarly, we undertake to review our paralegal strategy to empower our shop stewards to represent members at the workplace. We emerge from this 10th national congress more confident and better prepared to consolidate our collective bargaining work on the following:

- (a) To complete the campaign to establish bargaining forums in all sectors as part of bringing back the principles of worker control and worker democracy in collective bargaining processes.
- (b) To complete the review and training of the negotiating teams in all national departments and other sectors.
- (c) To achieve our strategic objective of centralized bargaining in all our sectors.
- (d) To complete the setting up of the electronic collective bargaining management system that would position the union to manage collective bargaining at all levels.
- (e) To implement a system that ensures that organisers prepare, assist, research and coordinate collective bargaining adequately at all local levels.
- (f) To thoroughly prepare for the 2015 public service wage negotiation.

We now have a clearer picture on the state of branches, and therefore we have resolved that all branch congresses must be convened in the first six months of 2014. Newly elected branch office bearers must be educated and trained to deal with the organisational priorities, handling members' cases and grievances, running campaigns and negotiations. The key sub-structures especially the strategic nurses forums must be set up at all levels of our union. We must now extend and strengthen our recruitment efforts to achieve the 50%+1 in every workplace, and importantly we must systematically deal with the high number of resignations from our union. We have noted the concern of the 10th national congress delegates about the state of education and training in our union. We have now stabilised and strengthened our education service centre and we are committed to drive the capacity building of shop stewards and officials of our union.

Since our 9th national congress, we have reached an organisational milestone in establishing national, provincial and regional health subcommittees as well as the national and provincial

education subcommittees. These substructures shall be strengthened in order to carry out the implementation of our resolutions on health and post-school education.

Our 10th national congress noted the gains that have been made since the start of the roll-out of anti-retrovirals and of the HIV counselling and testing (HCT) programme. As a union, we have come a long way with regards to the transformation of our health system. Having first placed the National Health Insurance (NHI) at our national congress in 1998, we pledge to do all in our power to ensure that it is implemented. We call for the transformation of all of the Health Professional Councils, with particular regard to ensuring that their role in accrediting training curricula is in line with, and supportive of, the transformation of the health system. We are also calling for the re-integration of the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) back into the public service.

We have welcomed the progress that has been made in pursuit of a vision for a single, coherent, differentiated and articulated post-school education and training system, especially with regard to the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. Therefore we undertake to ensure that, amongst others, the union shall play a meaningful role at institutional level in the implementation of the FET Turnaround Strategy. We face a daunting responsibility of spearheading the challenge of the transformation of our state in general, the public service in particular, as part of building the developmental state. In this connection we shall engage with the legislation geared at creating common set of norms and standards, values and principles across all levels of government as well as with the report of the Presidential Review Committee on State Owned Entities. At the same time this 10th national congress commits our union across all provinces, to intensify our campaign against outsourcing, public-private-partnerships and agentisation.

We recognise that our federation is passing through an unprecedented period of internal challenges with regard to its unity and cohesion and several of its affiliates have been on the receiving end of sustained attacks from the bosses and even union vigilantism. This 10th national congress reassert our federation's posture in relation to government and therefore, call on COSATU to close ranks and unite around this perspective as reaffirmed by the 11th COSATU national congress. Therefore, we emerge from this 10th national congress with a clear message viz. *the unity of our own union NEHAWU is sacrosanct, the unity of our Alliance is sacrosanct and the unity of our socialist axis is sacrosanct.*

We are inspired by the continuing militancy of the organised workers under COSATU, including the rising confidence of the farm workers. The persisting triple-crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality shall for better or worse continue to be the springboard for this rising working class militancy.

The convergence around the need for a second radical phase of the democratic transition amongst the Alliance formations has recharged our energies to engage with the political process geared at producing policies for the realisation of this overarching objective. In this regard, we shall participate in the coming Alliance Economic Summit. The 10th national congress is convinced that the 53rd conference of the ANC was a resounding success, as it consolidated and built on the gains from the Polokwane watershed. As we draw our 10th national congress to a close, we appreciate that our movement is facing the challenge of securing a resounding two-thirds majority victory for ANC in the next year's national elections. With the ANC more united than at any stage since the emergence of the 1996 class project and the Alliance beginning to work together, we are convinced that this is worth fighting for and indeed an attainable goal.

We know fully well that without a decisive two-thirds majority victory for the ANC in the 2014 elections, our drive for the radical second phase would be put in doubt. We must secure this victory for our living worldwide icon, Madiba and indeed for our fallen heroes, heroines and stalwarts of our struggle such as Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo, Chris Hani, Walter Sisulu, Albertina Sisulu and many others.

As the current generation of our struggle, we have the duty to defend and guard our movement of Bheki Mkhize and Yure Mdyogolo. We have no illusions as we are convinced that our revolution is under assault. We committed ourselves to defend the NUM at the 11th national congress of COSATU. We now commit ourselves to put into practice our defence of the NUM. An offensive on this giant union of mine workers is in fact an attack on our own union and our movement as a whole. *An injury to one, is an injury to all!*

Amandla!!!

Matla!!!

All Power!!!

Aluta!!!

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

Free State

KwaZulu/Natal

End