



NEHAWU

National Education Health & Allied Workers' Union

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MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEHAWU STATEMENT ON ITS READINESS AND DETAILS OF THE PLANNED NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The National Education Health & Allied Worker Union [NEHAWU] has been mobilising all its members in the Public Social Development sector for purposes of joining the planned National Day of Action against the Department of Social Development to take place on Friday morning, the 10th February 2017.

The union is organising (five) 5 marches on the 10th February 2017 with the main march in Pretoria where the memorandum will be handed over to both the Department of Social Development and Department of Public Service and Administration. While other marches will be taking place in four (4) provinces namely: Eastern Cape (King Williams Town), KwaZulu-Natal (Durban), Northern Cape (Kimberly) and Western Cape (Cape Town).

At this stage, the union satisfied with the level of mobilisation and confirms its readiness for the marches in all respective provinces as mentioned including the main march in Pretoria and expect members to assemble as from 8am in Marabastad. The march will leave at 10am to the Department of Social Development via Struben, into Thabo Sehume (former Andries Street) straight to North Rand Social Development Regional Office where memorandums will be handed over to Director Generals of both departments, Social Development and Public Service and Administration.

In Eastern Cape, members will assemble at Victoria Grounds in King Williams Town as from 09am and depart at 11am straight to the Provincial Department of Social Development to handover the memorandum at 13h00 where the MEC is expected to receive it. In Kwa-Zulu Natal, members will converge at King Dinizulu Park (formally known Botha Park) from 9am and depart at 10:30 and proceed via Pixely Ka Seme to handover the memorandum at the Durban City Hall at 12:30 to the MEC.

In Northern Cape, members will assembly at Kemo as from 09am and depart at 10h00 straight to the provincial office of Social Development to handover the memorandum to the MEC or representative delegated at 12h00. In Western Cape, members will assembly at Keizersgracht Street in Cape Town as from 10am and depart at 11h00, proceed to the

provincial office of Social Development, Union House in 14 Queen Victoria Street to deliver a memorandum at 13h00 to the departmental representative as delegated by the MEC.

This national action comes as a result of collapsed negotiations on matters of mutual interest in the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) where the employer arrogantly and dismally failed to table a counter offer against our reasonable demands since August 2015.

Things got worse when the Minister Bathabile Dlamini disregarded the correspondences of the national union requesting a meeting with her following the collapsed negotiations. As a result of the Minister's refusal to engage with the union, we are unfortunately left us with no choice but to take to the streets.

It is important to mention that the marches on the 10th February 2017 must be regarded or serve as a first warning shot to the department. In this regard, the union confirms that a full blown strike is imminent, should they fail to meet our demands within 5 days post the march.

Central to our demands are:

- The review of entry levels for Social Service Professionals and Occupations,
- The total overhaul of the OSD,
- Introduction of rural allowance,
- Provision of tools of trade,
- Absorption of unemployed Social Workers on a permanent basis,
- improved conditions of service for all employees in the department of Social Development,
- Implementation of the 2015 Social Workers Indaba resolutions,
- The protection of the professional council for Social Service Professionals,
- Insourcing of all Youth Development centres outsourced to Bosasa, and
- Permanent employment of all contract employees based at the Gender Based Violence Command Centre.

The posture and high level of arrogance demonstrated by the department cannot be tolerated anymore. The truth of the matter is that Social Service professionals are the lowest paid professionals yet expected to give hope and confidence to the development of citizenry and creating sustainable and active citizens for social development. Unfortunately, workers in this service are not compensated in a dignified manner and valued as critical contributors at the point of service.

For instance, the current OSD does not promote the principles of attracting and retaining professionals as a strategy to preserve this precious service in a sustainable manner for

social development. As a matter of fact, in its current form, the Social Service professionals retire or die poor hence our demands for the review.

NEHAWU members and workers in general have lost patient against the intransigent employer, who expect quality service, while turning a blind eye on genuine issues confronting workers on daily basis. This long wait dates back to 2013, where NEHAWU began to agitate for these issues to be addressed.

These issues cannot be deferred any longer. Our claim to these issues has been backed by many research projects conducted, both internally (department) and externally (ministerial committees), as they confirmed our assertion about poor conditions of service employees are confronted with in this department of Social Development.

Potentially, the disastrous situation related to SASSA, an institution in which we also organise and represent members, underscore the systemic crisis of the dysfunctionality of the department and the Minister continues to recklessly place vulnerable grant recipients at risk as poor communities squarely depend on the professional services of our members, as she is more concerned about destructive factional battles in the ANC.

Lastly, we have also noted the attempts by various managers in provinces who are issuing circulars to intimidate our members including threatening workers with the principle of "No Work No Pay". We are also aware that workers in the places of Safety are being told that they cannot join our action as they render essential services.

The union want to set the record straight to the employer that no amount of intimidation shall stop members and workers to fight for better working conditions. In this regard, we wish to indicate that the union shall deal with these threats and call upon members to remain mobilise as they know that if it can't be won on the table then it can only be won on the streets.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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