

MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, 11th January 2017

NEHAWU NORTH WEST PROVINCE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS' INTENDED PUBLIC SERVANTS SALARY CUTS.

The National Education Health & Allied Workers Union [NEHAWU] in the North West Province has noted with shock the reports published in the New Age Newspaper [Tuesday January 10, 2017. Page 10] that the Provincial Government of the North West Province under the leadership of Premier Supra Mahumapelo is now aiming to cut salaries of Public Servant in a desperate attempt to salvage its financial crisis. It has become a norm that whenever Capitalism finds itself in crisis poor workers must bear the brunt, in this case workers shall refuse.

This act will present itself as an unprecedented act to undermine collective bargaining as a hard won victory of the workers because the current salaries of Public Servants are a product of salary negotiations between worker representatives in a form of Trade Unions and the employer at the level of PSCBC and for a Provincial Government to prepare itself to act in a federal manner which seeks to undermine this process suggest that workers and their organisations are being undermined.

Our members' socio – economic well-being cannot be compromised because of the Government's inability to tackle and overcome challenges of maladministration; lavish lifestyle by politicians; poor planning and corruption that has produced this unfortunate situation which has resulted in the depletion of financial resources and hence NEHAWU says it can't be our members who must pay the price.

Avoiding to confront the existing financial challenges and dealing with the root causes by rather gunning for workers, whether junior or senior is a sign of clear provocation and that shall be met with an equal reaction from NEHAWU. What is more shocking is that such pronouncements are made even without any consultation with working class formation, a clear sign of anti-worker posture which characterises our government in the Province.

This is the very same Provincial Government that just a month ago was making plans to procure a jet for the use of the Premier. The plans emerged just when National Treasury introduced austerity measures because of declined in revenue.

We call on the Government to find alternative ways of resolving the financial situation in the Public Service and to leave workers' salaries alone. Any further action towards this step will be a clear declaration of war against Public Servants who are the most reliable machinery of delivering services to the people on behalf of the ruling party.

Going ahead with the salary cuts will be a clear attack on the Collective Bargaining processes and a clear attack on the Basic Conditions of Employment Act that draws its mandate from both the Labour Relations Act and the Act 108 of 1996. In simple terms; this will be a roll back of the gains of the Trade Union that has been won over the years and also poses a threat to the sustainability of the union in the Province.

This is not what workers voted the ruling party for, and they cannot be butchered in this way when financial systems reach a point of collapse. Workers cannot suffer salary cuts while senior politicians enjoy opulent lifestyles. NEHAWU is ready to be engaged on this matter but we must indicate unequivocally that we will fight for our workers basic rights to remain protected.

We therefore call upon the Premier of the North West Province and his Government to work hard in finding ways of dealing with situations instead of targeting workers and that the Government must withdraw its intentions of salary cuts.

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