

MEDIA STATEMENT-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEHAWU CELEBRATES 2017 INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Friday May 12, 2017

The National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] joins the global community in celebrating the 2017 International Nurses Day. This year the day is commemorated under the theme "*Nursing: A voice to lead – Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*"

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world annually on May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. It is a chance to celebrate nurses and their contribution to the health of our people.

Nurses play an integral role in the healthcare industry and as the largest health care profession in the world they are expected to provide 24 hours care to patients and ensure that nursing care and primary health care is available in healthcare facilities such as Hospitals and Clinics. Twenty three years into our nascent democracy nurses continue to be victims of slave wages, workplace violence, overworking due to short staffing, long hours, and workplace hazards.

Nurses are amongst the lowly paid workers in the health sector. A profession that offers care and hope has to be remunerated well and as NEHAWU we will continue to fight for a living wage and better working conditions for nurses. NEHAWU will intensify efforts to ensure that the employer provides sufficient security for nurses and to protect nurses against all forms of workplace hazards that nurses are confronted with on a daily basis. Furthermore, we will ensure that all nursing categories are included in the PHSDSBC Resolution 02 of 2004 and that they receive rural allowances.

The Union has established Nurses Forums at a national level but also at provincial, regional and branch levels so that we can provide a more effective platform to enhance the servicing of our members who are nurses. The Nurses Forum is one of the avenues through which the union will ensure that we address all nurses' issues.

In response to the 2016 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement [MTBPS], as NEHAWU we vowed to intensify the fight against non-filling of vacant posts in key sites of the delivery of public services such as hospitals and clinics where the already under-staffed nursing cadre is forced to do the work of the cleaners, porters and administration clerks in addition to their already huge responsibilities that they carry in their duties.

To this end the national union marched against National Treasury and the Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA] to call for the filling of vacancies in the public service. NEHAWU will relentlessly pursue this struggle until

fruition for the benefit of the working class and the poor. We will intensify the call for government to re-open nursing colleges; government cannot stand idle while young people are exploited by fly-by-night bogus nursing colleges. It is imperative for government to re-open the colleges to train more nursing cadres to deal with the understaffing.

Nurses too are the backbone of the re-engineering of primary health care and the expansion of ward based services which are being rolled out in the NHI pilot sites.

We recommit ourselves to persistently wage a war in defence of key public services especially in nursing.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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