

MEDIA STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEHAWU REJECTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINGLE CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY AND CALLS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF THE DIRECTOR OF LABOUR RELATIONS

Monday January 22, 2018

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] rejects the mooted establishment of a single Catchment Management Agency [CMA] by the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation.

The said agency is proposed to be responsible for water use and allocation. With core function to issue general authorisation, licenses, review licences, registration of existing lawful water use and undertake compulsory licensing. The department did approach the union in 2015 on the intention to establish a Catchment Management Agency. The union in its response requested the department through the Minister to establish a task team to look onto a proposed model in dealing with these issues. The task team was established where labour unions were represented, while still waiting for a report back session with the employer on how to deal with the process and formulate a report to the Minister on the outcomes of the investigation for the correct model, the union is extremely shocked to see a communique from the Minister indicating the proposal to establish a single CMA.

As the national union, we vehemently reject any form of agentization of departmental functions as we see this as another form of subjecting the department to corrupt processes of the highest order which will result in increasing the cost of water to ordinary citizens. The transferring of workers functions to the CMA will render our members and workers redundant and this shall never be acceptable by the national union as it will lead to job losses. What worries us the most is that no consultations has taken place in the bargaining chamber on the proposal for the formation of the agency and already the department is informing its employees that the CMA is going to be established. In actual fact, in one of the 2017 chamber meetings, the department dismissed the union when we asked them if they were continuing with the project.

As NEHAWU, we believe that the contracting of private construction companies to build dams and water reticulation infrastructure, to the exclusion of the state-owned company by the department threatens the jobs of our members and goes against the notion of building a capable developmental state. The national union will develop a programme to challenge the department, including the call for an Integrated Water Plan and the building of a dam by the construction directorate employees in Tzaneen, Limpopo.

It is on these basis that NEHAWU rejects agentization as it stands against the principles of the union and both COSATU and ANC resolutions. The national union will not co-operate or allow public hearings and meetings convened to inform the public and employees about the establishment of the agency to take place. In doing

so, the union will mobilise all its members to ensure that this agency does not see the light of day.

Call for the resignation of the Director of Labour Relations

The Director Labour Relations is supposed to be playing a pivotal role in pursuing sound labour peace and effective bargaining, but unfortunately he is not. Instead of playing a mediatory role he is preoccupied with facilitating dismissals of our members and those occupying low level jobs while management misconducts are treated with kid gloves.

We have seen on numerous occasions labour relations personnel colluding with each other to dismiss employees of the department. Mr Oscar Mulaudzi further delayed the process of signing the conditions of service by constantly coming to the bargaining chamber without a mandate and thereby increasing the frustration of our members on the ground.

He has continued to play a role in obstructing sound labour peace in the Eastern Cape and other provinces through his authoritarian style. We have also noted the recognition of unions outside the bargaining scope through the backdoor. The department has been using reactionary unions to suppress NEHAWU while engaging in union bashing against us. These are ANC cadres who are voted for by our members who work hard in campaigning for an overwhelming victory of our liberation movement yet its deployees in government turns and mistreats them.

As NEHAWU, we hold a strong view that there is no self-respecting Director of Labour Relations who will go to represent the employer unprepared. As such, we call for the immediate resignation or removal of Mr Oscar Mulaudzi. The national union refuses to sit idle while abuse is meted against our members.

We are in a process of preparing for a National Day of Action against the department and our demands will include amongst others the following:

- Signing off new conditions of services for construction workers and members as they were last reviewed in the year 2000 and parties must agree on next date for the review
- Demand payment in full of merit bonuses and promotions retrospectively from 2017.
- We demand that construction workers receive their merit bonus on or before 01st December every year
- Project workers contracts be linked with projects
- Stopping of the outsourcing of construction of dams
- Immediate implementation of equal pay for work of equal value
- Address the safety challenges of water control aides/officers

It is in the best interest of both the Minister and the department not to take these demands lightly as the national union is ready for a serious fight in defence of its members and workers in general.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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