



# NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT 2024

## MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday November 04, 2024



The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] convened its ordinary National Executive Committee [NEC] meeting on the 30th – 31st October 2024. The NEC considered the international context, national political and socio-economic situations and organisational matters affecting our members and the working class in general.

### International Context

The NEC discussed the unfolding international developments taking place amidst the persisting global capitalist crisis which has produced deeper problems for humanity, including amongst others the developments on the African Continent, in particular the struggle against neo-colonialism, developments in Asia, Latin America, North America and Europe.

The NEC agreed that the capitalist crisis has brought greater burdens on the working-class with escalating unemployment, extreme inequality and poverty.

The NEC strongly condemned the unfolding shameful brutality of the Israeli genocidal aggression against the Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians, which threatens a major regional escalation of war. The NEC reiterated its unwavering international solidarity support to the Palestinian struggle. In this regard, the NEC agreed to explore Palestinian solidarity campaigns strategies that makes the biggest impact targeting Israeli interests in South Africa.

The NEC welcomed the outcomes of the BRICS 2024 Summit held in Kazan, Russian and further agreed that the union should establish links with Education and Health unions in BRICS countries to forge strong relations, prioritising health as a right for all.

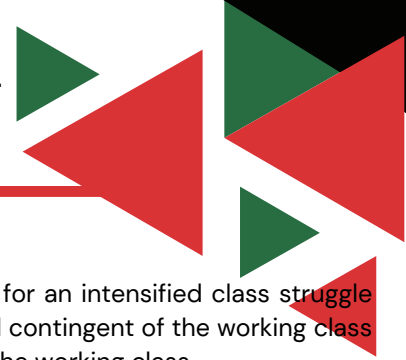
The meeting agreed that the union must pay attention on advancing internationalism at the workplace, focusing on international labour standards for collective bargaining; strengthening workplace organisation through twinning and beneficial cooperation with sister unions.

The NEC agreed that the union must start with preparations for the 80th anniversary celebrations of the World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU] in 2025. Equally, the NEC was updated on the 4th WFTU World Working Youth Conference set to take place in France on the 22nd – 23rd November 2024.

### National Political Situation

On the national political situation, the NEC made reflections and analysed the state of our National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

The NEC agreed with the conclusions of our successful national political school that was held in July 2024, that the ground has shifted unfavourable to the working class especially with the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU).



Therefore, the working class must ready itself for an intensified class struggle guided by the historic mission of the organized contingent of the working class under the leadership of the vanguard party of the working class.



The capitalists and the rest of the Neoliberal elite have welcomed the establishment of the GNU with high expectations for a better economic environment. Indeed, South Africa has now entered a new political stage in terms of its transition away from the Apartheid system since 1994. However, the changes that have come with the outcomes of the seventh democratic elections in the executive do no mean that there would be some change of direction in terms of the economic policy trajectory. The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) that was delivered by the National Treasury actually indicates that the GNU is going to double-down in the implementation of the austerity programme and the overarching neoliberal economic policy trajectory.



As part of our assessment of the national political situation, the NEC considered the implications of the GNU with reference to the need for an accelerated drive for radical socioeconomic transformation in our country. As NEHAWU, we believe that the unfolding multiple socioeconomic crises facing the working class, rural-poor and middle strata calls for a resolute focus on the part of the government, which would not be possible in the context of the GNU, especially in the light of the rogue behaviour of the DA, as it has already started undermining the principle of unity upon which the seventh administration is founded. Therefore, with everything considered, the NEC agreed to develop a position paper to elaborate the union's political strategic posture on the GNU for recommendation to the ordinary Central Executive Committee (CEC) in December 2024, including the perspective of a confrontational and contradictory posture towards the GNU.



The NEC noted with concern the anarchic behaviour of the DA since the inauguration of the GNU, which includes amongst others their continued rejection of the BELA Bill which was adopted by Parliament, and subsequently water-down by President Ramaphosa, wherein he signed the Bill and agreed to delay the implementation of two clauses – clauses 4 and 5 – for three months for negotiations with parties in the GNU.



The DA has further made controversial pronouncement on international relations matters which are contrary to the position of South Africa such as on the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Indeed, the formation of the GNU has emboldened the DA with its Neoliberal agenda in seeking to reverse the gains of our people, hence they are opposed to the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) and implementation of the Universal Basic Grant amongst other progressive social interventions which seek to transform the livelihoods of our people. The NEC condemns this agenda of the DA.

The meeting directed the union to deepen class struggle supported by ideological training and mass education as a strategic approach to awake the working class. For this work to succeed, the union must work directly with the SACP and COSATU through a joint political and ideological programmes.





### **Socio-Economic Assessment**

The South African economy continues to remain stagnant with no prospect of registering an economic growth rate that would reduce the crisis-level unemployment that is facing our country, in the foreseeable future. Unemployment continues to grow at an alarming rate with the overall unemployment rate currently standing at 42.1% and 60.7% of South African youth not being able to find work.

The meeting took place when the GNU had tabled its first MTBPS against the background of a socio-economic context of high costs of living, high interest rates, and deepening levels of unemployment, poverty, and social inequalities. The MTBPS represented the fixation with the Neoliberal prescripts centred on austerity measures programme of National Treasury which have fostered inequality, unemployment and poverty.

The NEC agreed that the union must work tirelessly to roll-back the dominance of Neoliberalism and fight against the so-called structural reforms that are captured by business interests. In this regard, the NEC directed the union to build working class unity through forging popular fronts on four key socio-economic areas namely; education, health, economy and public service as well as crime and corruption.

#### **Education**

The NEC discussed in detail the state of post-school education and training sector and concluded that the sector is confronted by myriad of challenges which have manifested in the unfolding crisis in post-schooling.

The meeting directed the union to work with all working class formations (within and outside congress movement) to mobilize the working class along the overarching South African vision the – “People’s Education for People’s Power” guided by long defined seven features – (Destroying the backwardness of the apartheid system; Masse based; Reach-out to all the people of this country, be they young and old, in farms, town or cities; Not to serve the interest of the rich; Be based on the actual experience of our people; Uncover the cultural heritage of our people; Unify the nation and paving the way for people’s power (in control of both political and economic power). This mobilization will be possible through revamping and re-establishing organs of people’s power in different components or sectors of the education band.

The NEC congratulated the South African Students Congress [SASCO] for a successful Student Representative Council [SRC] elections campaign program in various institution of higher learning.

## Health

The NEC, in discussing the state of health sector, moved from the premise that a country that does not value the health of its citizens deserves no future. The NEC was dismayed that the GNU does not have a plan to catch-up with the targets set out by the sixth administration regarding the implementation of the Human Resource for Health 2030 and the commitments from the 2nd Presidential Health Summit.

Equally, the NEC condemned the deliberate ploy by President Cyril Ramaphosa to delay the promulgation of the NHI Act in order to have further engagement with the private sector. The NEC called for President Ramaphosa to immediately gazette the legislation.

The meeting agreed to work with the Friends of the NHI to ensure that President Ramaphosa does not strike a secret deal with the private sector companies that would lead to the amendment of the NHI Act and compromise the goal of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Furthermore, the NEC agreed to work with all working class formations in the health sector as part of its strategy to reawakening the working class to take full responsible for their health through entering into struggles to ensure the realisation of the UHC.

## On Economy, Public Service and Fighting against Austerity Front

The NEC agreed that the union must mobilize for a people's budget which prioritizes development and economic growth through creating sustainable jobs to improve the livelihoods of South Africans.

The NEC called on National Treasury to desist from making pronouncements that are deliberately intended to predetermine the outcomes of collective bargaining process that is underway in the public service at the moment. Any pronouncements on the salaries, retirement arrangements, etc. are merely hot-air as long as they have not been presented at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council [PSCBC]. Therefore, matters of the "additional R57.6 billion to pay for the salaries of teachers, nurses and doctors, among many other critical services" must be left alone to the current process that is underway at the PSCBC.

Lastly, the NEC agreed that the national union must launch a dedicated campaign on the immediate implementation of Government Employees Housing Scheme Resolution both inside and outside the bargaining council confinement. The meeting agreed that as long as the resolution is not fully implemented, NEHAWU shall be a necessary nerve and irritation to the government of national unity – GNU until is fully implemented. The union will use everything it has to ensure that this campaign is taken forward in a sustainable manner and ultimately it sees the light of the day including preparing our structures to be equal to the task.

**END**

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat.

