

Ramaphosa will steer ANC towards unity – NEHAWU

14 December 2017

NEHAWU CEC statement

14 December 2017

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] convened on the 12–13th December 2017 its first Central Executive Committee [CEC] meeting after its successful and united 11th National Congress held in Boksburg in June 2017. The CEC also took place just as we wrapped up our 30th anniversary celebrations which saw the union celebrating in all nine provinces this important milestone.

The CEC received reports covering all four pillars of the organisation which includes international assessment, political assessment, socioeconomic assessment and organizational assessment. The CEC also assessed progress in the implementation of the 2017 programme of action and drafted a programme of action for the next four years.

On International

The CEC rejected the announcement by US President Donald Trump of East Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel and the transferring of his embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. As NEHAWU, we continue to recognise Jerusalem as the capital city of Palestine that is currently occupied by Apartheid Israel. We recognise however that this is not only Trump's policy as it was long legislated in terms of the Jerusalem Embassy Act passed in the US Congress in 1995, which for some reasons was never implemented by successive US Presidents.

This move is going to pose a very huge impact on the peace process and it also undermines the Palestinians efforts to establish their own state. A picket will be organised in February 2018 directed at the US embassy to register our anger at this decision. We believe that such concrete and practical action are required especially given the serious implications of the recent developments.

NEHAWU calls for the immediate and unconditional support for the total shutdown of the South African Embassy in Tel-Aviv. In this regard, we urge the ANC's 54th National Conference to take this position. A position welcomed and supported by both Palestinian political parties and progressive Jewish Israelis. We also call on all our members and workers, who themselves are beneficiaries of an international solidarity struggle to support and advance this position, that enjoys the support of majority of provinces of the ANC.

We note the relentless regime change efforts by the US in Cuba. The US has been persistent in their plans to overthrow socialism and to restore capitalism in the island. As NEHAWU, we will continue with our international support of Cuba and this includes our assistance to the recovery and reconstruction efforts after the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma. We remain inspired by the commitment of the Cuban people to the ideals of socialism.

On Zimbabwe, the CEC noted that what took place was largely a coup and does not represent a new qualitative change from the previous political trajectory of Robert Mugabe. For us this represents the changing of one faction with another aided by the assistance of the military. The faction of the ZANU PF currently in charge is the same that has propelled the Mugabe regime for the past 37 years.

The CEC noted that during these recent developments in Zimbabwe the masses had a very minimal role to play and were only reduced to cheerleaders rather than leading the charge to rid

Zimbabwe of the parasitic bourgeoisie. The masses have a bigger role to play in fixing the derailed national democratic revolution that the country was set to take after the liberation of the country.

The CEC also deliberated on the Libyan situation and came to the conclusion that the US has been for some time putting measures in place to impose capitalism with slavery both in Africa and in the Middle East. The killing of Colonel Gaddafi has led to the destruction of Libya which was once Africa's most prosperous country.

The removal of Colonel Gaddafi made a leeway for Libya to be turned into a safe heaven for all sorts of illegal and backward activities including slavery. Currently it is estimated that more than 30, 000 people are traded as slaves in Libya. We blame this catastrophe on imperialists who are hell-bent on stretching their tentacles so as to expend their influence as wide and far as possible. As NEHAWU, we reiterate our commitment to intensify our international solidarity by pursuing rigorously campaigns with the people of Swaziland, Western Sahara, Cuba, Palestine, Basque, Kurdish, Middle East, Venezuela and Brazil including strengthening ties with trade unions in the south.

The national union will work hand in hand with COSATU in thoroughly preparing our contribution at the BRICS Trade Union Forum, which shall be held during the BRICS 10th Summit. We shall also take steps to forge direct relations with the WFTU affiliated trade union centre in Basque, LAB, a region which together with Catalonia is engaged in a protracted struggle for self-determination in the face of intensified suppression by the neo-fascist monarchic state of Spain.

Political Situation

The CEC noted that it takes place just few days before the start of the ANC 54th National Conference. As NEHAWU, we are proud to have been the first organisation in our October 2016 NEC meeting to call for President Jacob Zuma to resign and for Cde Cyril Ramaphosa to succeed him in line with ANC's past precedents. A year later we are elated at the support shown for Cde Ramaphosa to ascend as President of the ANC and subsequently the country come 2019. We are confident that we have done enough for Cde Cyril to emerge as the President of our beloved ANC. We strongly believe that with Cde Ramaphosa at the helm he will steer the ANC towards both unity and an overwhelming victory come the 2019 national elections.

The CEC also took time to analyse the current state of the National Democratic Revolution [NDR], and our analysis reveal that the NDR is derailed and no longer on course to achieve its strategic objectives. The CEC welcomed the initiative of the South African Communist Party [SACP] in calling for the reconfiguration of the Alliance, and in this context its decisions to build strategic capacity to participate in multi-party elections in its own right and to play a leading role in developing a common platform for a Left Popular Front of working class and progressive forces.

As NEHAWU, as per our 11th National Congress resolution remain committed to our resolution to support the ANC in the next general elections and we shall engage in internal discussions reflecting on the implications of the outcomes 54th conference of the ANC and the Special National Congress of the SACP ahead of the 13th National Congress of COSATU primarily through our national and provincial political commissions. Part of these discussions in our commissions shall interface with the SACP's roadmap. Nonetheless, we reaffirm the sentiments of our 11th National Congress that ultimately the struggle for socialism requires the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat led by the vanguard party, the SACP, which is for us the real content of the question of the strategic relationship of the proletariat, the party and state power

rather than seeing the narrow parliamentary road as a strategic way to socialism, an important terrain as it is.

The CEC noted the North Gauteng High Court judgment which dismissed President Jacob Zuma's review application against the former Public Protector's "State of Capture" report and proposed remedial actions. The onus now rests with the President to do the honourable thing of ensuring that an independent judicial inquiry into state capture is established as soon as possible. The CEC welcomes the judgement by the court compelling the President to pay his own legal fees. We elated that the President will no longer use tax payer's money as his piggy bank to finance his frivolous court actions.

On socioeconomic situation

The CEC noted the IMF's forecasts on the rising global economic growth in 2017 and 2018, notably its manifestations in the United States, European Union, China and other regions and countries, the CEC concluded that this is still superficial as it is accompanied by ever deepening socioeconomic inequalities, rising poverty and environmental degradation all across the world. Here at home our economy is also on a long winding downturn with the growth rate forecast lowered from 1% to 0.7% this year by the IMF.

As NEHAWU, we note the intension by Treasury to cut the wage bill to address the growing public debt at the expense of the incomes of the public service workers, when government has contracted about 240 000 employees that are actually doing public service work as interns or contracted under the guise of the Community Work Programme and the Expanded Public Works Programme, which represents extreme exploitation of workers by the ANC government. We vehemently reject any job losses, freezing of posts and austerity measure by Treasury because most of the state resources ends up lining the pockets of greedy politicians or find their way to safe heavens in Dubai. Furthermore, we will outright reject any offer by the government that is not double digits in the current public service wage negotiations.

Public Service

The CEC noted the social grants deal between the South African Post Office [SAPO] and the South African Social Security Agency [SASSA]. However, we are still going to demand the full contents of the agreement as this is very important to us as a union organising in SASSA and also on behalf of the 11 million social grant recipients. As NEHAWU, we call on the Minister of Social Development to desist from her plans to continue with outsourcing key functions of the department. The CEC also welcomed the fact that Postbank is in a process of being registered as a retail bank.

The CEC noted with disgust the Steinhoff scandal and call for meaningful worker representation in the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) in order to subvert any further loss of workers' hard earned pension funds. We reject the racialization of financial crimes in the country; when white people like Markus Jooste and Christo Wiese loot money it is called "accounting irregularities or accounting failures" while for black people it is just simply referred to as fraud or corruption. The CEC calls for a full investigation by the criminal justice system and those found guilty brought to book.

We note with concern the continued investments based on speculation by the PIC and the haemorrhaging of funds due to bad decisions. As NEHAWU, we are convinced that the appointment of Malusi Gigaba as Finance Minister has exacerbated the problems currently engulfing the PIC and SARS. We will intensify our call for the PIC to fund housing for government employees.

Health

The CEC noted the slow pace of the implementation of the National Health Insurance [NHI] and this does not bode well for the working class and the poor. As NEHAWU, we note with serious concern the gazette issued by the Minister of Health to take the process of the NHI forward. Our main worry is that the gazette seeks to sway the entire process and open up space to smuggle the creation of a multi-payer system as opposed to the single-payer system contained in the White Paper on the NHI. As NEHAWU, we will fight any attempt to introduce any multi-payer system. We further noted that the structures to take forward the processes of the NHI will be dominated by powerful groups who have vested interest and have openly opposed the introduction of the NHI in the past. Civil society meanwhile will only participate in one structure called the National Health Council. We view this as nothing but the handing over of the NHI to private companies. NEHAWU will do everything in its power to ensure that the NHI benefits the working class and the poor.

Education

The national union will immediately convene a bilateral meeting with the newly elected leadership of the South African Students Congress [SASCO] to deliberate on the report of the Commission into the Feasibility of Fee-Free Higher Education and Training in South Africa, transformation of the higher education sector and joint programmes in advancing the Right to Learn Campaign.

The CEC further noted that both the Polokwane and Mangaung Conferences of the ANC called for the implementation of free education from Grade R until Post Graduate Degree. Contrary to those resolutions the President just merely asked the commission to probe the feasibility of introducing free education.

Lastly the union will monitor and engage the Department of Higher Education and Training on the finalisation of the White Paper on Post School Education and Training Implementation plan and the review of the National Skills Development Strategy 3. The national union will also ensure that it actively participate in the TVET forum and the outcomes of the TVET Imbizo are followed up at the provincial levels as well.

Issued by Khaya Xaba, Media Liaison Officer, NEHAWU, 14 December 2017