

Declaration of the National General Council of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)

4-7 October 2017 - SADTU Village, Glen Marais, Gauteng Province

Declaration

PREAMBLE

The SADTU National General Council - which brings together the National Office Bearers, Provincial Chairpersons and Secretaries, Regional Chairpersons and One delegate for every 5000 paid up members - convened from the 4th to the 7th of October 2017, at Glen Marais, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng; representing more than 260 000 educators and education workers. The Council was held in the SADTU Village, the new home of the largest teachers union in South Africa.

We, the delegates to this National General Council convened under the theme "Restore the Character of SADTU as a Union of Revolutionary Professionals, Agents of Change and Champions of People's Education for People's Power in pursuit of Socialism".

The Council met two and a half years after the National Congress held in 2014, which portrayed a bigger, stronger and more unified union. The Council acknowledged the diversity of the membership, which reflected the demographics of our country and noted that this diversity is our strength.

The Council further noted the rise in racial, tribal and ethnic incidents in our communities in general and in our schools in particular.

It noted with concern the rise in the levels of violence against both teachers and learners in our schools. It was further noted that gangsterism in the Western Cape is a total impediment in the education of our children. The Council mourned the recent violent killing of two deputy principals, one at a Western Cape and one at a Gauteng school.

The Council further noted the emerging and emboldened capitalists occupying our streets using the genuine grievances of our people whilst continuing to enslave the

workers through casualisation and labour brokering systems.

The Council noted the capturing of the democratic state by the corrupt Gupta family and the elites both in government and business.

The NGC further noted attempts by corrupt elites to access the pension funds of the public servants, which is invested and managed through the PIC. We reaffirmed our commitment that no one with nefarious intentions must get close to the savings of the workers, be it GEFF or the PIC.

The Council celebrated World Teachers Day and the official opening of our new offices on the 5th October and our 27th anniversary as the largest teachers union in the country. This council acknowledged as a great milestone the growth of SADTU both in terms of numbers and influence in our society. The Council was honoured by the presence of the Deputy President of the Country, Mr Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa who conducted the official opening of the building and the unveiling of the Mandela statuette.

Having noted the difficulties our country is facing in terms of the triple challenges and the stubborn apartheid legacy which impacts on any intervention to grow the economy - The delegates to this National General Council have declared as follows:

PILLAR NUMBER 1

SERVICING OF UNION MEMBERS

On the welfare of education workers:

Recognizing that the welfare of education workers from Early Childhood Development (ECD) to TVET/CET is of utmost importance

SADTU DECLARATION

in the achievement of the UN SDG4. Further acknowledging that the morale of education workers is at its lowest and that this has a negative impact on their health as workers and their learners across the education sector. Reaffirming the critical role that education workers play in the building of the nation.

The Council declared the Union's unwavering commitment and determination to achieve better working conditions for all workers in education and an enabling environment for learning for the children of South Africa.

The Council reaffirmed the National Executive Committee resolution to embark on industrial action and other programmes to achieve -

- the 0,5% parity for teachers in the basic education sector and lecturers in the TVET and CET sector,
- the formalization of the conditions of service for the ECD practitioners which include negotiated wages and benefits, recognition of their qualifications and their inclusion in the ELRC bargaining chamber,
- the payment of incentives such as a rural allowance to all qualifying workers and the review of the same policy to address concerns raised by the workers,
- the timeous payment of the pay progression to all qualifying workers and to bring to an end the delays which are unlawful and as a result of deliberate bureaucratic inefficiency intended to break the morale of workers,
- the provision of psychosocial services for both learners and education workers in areas affected by violence whether as a result of gangsterism or bullying,
- the provision of long study leave for workers in order to address their morale and status in education,
- the elimination of overcrowding in learning institutions which has become enemy number one and a devastating

force in the education system,

- the restoration of collective bargaining and dispute resolution mechanisms in the TVET Bargaining Unit which has been undermined by DHET - and by its lack has created chaos in the sector - and reduced this lawful instrument to begging,
- the provision of fences and security personnel in all the learning institutions to maintain safety and restore dignity of both workers and learners.

On the debt of the education workers:

The Council declared the commitment and determination of the Union to embark on financial education for all the workers and the speedy launching of the Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCO) to provide financial support, including taking them out of administration and restoring their status and financial freedom which will benefit education as a whole.

The Council will continue to call for the provision of bursaries to the workers in order to educate their children as the majority of the teaching staff do not qualify for financial support in the higher education sector. The Council further recognized that indebtedness has led to the teaching profession losing active and experienced teachers through early retirement or resignation.

On the Performance Management System

SADTU reaffirms the congress resolution that the democratic principles imbedded in IQMS be maintained in any revision of the performance management system.

SADTU should develop alternative elements within the QMS to address any short-comings that may exist within the draft quality management system. On the treatment of foreign nationals:

Foreign Nationals, whose qualifications have been verified and found to be genuine, with five years' experience in the department, should be permanently employed.

Foreign Nationals vetting within SACE should ensure that due process is followed so as to avoid disadvantaging these educators.

PILLAR NUMBER 2 CREATING A LEARNING NATION

That education is a fundamental human right and no learner should be denied access because of not having an identity number or not being able to pay. The Council reaffirmed the union position that education cannot be sold and that profiteering from it must be outlawed in our country.

On privatisation and commercialisation in and of education:

The Council declared all who profit from education as the immediate enemies of the people and the real stumbling block to the realization of quality public education for all. In this regard the Union will embark on campaigns to change laws around education and expose this ideological onslaught by edu-business and edu-preneurs to the working class.

On infrastructure, resources and curriculum as drivers of quality public education:

The Council declared that infrastructure, redesign of the curriculum and the financing of public education remain an apex priority in order to achieve the UN SDGs; in particular SDG4. In this regard the Council declared our firm resolve to realize the decolonization of the curriculum and the promotion and the deepening of our indigenous knowledge systems. The Council further declared that human resource plans specific and relevant to education be adopted as a matter of urgency.

That the so-called equitable financing model be revised and that learning-institutions-based budgeting be prioritised to address socio-economic realities of different geographic regions.

The Council declared that denial of ones culture and language is injustice and was therefore unwavering on the full

implementation of mother tongue teaching and the teaching of relevant African History as compulsory in all the grades in our schools.

On the importance of ECD in the attainment of Education for all:

The Council further declared that ECD is the only guarantee to quality learning as opposed to the incubation agenda by the education department. In this regard the union will expose the reluctance of government to roll out universal ECD as facilitating privatization of education to benefit the elite.

On the critical role that should be played by the TVET and CET sectors:

Further declared that the TVET and AET sectors be transformed to grow the skills that will directly respond to the triple challenges on poverty, unemployment and inequality. That council expressed anger at the unbearable working conditions of the workers in this sector after 23 years of the democratic breakthrough. That with regard to the lack of urgency by the DHET to address these problems, the union declares zero tolerance towards this deliberate bureaucratic inefficiency. That the Union declare action against this provocation and attack on collective bargaining.

On the role of the PYA in transforming the higher education sector:

The Council further declared the determination of the Union to work with all progressive youth alliance(s?) to transform Higher education and usher in a higher education sector that responds to the needs of the African economy and conditions. In this regard the union will embark on campaigns to expose the untransformed university management and in particular the dean levels that are not reflective of the demographics of the country. The Council will further embark on awareness programmes to advance the decolonization project in order to make higher education institutions accountable to the people of our country.

The Council calls upon the state president to without further delay release the Commission report on free education for the poor in higher education as part the reaffirmation of the Union's policy position in support of free higher education for the poor.

PILLAR NUMBER 3 PROMOTING A DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED NATION STATE

On Political Intolerance and mass killings in the MDM structures:

The Council noted that there are intra movement assassinations and the numbers of comrades being killed in the MDM structures are increasing. Minor differences within MDM structures give rise to disharmony.

We acknowledge that this is driven by crass materialism e.g. hunger for leadership positions, and manipulation of state resources for self-enrichment and populism.

As the delegates to this NGC, we declare our support for an urgent investigation by the Alliance in order to address these differences and renew the Alliance. We call for the perpetrators to be brought to book and be expelled from MDM structures.

On building the Alliance:

The Council reaffirmed the Congress resolutions to strengthen and reconfigure the Alliance in order to service the people of our country and restore the confidence of our people in their liberation movement.

The Council further reaffirmed the Congress resolution that should the SACP take a resolution to contest state power as the SACP, the union shall convene a special congress to debate and take a decision on the matter. The Council recognized that it was important to convene such a special congress because currently SADTU supports the ANC in general and local government elections.

The Council called for the proper functioning of the Alliance Political Council and Alliance Secretariat to eliminate public spats which are not beneficial to the people of our

country but feed into factional agendas and bolster regime change agents.

PILLAR NUMBER 4 EFFECTIVE WORKER UNITY

On the Middle East and Palestine:

On the international front we re-affirm the 6th National Congress Resolution on the Middle East and Palestine. We are calling on all our structures to participate in the annual international Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW). We support the calls for the curtailing of diplomatic relations between South Africa and Israel, and therefore call for a total shutdown of the South African Embassy in Tel-Aviv as a form of government sanction as a way to advance the Palestinian struggle.

We believe that the global trade union movement has a responsibility to advance the Palestinian struggle through practical acts of solidarity. We have a responsibility to ensure that the curriculum in schools provides for an accurate depiction of the Israel/Palestinian issue as an anti-colonial struggle, and a struggle against apartheid. Workers must refuse to offload Israeli products that arrive in their countries, workers in the creatives industry must refuse to normalize Israel's violations of international law by adopting the cultural boycott against Israel, there are many ways that the trade union movement can express its solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the Palestine.

PILLAR NUMBER 5 BUILDING A DELIVERY BASED ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

On the Gender Policy:

- The NGC adopted the Gender Policy in order to address the ongoing violence against women and children in our country; and in doing so the NGC further declared it would convene a National Equality and Diversity Conference to give effect and devise programmes for such policy.

On the servicing of School Principals and Office based educators:

- The NGC declared to establish a network of Principals that may be convened as and when the need arises to address issues peculiar to them, and such networks shall be accountable to all executive structures that established them.
- It was further resolved that our branches should develop a dedicated programme to service this cohort of members, as a strategic strata within our general membership.
- The Council further declared the Union's commitment to audit services to the principals by union structures.
- The Council reaffirmed the Union's policy position on the servicing of office -based personnel, including the reaffirmation of the Congress resolutions on convening meetings to afford them to raise their issues with the intention of providing them with quality representation and services.

On the SADTU journal:

- SADTU to launch a Teachers' Journal before the next Congress and that the NEC should then develop a concept document to guide the existence of such a Journal.

On the Young SADTU Members:

SADTU to develop programmes that will encourage the participation of young teachers to mobilize and attract more young workers into the organisation and that capacity-building initiatives in terms of political education and support be embarked upon for these young members and leaders.

The union to run developmental programs for the young workers to prepare them as activists in the union (i.e. strengthening and funding of the Sports, Arts and Culture programmes in all structures of the Union).

That research should be conducted to learn best practices on how to organize and

mobilize young teachers.

The next Congress should receive the research report and decide on the way forward.

The young teachers should be encouraged to interact with each other and share experiences through activities and programmes rolled out by the Union's constitutional structures.

On the SADTU Student Chapter:

SADTU to launch the SADTU Student Chapter in all institutions of higher learning working with the South African Students Teacher Union (SASTU) before the next Congress.

SADTU student Chapter should work with South African Student Congress (SASCO) as a recruitment strategy to target education students about to enter the profession.

Conclusion

We are re-energized as members and our commitment towards our organization and its members. Our unity is sacrosanct and we will defend it with all our might. We will focus our strategies towards servicing our members, including those in vulnerable sectors such as the ECD and TVET Colleges.

We are prepared to be on the streets and use any other mechanism to ensure that the demands of our members in vulnerable sectors are met. We are willing to embark on various actions including targeted programmes for education workers in the TVET and the CET sectors.

We will remain a member-driven union and I represent their aspirations with utmost dedication.

And So We Declare!!!