

**Declaration of the 9th National Congress of the
South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)
25-28 September 2019
Nasrec Expo, Johannesburg, Gauteng Province**

Declaration

Preamble

The SADTU 9th National Congress, which brings together the National Office Bearers, Provincial Office Bearers, Regional Chairpersons and Secretaries, 1 branch delegate for every 350 paid up members from the 498 branches countrywide convened from the 25th to the 28th of September 2019, NASREC Expo, Johannesburg, Gauteng representing more than 260 000 educators and education workers.

We, the delegates to this Congress convened under the theme "*Claiming our right to have our human dignity and safety protected and respected in pursuit of a decolonised quality public education,*" acknowledge the role that we have to play in building a violence-free society based on human rights.

Recalling and reaffirming our Union policies and principles, the Congress deliberated on the theme informed by the violence against the education workers and the learners in all the institutions of learning.

The Congress was unanimous on the need to end violence in our institutions and in support of the ILO declaration on sexual harassment at workplaces as adopted at its centenary conference in June 2019.

Acknowledging that building, a violence-free society is not, an option but an urgent obligation to everyone in our country and a decolonised

education can have an influence in building a healthy society where everyone's dignity is respected.

Recognizing our duty as education workers that institutionalised racism and the colonial educational settings that continue to affirm white superiority as a norm and a marker of progress, can only be stopped by pursuing a decolonised quality public education.

Reaffirming that structural organisation and the design of our society has to change if we are to decisively deal with institutionalised racism, self-hate and gender-based violence and therefore education as an enabler has to be at the forefront of our project to change power relations.

Understanding that white supremacy is an outcome of the economic and cultural dispossession of the African people in our country and the continent and therefore the restoration of the birthright of all South Africans regarding access to land and other resources must be at the centre of a decolonised quality public education.

Reaffirming and articulating our view, that the current curriculum is not fit for purpose because it is obsessed with standardized assessment of learning at the expense of assessment for learning.

Recognising that the destruction of creativity in the classroom in pursuit of standardized assessment for shaming, league tables are the

undertakings of neoliberalism at its best and must be stopped.

Theme of the Congress as articulated in the preceding paragraphs.

The Congress declares that:

A. On the decolonization of the curriculum

- The curriculum based on excessive assessment and instrumentalist accountability (ticking the box based on standardized curriculum accountability) is educationally and psychologically damaging to our children and cannot change the behaviors hence so much violence in our institutions and society in general.
- The curriculum was constructed to instill Western ideas and values by subjugating the colonised including the destruction of their identity, language and culture.
- Where identify, land, culture and knowledge of a people was violently destroyed including the use of institutionalised policies of colonialism and apartheid the need for land restitution and decolonization of the education system is very urgent and necessary.
- The upliftment of the Western epistemology at the expense of the African indigenous knowledge has to be reversed by decolonising the curriculum as an acknowledgement that all knowledge has equal status, including language.
- The extreme inequality in our country, which fuels violence in our communities, is a direct outcome of the colonial apartheid economic collapse.
- The colonial and apartheid economic dispossession forms the basis of the feelings of hopelessness; resentment and bitterness are divisive and socially corrosive and lead to violence against the vulnerable based on their politico-socio-economic situation in society.

- The economic instability, social unrest, vertical inequalities, including extreme income inequalities, such as gross wage differences between CEOs and workers, must be regulated through collective bargaining forums established in terms of the LRA in order to build a more equal and socially cohesive society.

B. On the safety and security of education workers and learners The Congress declares that:

- We tremble with indignation at every injustice our education workers and our learners experience in particular economic inequality that strips them of their inherent dignity as human beings.
- Whilst we honour all those who commit to work during weekends and holidays to liberate our young and old from ignorance and mental slavery, we condemn the system that destroys their families and their health.
- These committed education workers of our country, symbolise the peoples' quest for justice, equality and access to a decolonised quality public education for all.
- These professionals of our union are leading the way to arm the young and old with an education system that is critical and liberatory to fight against violence and they do it in a selfless way.
- The union takes all matters of violence against education workers and learners as an attack on their inherent right to safety and dignity and must declare a zero tolerance to lack of psychosocial service, appropriate infrastructure and urgency from employer and must seek recourse as a matter of urgency.

C. On the National Democratic Revolution

The Congress declares that:

- The National Democratic Revolution remains the shortest route to socialism and should

be pursued with vigor and that pursuing a decolonised quality public education trajectory position the education workers to dismantle the structural pillars of crises-riddled and disastrous capitalism.

- The Union reaffirms our conviction that socialism is the future as it guarantees sustainable development, deconstruct the exploitation of one man by another, and will end poverty and misery in the world.
- We all be critical on the stagnating economy, which continues to bleed jobs and creating an army of unemployed youth. Further expressing our concern that the official 29% rate of unemployment and 38% unofficial is not sustainable in a country where grinding poverty is only mitigated by the grants offered by the government.
- We sound a warning against disaster capitalism using the economic crisis in our country to entrench privatisation agenda of the state entities with profit motive and the sovereignty of credit rating agents, WB and IMF agenda above the sovereignty of our country.

D. On the Unity of Alliance in the service of the people

The congress declares that:

- The union reaffirms and recommits to the unity of SADTU, COSATU, ANC and SACP as sacrosanct in pursuit of a socialist society based on human rights.
- The Union further re-affirms that the united COSATU is the only capable force of fighting for the socio-economic rights of all workers in the country and thus call on the re-doubling of efforts to cement the unity of the federation by condemning the emergence of workerist and 'numerical arrogance' tendencies.
- The founding principle of one sector-one union, one country-one federation and condemns intentions of some unions to undermine policies of the Federation to broaden their scopes and thus violate this long held principle of the federation with the possibility of weakening and destroying other unions.

- The trade union movement demands maximum discipline and unity by all members and leaders at all levels in order to drive the radical phase of economic transformation and engage in battles against neo-liberal onslaught.
- The Alliance's functionality be strengthened and sharpened to be the shield and spear in the fight against unemployment, poverty and inequality.
- All members work hard to restore the confidence of the people in leadership of the ANC and unite against factionalism which is consuming the movement.
- The 2021 local government elections should be approached with full political knowledge that the movement must win an overwhelming majority because any other victory by the right wing or fascist ultra-leftist parties would mean the destruction of the human and trade union rights in our country.
- The union develops an intensive political education programme that would expose the emerging fascism and right-wing rhetoric that would plunge the country into a societal catastrophe.
- The support and commitment to work for an overwhelming victory for the ANC led governing Alliance in 2021 local government elections comes with the strict precondition that the alliance will indeed be radically reconfigured to be fit for purpose.
- Further that all the components of the alliance must be viewed as equal partners who have an equal opportunity to participate in policy and decision making processes, instead of being reduced to just voting fodder for electoral purposes.

E. On the organisational discipline

The Congress declares that:

- The code of conduct as provided for in the SADTU constitution forms the only legal contract between a member and union, and that violating such strips one of his/her membership of the union in pursuit of the highest ethical and revolutionary cadre-ship

within our organization.

- We further reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the application of the principle of democratic centralism as contained in the constitution to instill organizational discipline and root out factionalism and status-consciousness type of leadership that live from one conference to the next conference at the expense of the members and our people.
- We further declare a zero tolerance to the new tendency of immortalising leaders and using leadership position for self-serving and disrespecting members. The union as a revolutionary organization enforces the values of fairness, merit and duty to care for members and the community.

F. On the Commercialisation and Privatisation in and of education

The Congress declares that:

- The implementation of the Charter or Academies type of schools in the Western Cape is nothing but what is now commonly known as accumulation by dispossession where public funds meant for public service enrich the private individuals who will be running the schools.
- The union recommits the members to fight against this disaster capitalism everywhere in particular the privatisation of education as unfolding in the Western Cape in particular. The Western Cape government is a racist government that passes legislation to undermine centralized collective bargaining.
- These disaster capitalists, as we rightfully characterize them, have even embarked on another concerted campaign to stall the signing into law of the Copyright Amendment Bill in an effort to consolidate their monopoly in educational materials. The Learning and Teaching Support Material is one of the Department of Basic Education's biggest annual cost, the monetary benefit goes to no more than 4 largely foreign controlled publishing companies based in South Africa.
- The proposed copyright amendment bill is intended to replace the 1973 archaic copyright

laws that are in place currently. The current framework grossly limits access to educational resources and the copyright amendment bill proposes the adoption of certain flexibilities that would enhance access to copyright works and thus access to information for educational purposes.

- The President of the Republic must sign the copyright amendment bill into law without any further delay because any delay serves the interests of the greedy publishing conglomerates that have now turned one creative industry worker against the other as a consolidating tactic to stall the signing of the bill. We warn that any copyright should not supersede the educational needs of our children.

G. On the implementation of the NHI

The Congress declares that:

- We make an emphatic call for the implementation of the National Health Insurance, which will ensure universal access to quality health care for the poor and working class immediately.
- The Congress viewed the NHI as a necessary and urgent intervention to reduce the inequalities that we believe are at the centre of our societal collapse. Just like quality public education, health care access should be treated as a basic human right that cannot be reserved only for the few that can afford the current obscene medical aid private hospitals costs.
- The union should embark on an intensive campaign for the realization of the NHI as a matter of urgency.

H. On recalling and reaffirming the specific Pillars of the 2030 Vision:

- The Congress further deliberated on pertinent issues ranging from education, political chemistry, socio-economic, international and Organisational.
- The Congress further extensively deliberated

on all the matters affecting teachers, learners, education personnel and the country at large, assessed the impact of the all the campaigns directed at defending collective bargaining, which is the essence of our existence.

- In view of the challenges that confront us both within and outside the organization and in line with our 2030 Vision which we are firmly re-affirming,

Further declares that:

I. Servicing of members

On CET Educators

- CET qualified professionals must be employed permanently with full benefits that are negotiated at the ELRC as the sectoral councils as designated in terms of the LRA.

On a Danger Allowance for Teachers

- To address the recent prevalent violence and killings perpetrated by learners against teachers, the provisions of PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2097 be extended through an enabling collective agreement negotiated at the ELRC in order to create a danger allowance dispensation for educators as employees in the public service.

On Retaining the Presidential Proclamation of the GEP Law for the accelerating of the changes in favor of the members, pensioners and beneficiaries

- The GEP Law should remain a proclaimed legislation in order to avoid lengthy public consultation processes because the GEPP is owned by its members and pensioners who have their representatives in the PSCBC.

J. Creating a learning nation

On the General Education Certificate

- That SADTU should conduct research on the implications of introducing the GEC certificate in the country with the intention of ensuring that the assessment for learning is applied and that it should participate fully in its conceptualisation.
- The research also address all modalities relating to the proficiency level as required for all subjects to considered for the certification

On the 4th Industrial Revolution

- SADTU should take the lead in empowering educators on the 4th Industrial Revolution and further demand a clear strategy and plan from the Department of Basic Education on its plans regarding the 4IR and its impact on education and education workers.

On Assessment for Learning

- We must play a leading role in engaging and advocating for assessment for learning practices which should include the convening of a Lekgotla on the same subject matter.

K. Promoting a development oriented nation state

On Local Government Elections 2021

- The country will hold the local government elections in 2021 and the COSATU 13th National Congress resolution that directs the federation that "if the radical reconfiguration of the alliance fails, COSATU, shall beyond the 2019 elections work to deepen its work to strengthen the SACP as a political insurance of the working class and mobilize for its electoral victory" that we vehemently reaffirm;

- SADTU, working with the alliance should ensure the electoral victory of the ANC in the 2021 local government elections and that critically, the National Executive Committee should closely assess the progress in the implementation of the 13th COSATU National Congress resolution on the "Radical Reconfiguration of the Alliance" in finalizing the discussions on this matter.

L. Worker Unity

On Internationalism & Working Class Solidarity

- The Union should coordinate more actively and become a systematic participant in the work of international solidarity, global justice and education for all.
- Further that we should promote the COSATU resolutions on an Alliance International Solidarity Forum, and to call for both the AU and the UN to act decisively against Morocco in affirming the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination,
- To intensify our work in solidarity with the people of Palestine, Cuba and Venezuela and other parts of the world struggling against US sponsored imperialism.
- The union reaffirms the resolutions of previous congresses to unequivocally support the working and poor people of neighboring Swaziland against an oppressive and anti-worker regime through sustainable solidarity programs.

K. Building a delivery based organizational capacity

- The Union should intensify its internal and administrative capacity so that it serves the membership more efficiently and effectively within an ever-changing labour market and education sector.
- Members are the basic unit and the lifeline of the Union, no effort should be spared in an attempt to improve our capacity to service them and to advance our objectives as an organization guided by the 2030 Vision.

Conclusion

As the delegates to the 9th National Congress, we assert that the dignity of the teaching, education support personnel and the learners in our learning institutions is inherent and does not need evidence.

We acknowledge that our dignity has been degraded; we thus declare that our Union and its members will strive for the restoration of the dignity of teachers, education support personnel and learners in our institutions of learning.

We recognize and accept that learning institutions are sanctuaries and centers of our communities.

We are making a clarion call; for society to take charge of our schools and ensure that, they are safe and provide an optimal learning and teaching environment.

We decree that all learning institutions must be a reflection of equality and dignity and that they must be equipped with the necessary appropriate learning institutions infrastructure.

We denounce violence in our schools in the strongest terms possible.

We are school fans!!!

And so we declare!!!!