

Empowering educators to reposition
SADTU for peoples' education and
working class power

3 June 2009 • Edition 10

Contact: Jon Lewis 011 334 4830
jlewis@sadtu.org.za

SADTU e-VOICE

Online Voice of the South African Democratic Teachers Union



In the aftermath of the historic 2009 General Elections, SADTU needs to move rapidly to tackle urgent labour and education issues - all this in the midst of a deteriorating economic situation and recession.

State of the Nation

SADTU welcomes the fact that the President's address on the state of the nation was very positive and speaks to the challenges we face as a nation in the midst of an international economic downturn and recession.

However, we are disappointed that the President avoided the issue of the public service and OSD (Occupation Specific Dispensation) – what comrade Vavi refers to as the 'ticking time-bomb.'. Perhaps this was wise. The unions will be meeting with the relevant ministers on 8th June – when we should receive further clarity.

For SADTU as a union – the centrality of employment in government strategy – defending and creating jobs – is crucial. We do however have the following concerns:

- Does the current budget allow us to meet the targets that have been set? We need to look at the detailed programmes and plans that the President said would be made available in the coming days.
- Our other concern, in relation to the education commitments is in regard to provincial budgets. Often funds are budgeted – for example for ECD – and not all provinces spend the money on the intended purpose. This needs to be monitored.

On Education

We welcome the comments by the President and the emphasis on education as a priority. In particular:

- The roll out of ECD (Early Childhood Development) is crucial. International research shows that good ECD is crucial to later success in school. So the universal roll out of Grade R by 2014 is good news (although the original target was for 2010)
- We fully support the President's comments with regards to sexual abuse of learners by teachers. As SADTU we have said the following:
 - We have called on our members to blow the whistle on abuse wherever it occurs
 - We have called on the DoE to use its powers under labour legislation to discipline and dismiss
 - We have said that the police must enforce the law with regard to statutory rape; and
 - We have fully supported the actions of SACE (South African Council for Educators) in removing abusers from the teachers roll and banning them from teaching in South Africa.
- Encouraging learners to complete their secondary education – we fully support this move. Currently approximately 40% of the cohort do not reach matric. The only chance these youngsters have of finding employment is if they are educated.
- We would support the need to train principals to make them effective school managers. But we would say you need to train and build capacity at all levels of the education system – including all teachers, and officials – particularly the district officials.
- FET (Further Education and Training) – the emphasis on this as the site of skills training is vital. Recent survey shows that there are some 3 million youngsters between the ages of 18 and 24 who are not employed and not involved in any form of training – we have to reach out to them.
- School sports should be boosted and be part of the mainstream curriculum, not just an extra-mural activity. SADTU fully supports this

- Higher education – we look forward to seeing the details on how access is to be extended to the children of poor families.

OSD Update

Developments include the following:

- The employer proposes to pay the 4% translation to qualifying educator specialists (therapists and psychologists) whilst referring all other issues for this group to the Public Health and Social Development Sector.
- The employer has proposed a revised salary structure for employees on salary levels 1 – 12 by reducing the number of notches to 12 per level, with a fixed 1.5% increment between notches.

Outstanding areas which have not been agreed:

- *Salary structure* – differences over starting salary (SADTU has called for R180,000; the Department is proposing R95,000 for M+3). Moreover the Department refuses to provide individual salary histories as a way of sorting out anomalies.
- *Pay progression* – there is no pay progression for 2008 and 2009 (previously 1% per annum). The Department now claims that the pay progression for 2008 is included in the 4% translation payment last year. They have also now linked pay progression to the provision of laptops for educators. SADTU negotiators have also proposed that IQMS for development purposes be delinked from pay progression which should be automatic.
- *Recognition of previous experience/service* – basically the same issue as caused the recent metro bus strike. SADTU has proposed 2 notches for every year of service. The Department says that it was taken care of in the 4% translation.

- *Conditions for appointments and promotions for principals, specialists etc* – the Department is seeking to increase the qualifications and years worked for promotions and appointments
- *Recognition of Prior Learning for unqualified teachers* – the Department has not tabled anything. SADTU has called for the time frames (currently by 2013) to be revised in the light of this.
- *Inclusion of learner performance in the evaluation of educators* – SADTU has said that contextual factors must be included to recognize the challenges faced by teachers in poor schools, and that IQMS remains the instrument for evaluation and development.
- There is no agreement on the moderation tool to be used for IQMS scores, with the employer wanting to bring in external moderators.

SADTU National Executive Committee meets in June and will provide strategic direction on OSD and other issues.

Other Labour Issues

- The Department's incentives policy for rural schools and scarce subjects has been implemented in an arbitrary and unfair way. The SADTU negotiators have proposed a major review.
- The Department is piloting a new post provisioning model for 2010. This needs to be handled in the ELRC.
- ABET and ECD Practitioners – reports are expected to be tabled soon at the ELRC dealing with their conditions of service.

Bargaining unit for FET college lecturers

We are pleased to announce the launch of a bargaining unit within the ELRC to cater for FET (Further Education and Training) lecturers in terms of section 54 of the FET Act. The launch will take place on the 9th of June.

SADTU has instructed its negotiators to withdraw the previous request to the PSCBC (Public Service Central Bargaining Chamber) to vary the scope of the ELRC to cover FET because of the unnecessary delays in the PSCBC. We have further instructed the General Secretary of the ELRC to facilitate the launch of the FET bargaining unit on the 9th of June, and to convene a full meeting of the ELRC for the 10th June to table outstanding OSD (Occupation Specific Dispensation) adjustments to the remuneration structure for FET lecturers.

SADTU has held several meetings with the FET employers' organisations (FETCEO – Further Education and Training College Employer Organisation, and SACPO – South African College Principals Organisation) to address issues affecting the conditions of service for the FET sector.

This is a landmark in the development of collective bargaining in the FET sector, providing college lecturers with full labour rights and establishing structures to allow them to exercise these rights and to bargain for improved conditions.