

NEHAWU

National Education Health and Allied Workers Union



NEHAWU MEMORANDUM OF DEMANDS

03 September 2020

**NEHAWU MEMORANDUM OF DEMANDS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT, THE PRESIDENT, AND PREMIERS ON THE NATIONAL DAY
OF ACTION, 03 SEPTEMBER 2020**

INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of our national day of action, the 03rd September 2020, NEHAWU which represents more than 277 000 members has gathered here for the presentation of this memorandum, to the attention of the President of the Republic of South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa and all Premiers from the nine provinces.

Our national day of action is supported by many local organisations, including our federation COSATU and its affiliates, the SACP, SASCO, YCL and SAUS who are together with us today across provinces.

We have also received messages of support internationally from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the WFTU Trade Union International of the Public Services and Allied (TUI-PS&A), DRC Worker's And Peasants' Consciousness (CTP), DRC; All Militant Workers Front (PAME), Greece; Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), India; Trade Union International of Workers in Agriculture, Food, Commerce and Allied Workers; Pasyek-Peo, Cyprus; Trade Union International Public Service and Allied (TUI-PS&A) of Latin America; National Federation of Unions of Workers in Public and Social Functions (FNSTFP), Portugal; WFTU in the Asia Pacific Region; Unione Sindacale di Base (USB), Italy; Worker's House, Iran; Amalgamated Rural Teacher's Unions of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ); Communist Party of Swaziland (CPS), Botswana Land Boards Local Authorities and Health Workers Union (BLLAHWU), Lesotho Teachers Trade Union (LTTU) and the Trade Union Of Workers In Local Administration of Athens, Greece.

These organisations have all registered public supporting messages to our action to which serious government's attention is drawn. Our demands also resonate with many South Africans who share and are affected by similar concerns.

We are demonstrating at a time when we are still mourning the needless deaths of more than 240 healthcare workers with 169 NEHAWU members which account for 83% of the total number across the country and over 14000 South Africans succumbed to COVID-19. There is no justification whatsoever for government's failure to comply with the occupational health and safety legislation and regulations that seeks to protect workers, especially those in the frontline of combatting the pandemic. Our members and workers in general are subjected to savage attacks through an increasing rate of exploitation. Most critical is this frontal attack on cornerstone workers gains namely, collective bargaining and the right to strike accompanied by downward variation of their

working conditions by both the state and the private sector.

Therefore, today the 3rd September 2020, we have come out across all our sectors supported by our federation and shoulder to shoulder with our allied formations of the mass democratic movement, to put across all the key demands of all our members to all the political heads of the land, in every provincial capital and the seat of the national government itself, the Union Buildings, as well as the law-makers at the National Parliament in Cape Town. Key amongst these demands are those arising from the appallingly unsafe working conditions in the face of the COVID-19, especially in many of our public health institutions, including:

- a) That COVID-19 must not be used as an excuse to reverse the hard fought gains of the workers.
- b) That government must urgently take steps away from a neoliberal economic policy paradigm, with its austerity measures that results in burdens on working people and their livelihoods.
- c) We demand full compliance of with the OHS Act by all workplaces and ensuring that risk assessments and infections control and prevention measures are put in place and the immediate establishment of OHS committees in all workplaces. The Occupational Health and Safety Act must be implemented in full to protect workers.
- d) Infected workers must return to work only on the following conditions: They have completed the mandatory 10 days of self-isolation, they have undergone a medical evaluation confirming fitness to work if they have had moderate or severe illness, they strictly adhere to personal hygiene, wearing of masks and social distancing. Managers at institutional level must closely monitor symptoms of such workers returning to work.
- e) We call on the NDOH to issue a circular, explicitly prohibiting institutional managers from preventing workers to go on quarantine if they believe they have been exposed, whether at home or at the workplace. The circular must explicitly prohibit managers from issuing or communicating any kind of threats or intimidating notices or letters to workers in such a way that they are forced to work when they have been diagnosed COVID-19 positive but without symptoms or when they have been in contact with individuals diagnosed COVID-19 positive.
- f) We demand NDOH to mandate the daily screening of healthcare workers and that it must roll-out a national testing programme of Non-Communicable Diseases, as many of the frontline workers actually live with such underlying diseases without being aware, which causes complications and deaths when such NCDs are only discovered at the late stage.
- g) We demand that the Department of Health must engage with the Health Professions Council of South Africa [HPCSA] to expedite the applications and to review the postponed arrangements for the board exams for the foreign-

trained doctors and other healthcare workers, whether South African or not. Similarly, we demand that the South African Nursing Council [SANC] must review its decision on the registration of the foreign-trained nurses.

- h) We demand that the NDOH must review the process of reporting on COVID-19 fatalities in all institutions to ensure adherence with uniform standards as recommended by the WHO. In this regard, we also call on the NDOH to compel all institutional managers to regularly update NEHAWU and other trade unions on all Coronavirus and COVID-19 data especially pertaining to the healthcare workers in the institutions.
- i) We demand to government to urgently fill all vacant posts in the public healthcare sector and ensure that we start to build building blocks for the implementation of the National Health Insurance [NHI].
- j) We demand that government must implement a Risk allowance for frontline workers for the hard work and sacrifice of their lives and families during this fight against this invisible enemy.
- k) We demand that all COIDA claims be processed in line with the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 130 of 1993.
- l) We urgently demand the procurement and provision of adequate PPE's for frontline workers in particular based on credible figures of the total workforce and the type of work performed by occupational categories of employees.
- m) We call on government to abandon the current decentralised and fragmented approach in the procurement of PPEs, as determined by the Guidelines on the Management of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Public Service issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration.
- n) We demand the provision of psycho-social support to all workers and their families who are infected and affected by COVID-19.
- o) We demand the respect and protection of our collective bargaining right across all sectors and that neo-liberal policies must not be used by the states as a pretext to dismantle collective bargaining right. To this effect we demand the full implementation of the following resolutions in the public service:
 - 1. PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2018 clause 3.3 in full without failure and stop wasting money through the protracted legal processes.
 - 2. The abolishment of salary level 1 and 2 in the public service and filling all vacant posts in public service.
 - 3. Full implementation of PSCBC resolution 7 of 2015 on Government employees Housing Scheme and PSCBC Resolution 5 of 2015 on the new danger dispensation.
 - 4. Full time employment of Community Health Workers at salary level 3 by all provinces and that they must be integrated into the public service.

Given the urgency of addressing all the demands above, due to their direct impact on service delivery and the negative on our members, we demand that your office responds to the union within a period of 7 days from the day of receipt, failing which we declare our intention to embark on an extensive national campaign aimed at withdrawing our labour power as from the 10th September 2020 in all sectors NEHAWU organises until our demands are met favourable to workers.

This memorandum is handed over to the South African government through the President, National Speaker of the National Assembly and all Premiers in all nine province on the 03rd of September 2020.

Received on behalf of the South African government by

Name & Surname: *KECHESA TSENOLI*

Designation: *Deputy Speaker*

Signature: *[Signature]*

Handed over on behalf of NEHAWU by

Name & Surname: *Eric Kwekwa*

Designation: *Provincial Secretary*

Signature: *[Signature]*