

The Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) held its Annual National Bargaining Conference on 9 – 11 March 2012 in Cape Town.

The Conference was attended by 160 delegates and staff. Delegates were shop stewards representing 101 000 SACTWU members in the clothing, textile, leather, distribution and related sectors in all parts of South Africa.

The main purpose of the Conference was to consolidate the union's wage demands for the 2012 round of substantive negotiations. The Conference successfully completed this task by re-affirming:

- Our demands for a living wage
- Our determination to combat attacks on the union's bargaining structures, such as bargaining councils
- Our commitment to strengthen centralised bargaining
- Our determination to stamp out the scourge of non-compliance in our industry.

The details of our consolidated demands will now first be reported to our members, after which we will submit our demands to employers and release them publicly.

The Conference applauded SACTWU members for their strong participation in the COSATU Section 77 protest action against labour brokering and e-tolling on 7 March 2012. The Conference reaffirmed its support for a total ban on labour brokers. We also compliment our Federation and its affiliates for the determined and disciplined manner in which the protest action was conducted, and we reject all attempts to interpret the general strike as an indication of division within the tripartite alliance.

The Conference received detailed reports on the state of the industry and the economic bargaining indicators for this year. We noted the significant slowdown in the rate of job losses in the industry, noted the recent announcement of large pending job losses and recommitted ourselves to combat these vigorously.

The Conference was pleased to be addressed by Zwelinzima Vavi, COSATU General Secretary, on the current political and organisational challenges facing the working class. We reaffirmed our unwavering support for COSATU's solid commitment to step up the fight against the growing wealth inequality in our society.

The Conference was also addressed by Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Economic Development, on government's new infrastructure development plan. The Conference welcomed the report as a refreshing new road map to address our country's developmental challenges and called for similar programs on rural development.

Regarding the recent Walmart judgement, the Conference warmly welcomed the reinstatement

of over 500 dismissed retail workers affected by the Massmart-Walmart merger, and sees exciting new opportunities in the appointment of a specialist committee to develop proposals on how to mitigate the detrimental effects of the merger. We regard this as an important indication that the public interest provisions of the Competition Act cannot just be ignored.

The Conference held four specialist Commissions of its own, which developed proposals on our core Programme of Action (POA) objectives, including growing the union's membership, creating and saving jobs, improving service delivery to members and organisational renewal.

Policy proposals emanating from the Conference will now be submitted to the union's National Executive Committee meeting for constitutional structural consideration.

Issued by

Andre Kriel  
SACTWU  
General Secretary

If further comment is required, kindly contact either of the SACTWU National Organising Secretaries, Bonita Loubser on 0828007142 or 0214474570 AND Chris Gina on 074 1932258 or 031 3011351.

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