

PRESS STATEMENT

SACTWU HANDS OVER WORST EMPLOYER AWARD TO NEWCASTLE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

The Southern African Clothing & Textile Workers' Union(SACTWU) has today handed over its 2010 "Worst Employer Award" to representatives of the Newcastle Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NCCCI). The award ceremony took place at the Newcastle Hall, Voortrekker Road, Newcastle at 10h00.

This "Worst Employer Award" was bestowed on the NCCCI by the SACTWU 11th National Congress, at its Awards Evening held on 24 September 2010 in Cape Town, because the clothing employer members of the NCCI continue to disrespect our country's labour laws. They pay clothing workers at wage levels which are far below the legally prescribed minimums.

The Award is a broken brick, symbolising employers who break, not build, decent work in the clothing industry.

While the union's National Congress expressed its concern about job losses, delegates to our Congress has made it clear that a new growth path for decent work in the industry cannot be based on slave wages and certainly not on a deliberate and disrespectful disregard for our country's labour laws. This includes refusal to allow bargaining council inspectors entry to work places, to do their statutory workplace inspections, as enshrined in law.

Based on verified clothing industry bargaining council information, the union's survey of 13 NCCCI member companies reveals the following:

- 12 companies have had non-compliance awards handed down against them between 5 February and 2 September this year, while 1 (one) award is still pending;
- these 13 companies collectively owe workers arrear wages and levies of a combined amount of over R10 million;
- 5 of these companies have illegally refused bargaining council inspectors access to the workplace, during the compliance inspection proceedings;
- these companies, based on uncontested information tabled at the arbitration proceedings, pay a machinist wage rates ranging between R180 and R330 per week, while the legal minimum at the time of the arbitration proceedings was already as low as R440 per week.

We invite the NCCCI to part of our country's decent work agenda. They must pay workers what is due to them.

Issued by
Andre Kriel
SACTWU
General Secretary

If further information is required, kindly contact SACTWU 1st National Organising Secretary,
Chris Gina on 082 940 9456 after 11h00 today.