

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**CLOTHING INDUSTRY ACCORD PROCESS IS BROADER THAN JUST THE NEWCASTLE MATTER**

The Southern Africa Clothing & Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) is amused at the widespread misconception that the clothing and textile industry accord process and Minister Patel's involvement there-in is simply confined to resolving the issue of threatened factory shutdowns in Newcastle due to the illegal wages being paid there. This is just one of the many mushrooming recent misconceptions about what is happening in the fashion manufacturing industry which, if left unchallenged and uncorrected, could soon be accepted as truth.

The issue evolved very differently to what is now being publically reported:

Minister of Economic Development, Ebrahim Patel addressed our union's National Congress in September this year. Our Congress was vexed with the difficulties which the industry is experiencing and what to do about it. In fact, our Congress theme was just that: "A new growth path for decent work in the clothing, textile, footwear and leather industry".

The idea of an industry accord to address the many developmental challenges faced by the industry, including productivity, forms of work organisation, trade issues, industrial policy, matters amongst others, emerged from these discussions at our National Congress and was finalised at our union's National Executive Committee meeting held in early November. In discussion with clothing employers, it was agreed that the Accord Process will also include the problem of non-compliance as part of the Accord Process. It is just one of many issues to be considered, and certainly not the only one.

Attempts by many public commentators and some employers to narrow the Clothing & Textile Industry Accord Process to simply addressing the Newcastle wage non-compliance matter is a serious disservice to the industry. As this process unfolds, SACTWU has absolutely no intention of focusing its agenda narrowly, simply on the Newcastle matter. The industry's challenges are much broader than that.

Another misconception that is being propagated is that the union is opposed to a new wage model. Nothing could be further from the truth. SACTWU is not opposed to a new wage model for the clothing industry. We are opposed to attempts to introduce poverty wages in the industry, dressed up as "a new wage model".

Issued by  
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SACTWU  
General Secretary

If further comment is required, kindly contact SACTWU's Deputy General Wayne van der

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Sunday, 14 November 2010 12:26

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