New Bill heralds a better deal for farmworkers

By Sekela Selego

The Department of Labour unveiled its long-awaited draft bill to bring the working conditions of farmworkers in line with the rest of the country (30/12). The working document is the extension of the Labour Relations Act which gives farmworkers under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 the right to job security, remuneration and working conditions.

In terms of the proposed bill, child labour (under the age of 15 years) at the farm is effectively eliminated, farmworkers are entitled to annual leave, sick leave, working hours are prescribed and wages determined.

The sweeping changes the government proposes are likely to avert the lot of farmworkers generally regarded as the most underpaid, overworked and exploited employees in the country.

But, as changes begin to take effect, the government and trade union federations, such as Cosatu and Nactu, could find themselves on a collision course with the powerful SA Agricultural Union which is opposed to any changes in the industry.

A month ago, when the government announced that it was considering extending the Labour Relations Act to farmworkers, the agricultural union expressed its opposition to the envisaged proposals, saying they were "unworkable" and that the legislation would not take into account the "unique" circumstances of agriculture.

Farmers' representatives subsequently met State President FW de Klerk and Manpower Minister Leon Wessels to express dissatisfaction that there were no proper consultations with farmers on the implications of the Act.

To counter the swelling opposition to the envisaged legislation, Wessels proposed further discussions on the matter. Farmers have until the end of February to submit comments to the government.

Among the important provisions of the Act is the establishment of a special labour court to listen to disputes between the employer and employee and the appointment of inspectors to monitor the farmworkers' working conditions.

If this draft Bill becomes law early next year as seems likely, it will be an offence for an employer to hinder an inspector in the execution of his duties. It will also be an offence for an employer to dismiss or alter the service conditions of a worker if such an employee has given evidence to an inspector.

Farmworkers will in future have the right to belong to trade unions and will also have the right to participate in the union's activities. It will be an offence for an employer to prohibit an employee from participation in union activities.

Farmworkers will also, among other things, be entitled to annual leave and sick leave. They are also entitled to lunch periods while female workers will enjoy the right to maternity leave. In terms of maternity leave, a female worker is not allowed to work for four weeks after confinement and eight weeks after giving birth.

The summary dismissal of farmworkers is a common practice. In the past, farm workers were often dismissed for no apparent reason. In future, if a worker wants to terminate his services, the farmer cannot keep him against his will. However, the worker is expected to serve notice.

Farmworkers will also enjoy all public holidays as paid holidays and working on Sunday will be considered overtime.

Cosatu has played an important role in drafting the working document. Nactu says the proposed legislation is long overdue and has repeated farmers' demands that they be exempted from industrial courts in cases of disputes with workers.

While the general thrust of the proposals is to bring about enlightened labour relations on farms, the expected opposition from the farmers could turn these areas into battlefields.

NEW DEAL... The long-awaited draft bill protecting exploited farmworkers was unveiled last week.
Naactu suggests new taxes

Instead of shifting the tax burden to the poor by increasing Value Added Tax, the government could introduce at least eight other taxes to raise revenue, suggests the National Council of Trade Unions in a report prepared by the Labour Research Service.

- The report will serve as Naactu policy at the National Economic Forum meeting next week.

The federation suggests the government tax pension fund contributions and introduce progressive property taxes, rural land taxes, a minimum business tax, a capital transfer tax, a capital gains tax and a tax on interest earned by emigrants. The government should also reintroduce the tax on dividends.

These, together with the proposed increase in the fund tax announced this week and the luxury tax introduced last year, could raise R15.4-billion. Increasing VAT to 13 percent will only raise R6-billion.
Battle for soul of SABC

Controversy over the appointment of black executives:

By Mathatha Tsedu
Investigations Editor

The battle for restructuring the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has taken a new turn with the recent promotion of black executives.

While the Media Workers Association of South Africa (Mwasa) has taken issue with the promotion of Mr Leslie Mashokwe from deputy editor of Business to editor of CCV's Newsline, the ANC and liberal newspapers have come out in opposition to the entire process.

Mwasa members at Newsline have sent petitions to management opposing Mashokwe's appointment, saying he was a bully and difficult to work with.

They said several workers under Mashokwe at Business had to either resign or change jobs to avoid his wrath.

Mashokwe has denied this and allegations that he had vowed to "clean up" the department.

"I have no intention of cleaning up a clean place. If there is anything that deserves cleaning up, I can assure everyone that I will do so," Mashokwe said.

But there is no reason to worry as I have no intention of carrying out any vendetta against anyone," Mashokwe said.

Mashokwe's appointment is still a matter of discussion between Mwasa and the SABC. The SABC has refused to accede to the demands of the workers, saying Mashokwe is a competent person.

Mwasa secretary general Mr Sthembele Khula said about the SABC decision to ride roughshod over the feelings of workers, the union decided to dispute which could develop into an eventual strike.

Mwasa has not taken issue with Mashokwe's alleged political affiliations and is only focusing on the basis of his being unacceptable to those who are destined to be his juniors, Khula said.

But ANC spokesman Matt Gil Marcus said the ANC was opposed to the promotions altogether as these precipitated the obvious restructuring that must take place when a new board is appointed by the end of March.

Marcus said the ANC was not fighting individual promotions but the principle itself.

But inherent in the battle that has now engulfed Mashokwe and two other appointees is the battle for the control of the new board which must replace the present one by end of March.

At the centre of this battle is the newly created Campaign for Independent Broadcasting (CIB), the brainchild of the Campaign for Open Media (COM).

The CIB has as its basic aim to replace the National Party-appointed SABC board with a politically non-aligned board appointed by a group of eminent persons who in turn are chosen by two judges.

COM has proposed that the two "Codesa judges", Ismail Mohamed and Judge Scharbot, be appointed to choose the panel of eminent persons, COM chairman, Mr Raymond Louw, said.

But their involvement in Codesa has alienated them from some segments of the black community, such as the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), that have shunned the Codesa talks show.

Ironically, CIB has appointed well-known ANC activist Barbara Hogan as its co-ordinator, leading to questions of how independent their actions would be.

Also, CIB is presently putting together a programme that will cost about R700,000 to train people from outside the SABC for specific senior appointments in various SABC departments after a new government and board takes over.

The trainers will be drawn from the ANC's ex-Radio Freedom announcers and the print media, a source within CIB confirmed.

This has raised objections from Mwasa members at the SABC who feel the CIB trainers would be political appointees and outsiders brought in to lord it over them in the name of restructuring.

But Louw said the trainers would merely be "available" and not automatic appointees as the CIB would not appoint personnel to the SABC staff.

Louw denied that Hogan's appointment meant that the CIB was slanted politically and said she was no longer an office bearer of the ANC.

"Our preference would be that we have people who do not belong to any organisation but in this country, right now, that is not possible," Louw said.

And Mashokwe, a capable and fearless journalist, is now caught in a battle in which Mwasa objects to his appointment on the basis of his managerial style, while the ANC and liberals blast the promotion for political reasons.

There are many who argue that the liberal fringe would like Mashokwe's rival, Mr Pekwa Mashiwane, to be appointed to head Newsline simply because he is perceived to be less capable.

But many are apprehensive that it may end up as replacing one set of political appointees with another...
Gripe is withdrawn

- Members said Mashokwe was a bully:

By Mathatha Tsedu

THE MEDIA Workers Association of South Africa on Tuesday withdrew its objection to the appointment of Mr Leslie Mashokwe as head of CCV's Newsline.

Mwasa secretary general Mr Shembele Khala said they had decided that the objections be addressed between its members and Mashokwe directly.

Mwasa members at Newsline had signed a petition alleging that Mashokwe was a bully.

The matter was handled through the grievance procedures contained in the recognition agreement between the SABC and Mwasa.

A relieved Mashokwe said: "I am only human, with many faults, and if there are things I do that are wrong it is only fair that they be pointed out."

Mashokwe was promoted from deputy editor of Business to head of Newsline above former head Mr Pekwane Mashilwane. *(See Page 7)*
Nactu says campaign on SABC ‘hijacked’

AN ANC-LED cabal had hijacked the recently formed Campaign for Independent Broadcasting (CIB), union federation Nactu charged yesterday.

Nactu spokesman Mphindi Manhla said his organisation was concerned at the growing role political organisations were playing in the campaign aimed at restructuring the SABC.

Manhla said Nactu, which was a member of the CIB and the Campaign for Open Media, was of the opinion that a key role in a programme to restructure the corporation should be played by the trade unions and civic organisations, rather than by political organisations.

There was “no logic” in having representatives from political organisations in the CIB’s co-ordinating committee if the campaign’s professed aim was to depoliticise the SABC.

The appointment of members of political organisations to top positions in the CIB was tantamount to import into the CIB the frictions which existed in the communities.

ANC official Barbara Hogan was recently appointed co-ordinator of the CIB.

CIB co-leader Raymond Louw denied any political organisation had hijacked the campaign. In fact, the political organisations in the campaign — the ANC and the DP — had adopted the CIB’s proposals on restructuring the SABC.

Wilson Zwane

Of Hogan’s appointment, Louw said it had the blessing of the CIB’s steering committee. He admitted, however, that there had been unhappiness on the part of Nactu about the Codesa proposals.

He said Nactu should raise its concerns at the CIB’s plenary session next Saturday.

Manhla said Nactu would “fearlessly expose” any cabal appointed to run the SABC. Any programme aimed at restructuring the SABC should involve Nactu’s affiliate Mwasa.

Mwasa, he said, represented the corporation’s workers.

SABC workers had “sacrificed so much for the corporation in terms of low salaries and denial of worker rights and dignity”.

Proposals

Manhla said proposals tabled at the CIB’s plenary session in November on the restructuring of the SABC were those of one of Codesa’s working groups, and Nactu was not in favour of them.

His organisation had believed that the CIB would cater for the interests of people right across the political spectrum.

“It is now proving otherwise, day by day,” Manhla said.

No comment could be obtained from the ANC at the time of going to press.
Lost City not real ruin — Rosevear

THE Lost City was not about to crumble, Sun International MD Ken Rosevear said at the weekend. Parts of the carefully constructed ruins of the exclusive resort have suffered real damage from heavy rains in Bophuthatswana only months after the glitzy official opening. Bophuthatswana, 12/1/93.

But Rosevear said the cracked Royal Staircase, leaking swimming pool and damaged waterways were "normal" damage caused by earth shifts and ground movements. "It is merely buildings settling in," he said.

He could not give an estimate of the cost of repairing the damage, but said repairs would not cost SI anything.

"Repairs, which have been going on for the past two to three weeks, are a matter of insurance. The construction companies involved would carry the costs," he said.

Rosevear said media reports about the damage had created a "storm in a teacup." He denied faulty construction was to blame. And the rush to complete the R300m complex in time for the festive season had not been a factor. Damage caused by ground movement often happened with new buildings, he said.

Damaged underground pipes feeding the flowing lakes had to be replaced. All five damaged waterways would be back in operation this week, he said.

The pipes that had been damaged were being replaced by steel ones. The only inconvenience to Lost City visitors was the closing of a part of the Royal Staircase leading down from the Palace Hotel to the Valley of the Waves.

"Only a section of the stairs is closed for repairs to foundations. Large crews are working around the clock to get everything back to normal," he said.

Visitors seek evidence of employers' role in violence

THE role of employers in engendering violence in SA will be investigated by the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions (Nactu). At a media conference in Johannesburg, Nactu general secretary Enzo Frisco said 50 trade union leaders from around the world would tour SA over the next few days, gathering information about employers' role in violence.

Cosatu general secretary EEPROM Ngcobo said multinational companies, including multinationals, had attempted to undermine trade unions by harrying employees from opposing political factions during strike action.

This had precipitated violence in some instances, Ngcobo said. Enzo Frisco said evidence of this could be obtained, union members of the multinational's home plants would be informed and urged to act.

Calling for the recomposition of sanctions was one option which could also be considered by the confederation, he said.

Frisco said the 50 trade union leaders, assisted by Cosatu and Nactu representatives in terms of an agreement signed by the three organisations, would meet in Johannesburg soon to discuss their findings.

"We will discuss how best we can help at this particularly delicate moment to foster democratisation and fight violence in SA," Ngcobo said.

Nactu said it was vital during the pre-election phase that unions be allowed to establish freedom of association.

Fewer wines auction

CAPE TOWN — The application of more stringent selection criteria and the tight economic climate will see fewer wines on offer at this year's Nederburg Auction in Paarl on April 3.

Compared with 1992 when 10 493 cases of 121 different wines were on offer, fetching a total of R72m, only 9 324 cases of 86 wines are on sale 8/1/93.

Strong overseas interest is expected when 30 of SA's premier estates, wineries and co-operative sellers offer their finest wines.

Two newcomers to the auction will be De Wetshof Estate with a Danne de Wet Chardonnay 1991 WO, named after the owner and award-winning winemaker, and Rheboksloof with its maiden vintage Chardonnay 1991 WO.
End of Union

By lamina

 Officials meet to stamp on leaf in upper echelons.

News Food and Beverages Workers Union lives to settle differences. No ANC journals.

Monday February 1993. Sowetan
Replacing the old with the new

Unionists arming themselves with an education:

By Mokgadi Pela

FOR unionists in the National Council of Trade Unions, the era of handling issues by intuition and logic is about to become a thing of the past.

And as the old gives way to the new, professionalism is the in-thing.

More than 30 representatives of Nactu's affiliates have started a one-year course in economics at the University of South Africa, to empower themselves with knowledge so they could be able to run their unions on a professional basis.

The move, taken to its logical conclusion, will mean that unionists will be best suited to face up to the challenges posed by the sophisticated management expertise.

The course will introduce the unionists in economics, business communication and financial management.

First chunk

The officials have already had their first chunk of their studies. The week-long programme started on January 11 and finished on January 15.

What makes the course crucial is the fact that candidates are expected to complete nine assignments by June before sitting for examinations.

The second leg of the course will be held in July, also for a week. During this period they will study labour law and collective bargaining.

The course is aimed at empowering candidates to contribute positively to dialogue between labour and management.

Nactu president Mr James Mdialose called on students to work hard, and to present their assignment timeously.

"It is of utmost importance that candidates take their work seriously. Failure to do so would only work against the interests of the unions they represent," Mdialose said.

And in the wings, seemingly to make sure that the union talk does not replace the Christian spirit, was the Reverend Joe Seoka.

Seoka, a senior official at the Wilgepruit Fellowship Centre, is also enhancing his skills to ensure that his former students do not leave him behind.
Unions this week rejected the
"zealous adherence to power-
sharing, federalism and region-
isation" evident in President FW de
Klerk's opening of parliament
speech last Friday.

The federation also called on De
Klerk to stop the flow of arms into
the townships. It prompted the
government to apply the same
zealousness to arms control as it
had to township liquor laws.

"When Africans were not allowed
to buy liquor, successive National
Party regimes ensured that not a
single bottle entered the town-
ships," the federation said.
Labour vehemently opposed to VAT hike

By Mzimkulu Malunga

As the budget date approaches and debates on tax increases hot up, labour believes the Government has to prioritise cutting unnecessary expenditure instead of effecting tax hikes to raise revenues

On March 17 Finance Minister Derek Keys will be in the spotlight when he presents the national Budget.

A report released by the National Council of Trade Unions advocates alternative means of boosting revenues as opposed to increasing indirect taxes such as VAT — which hit the poor hardest.

Central to Nactu's argument is the belief that the Government is using the taxpayers' money against the taxpayers themselves.

"Revelations of covert operations being funded with the taxpayers' money or of the consistent corruption and maladministration in the state-funded bantustans are a frequent occurrence," argues the report.

The Government contributed over R12 billion to the TBVC states and self-governing territories during the 1992-93 financial year.

Cutting spending on defence and the tri-cameral parliament — both of which consume a substantial share of the budget — could put the S1- on a much healthier footing.

The deficit for the current financial year is hovering at R30 billion — about nine percent of the national income.

The report also highlights unnecessary tax exemptions and focuses on pension funds.

"The pension fund exemption is a particularly regressive one and the rich benefit more from this system than the poor. In fact, the unemployed and low-wage earners get nothing at all," says the report.

The total scrapping of pension fund tax exemptions or a drastic reduction could contribute towards solving the Government's financial crisis.

Increasing VAT while the economy is in a recession will not only have a negative effect on consumer spending but will deliver the death blow to industry and commerce.

The collapse of industrial and commercial sectors will lead to further retrenchments as the consumer demand dampens.

Increasing tax substantially on property owners on any additional fixed properties they may possess, such as second homes, is one alternative measure the Government can explore.

Also, the implementation of agricultural land tax could contribute a great deal to the national coffers.

On agricultural land tax the report argues "These properties have in the past been heavily subsidised by the Government for political reasons. Now would be a good time for the recipients of this unfair advantage to start paying back."

Revenues collected here can be used for the development of small-scale farmers.
Media union wins dismissal dispute

By Don Seokane

THE MEDIA WORKERS ASSOCIATION of South Africa (Mwasa) has finally won a two-year-old dispute with Taiwanese-owned company Sakkor.

Mwasa has been fighting the dismissal of over 400 workers by Sakkor, a bag manufacturing concern in Petersburg, stemming from a dispute in June 1991 when the company stopped housing workers on its premises.

Sakkor contended that they had received an instruction from the Petersburg Town Council to stop housing workers on the premises and to remove all illegal structures and buildings as the area was not zoned for residential purposes.

Workers went on strike, demanding that removal of the accommodation was a change in their employment conditions and demanded that this be made up in a wage increase to cover transport and rent costs. The workers were all fired as a result and an industrial court ruled last September that the company was guilty and ordered that compensation of R103,000 be paid to the 282 applicants.

Mwasa and Sakkor appealed against the judgment. Mwasa argued that the amount was too little while the company said it was too much.

Mr Justice Goldstein ordered that Sakkor double its payment to R210,000 and also pay R5,000 in legal costs. The company was also ordered to hand Unemployment Insurance Fund contributors' cards to the workers.
Nactu to be quizzed on SA violence

By Ike Motsapi

The National Council of Trade Unions has been invited to Geneva by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to discuss the findings of its report on violence here.

Mr Cunningham Ngcukana, general secretary of Nactu, will represent the trade union federation at a meeting on February 25.

Nactu's media officer, Mr Mudumavha, said the International Labour Organisation, which also sent a delegation to South Africa at the same time when the ICFTU was here, will also be in attendance.

Mavha said: "The ICFTU and ILO has set February 25 as a date to look at the conclusions of their missions in South Africa early this year. Other issues to be discussed include the freedom of the press."

The ICFTU and ILO delegations arrived in South Africa on January 24 for a week-long mission to investigate the effects of violence on workers in the country.
Media Workers Protest

Injured TV cameraman fighting for his life in hospital

Injured TV cameraman fighting for his life in hospital

Over the killing of CCTV-7 reporter last Friday.

Panja Attack March in Shikarpur today

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News

By: Mohbad

Medcasa 87 7 April 27 1993
3000 go back to work

Farm workers score victory as bosses agree to consider demands: Boemfontein 20/14/92

By Mzimasi Ngudle

MORE than 3000 farm workers went back to work on Tuesday when their employers agreed to negotiate wage increases and the recognition of their union.

The two parties reached agreement after a one-day work stoppage at Schoeman Boedery in the Northern Transvaal.

The workers demand wage increases, fair disciplinary procedures and the recognition of the National Union of Farmworkers, an affiliate of the National Council of Trade Unions. Nactu spokesman Mr Mudzi Mazivi said management agreed to include grievance and disciplinary procedures in the recognition agreement to be negotiated on May 11.
Hands off the Press
warning by Azanyu

■ 'Uncompromising stand against harassment, attacks':

THE Azanian National Youth Unity, a youth wing of the Pan Africanist Congress, yesterday announced it would take "an uncompromising stand" against those who harassed and attacked journalists.

Azanyu said in a statement it planned a summit of "all organisations and structures" in Vereeniging to discuss the safety of journalists covering news events in Vaal Triangle townships.

It also called on the youth to hold a packet with the banner "Salute Journalists, Support Democracy" outside the Benoni Magistrate's Court on Friday morning when suspects are to appear in connection with the shooting of television cameraman Sam Mabu.

Another packet would be held outside the Vereeniging Magistrate's Court on Monday.

On Thursday, a meeting to discuss attacks on journalists would be held with officials of the Media Workers Association of SA and the South African Union of Journalists.
Unions unveil plans
to curb job losses

By Paul Bell
Labour Correspondent

Organised labour has called on business and the Government to accept a sweeping and controversial series of proposals for immediate action to stave off further job losses and stabilise the unemployment crisis during transition.

At a press conference in Johannesburg yesterday, the three major trade union federations, Cosatu, Nactu and Fedsal, unveiled the proposals — which include job security agreements and industry-wide collective bargaining structures, both of which are certain to attract flak from business.

The proposals, already seen by business’s representatives at the National Economic Forum, will be considered by its negotiating committee, which meets tomorrow.

The NEF labour negotiators stressed that their proposals should not be construed as confrontational but acknowledged that the initial reaction of their business counterparts had been negative.

But business, they said, and especially manufacturers, were faced with increasing conflict on the shop floor as a result of ongoing large-scale retrenchments. This would encourage employers to take labour’s proposals seriously.

"Some of these proposals could be implemented within weeks," said Ibrahim Patel of the Cosatu-affiliated SA Clothing Workers’ Union. "If we can do that in the NEF within the next few weeks, we can initiate programmes that will protect and create jobs in the short term and have an immediate effect on the unemployment crisis."

Cosatu negotiator Jayendra (Little Jay) Nadoo listed the job-saving proposals as follows:

1. Changes to collective bargaining structures to effect centralised, industry-wide collective bargaining and enhance labour’s ability to contribute to the development of national industrial policy.
2. Job security agreements to protect existing jobs and hold down the cost to society of retraining by requiring employers to explore all other alternative remedies before resorting to the quick fix of axing jobs.
3. The Government’s agreement not to cut jobs in the public sector without consulting the unions, and to concentrate instead on the setting of minimum levels of service provision and the elimination of inefficiencies.
4. Targeted assistance to industries, notably mining, and major industrial enterprises affected by long-term, possibly terminal, decline — to help them downscale on a planned basis and thereby minimise the "devastating" socio-economic costs of large-scale closures.
5. The establishment of industry-wide work security funds — funded by employers at this stage — and the improvement of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, including a review of the latter’s cut-off level as more skilled workers are affected by job cuts.

Dr Ben van Rensburg, an SA Chamber of Commerce delegate to the NEF’s negotiating council, said the other negotiating blocs had not been consulted before labour went public with its proposals. He himself was not aware of them and they would have to be studied carefully before business would respond.
Nehawu protest

HUNDREDS of Nehawu members held a march yesterday to protest against unfair dismissal and harassment of workers by Clune Holdings. The protesters marched to the Park Lane Clune near Hillbrow to present a memorandum outlining their grievances to the company's board of directors.

CASEL Fancy, Business Day Report
Political staff, Sapa
Nactu gears up to play full role in future SA

SHARON SOROUR
Labour Reporter

THE National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) is working on a strategy to increase its effectiveness and power as a trade union federation, according to regional spokesman Mr Brian Williams.

Nactu, the second largest union federation in the country, with about 600 members in 24 affiliates, held a strategic planning conference recently, at which objectives were defined and formulated.

The federation was placing greater emphasis on competence and professionalism in its affiliates, which had already led to a number of people leaving the organisation.

Mr Williams said it was crucial that unions became self-sufficient and independent.

It was inevitable that there would soon be a new government structure, with the ANC having a "fairly decisive influence".

Cosatu, because of its alliance with the ANC and SACP, would therefore become the government's trade union "expression".

Warning that trade unions had to become independent, especially when a new government came to power, Mr Williams said it was already "questionable" whether Cosatu was an independent trade union federation.

"It is therefore increasingly important for Nactu, as a progressive, independent trade union federation, to increase its effectiveness capacity," said Mr Williams.

Mr Williams, who returned recently from a "solidarity contact" visit to Europe, said he found organisations still had a "deep interest in South Africa".

"But their information network about the country is not intense enough or adequate to convey what is happening. The full picture is not getting through."

He said Nactu, and its various campaigns, would continue to receive international support.

Mr Williams was researching self-reliance strategies, which would be evaluated by the federation's affiliates.

Nactu had grown in the Western Cape, with the Western Province Local Authority Workers' Association joining its ranks and a postal staff association expressing the interest to do so.

Nactu was also looking at its structural relation with its affiliates, its relationship with other liberation movements in the country and its links with international solidarity movements.
Leadership is the key to union success

LEADERSHIP is the most important factor in deciding whether any organisation will be successful.

Metal and Electrical Workers Union of South Africa (Mewusa) regional secretary Mr Brian Williams believes leadership is the foundation of an organisation, and that without a strong foundation there can be no effective structure.

A full-time staff member of the union since 1985, Williams joined the labour force as an unskilled electrical worker in the early seventies.

"I had my first taste of labour relations when I was doing an electrical apprenticeship at a Cape Town company," Williams said.

"The company wanted to cancel my contract because they said I was an agitator and my union, the Electrical and Allied Trades Union, supported the cancellation.

"I had to fight to maintain my position."

Having succeeded, he became involved in union work, attending meetings.

Williams said the union was segregated and under white control when he first joined.

"To be a member you had to be a coloured, an artisan, an apprentice or an electrician," he said.

No African or white members, women, unskilled or semi-skilled workers were allowed.

"We started to fight against this discrimination and eventually managed to overthrow the union's racist control," Williams said.

The Cape Town office has two other people who play an important strategic role in the union, Mr Russel Sabor and Mr Phillip Benjamin.

A qualified electrician and electrical inspector, Sabor has been a member of Mewusa's national executive for 13 years.

"Russell is a strong union leader and has guided the union through many difficult periods," a union spokesperson said.

During the time when the union was still "under white control", Sabor was instrumental in fighting racism.

"Everything he does is done with a passion. He is involved in adult education, especially in the electrical industry, and is also very concerned about homeless children," the spokesperson said.

Sabor had made many personal sacrifices as part of his commitment to workers and Mewusa members in particular.

Mr Phillip Benjamin, a worker leader and a union shop steward, has been involved in trade union organisations since the early eighties.

"When I started in the industry as a trainee there was lots of unfairness. There were vast contrasts between our working conditions and those of whites," Benjamin said.

He said there was no proper representation for workers.

"We received some help from the Radio and TV Union, who tried to raise some of our grievances, but it wasn't until we came into contact with the Electrical and Allied Workers Union - now Mewusa - that things started changing."

"I am committed to fighting injustice in the workplace and in the community and that is why I became involved with worker struggles," Benjamin said.

Described by Williams as "almost fearless", Benjamin played a key role in leading Western Cape workers to understand the new challenges of the changing social and political environment.

Employed at Plexy Teliunata as a technician, Benjamin served on Mewusa's national executive until last year.

"I decided to step down to allow others the opportunity to develop," Benjamin said.

"All but two of the next executive committee will be new members. We're hoping that they will inject fresh ideas into the organisation as well as create new developments in education and training."
At their national congress in Johannesburg next week, hundreds of members of the Metal and Electrical Workers Union of South Africa will determine their union's role as an independent force in the new political climate. **EDWINA BOOYSEN**

examines the union's activities in the Western Cape:

Together with the Urban and Rural Development Education Project (Urdep), Mewusa is trying to combat the problem of illiteracy. The two organisations are involved in raising funds and implementing literacy programmes.

"We are focusing strongly on education and training. It is vital to provide ordinary factory workers with tools and skills to enter into dialogue with their employers," Williams said.

"This will enable them to be effective representatives of their fellow workers. A key word in education in Cape Town is 'empowerment' and we have identified a clear strategic area of education and skills training for all our members."

Mewusa believes "empowerment" is necessary for effective communication between workers and management, so both can know what their respective needs are.

"It is a condition of employment at the union's Cape Town office to be engaged in education or training, either of themselves or others. That is how important education is to us," Williams said.

Mewusa has a strong political position about social and economic issues but "is not party political".

"We don't believe that trade unions should ever become linked to party politics. "It eventually leads to workers being pawns in the political power game. The union has a strong principle of maintaining its independence," he said.

"Worker control and worker democracy are the two key ideas which workers uphold as necessary to protect their independence."
Employers, unions can get along

RELATIONSHIPS between trade unions and the companies at which they represent workers do not have to be stormy.

Metal and Electrical Workers Union of South Africa (Mewusa) shop steward at Power Engineers, Mr. Ashraf Samaai, said since the union was recognized at the Epping company in 1989, conditions between management and the union have been rosy.

“We have received lots of benefits for the workers, for example an Emergency Distress Fund has been set up where workers in financial difficulty can come to the union for assistance,” Samaai said.

He said the good relationship between the company and Mewusa was a direct result of improved communication between management and shop stewards.

“A more open attitude prevails and decisions aren’t taken unilaterally anymore,” he said.

Mewusa has successfully negotiated for arbitration to be compulsory during a dispute, and the establishment of a Death Benefit Fund.

Mewusa, Samaai said, was also happy about Power Engineers’ commitment to training workers.

Mr. Jim Lappin, managing director of Power Engineers, believes his company’s philosophy is different from that of other businesses.

“We believe in working towards a common goal. When it is achieved, everyone benefits,” Lappin said.

Lappin said the company tried to make employees aware of the need to be productive and competitive.

Through this philosophy, Lappin said, Power Engineers are a success.

“As a result, in the past two years, we have had no retrenchments and we even employed a further 100 people,” he said.

“According to Lappin, both management and the union are firm but have a fair approach.

“The union keeps us on our toes,” Lappin said.
THE WEEKLY MAIL, June 25 to July 1 1993

Judge raps lawmaker

Nic Wielhahn has found himself on the receiving end of legislation he helped create. By GAYE DAVIS

The company, the judge ruled, had "blown hot and cold" by suggesting negotiations were still in progress while firing workers. Wielhahn, an ad hominem professor at Unisa who now heads a mediation agency called the Resolution Board, chaired a watershed 1977 commission of inquiry into labour legislation. It was on the basis of his reports to government that black trade unions were allowed to register under the Industrial Conciliation Act and that the industrial court, with its unfair labour practice jurisdiction, was created.

He was retained by the Department of Manpower to co-ordinate research into the functioning of the industrial court and was appointed president of the industrial court in Transkei.

The NUPSW had accused Wielhahn of delaying tactics and bargaining in bad faith, referring to his assertion that he had no mandate to negotiate, while the union was under the impression that negotiations were under way. The judge found that the initial court findings had been "charitable to the respondent". The NUPSW had put demands on the table and was entitled to expect negotiations would follow after supplying the motivation requested by company.

Wielhahn had rejected this motivation, saying management found it unacceptable as its contents were not substantiated. "The impression is created that like an errant schoolboy, the union was sent home to do 'redo its homework' and produce it in a form acceptable to management," Joffe said.

Stating that the strike by union members "would appear to be a reasonable response to the employer's conduct", Joffe ordered the workers' reinstatement.
Sacked workers return to jobs

By Ike Motsapi

The council opposed the application and has now said it does not have money to pay the workers their salaries.

In a letter to council, written by city treasurer Mr Chris van Zyl, the council said it would have to approach the Transvaal Provincial Administration for assistance.

Mr Martin Sere, an official of Samwu, yesterday said all the workers who were sacked on November 2 after requesting the council to transfer them to other centres were back at work.

They were employed near a hostel and feared for their lives.

Union to march on Sasol

By Ike Motsapi

HUNDREDS of South African Chemical Workers Union members will march on Sasol's headquarters in Johannesburg at the weekend to demand the reinstatement of workers dismissed in 1987.

Mr Cunningham Ngubana, secretary-general of the National Council of Trade Unions will be among those leading the march.

Mr Joseph Maphakemi, an organiser of Sacwu, said the march was part of an ongoing six-year battle by the union after the dismissal of about 100 employees — all members of Sacwu — by Sasol 1 when they campaigned for better pay and working conditions.

Maphakemi said: "The union won the case in the Industrial Court but that victory was overturned by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court following an appeal by the company. The dismissals led to a number of former employees losing houses and children being forced out of school because their parents could not afford to pay for them.

"As a result we have a squatter camp near Zamdela because workers have no accommodation," said Maphakemi.
Call for national worker summit

By FAROUK CHOTHIA

FLEXING its muscle, the trade union movement in Natal this week called for a national worker summit to discuss strategies to ensure that worker rights are entrenched in a future Bill of Rights and constitution.

This comes against the backdrop of growing fears in the labour movement in the province that worker interests are not only being ignored at the World Trade Centre, but that politicians may also introduce legislation which threatens worker rights.

The Regional Worker Summit, the first of its kind in the country, was attended by about 200 delegates from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) and the independent unions.

Cosatu’s Economic and Development Initiative in southern and northern Natal.

A representative of the independent unions, Kesse Moodley of the National Union of Leatherworkers, said the summit noted that in other African countries liberation movements “eroded” worker rights once they assumed power. He said the negotiation process, and the proposed Bill of Rights, was dominated by debate around regionalism and federalism and addressing minority fears. Worker rights have been placed on the backburner.

“The longer we take to set up a national worker summit and to adopt a workers’ charter, the more critical it will become for workers,” he said.

Warning that time was running out, Moodley added.

“The boat hasn’t left the shore yet. We can throw a life raft out to get on board.”

Persad said the workers’ summit had to address other “unanswered questions” as well, including whether trade union leaders can be allowed to take positions in a new government.

“There is a lot of uneasiness about this, particularly given the history of Africa. We need clarity on the issue,” added Persad.

The workers’ summit should also look at formulating a national economic restructuring programme in order to ensure there is unity when challenging business and government.
Interpreter union talks business

By Shadley Nash

A NEW trade union for court interpreters was launched in Port Elizabeth last weekend.

The decision to dissolve the Interpreter Association of South Africa (IARSA) and break away from the Public Servants Association was taken at a national congress of the now defunct IARSA.

Resolutions adopted by the new union, the South African Court Interpretation Officers and Allied Workers Union (SACIOAWU), encapsulate a long standing belief that the status of the court interpreter should be upgraded.

One resolution calls on the Department of Justice and universities and technikons to introduce diploma and degree courses in "court language interpretations sciences".

Another resolution calls for "uniform regalia" for interpreters and notes they should be known as court interpretation officers.

The move by SACIOAWU to establish itself as a public sector pressure group is in step with moves by other public sector employees who have formed independent trade unions.

— ELNEWS
As the new SA looms closer, unions are pondering what relationship they will have with the new government.

**Cunningham Ngeukana**, general secretary of the National Council of Trade Unions, sets forth his organisation’s position:

The end result of this is that the internal democracy of the union movement is affected as decisions are taken elsewhere. However, the union movement has allowed this due to the liberation struggle forces. The question is, will we allow this to happen even if the liberation movement becomes a government?

In the end, the liberation movements, when they come to power with their commandist leadership approach, tend to lack accountability and through party activists the union movement serves to become a conveyor belt of government decisions to workers.

This serves the interests of capital very well as they would have placed themselves into a position of influence by the time liberation movements come into power.

Apartheid becomes the order of the day and the union movement becomes vulnerable.

The institutions that are supposed to be guardians and guarantors of democracy become subservient to a government, thereby giving it a licence not to be accountable.

African states became what they are because of this and apartheid survived for so long because white unions did not care because they were close to the government, while others claimed neutrality. Which can never be any neutrality where there is injustice and oppression. Silence means consent.

A relationship with a government determined by operatives of unity prior to liberation is a licence by unions to the government to silence any democratic opposition to the government. This is the biggest crime white unions committed against our people—a crime not by commission but by omission.

As Nactu we contend that after liberation the trade union must be responsible for the interests of its members and working people in general.

Secondly, it must serve as a guarantor of the newly attained democracy and to ensure its survival.

Thirdly, it must serve as the anchor and centre of all institutions of civil society that will ensure government accountability.

This can only be attained under the following principles:

- Non-affiliation to political organisations and parties,
- This means organisational independence without interference by government in decision-making, and
- Internal democracy—ensuring participation by union members at all structural levels of union movement.

This can be done by ensuring education of members so that they can make informed decisions through participation.

The question that begs for an answer is: how does the democratic trade union movement influence government without losing its independence to listen to the voice of the workers?

The strength and ability of the union movement to influence any government lies in its unity, internal democracy and accountability of its leadership to its structures.

We cannot destroy our being and essence of our very experience and hope we will have any influence thereafter. If we keep to principles of independence internal democracy and accountability to our own structures, whatever decision we take will be have weight. If the union movement becomes a rubber stamp we will lose our influence.

This requires strict discipline by party activists within the union movement. Only in this way can any electoral pact on issues we want as unions have a meaning.
STATE REPRESSON OF TRADE UNIONS AND UNIONISTS has been part and parcel of the legacy of apartheid in South Africa since the advent and rise of the African Labour movement.

Trade unionists have been seen by the regime as responsible for shop floor rebellions, rather than fighting against inadequate wages, appalling working conditions. They have also been seen as the agents of general political rebellion.

To begin with, the South African regime has for many decades legislated against African trade unions. Domestic and farm workers are only now about to have their right to belong to trade unions protected by legislation.

It was only in the '70s that the Wiehahn Commission was appointed and produced a report recommending legislation allowing African trade unionism on condition that such unions were registered with the Government.

This constituted yet another violation of trade unionism and the freedom of association because an unregistered trade union was not recognised by the bosses.

Trade union leaders at the head of the resistance to these conditions and involved in other campaigns bore the brunt of State harassment, detention and physical torture. They also lost their jobs, with management bringing in a variety of petty accusations against them.

Part of the reason for the unleashing of the State machinery was the campaign by unionists to get the international community to impose sanctions against South Africa's racist minority and illegitimate regime as well as their campaign for disinvestment from the country.

Into exile

Many trade unionists were locked up while others fled into exile. However, relative reforms of the Labour Relations Act were carried out, conceding to many demands of the labour movement supported by the international community. However, this did not mean an end to violations of trade union rights as the State hostility towards the unions and unionists continues to date.

State hostility towards the unions is exemplified by the non-existence of legal protection against the dismissal of workers on a legal strike. It is exemplified by the nationwide raid on Nactu offices by huge contingencies of security forces on the morning of May 25, 1993.

Nactu headquarters was burgled, with police claiming to be acting on information that attacks on security forces and the public and bank as well as car robbies were being planned from those offices. They raided and beseged the regional offices but in the end found nothing.

But, as is the typical of African state, a thief who finds nothing of value to steal in a homestead will take the hearth stones and leave them at the entrance to the kraal.

Mudini Maivha of Nactu recounts the many violations committed by the State and business against emergent trade unions in the '70s.

Face to face — marchers clash with police.

Managements have tended to assist or establish spurious unions and staff associations at plants where workers have been strongly organised. This action is aimed at destabilising established unions.

In several instances management reduced staff through retrenchment or legitimate but disciplinary action. New employees, workers informed us, were given jobs on condition that they did not join the existing union or that they set up their own.

They employ members of conservative political organisations to take jobs of striking "radical" workers, thereby creating conditions for conflict. There are instances in which management turned a blind eye to shop floor violence caused by division among workers because management derives advantages from it.

These are just classic examples of what is happening in our society. Harassment of trade unions is common in this country. We have also seen some unionists murdered just because they worked for better working conditions for their colleagues.
Bisho: Nactu won't join ANC stayaway

EAST LONDON. — The National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) has rejected a regional stayaway called for by the ANC to commemorate the first anniversary of the Bisho massacre today.

Nactu Border chairman Mr Anthony Fosu said last night that while the organisation supported the commemoration, it could not endorse the stayaway "because it would be against our principles to join a bandwagon as rubber stamps".

"Also, we were never consulted by the ANC or the Congress of South African Trade Unions about this stayaway. We were not invited to their discussions with the Border Business Action Committee and we did not get feedback from the meetings," he said.

Forty union representatives from different Border plants met at the weekend to discuss the proposed stayaway.

Border ANC spokesman Mr Mcebisi Buta said it was unfortunate Nactu had decided not to support the stayaway but "we will appeal again to them to come aboard" — Sapa.
Union seeks to stem job losses

By Paul Bell
Labour Correspondent

The Banking, Insurance, Finance and Assurance Workers' Union (Bifawu) estimates that up to 1,000 workers have been re-trenched from banking and financial institutions in the past three months, and is planning a campaign against these job losses.

National organiser Stan Sigutyala says the estimate, which includes 250 union members, is based on the union's own research of the period June to August 2019.

Bifawu, which has about 6,000 members — most of them clerks, drivers, messengers and cleaners — will meet at the Duncan Hall in central Johannesburg at 1 pm today to launch its campaign.

In a statement, Bifawu president Ramontsho Momanakgotla said the most common reasons for retrenchments were mergers, takeovers, rationalisation and restructuring, as a result of the acquisition of new technology.

He called for an end to retrenchments and the employment of casual and temporary staff, and for the retraining of workers to equip them for other tasks.
Unionists clash with govt over petrol price increase

UNION federations Cosatu and Nactu yesterday warned government to review its position on the petrol price or face the mounting anger of the masses.

A delegation representing unions and transport and business organisations met Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister George Bartlett in Johannesburg yesterday. They accused him of "lying" when he told taxmen that the National Economic Forum (NEF) had agreed to keep petrol at the increased price while a task group was investigating the situation.

Cosatu and Nactu denied that their NEF representatives had agreed to this when Bartlett and the forum met last week and decided to hold a summit on October 4 to get a report from the task group.

Bartlett also met a delegation of taxi-men led by Nafto chairman Peter Rabali in Pretoria yesterday. The meeting ended with Bartlett sticking to his guns on the increased petrol price, but agreeing to meet the delegation again with Finance Minister Derek Keys and Transport Minister Piet Wolgemeed.

At the Johannesburg meeting Cosatu's Chris Dlamini said a labour delegation and the taxi industry would attend the first meeting of the NEF task group today to begin negotiations.

"We will demand a 10c reduction in the price of petrol and diesel and a review of all the subsidies, protection and profit margins which presently make up the fuel price," said Dlamini. The meeting decided that "all the forces" would attend the October 4 summit.

Government was warned against taking further "irresponsible and repressive" action against protesting taxi operators.

"If this action by the government continues and the petrol price is not reviewed, we will consult with our constituencies about forms of national action," the groups said.

Sapa reports from Kroonstad that police and traffic authorities removed taxis which were blocking the central business district yesterday.

A police spokesman said negotiations were taking place between police and the taxi drivers, who were protesting against the petrol price increase.

Our Cape Town correspondent reports Transport Minister Piet Wolgemeed yesterday announced the formation of a new task group to investigate the problems of the minibus taxi industry.

He said his department had been considering subsidising minibus taxi commuters in much the same way as bus passengers were subsidised. But one difficulty was that the taxi industry was fragmented.

Government hopes to enable commuters to use a single subsidised ticket for a multimode journey, using buses and taxis.
Nactu is "neutral"

By Ike Motsapi

The National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) will not support any political party during next year’s first democratic elections because it is an independent worker federation.

Mr James Mdlalose, president of Nactu, yesterday said the giant trade union federation would leave “it up to our members to decide which political party they want to support.” Mdlalose said Nactu was involved in what he described as “voter education for our members.”

The aim was to make sure that members of trade unions affiliated to Nactu knew how to vote.

Mdlalose said Nactu had adopted a Workers’ Charter which would entrench workers’ rights in the event of a new dispensation.

Some of the points in the charter are:

- That workers want to see the establishment of a non-racial, democratic Apartheid.
- That the working class can succeed in this endeavour if the country is united and guided by working class principles.
- And that every worker shall have a right to a job irrespective of colour, creed or religion.

Unlike Nactu, the Congress of South African Trade Unions has undertaken to make sure that the African National Congress wins the elections scheduled for April 27 next year.

Cosatu has released its general secretary, Mr Jay Naidoo, and 19 other officials to join the ANC election platform.

Some of the decisions taken at Cosatu’s special congress were:

- To make sure that the ANC wins the elections decisively.
- To address the challenges that face the trade union federations.
- To make sure that the trade union federation remains strong, independent, democratic and accountable to its membership in order to serve the interests of the broader working class.
NEWS  Trade union federations in

Clash over envisaged labour bill

VERBAL WAR  Nactu is not happy with the bill, Cosatu affirms it.

By Ike Motsapi

A war of words has broken out between the country's two trade union federations regarding the extension of the Labour Relations Act to farm workers.

The National Council of Trade Unions has accused the Congress of South African Trade Unions of collaborating with the South African Agricultural Union in extending some provisions of the labour legislation to farm workers which, Nactu says, "do not grant but regulate collective bargaining rights."

Mr Cunningham Ngcukana, general secretary of Nactu, said: "The LRA envisaged for farm workers does not provide for a duty to bargain."

"Collective bargaining under the existing Labour Relations Act is not a right. Hence the issue is still debated in the Industrial Court."

"The Bill, which is awaiting the signature of State President Mr FW de Klerk, also fails to provide for the right to collectively bargain and its corresponding duty to bargain."

"It essentially fails to recognise Cosatu's concession of accepting the agricultural sector as an essential service."

"The International Labour Organisation does not categorise the agricultural sector as an essential service," said Ngcukana.

He said the third point is that the Bill did not include other sectors of organised labour and agriculture. "We are talking here of Anglo American Farms, Tongaat Farms, Sappi Forests, Mondi Forests and others who were not party to the envisaged deal for farm workers," said Ngcukana.

Mr Sanele Shulowe, general secretary of Cosatu, said the federation had a mandate from its affiliates and members to negotiate the deal for farm workers.
Nactu criticises ANC trio's posts at SABC

TRADE union federation Nactu has criticised the appointment of three prominent ANC members to senior SABC positions.

Nactu general secretary Cunningham Ngcukana said the “political appointments” by ANC deputy president's son Zwelakhe Sisulu, former ANC Radio Freedom's Solly Mokoetle and ANC campaigner Govan Reddy raised the question of whether the SABC board was changing from an NP mouthpiece to an ANC mouthpiece.

However, Cosatu responded angrily to the criticisms yesterday, saying the three knew more about “the need to fight censorship and party propaganda” than the entire SABC management put together.

Ngcukana said Mokoetle, Reddy and Sisulu were lacking in radio and television experience.

Cosatu welcomed the appointments and reiterated that all three journalists were independent.
INDUST. REL. - WORKERS' ORG.  NACTU

1994
The conflict at Rainbow Children is an unfortunate and it was a shame of the company's reputation. The union, which presented the Rainbow Children's workers with a contract, was turned down. The company's response was to fire the workers, who then formed the Workers Union and Rainbow Children. The union decided, however, that the company's response was not acceptable. The conflict was ongoing, and the workers continued to fight for their rights. The company failed to recognize the union, and the conflict continued.

By Isaac Moced

Natal unions clash

Volkswagen councillors rappecd

Cosatu and Natal affiliates seek recognition of councillors in provincial council

THE TIMES PROVINCIAL AMBASSADOR

Monday, February 6, 1944

NATAL TIMES, Port Elizabeth
**Nactu men won't stand**

By KHANGALE MAKHADO

NATIONAL Congress of Trade Unions officials will not represent any political party in the coming elections. That's the final word from Nactu general secretary Cunningham Ngukana, who was included among the PAC nominees on the PWV national assembly list, along with Nactu president James Mdlatlose.

**Prevented**

Ngukana said the federation would not allow any of its officials to join any party, irrespective of their personal political affiliation.

He told Cty Press that Mdlatlose and himself were not consulted by the PAC – which published its list earlier this week. He stressed that had the PAC consulted its organisation, Nactu's position would have been made clear to the party.

Ngukana added that his organisation, unlike Cosatu which has put its weight behind the ANC, would not support any party.

Asked whether this also applied to Nactu members, his response was that workers were "asked to really scrutinise promises made by parties and to ask questions".

"We want to assure our workers that we are here to stay, organise and build Nactu as the flag bearer for trade union independence and democracy not controlled by any political organisation," he said.

Echoing Ngukana's sentiments, Nactu information and publicity chief Mudim Marwah said even if workers joined parties in their individual capacity, this shouldn't confuse Nactu members into thinking their federation was identifying with political parties.

"In any event, after April elections or any other elections for that matter, the employer interest will continue to exist."

**Bashing**

"They won't stop their campaign of union bashing and won't give us better working conditions, education, better housing and medical aid subsidies just because we have a new government," said Marwah.

(Report by Khangale Makhado of 2 Herb St, Doornfontein, Johannesburg)
Rival unionists back ANC

South 15/4 - 1994

April 15 to April 1994

2 South News
Union federations to pursue unity

COSATU, the federation of SA labour unions (Fed), had decided to pursue a three-tier system of collective bargaining, which would be based on sectoral collective bargaining, and a restructured wage board to set minimum wages in unorganized sectors.

The union federations, which together represent almost 2 million workers, held their first joint meeting last week, and reached a historic consensus on the broad priorities of labour.

On the issue of unity, the federations said that there would be a greater need for a unified labour front after the elections. COSATU, Fed and Nactu would try to include other federations but would not delay the process because of their non-participation.

The major priorities of reconstruction were creating permanent jobs and providing basic goods and services to goals which should be combined to improve the economic climate if workers were not exploited in the process. Jobs created through a public works programme must be based on fair labour standards and decent wages.

The federations reterrated COSATU's call for a reconstruction tax to fund the ANC's development programme. They said the National Economic Forum should quantify the funding level required for its successful implementation.

They felt they should play a central driving role in the industrial restructuring process to increase wages and create jobs. Their goal would be to encourage other levels to be established nationally.

At sectoral level, parties would set wages for skill levels and across-the-board increases, as well as career paths and enterprise bargaining frameworks.

Company-level bargaining would cover company-specific issues, such as productivity targets, affirmative action and retrenchment.
Nactu clears the way for ties with other trade unions

THE National Council of Trade Unions' goal of working class unity and the establishment of trade union and labour federation unity was under the spotlight at its congress this weekend.

Delegates agreed to a resolution calling on Nactu to rescind its black working-class leadership requirement and replace it with a working-class leadership requirement, leaving the way clear for ties with other unions and federations.

However, Cosatu's political alliance with the ANC and SACP remained an obstacle as Nactu has always maintained its political independence. The other contender for unity — the 268 000-strong Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal) — favoured a confederation, with the major players retaining their identities.

Nactu's congress resolution was to continue working with Cosatu and Fedsal, as well as unaffiliated unions, to build unity with a view to this culminating in the establishment of a single federation.

In his secretariat report, general secretary Cunningham Ngokukana welcomed Labour Minister Tito Mboweni's "pro-labour policy" outlined in a draft paper circulated to business and labour.

Ngokukana said the policy covered a mooted social contract between government, organised labour and business, formulation of an incomes policy; consolidation of labour legislation, training assistance for trade unions, restructuring the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and improving international relations.

He said Nactu's largest affiliate was the SA Chemical Workers' Union, with 40 000 members, followed by its food and beverage affiliate with 32 000. Its transport and building and construction affiliates also topped 30 000 members.

He called for the formation of "a coherent strategy to co-ordinate collective bargaining and solidarity".

Nactu president James Mdlalose criticised the reconstruction and development programme, saying it was "seriously constrained in its ability to deliver". He believed more time was spent on prioritising the allocation of scarce resources than on implementation of delivery.
Union federation backs RDP efforts

BY JOVIAL RANTAO
LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

The Government’s Reconstruction and Development Programme should address the shortage of water, electricity, roads and health care facilities as well as the inadequate education facilities in rural areas.

The call was made by the National Council of Trade Unions at the end of its three-day annual congress in Johannesburg yesterday.

Re-elected Nactu president James Mdakose told a press conference that Ministers had to adopt a consistent policy on housing, particularly in the urban areas.

"The Government should create conditions that will enable the creation of sustainable and quality jobs in places nearer to the homes of the people," Mdakose said.

He said a resolution had been taken that communities should view the RDP as economic aid and should strive for self-development and empowerment.

Nactu members resolved to become actively involved in RDP efforts by using the federation’s economic policy working document with a view to addressing shortcomings in the programme.

Mdakose said a resolution had been adopted to foster unity between Nactu, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedusa).

Committees would be formed at shop-floor, plant, affiliate and federation level to monitor programmes aimed at uniting workers from the three federations.

Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa and Fedusa president Ben van der Walt addressed the Nactu congress on Saturday and expressed their organisations’ commitment to trade union unity.

Part of Nactu’s resolution on unity calls for the inclusion of non-affiliated trade unions.

Nactu also resolved to:

- Campaign with other organisations to curb crime.
- Call for parity in salaries and living conditions of MK and APLA cadres, and recognition of the “people's army” rank and grade, the rebural of fallen “comrades”, and free housing, medical attention and state pensions for all combatants mauled during the “liberation war”.
- Campaign for the equitable application of immigration laws and regulations.
- Participate in the National Economic and Development Council — a body to be formed by the National Economic Forum and the National Manpower Commission.
- Affiliate with the International Council of Free Trade Unions.