

PROCESSED

**COSATU**  
**6th National**  
**Congress**  
**September 1997**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Cosatu's Sixth National Congress held over four days from 16-19 September was on the surface a fairly well run operation in which Cosatu, with the involvement of the SACP, effectively drew the battle-lines with respect to its ANC alliance partner on the question of its Growth, Employment and Redistribution macro-economic policy - GEAR. The Congress also laid the groundwork in preparation for the ANC's upcoming December National Conference where socialists are expected to make a determined push in getting elected onto the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC), as well as influence ANC strategy and tactics to counter the emergent Africanist grouping which threatens to dilute the ANC's working class bias.

The Congress further saw Cosatu clearly attempt to reassert its socialist vision. Using its recently released September Commission Report as a basis for policy formulation, a decision was made that Cosatu should play an active part in the economy and the development of the country. This included Cosatu's involvement in areas such as industrial development strategy, changing investment patterns and new forms of management.

The Congress, however, also witnessed the humiliating defeat of carefully crafted motions and much unfinished business concerning the finalisation of critical resolutions and debates raised from the floor. Cosatu's senior leaders including John Gomomo (President), Sam Shilowa (General Secretary) and Zwelinzima Vavi (Deputy General Secretary), were often caught wrong-footed by debates from the floor which countermanded positions thought out prior to the conference by the executive committee.

The most embarrassing moment came for Cosatu's leadership when a recommendation to implement a gender quota was rejected by most affiliates, including women delegates themselves. Prior to the Congress, it had been recommended by the September Commission that the federation and its affiliates should adopt a quota system for women. A target had been set of 50 percent representation in all structures by the year 2 000. Mindful of the implications this held for the national affirmative action debate, Cosatu's leadership tried to side-track the issue for a later resolution but were rebuffed by the delegates.

Similarly, the debate around globalisation took up a considerable amount of time, which led to Gomomo attempting to bring the debate to a speedy resolution. That in turn resulted in his censure from the floor. Earlier, Shilowa had embarrassed himself when he inadvertently seemed to state that he supported globalisation only to be reminded by the delegates that that was not Cosatu's position.



The SACP's influence was ever present, given the SACP delegation which attended as observers and the important leadership positions the Party enjoyed on the federation's executive as well as in some of the affiliates. A key concern for the Party was whether workerist notions would once again be raised over the question of whether the Tri-partite Alliance served the interests of workers. No such concerns were raised, however, given the recent decision by both the SACP and Cosatu to reassert the socialist agenda within the Alliance and to change the course of ANC policy. This was the key reason for the defeat of the far left within the federation, which, until recently, were in the ascendancy demanding the complete dissolution of the Alliance.

A sense of growing frustration with the direction in which the ANC has been headed since taking power in 1994 culminated in scathing attacks against the ANC leadership especially with respect to its GEAR economic policy. This had to be seen against the backdrop of an assertive SACP in recent months determined to take up the cudgels for socialism against the perceived "rightward shift" of the ANC leadership. In the past, the SACP had become an increasingly muted voice for the socialist cause as it tried to respond to changing ANC policy, leaving a vacuum that was partially filled by independent socialist forces which saw the Alliance as partly responsible for the retreat of socialism - not the solution. Problems were also compounded for the SACP with emergent debates within the Party, emanating from its troubled Western Cape region, calling for an autonomous SACP operating outside of the Alliance.

A number of contentious matters did not reach the congress floor due to cumbersome technical procedures. Instead, outstanding issues, some 47 in all, covering areas such as union investment strategy, trade policy, privatisation, tariff reduction and the jobs summit were put aside with the agreement that they would be pursued by the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and at a special policy summit to be held within the next six months, but not before the ANC's December conference.

## **2. THE SEPTEMBER COMMISSION**

The Congress took place against the backdrop of the federation's release of its September Commission hearings which sat for 18 months to map the way forward for Cosatu into the 21st century. It represented the most detailed introspective study yet undertaken on the future direction of the labour movement in South Africa by Cosatu since its inception in 1985. The unveiling of the Commission's report came against the backdrop of increasing demands for a new strategic vision to take Cosatu into the new millennium as well as mounting dissatisfaction with the apparent "rightward tilt" the ANC has undergone since assuming political power in April 1994, which had resulted in the steady marginalisation of its Tri-partite Alliance partners.

The core objective of the September Commission, was to reassert working class leadership over the ANC. At a stroke, the Commission effectively neutralised any discussion of an impending breakaway by Cosatu from the Alliance - for the time being - and rather concentrated efforts on making the Alliance work in favour of the working class movement.

The Commission unveiled three broad scenarios which could ultimately confront the labour movement. They were euphemistically defined the "Desert", "Skorokoro" and "Pap, vleis and gravy" scenarios.

### **2.1 THE "SKOROKORO" SCENARIO**

As far as the Commission was concerned, it most readily identified "Skorokoro" as the current reality pertaining to South Africa. "Skorokoro" (a word used to explain something which is not good or defective) defined current reality as the following:

- The country zig-zagging from problem to problem;
- The rapid emergence of a black middle and upper class on the one hand and increasing social fragmentation on the other;
- Ethnicity, racism and provincialism emerging as a result of a lack of delivery and growing conflict over resources;
- Labour fragmented by competing and increasingly hostile unions such as Turning Wheel and the Mouthpiece Workers Union;
- The polarisation of political parties with clear racial identities; and
- ANC policy zig-zags on issues ranging from privatisation and taxing the

wealthy.

## **2.2 THE "PAP, VLEIS AND GRAVY" SCENARIO**

This was viewed as a best case scenario where the country for a period, enjoys high levels of economic growth and delivery via a regalanised Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Elements of this scenario include the following:

- Unions are involved in deal-making, joint decision-making and co-determination at all levels;
- There is tremendous growth in all areas. All kinds of small and medium sized companies flourish;
- After six years, however, growth slows down. Investment slows. While there has been large scale delivery by the RDP, much still needs to be done;
- Government calls for new negotiations around wage moderation, labour flexibility and industrial peace. Labour agrees at Nedlac to wage restraint in return for greater investment by government and business in training;
- A militant labour federation emerges to tackle Cosatu's "sell-out" at Nedlac; and
- Questions are posed over the direction of ANC policy in the longer term, and whether there will still be "Pap, vleis and gravy" for everyone.

## **2.3 THE "DESERT" SCENARIO**

This was regarded as the worst case scenario, where there is no economic development, no RDP delivery and a high level of class conflict. The reason for this is the government's rigid adherence to Cosatu's economic nemesis - GEAR. The report makes it explicitly clear that GEAR is the "Desert" scenario: "If it is dogmatically implemented, GEAR would lay waste to the economy, destroy the state's capacity to deliver, and destroy the Alliance. This would take us into the Desert scenario". Elements of this scenario include the following:

- After a few years, the economy stagnates following the implementation



of GEAR;

- There is very little RDP delivery as the government focuses on reducing state expenditure. There are retrenchments across the economy;
- There is growing conflict between employers and unions at collective bargaining levels and at Nedlac;
- Labour and business fallout over the latter's demand for wage restraint. Centralised bargaining councils collapse and government closes Nedlac down; and
- Massive demonstrations rock the country. Government confronts them and detains a number of militant leaders. The SACP, splits with one half opting to end the Alliance and form a workers party to the left of the ANC. The Tri-partite Alliance effectively ends.

Cosatu concludes that while the "Skorokoro" scenario reflects current reality, GEAR could push South Africa into the "Desert" scenario while the legislation of the current Basic Conditions of Employment Bill and institutional structures such as Nedlac would push the country towards the "Pap, vleis and gravy" scenario.

## **2.4 THE SEARCH FOR OPTIONS**

In response to the unfolding scenarios identified by the Commission, Cosatu rejected what it calls "zig-zag unionism" which, the report maintains, reflects labour's current approach, and parallels the "Skorokoro" scenario which describes the prevailing situation. In its place, the Commission recommended what it calls "social unionism" to confront the current reality. In its broadest sense, it is an approach concerned with broad social and political issues, as well as the immediate concerns of its members. Its key objective is to influence developments towards "democracy and socialism" by participating in political and social alliances coupled to a simultaneous commitment to worker control. Its an option which rests on two legs: a) political transformation and b) economic transformation, which from Cosatu's perspective is only attainable within the Alliance.

Its an option which rejects on the one hand, more militant calls by "ultra-leftist" or workerist tendencies demanding immediate mass action to implement socialism - what it calls "Moses unionism"; and on the other, "bread and butter unionism" which focuses more narrowly on worker interests at the shopfloor level. In many respects it is a simple rendition of previous policy - only that it be re-implemented more effectively than it has been in the recent past.



## **2.5 CONTESTING THE POLITICAL TERRAIN**

Cosatu's political programme, as outlined in the September Commission, in many respects echoes the ANC's recently released Strategy and Tactics document in its reflection on the current situation. As with the ANC paper, it talks of certain areas still under the control of oppositional forces. It likens the current situation to a "dual power" situation which suggests that while the ANC enjoys areas of limited governance, other areas such as the Reserve Bank, parastatals and the civil service still mirror old order centres of power. As with the ANC's Strategy and Tactics document, SACP input here is self-evident, given the Gramscian underpinnings of the Commission's review of the current situation.

The documents part ways on how to deal with the yet uncontested areas of power. Cosatu calls on "democratic forces" (i.e. socialists) to assist its leadership in the Alliance to neutralise conservatives in the Alliance who "attempt to ... induce passivity amongst the mainstream democratic movement". With respect to the ANC it calls for the reassertion of its working class bias; and with respect to the SACP, the report calls on the Party to reassert a coherent socialist programme to develop working class leadership both within the Alliance and nationally.

The document also made calls to:

- Revitalise and strengthen the Alliance with a common programme of transformation;
- Build alliances with churches, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and other sympathetically aligned institutions and intellectuals to "struggle against poverty and inequality";
- Ensure that government institutions work; and
- Extend socialism to all social and economic spheres.

## **2.6 CONTESTING THE ECONOMIC TERRAIN**

A key imperative of the Commission's economic vision is "reclaiming redistribution" (of resources) on the economic terrain. This the report contended would be attained on two levels. Firstly, halting the privatisation process and asserting worker control over the state sector to "meeting the social and developmental needs of society"; and secondly, calling for the replacement of the private ownership of the economy with what the Commission refers to as the "public and social ownership of the economy".

Rights to property ownership will require "re-examination".

The Commission called for the "socialisation of capital", itself, an almost Orwellian variant of the SACP's call for the "socialisation of the means of production" by workers and other stakeholders - first mooted at its 9th National Congress in April 1995 - which represented a slight refinement of earlier and cruder calls for nationalisation. Any such process will require coercive state intervention in the economy on a massive scale.

In conclusion, the September Commission represented a clarion call to reshape the future direction of the ANC. It is a battle cry that challenges the very essence of ANC policy, namely GEAR, and with it, its original formulator - ANC Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki. Knowing that breaking away from the Alliance represents the path to political obscurity, the September Commission has instead called on socialists and workers within the Alliance to reassert socialist leadership over the ANC. As in the past, it presages the age old Marxist-Leninist approach of penetration, secret caucusing, marginalising and finally neutralising oppositional forces to socialism. In this respect the SACP has played a critical role in refocusing Cosatu's strategic objectives and in re-delineating the parameters within which the Alliance will operate in future. A critical question is its acceptance by the ANC leadership. [See section 8.]

### **3. THE ALLIANCE SUMMIT MEETING**

Over the past few months, it was obvious that the ANC and its Alliance partners were heading for a showdown over a range of issues including GEAR, the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill, tariff barriers, privatisation, deficit spending, exchange controls, high interest rates and the collapse of consultative structures within the Tri-partite Alliance. The release of the September Commission provided further grist to the perception of a growing antagonism between the Alliance partners.

With the Cosatu Congress looming and the ANC National Conference a few months later, damage control was imperative to paper over the growing divide and project a public perception both for its supporters and non-supporters that the Tri-partite Alliance was still intact and shared common objectives.

A critical Alliance summit was held on 31 August - 1 September where all three parties were represented by high powered delegations. President Mandela opened the summit. For the first time since GEAR was announced in June 1996, the ANC extended an olive branch to Cosatu and the SACP by stating in reference to GEAR that "no policy is cast in stone". All participants criticised the "neo-liberal, minimalist conception of the state". Participants instead called for a developmental state that would require a thorough transformation of the state apparatus. The summit resolved to establish a Special Task Team, headed by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, to develop and drive a common alliance strategy on the transformation of the public sector. Other issues agreed upon included:

- A clear programme of action is put forward by all three parties capable of uniting and mobilising their respective constituencies;
- That before the Presidential Jobs Summit is held between government business and labour, the Alliance partners agree to a common job creation strategy; and
- Cosatu and the SACP are allowed to make formal inputs on the ANC's draft "strategy and tactics" document ahead of the ANC's December National Conference.

With some issues ironed out prior to the Congress, the Alliance leadership were able to exert considerable influence over the Congress proceedings, despite restated attacks against the ANC's "rightward shift". These efforts to "placate" Cosatu and socialist hardliners in its ranks was to a great degree successful, and largely explains the impression that this Cosatu Congress was "uncontroversial", since the major policy conflicts between the Alliance partners have either been deferred or pushed to the background.



## **4. THE CONGRESS PROCEEDINGS**

The Congress oscillated between extreme rhetoric and militancy on the one hand and more strategic interventions on policy issues on the other. On the question of ANC's economic agenda - GEAR, there was an almost pathological rejection of it which set the tone of the conference from start to finish. On the question of globalism, debate was fierce between an antiquated approach which rejected it entirely and those which proffered a more pragmatic view that it was a fait accompli and that Cosatu had to influence global trends to suit its own national and regional objectives. Another major focus of Congress proceedings was strengthening Cosatu structures, especially with the view of centralising decision-making into the hands of federation's leadership - a debate which sharply divided affiliates over the weakening of individual union autonomy.

### **4.1 THE ATTACK ON GEAR**

Cosatu's President and SACP Central Committee member, John Gomomo set the tone of the conference in his opening address when, in the presence of President Nelson Mandela, he called GEAR a "monster" whose strategy and philosophy needed to be rejected by the union movement. Attacking GEAR for being full of rhetoric about employment creation and economic growth, Gomomo ventured that "it remains an empty shell which will not deliver any benefit to the working class particularly the unemployed and the rural poor". "Left unchallenged", Gomomo warned, "it can only mean more poverty and the increase of the gap between the rich and the poor". GEAR was simply a replication of the global phenomenon called "neo-liberalism", supported by big business and international capital.

Gomomo's attack on GEAR was supported by ANC MP and SACP Acting Chairman, Blade Nzimande, who, providing the SACP view, reminded delegates that at the Party's last Central Committee meeting, the SACP had come out in opposition to GEAR. "The Central Committee made the point that this kind of macro-economic framework is not conducive to the implementation of the RDP".

GEAR was also criticised in the General Secretary's secretariat's political report. "At one point we had entertained the thought that, instead of confronting GEAR head-on, we would attempt to propose progressive policies in key areas of social and economic development, such as housing, and in that way hope to shift the parameters of GEAR. The limitations of this approach, however, have become clear." The report went on to outline specific areas which GEAR had impacted negatively upon. These included:



- Its intrusion into a wide range of social policy and legislation;
- GEAR's intermediate objectives of fiscal discipline which have replaced the social and developmental aspects of the RDP;
- The "religious" commitment to GEAR by the Ministries of Finance and Trade and Industry, which led to both privately and publicly questioning the "financial implications" of the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill; and
- Cutting back the public sector.

As far as the report was concerned, progressive or socialist elements of GEAR were never part of GEAR's conceptualisation "but added as a sop to make it seem in line with the RDP!"

Cosatu's hardline position was cemented when a couple of unions which had previously called for a more open approach to GEAR, suddenly switched sides. On the second day, the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union (Sarhwu) withdrew a proposal calling for engagement with the government on GEAR because it could not be rejected as a whole. Its proposal had noted that while there were areas of disagreement with the strategy, "we need to take cognisance of the fact that the climate for foreign investment must be conducive". Sarhwu's resolution pleaded for Cosatu to rather isolate problematic elements of GEAR.

Both Cosatu and the SACP, however, were defensive over allegations that the labour movement's criticism of government economic policy and the use of mass action and strikes, was somehow "unpatriotic" and "counter revolutionary". Gomomo was at pains to stress that Cosatu's actions were not aimed at government but at business, even though the logic of this delineation was flawed given the structured interlock between business and government in the economy, and the fact that GEAR was initiated in ANC rather than business circles. Mass mobilisation and mass action by Cosatu, according to Gomomo, had to be seen in the context of ongoing "struggles to ensure success in rebuilding our country based on the needs of the majority". He went on to assert: "We reject with contempt any assertion to equate all forms of mass mobilisation and protests with those of counter revolutionary elements who want the failure of an ANC government".

Blade Nzimande was equally as defensive: "To argue that a general strike against capital is a strike against the democratic government is a deliberate distortion in order to continue to subject employed workers to conditions to which they have been subjected under apartheid colonialism and its capitalist system". These defensive and contorted arguments were aimed not just at opposition parties and the business community in general, but also towards

a growing antipathy emerging within the ANC and black business towards their socialist compatriots in the labour movement.

## **4.2 ENTER THE ANC**

President Mandela was the only senior ANC leader to address the Congress. Given the mood of the delegates, he was the most credible leader for the ANC to wheel in to face their ambivalent Alliance partner. Thabo Mbeki, the architect of GEAR, was nowhere to be seen, and the Minister of Labour, Tito Mboweni, who had angered Cosatu delegates the day before the Congress started by suggesting that sufficient consensus had been reached on the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill to be sent to parliament for ratification into legislation, did not venture anywhere near the podium.

Despite his immeasurable charm reflected in the standing ovation he received on the way to the podium to make his address, the President had been somewhat taken aback at Gomomo's unyielding attack on ANC economic policy and it seemed was badly briefed on critical issues. Throughout his speech Mandela walked a tightrope between the need for the ANC to assert its leadership on certain issues and a willingness to compromise with its Alliance partners on others.

President Mandela made the point that it was not in the character of the Tripartite Alliance for its partners to declare non-negotiable positions to each other. At the Alliance Summit held three weeks earlier, the ANC had compromised on its previously non-negotiable position on GEAR to state that "it was not cast in stone". He expected Cosatu to show similar flexibility over its hardline anti-GEAR stance and give the policy a chance. Ultimately, however, Mandela indicated that despite the need for greater consultation, there would be occasions when compromise was not possible and then the ANC's position would prevail. "There will be situations where we agree from the start. Then there are situations where our conflicting views can be resolved by compromise. But, there are situations where no agreement is possible. Here, the ANC's view will hold sway", he told disenchanted delegates.

On a reconciliatory note, Mandela conceded that he had serious reservations about GEAR but that it was a good strategy "to drag our economy out of the mess that apartheid left us". He also conceded that there had not been sufficient consultation within the Alliance over GEAR, exclaiming somewhat absurdly that even the ANC only learnt of GEAR when it was almost complete.

Nevertheless, these two points reflected a discernible distancing of the President, for whatever tactical reason, from GEAR's chief architect - Deputy

President, Thabo Mbeki. The latter point about GEAR taking the ANC "by surprise" is not plausible given that GEAR was discussed by the ANC leadership both within its own leadership structures and the cabinet before becoming official ANC government policy. Mandela later went on to contradict himself when he told delegates that GEAR was actually the collective effort of the entire cabinet. Mandela's contradictory approach continued when he criticised GEAR's approach to servicing the national debt, saying that government could not spend so much on debt as it defeated the purpose of transformation; and then praising his Minister of Finance as "one of the most brilliant young men this country has produced".

Mandela then caused a furore when he congratulated Cosatu General Secretary, Sam Shilowa, and Minister Tito Mboweni for reaching a consensus on the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill. Delegates were momentarily stunned as Shilowa had been given no mandate to compromise over the bill. Tito Mboweni who was present when Mandela made the statement remained silent over the issue.

When Mandela vacated the podium, delegates remained unmoved at the President's defence of government economic policy and chanted "Asiyifuni i GEAR" (we reject GEAR). Later a resolution rejecting GEAR was passed, calling it "an unsuitable macro-economic strategy for South Africa's socio-economic transformation" and calling on Cosatu and like-minded institutions to "publicise and resist the Gear elements of subsidy cuts, privatisation, labour market flexibility, etc". [See selected appendices.] A proposal put forward by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and backed by the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) that the ANC abandon GEAR with immediate effect, was unsuccessful.

After Mandela's speech, Shilowa indulged in rapid damage control to assure delegates that in fact no compromise had been reached. Yet the controversy rankled in the minds of delegates that Shilowa may have done some behind the scene deal with the government on the bill. Cosatu President Gomomo reacted strongly to Mandela's position stating that there was no consensus on the bill. "I do not know who informs the President, it is certainly not us."

The following day Mandela sent a message to the Congress apologising for his comments around the bill, blaming not Mboweni but "inaccurate" press reports. Yet Mboweni had clearly stated just before the Congress started that in his mind sufficient consensus around the bill had been reached. To cover the President, the minister in a dissembling manner, later clarified his earlier position to say that "not everybody else's" sufficient consensus had been reached. There are indications, however, that some sort of deal may have been struck behind the scenes at the time with Cosatu's leadership, that it would allow the bill to go to Parliament in its current form but on condition that certain amendments would have to be made within certain time frames.



### **4.3 THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISATION**

Considerable time was spent debating the issue of globalisation. Several powerful unions including the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu), wanted the congress to adopt a resolution opposing the concept of globalisation in its entirety. This impractical viewpoint was rejected by other unions which argued on a more practical level that globalisation was a *fait accompli*. Consideration had to be given to the fact that globalisation was crushing any thought of socialism and that global investments were being shifted to those countries where few union rights were enjoyed. Instead, it was felt that unions should rather work towards protecting workers rights in the global market.

The acceptance of globalisation as a *fait accompli* was a pragmatic shift on previous positions which had seen globalisation as the stalking horse of "neo-liberalism" and capitalism which had to be opposed at all costs. Shilowa quipped: "I have never understood Cosatu to say we oppose globalisation, period". This elicited a response from some delegates saying that this was not Cosatu policy. Shilowa replied that he was opposed to the "capitalist logic" of globalism but not opposed to the coordination of productive forces on a global level operating within the parameters of socialist modes of production and distribution.

In the end, a motion was adopted that workers be mobilised internationally against the "neo-liberal" trends of globalisation. Cosatu's response to the "neo-liberal strategy", outlined in its resolution on the issue, included the following:

- Initiate international campaigns amongst unions and "progressive forces" to target countries such as Nigeria and Swaziland that have a poor labour track record;
- Counter the free market system and "deepen the crisis of imperialism" by developing an alternative "humanistic project" consistent with a socialist perspective;
- Promote trade union unity in all countries;
- Develop an international platform of progressive forces, to advance proposals for an alternative economic order; and
- Campaign for coordinated international actions every year by unions to draw attention to the negative consequences of globalisation.

On this last point Cosatu has mapped out an ambitious strategy to develop an international programme of action. During the first half of 1998, an



international week focusing on globalisation and ending with May Day celebrations will be considered. Then sometime during the second half of 1998, Cosatu has called for "an international day of action" on a normal working day to consist of "demonstrations, pickets, stoppages, and a global strike by workers". Global trade federations such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and regional federations such as the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (Oatuu) and the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Council (Satucc) would be called upon to mobilise support.

The resolution on globalisation also called for a decision to be taken at Cosatu's next Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting to consider mechanisms for setting aside a certain percentage of the federation's affiliation income to establish a solidarity fund to be used to build trade unionism in Southern Africa and other parts of the developing world.

#### **4.4 THE STATUS OF THE TRI-PARTITE ALLIANCE**

A central issue for the Congress was re-examining Cosatu's relationship with the ANC within the context of the Tri-partite Alliance. Again the debate was guided by the already released September Commission report which made it clear that while there were certainly problems with the Alliance, it still remained the most effective locus of power to drive and influence the political and economic transformational process in the country.

The Commission conceded that the Alliance represented a complex relationship between the ANC, SACP and Cosatu - a relationship made more difficult and fraught with tension given the ANC's role in government which had exacerbated natural class tensions and contradictions between all three partners. Quite clearly, according to the Commission, the Alliance was not working for a number of reasons:

- In most cases Alliance structures do not meet, and when they do meet it is formalistic in nature. There is little or no joint formulation of policy or strategy;
- Alliance partners are not operating as partners: they do not, in general, confront common problems together and work out joint solutions. This is the case at national level (cabinet, the executive), at sectoral level (ministries) and provincial and local levels; and
- The gradual erosion of the RDP and the sudden adoption of GEAR as a "non-negotiable" economic framework had seriously undermined the Alliance.

The solution to this according to the Commission was not to quit the Alliance but to build the ANC with a working-class bias. From this perspective Cosatu has adopted the SACP position to reassert the socialist programme within the ANC.

There was also debate at the Congress around an ANC offer made at its Lekgotla conference in January 1997 to set aside a certain number of seats on its constitutional structures for Cosatu members. Although the September Commission accepted the ANC's proposal, mounting opposition to this view came from Numsa. ANC Chairman, Jacob Zuma tried to sell the benefits deploying Cosatu leaders into ANC structures, by stating that the ANC would not have been "progressive" as it is today had it not been for the involvement of Cosatu leaders - "nor can we shape policies of a political organisation with people who do not have the workers' interests at heart". But Numsa's general secretary, Mbuyi Ngwenda, a senior SACP member with workerist tendencies, feared cooption and a dilution of the independence of the labour movement. Instead, he called on Cosatu to re-examine its ties with the ruling Tri-partite Alliance, saying that the ANC had abandoned its leftist roots. Shilowa had also voiced a certain cynicism as to how much "value for money" the federation was getting from the people it had sent to parliament in the past.

The Congress finally resolved that the federation retain its policy of releasing its leaders to stand for elections to leadership positions in the ANC. It also resolved to support the ANC in the 1999 general elections. A proposal by the Paper, Pulp, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) that any pact with the ANC for the 1999 elections should be conditional on the ANC's acceptance of Cosatu's demands, was rejected.

Other aspects of the Alliance which Cosatu resolved to work on included:

- Restructuring the Tri-partite Alliance in such a manner that the ANC in government is subject to the political control of the ANC party structures and is guided by the policies of the Alliance. [This is a controversial point which has its genesis in a document written back in 1993 by SACP Central Committee member Raymond Suttner in which was raised the issue of accountability of ANC members once in government to its party structures and grassroots support base. Socialists in the Alliance have become concerned at how decisions are being increasingly made at the executive arm of government (cabinet and the Deputy President's office) at the expense of the ANC's National Executive Committee and its Alliance partners];
- That the Alliance remains the only vehicle capable of bringing about fundamental transformation for the country;

- Holding regular summits to co-ordinate and guide the activities of the Alliance;
- Establishing an Alliance political centre to be coordinated by an Alliance leadership;
- That the common programme of the Alliance must be based and built on the RDP; and
- Ensuring that while committed to the Alliance, there will be commitment to vigorously defending the federation's political independence.

According to some Cosatu sources, the noticeable decline in anti-Alliance sentiments among Cosatu's more radical affiliates stemmed less from a surrender to ANC dominance than from an apparently concerted effort by the SACP in reasserting its influence within key Cosatu unions, as well as taking up more radical positions against key ANC policy formulations such as GEAR.

Spearheading this initiative have been SACP Central Committee member and former NUMSA general secretary, Enoch Godongwana, Langa Zita (a former Cosatu organiser in the Wits region and now the SACP's National Organiser and Mbuyi Ngwenda (a former chairman of the SACP's Eastern Cape region and Numsa's new General Secretary). Their view has been to turn the SACP into a true party of the working class led by workers rather than an intellectual cabal with non-working class roots.

#### **4.5 THE GENDER DEBACLE: QUOTA VS MERIT DEBATE**

The most embarrassing moment at the Congress came when delegates rejected a key policy position of the September Commission and endorsed by the federation's secretariat, that Cosatu adopt a gender quota to boost women representation at all levels of Cosatu's structures. The recommendation by the Commission was that "Cosatu and affiliates should adopt a quota system for electing (women) representatives and office bearers. The target should be 50 percent representation in all Cosatu and affiliate structures by the year 2 000, starting at this year's Cosatu Congress with the election of at least three women office-bearers".

According to the newly elected First Vice President, Connie September, the only woman on Cosatu's executive committee, a quota was necessary as "other avenues have failed". What was thought would be a mere a formality of acceptance of women quotas by the attending delegates, turned out to be one of the most contentious issues which impinged on other similarly critical areas such as affirmative action.



When debate was opened on the issue, some unions such as the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) were in agreement on a quota system. General Secretary Sam Shilowa, started off endorsing Nehawu's position but was stunned when the position on quotas was rejected by most other unions, including all women delegates who got up to speak against what was called the "paternalism of quotas".

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu), came out against any reservation of positions for women, preferring that they be elected, stating further that the Congress should not be turned into a "complaints office". Sadtu preferred regions to take up the gender issue but not on a quota basis. The Paper Pulp Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) slammed quotas and said it was better for women to be seen leading on their own merit.

The powerful Numsa union agreed saying that women should be elected at the shopfloor and be truly participant like their male counterparts. Women delegates at this stage endorsed Numsa's view but pointed out that women were generally disadvantaged because they often lacked political debating skills and needed educational improvement in order to be able to compete with men on the shopfloor. The Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) said that the working class struggle is not about a "quota empowerment bill" but agreed to a clear training programme for women for the development of leadership skills.

The most powerful union (NUM) shared the views of other dissenting unions and women delegates, adding that any new programmes should be targeted at all Cosatu shopstewards and not just women. Admitting that NUM is indeed male dominated by virtue of its sector of operations in the economy, the union nonetheless felt that "setting numbers is not a solution, but setting targets is".

In response, the ANC gender desk described NUM's view as representative of a "boys gathering" and that it was evident that it would be difficult to change the "male mindset of the federation". The ANC's women's view was that quotas were not strictly the equivalent of the numbers of women in structures, but rather "is a mechanism and should be treated as such". As far as this viewpoint was concerned, "Cosatu is a 'progressive' organisation where there should be a gender perspective. Quotas address that perspective and allows for the transformation of patriarchal power relationships in society. Quotas in themselves can be conservative, liberal or progressive. It depends on how they are used".

The ANC's response was treated with disdain by Cosatu women delegates. Such a view was only representative of "opportunistic and useless" political aspirants who wished to reserve positions for themselves where they could not perform on merit, and hence damage the prestige and



respect women deserve for being competent unionists.

The drubbing which the ANC delegation received prompted the intervention of Sam Shilowa to declare that the debate "is not really about a quota system". This along with his remarks on globalisation did not go down well with delegates as he attempted to redirect the essence of the debate into less hostile waters. According to Shilowa the following points were indisputable:

- There was unanimous agreement that women be represented on all Cosatu structures; and
- Women be elected as office bearers but that the federation provide them with the necessary tools. Generally there is no "mutual exclusiveness" between the development of women and a quota system. The key follow-up concern was what percentage of women should be appointed and that passing "intent declarations" was not enough.

The delegates, however, were not swayed by Shilowa's logic given that the general feeling was that women could compete on their own strength and that special arrangements for them were disparaging in nature. Seeing that the leadership was not going to get its way and faced certain defeat if taken to the vote, John Gomomo, moved that the matter be referred to the Federation's Central Executive Committee which would set up a programme to advance women.

A long-winded resolution was passed on women issues with the question of quotas simply replaced with a position that steps must be taken to encourage the participation and leadership of women in Cosatu's activities and structures.

#### **4.5.1 THE IMPLICATIONS FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

The question of quotas will continue to simmer until the next Congress in the year 2000. Cosatu's leadership is particularly concerned that the stand taken by the federation against quotas will seriously undermine the legitimacy of labour's demands for the implementation of affirmative action programmes. The fear is that in future negotiations with business, businessmen will use the same arguments that were used by Congress delegates against affirmative action. This was the major reason why Cosatu's leadership tried to shut down the debate when it seemed impossible to get the Congress floor to see their way.

If Cosatu rejected special preferences for women, who, according to the September Commission, "Under apartheid ... suffered more than any other group; as black people, as workers without rights and as women"; then why

should special preferences be considered by business for black workers in general. Cosatu faces a moral dilemma in demanding preferential treatment for black workers in the workplace but not for (black) women in its own structures.

#### 4.6 BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Both the September Commission and the Congress spent much time discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the federation's structures. According to the results of a survey of union staff conducted for the Commission, large numbers of staff believed that structures were not functioning properly and that unions were not using their resources or their staff effectively. The results are shown in the table below.

QUESTION	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
The union has clear goals/vision	54%	35%	12%
The union has workable strategies	46%	41%	13%
National Office Bearers (NOBs) are in touch with staff/members	36%	28%	36%
The union uses its resources/staff effectively	30%	38%	33%
Union structures function properly	30%	35%	36%
Shopsteward committees are strong	34%	31%	35%
Members are happy with service	34%	34%	30%

Problems identified included poor staff morale linked to a high level of staff turnover, poor administration, weak management, poor delivery of services to members, ineffectual shopstewards and a growing gap between union leaders and members. Another critical weakness identified by the Commission was that the link between Cosatu's central decision-making structures and affiliates are weak:

"The structures where affiliates meet to determine Cosatu policies and strategies - Exco (Executive Committee) and the CEC (Central Executive

Committee) - are large, unwieldy debating forums. Affiliates do not generally participate in implementing decisions. Exco does not meet often, so affiliates are distant from the constant pressure on the NOBs (National Office Bearers) to develop new tactics and responses to rapidly changing conditions. The result is poor co-ordination of, and communication with affiliates. All this encourages a lack of commitment to, and cynicism about, programmes of Cosatu, and a tension between secretariat and NOBs on the one hand, and affiliates on the other.

"These weaknesses, together with weaknesses within affiliates, mean that the information flow from Cosatu via affiliates to members is inadequate. Members often complain that NOBs are negotiating without a mandate because they are not informed of the progress of negotiations and campaigns, or about Exco decisions. The structural weaknesses in the federation are contributing to the gap between the leadership and base".

The solution to these problems was greater centralisation of control over Cosatu's affiliates on the one hand and enhancing local structures on the other. The question of greater centralised control had to be seen in the context of affiliated unions either disregarding secretariat decisions or pursuing agendas and programmes of actions at odds with federation policies. The decision, for example, of NUM not coming out in support of Cosatu's strike on the lock-out clause, was seen as one factor fuelling this position.

Compounding this problem has been the simmering conflict between populists or charterists traditionally supportive of the ANC-led Alliance and workerists of a Trotskyite disposition supportive of an independent socialist workers viewpoint. This has manifested in unions where affiliates such as Numsa, Sactwu, CWIU, Samwu and Saccawu have always leaned against Cosatu's leadership which has been loyally supportive of the Tri-partite Alliance.

When put to the delegates, however, Cosatu's leadership once again faced rebuke by its affiliates. This was clearly highlighted during a heated debate, which went to the vote and was subsequently defeated, on a constitutional amendment which proposed that all office-bearers, including full-time officials, should be defined as workers, not officials. One of the implications was that the amendment would give greater powers to elected officials and marginalise the influence of nominated workers on Cosatu's structures. Another implication for union autonomy was that full-time office bearers rather than nominated office bearers, would no longer be accountable to their constituencies.

NUM, considered one of the most slavish "conveyer belts" in parroting SACP positions, and backed by Nehawu, supported the motion but was defeated by



other unions led by Numsa.

Despite this defeat, the leadership were able to pass a resolution which resulted in some power being centralised in the hands of the secretariat. The most important change was getting delegates to agree to the formation of "super unions" to represent workers within six broadly defined sectors of the economy. Key aspects of this resolution included the following:

- Agreement in principle to the establishment of six broadly defined union sectors within the federation which will include Manufacturing, Mining and Energy, Public sector, Private Sector services and Agriculture. Each sector will take responsibility for defining sector policy, take responsibility for collective bargaining and set parameters for all other union work of national competence;
- The establishment of a commission to study the implications of broad sectoral unions;
- The process of mergers into the respective sectors to be completed within three years;
- Allowing Cosatu to intervene in the internal problems of affiliates, either identified by the federation or brought to its attention; and
- That Cosatu be empowered to enforce decisions related to the poaching of members by unions operating in the same sector. Affiliates poaching members in areas not classified as part of their demarcation, must hand over any membership to the responsible affiliate operating in that sector.

Cosatu has set itself an ambitious programme to merge its 19 affiliates into six "super unions" and given previous experience it is unlikely to be achieved within the space of three years. The merger between the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union (Sarhww) and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) which has been a stop start affair over the past few years, is a case in point, where a dispute over the demarcation areas for union recruitment remains unresolved. The planned merger between Samwu and Nehawu in the public sector has also been held up over a number of years due to problems related to demarcation, size of branches and constitutional issues related to structures, financial statements and budgets.

Leadership egos, demarcation disputes and contrary ideological strands running through the various unions will make the planned mergers difficult to attain, and in the process debilitate the effectiveness of unions in their fights against management in future negotiations.



## **4.7 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

In keeping with one of its founding declarations that "International solidarity is the lifeblood of trade unionism", Cosatu continues to place a heavy emphasis on the development of ties and labour programmes with other labour centres and industrial unions both on the continent and overseas. In a wide ranging overview of the federation's international relations, Cosatu's Secretariat report provides a measure of detail with respect to specific political campaigns against governments suppressing labour and human rights; coordinating union activity in southern Africa in search of common labour standards for the region; strengthening relations with labour centres, and strengthening relations with multi-lateral institutions worldwide to counter the trends of globalism.

At the congress, it was resolved that Cosatu seek affiliation to the Brussels based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), as per the decision reached at its international policy conference held in April 1995. This decision represented a significant shift in Cosatu's previous policy of non-alignment, despite its affiliation for a number of years to the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (Oatuu) - a regional adjunct of the former pro-Soviet World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Despite traditional concerns over the ideological orientation of the ICFTU, Cosatu, in conjunction with other left leaning unions world-wide, has adopted a strategy to transform the ICFTU from within via the affiliation of its unions to the Confederation's global sectoral affiliates.

Cosatu called for maximum unity amongst workers worldwide especially greater unity between the ICFTU, WFTU and the Geneva based World Confederation of Labour (WCL). In line with this call, Cosatu moved to host the next Indian Ocean Trade Union Regional Conference - a labour initiative held bi-annually representing "progressive" unions in countries around the Indian Ocean rim. The same resolution also called for the establishment of more concrete ties with unions in the "South-South region" (Unions in developing countries) that share common political and economic platforms.

### **4.7.1 THE AFRICAN DIMENSION**

Cosatu has a particular interest in developing union capacity and uniform labour standards across the sub-continent. In recent years it has worked closely with the Harare-based Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council (Satucc) to strengthen unions and to counter multi-national corporations in the region. On a resolution on Africa, Cosatu resolved the following:

- Working closely with Oatuu and Satucc (its Southern African affiliate), in forging a common programme of action targeting "particularly anti-

working class organisations and multi-national companies";

- To look at the establishment of African Shop Stewards Councils where economic policies can be debated;
- Organising a conference for the labour movement and governments in Southern Africa to discuss social and economic policies appropriate for the region. This must be seen in the context of the labour movement shaping discussions on economic trade within the Southern African Development Community (SADC); and
- That Cosatu strengthen relations with other unions in the region, with the aim of analysing the problems of their respective sectors and developing ideas as to how their industries could be developed in a mutually beneficial way across countries.

The most important element of Cosatu's increasing influence in the region was a call by the Congress to establish cross-regional shop steward councils to "build solidarity", as well as for Cosatu to assist unions in the region to develop their organisational, research and educational capacities.

This last point represents the most significant aspect of Cosatu's regional ambitions on the labour front and potentially will have far reaching implications for political relations between South Africa and its neighbours on the sub-continent. The federation in close collaboration with the SACP is spearheading concerted "democratisation" campaigns against Nigeria and Swaziland. On a resolution on international solidarity, Cosatu called for "mass action with other solidarity forces to put pressure on the undemocratic regimes of Nigeria and Swaziland".

It has already done so on a number of fronts. Cosatu participated in the founding of the South Africa Nigeria Democratic Support Group (SANDSG), which has been calling for a boycott of Nigerian oil and the severing of all relations with the Nigerian government.

Closer to home, Cosatu has been spearheading a worker led campaign to dislodge the Swaziland monarchy, in conjunction with the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) and the SACP/Cosatu front organisation known as the Swaziland Solidarity Network which operates from SACP headquarters in Johannesburg.

What is set to further aggravate tensions in the region between governments and labour movements increasingly primed with strategic input from Cosatu, is the demand for uniform labour standards for SADC countries. Cosatu has become concerned at the flow of investments to surrounding countries from both South African and foreign companies, disenchanted with South Africa's

inflexible and costly labour market. As a result it wants to shut down one of the few competitive advantages enjoyed by South Africa's poorer neighbours vis-a-vis the South African economy - namely cheaper labour, a move likely to rankle the minds of regional governments concerned with the imperatives of economic growth and job creation rather than the unrealistic and narrow sectarian demands of trade union movements.

#### **4.8 ELECTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP**

The elections for Cosatu's new leadership held on the forth and final day of the congress delivered few surprises except for the election of the only woman on the executive, Connie September, who replaced George Nkadimeng for the position of First Vice President. Several of the incoming office bearers were elected unopposed. These were:

- |   |                 |                          |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| - | John Gomomo     | President                |
| - | Sam Shilowa     | General Secretary        |
| - | Zwelinzima Vavi | Deputy General secretary |
| - | Ronald Mofokeng | Treasurer                |

Rumours to the effect that Sam Shilowa would stand down for a possible government position after the 1999 elections proved unfounded as was the view that Deputy General Secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, would replace Shilowa. Nominations for electing individuals to the leadership positions had to be made by more than one affiliate. The post of General Secretary was contested by Vavi, but he was only nominated by one affiliate making his nomination invalid returning Shilowa to his post unopposed. Nevertheless, Shilowa did not enjoy unquestioned popularity, with Numsa, Cosatu's largest affiliate, having not nominated him for the post.

Vavi, a hardline militant and SACP member, played the most overt political role during congress proceedings in representing the interests of the ANC/SACP Alliance.

Sam Shilowa similarly touted the Alliance line but handled himself badly during the three pivotal debates around GEAR, globalism and quotas for women office bearers in Cosatu. In all these issues, Shilowa was criticised by some delegates for acting like a "juddering transmission belt" for the accepted and settled views of the Alliance's political leadership. Women delegates on the third day were particularly resentful of his high-handed manner in attempting to pass a quota for women in Cosatu's leadership structures.

The post of First Vice President was a straight contest between the incumbent George Nkadimeng and Connie September (Second Vice President).



Fawy President, Peter Malepe, was also nominated for this position but declined to stand while Nehawu President, Vusi Nhlapo, was only nominated by one affiliate which made his challenge invalid.

Conducted by secret ballot, September secured 1 321 votes to Nkadimeng's 628 votes. There were 14 spoilt papers. Peter Malepe who had been nominated for the position of Second Vice President along with September, was elected unopposed after September secured the post of First Vice President. Surprisingly, no nominations were received from the South African Society of Banking Officials (Sasbo) and the South African Public Servants Association (Sapsa).

#### **4.8.1 PROFILE: CONNIE SEPTEMBER**

Elected First Vice President of Cosatu at its recently held Sixth National Congress, Connie September is the most high-profile woman leader to emerge out of Cosatu's ranks. She unseated the respected National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leader, George Nkadimeng with 1 321 votes to 628. Nkadimeng was previously Cosatu's First Vice President.

Having been with Rex Trueform in Cape Town ever since she started working for the company in 1980, she became involved in political and labour agitation with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983. She helped in the formation of the Clothing Workers Union (Clowu), formed by UDF activists to challenge the long-established and Conservative Garment Workers Union (GWU) in the Western Cape. Despite the leftward shift in the GWU during the 1980s, which went on to merge with a Natal based textile union to form the Garment Allied Workers Union (Gawu) in 1987, September remained with Clowu. A decisive change in September's involvement in labour affairs came with the three week strike at Rex Trueform in 1988. Gawu's "progressive" credentials were proved in bringing out a total strike against management.

Shortly after the strike, she was elected a shop steward by workers in Gawu and started her rapid ascent in the labour movement. Six months after her election to the shop stewards committee, she was given the post of secretary of the committee. With the merger between Gawu and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union of South Africa (Actwusa) to form the South African Commercial and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu) in 1989, September was elected vice-chairperson of the new union's Western Cape region. Her administrative skills did not go unnoticed and in 1991, she was elected Sactwu's treasurer. Between 1992 and 1993, she was part of a team selected by Cosatu to negotiate with business leaders about getting back money that workers were overtaxed on their payroll slips. Cosatu's decision to elect a woman to a senior leadership position on the federation's executive committee saw September climb into the breach with her election



as Cosatu's Second Vice-President in 1993. Spearheading gender issues within the federation's structures, she cemented her credentials when she was chosen last year to head the September Commission which resulted in the unveiling of a comprehensive policy blueprint for Cosatu just prior to its Sixth National Congress in mid-September.

Having come from a workerist background in Sactwu, she is not a member of the SACP nor aligned to the socialist lobby in Cosatu determined to maintain the alliance with the ANC at all costs. In an interview with SA Labour Bulletin shortly after being elected Sactwu Treasurer in 1990, September said the following on the question of union leaders holding leadership positions in political parties: "Sactwu's position on holding office in two organisations is that one should not simultaneously hold leadership positions in the trade union and in a political organisation. The trade union should strive to maintain its independence. From a practical point of view, it would be difficult to serve the members well if one held two positions".

## **5. COSATU'S FINANCIAL SITUATION**

Cosatu's new auditors, Deloitte & Touche, issued three cautionary notes in accepting Cosatu's financial position ending 31 December 1996. These were:

- That "in common with similar organisations, it is not feasible for Cosatu to institute accounting controls over cash collections from donations prior to the initial entry of the collection in the accounting records";
- That they were unable to ascertain whether debts incurred to the federation by three of its affiliates vis. the Institute of Public Servants (IPS), Communications Workers Union (CWU) and the South African Agricultural, Plantation and Allied workers Union (Saapawu), to the value of R254 910 are likely to be recovered; and
- That while Cosatu is reliant on donations, the accounts were prepared "on the basis of accounting policies applicable to a going concern. This basis assumes that funds will be available to finance future operations and that the realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities, contingent obligations and commitments will occur in the ordinary course of business. Accordingly, these annual financial statements do not include any adjustments relating to the valuation of assets and classification of liabilities that might be necessary if the federation is unable to continue as a going concern".

Despite Cosatu showing greater income generation over expenditure costs for the 1996 financial year, a quick glance at Cosatu's Treasurer's report indicates a steady decline in donor funding to cover various operational costs, from R6 964 722 in 1994 to R4 350 419 in 1996. A major source of these donations has been from the Nordic Dutch group of donors which since the 1994 general elections have cut back donations in terms of the pre-1994 Transitional Assistance Programme to now only funding capacity building projects based on an agreed to programme. Further overseas funding cuts is set to close down Cosatu's Jabulile Educare centre as well as place financial constraints on its thinktank, the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (Naledi).

Cosatu has other financial problems as well. Its property rental company, Cubah Properties, is still running at a loss having not generated any investment returns for the federation since its formation in early 1993. Operating losses before taxation for the years 1993, 1994 and 1995, have run at R209 197, R231 098 and R167 962 respectively. An audited review of the 1996 financial year was not forthcoming in the Treasurer's report. This has resulted in rationalisation moves which have included moving the SACP head-office to smaller office space the Party can afford and reducing Cosatu's

own office space to a single floor to rent out saved space to other tenants.

In its drive for self sufficiency, Cosatu has enjoyed some success in offsetting declining donor funding with increased income from affiliation fees. Between 1994 and 1996, monthly affiliation fees charged per member has increased from 35 cents to 52,5 cents. This increase, along with boosted membership figures, has enabled Cosatu to increase income from this source from R5 365 233 in 1994 to R10 671 338 in 1996. After total operating costs exceeded total income by R1 691 706 and R251 707 for 1994 and 1995 respectively, a surplus of R599 723 was realised in 1996.



## **6. A SUMMARY OF COSATU WEAKNESSES**

Looking at the Congress as a whole, the following weaknesses were identified by delegates, who, in informal discussions, gave a more forthright perspective on some of the problems and challenges Cosatu faces. These points included the following:

- The federations's structures are considered to over-elaborate and complex;
- Cosatu does not have a coherent macro-economic critique of GEAR. Its attack on GEAR is ideologically driven rather than based on well-researched assumptions;
- Its poor ability to utilise union representatives in parliament;
- The debate between deregulation, privatisation and nationalisation has not been resolved;
- A fear among some senior labour officials that after Sasbo joining Cosatu, the federation may have reached a ceiling for further union membership growth;
- Ideologically within Cosatu there are "distorted" perspectives on socialism ranging from ultra-leftism to a pragmatic embrace of market forces;
- A continued loss of quality union leaders to both the public and private sectors. The new generation of emergent union leaders are considered political lightweights compared to their contemporaries from yesteryear;
- The existence of an incipient racism directed at non-black run union investment vehicles;
- The ongoing divide between workerist and populist thinking;
- The low development standards of shop stewards;
- Complaints by shop stewards that their concerns do not filter through to union leadership;
- Complaints by some affiliates that while they are subsidising Cosatu's head-office, they are not taken sufficiently serious until there is a cash crisis;

- That Cosatu's leaders rather than affiliate union leaders are generating all the media attention;
- On a political level, criticism levelled at government ministries in not coordinating media releases with Cosatu before their public release on labour related issues. The fracas around "sufficient consensus" on the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill was a case in point;
- Management has become more adept in persuading union members to see their point of view. This has been assisted by joint ventures with black economic empowerment enterprises which sometimes include union investment vehicles;
- Debates are never resolved. Simplistic formulations are often complicated by ideological wrangling by individual leaders who believe they have the sole monopoly on the correctness of socialist thinking. Formulated ideas which lead to recommended mechanisms for implementation, are either not implementable or achieve little on implementation. Unions have great difficulty in adopting formal resolutions; and
- Finally, Cosatu's leaders are seemingly attempting to achieve contradictory objectives:
  - \* Implementing a quota for black women in Cosatu's structures;
  - \* Attempting to attract white workers;
  - \* Using the race card against whites to mobilise black workers;
  - \* Trying to achieve a non-racial class consciousness;
  - \* Demanding affirmative action programmes for black workers.

## **7. THE ROLE OF THE SACP**

Any assessment of the Congress cannot be complete without an appreciation of the role which the SACP played in shaping some of its outcomes and future course. Prior to the Congress, the SACP had reviewed its standing in the Tri-partite Alliance and had decided that to leave the political arrangement it has enjoyed with the ANC since the early 1950s would leave it politically isolated from mainstream politics.

Since 1994, the SACP until recently, has had difficulty in trying to shape a strategic agenda relevant to the rapidly changing local and international environment. The formulation of GEAR by the ANC leadership was a direct attack on socialism and the working class aspirations of labour. The last line of defence remained the shopfloor and the labour movement, which has seen the SACP work closely with Cosatu in recent months in forging a unified response to GEAR and a purposeful unity within the Tri-partite Alliance to re-augment and reinforce the ANC's bias towards the working class. The formulation of proposals which emanated from the September Commission was one such manifestation of this renewed determination, as was the defeat of workerist notions at Cosatu's Congress calling for the formation of an independent worker-led socialist formation to the left of the ANC.

The September Commission was heavily influenced by SACP thinking with at least six of its nine commissioners also being members of the SACP. They included Sam Shilowa (SACP Central Committee member), Herbert Mkhize (Saccawu General Secretary), Philip Dexter (ANC MP and former Nehawu General Secretary), Susan Shabangu (Deputy Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs and a former senior TGWU official), John Gomomo (SACP Central Committee member) and Ronald Mofokeng. The SACP perspective was clearly evident on issues such as GEAR, globalisation, strengthening the decision-making powers of Cosatu's central structures, the Tri-partite Alliance and Cosatu's political programme.

On the question of GEAR, the SACP had already set the tone for Cosatu's views when prior to its Congress, the Party's Central Committee had undergone a strategic rethink on GEAR, calling for "a thorough-going review of macro-economic policy". As opposed to seeing GEAR as "a framework for the RDP", as it had done just after GEAR was released in June 1996, the new position stated unequivocally that "the very centrality of growth to GEAR calls the overall policy assumptions into question...it (GEAR) is not working and will not work". Instead, the SACP called for a progressive and "coherent industrial policy" to which any macro-economic framework is "subservient" in addition to "halting the unmandated drift into privatisation".

The defeat of workerist notions at the Cosatu's Congress was also steered by



SACP delegates, including Jeremy Cronin (Deputy General Secretary) and Philip Dexter. In the past it was usually the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and the South African Commercial and Catering Allied Union (Saccawu), which would put forward workerist notions at previous congresses, that would briefly cause some consternation in the Alliance.

Another problem for the SACP in recent years, was having to cope with a tendency which had developed within Party district branches, especially those in Gauteng, Western Cape, Port Elizabeth and in mining areas in the North West province, that the SACP would do better to pursue party agendas on its own. The belief was that communists could contest local and national government elections, confident that as much as 28 percent of the Alliance electoral block would support the Party. The sentiment behind this view stemmed from grassroots shopstewards and SACP district organisers

For a while last year, the SACP leadership was reluctant to condemn this autonomous view in the spirit of democratic debate. However, the SACP's leading theoreticians, namely Cronin and Blade Nzimande took the view that a split was a dangerous development. Advocates of the split were advancing their criticisms within the Party at the same time "ultra leftists" were demanding that an "authentic left" had to leave the ANC that was properly the home of African nationalists diligently trying to advance capitalism. Labelled as a "workerist tendency" and "neo-Trotskyite" the isolationist faction in the SACP quickly became muted but continued to work towards the goal of an SACP separated, but not divorced from the ANC, through the unions with a largely populist sentiment based in Cosatu.

In order to head off the workerist challenge over the past few years, the SACP leadership co-opted key leaders of the "workerist" oriented unions onto its own Central Committee. These individuals included Alec Erwin, Moses Mayekiso and the former Numsa General Secretary, Enoch Godongwana. Consequently the criticism of the alternative vision died away. The Sixth Cosatu Congress remained, nonetheless, a possible venue for a resurrected separation debate and possibly by workerist delegates. None of these concerns materialised on the day and the SACP felt it had achieved the defeat of both workerism and separatism, for the time being, although both strands of thinking are still rooted in both the Party and certain union sectors.

To consolidate these gains the Party has adopted a more assertive and unapologetic stance towards its function within the ANC. Its present view is that it commands a considerable skills base within the ANC that is indispensable and which has placed communists in unassailable positions throughout ANC structures. Examples of this include at least 80 ANC MPs, 5 cabinet ministers and 3 deputy ministers. The ANC National Conference in December might therefore witness hard critiques of black nationalism cloaked

in capitalist explanations than would have been contemplated in previous years. Peter Mokaba and Winnie Mandela are especially likely to bear the brunt of such criticism because populists are the least likely to follow the Party line.

In a resolution on Political Strategy and Vision, Cosatu pledged the provision of "resources" to strengthen the SACP and "transform it into a formidable force capable of meeting the challenges and leading the struggle for socialism". Cosatu also resolved to establish SACP units in the workplace and strengthen SACP branches where they are weak and build new ones where none exist. With the SACP facing serious financial constraints, Cosatu will provide both the financial and organisational resources to build the Party into a truly representative workers party.

## **8. THE ANC VIEW**

Cosatu's views on the Alliance are unlikely to find favour with the ANC's current leadership elite. The stated determination of the federation to shift the balance of power in favour of the working class component of the Tripartite Alliance is set to clash with an emergent Africanist perspective, spearheaded by Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, which is seeking to broaden the main motive forces behind a redefined National Democratic Revolution (NDR) to include the emergent black entrepreneurial and middle class sectors of South African society. Such a fundamental shift in the changing character of the ANC's NDR raises fundamental questions around the relevance of Cosatu's renewed enthusiasm to sustain a moribund ideology which in real terms is representative of only a minority segment of the ANC's support base.

Shortly after Cosatu's congress, two ANC discussion documents quickly surfaced in the public domain which articulated a very different vision of where the ANC should be headed as that being touted by Cosatu. Authored by the Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Peter Mokaba, both discussed the once sacrosanct topic of the ANC/SACP alliance.

In one document entitled *The National Question*, Mokaba at a stroke demolishes the continued relevance, indeed desirability of the ANC/SACP alliance given the differing end objectives held by both parties. Central to Mokaba's view is that the SACP's ultimate objective is to establish socialism in South Africa while the ANC's programme sets out to establish "the most democratic capitalist society in which all, including the Communist Party, will enjoy free political activity to operate freely... It simply does not share the goal or the aspiration of establishing socialism in South Africa or anywhere else". Mokaba eschews a clear parting of ways with supporters of socialism when he states that unlike the SACP: "The ANC's economic policy has never been one that envisages socialism or the abolition of classes". Instead, the task of the ANC is to "de-racialise these classes as part of the deracialisation of the economy". [See selected appendices.]

While Mokaba is not pushing a laissez-faire economic model, he talks firmly of a mixed economy with the public and private sector working side by side. It is a vision of a mixed economy which has as its core objective the economic empowerment of blacks, especially Africans, in the country. This is not to be achieved via nationalising the means of production but via empowering blacks to compete with their established white counterparts in the private sector.

Referring to Cosatu, Mokaba makes the point that socialism is not the natural objective of trade unionism but rather the upliftment of the working conditions



of black workers to reap the fruits of a market driven capitalist democracy. On this issue the ANC supports worker upliftment as part of Cosatu's *raison de'tre*.

Black economic empowerment has become the central plank of Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance initiative and runs counter to the socialist agenda which emanated from Cosatu's Congress. The Mokaba documents are believed to not just be the work of the author but of several other senior ANC leaders, including Thabo Mbeki and Joel Netshitenzhe, released to offset any socialist assault on ANC thinking at its upcoming December National Congress.

Looking beyond South Africa's borders, Cosatu's aggressive stand on regional and international issues are already running counter to ANC's foreign policy and economic interests. On the Nigerian question, there is a rapid parting of ways between the ANC and Cosatu's interests in the matter, given the certain relationship which existed between the ANC's exiled leadership and the current Nigerian military government prior to 1994. Notwithstanding the undemocratic nature of the Swaziland government, a perception is emerging that Cosatu represents an adjunct of ANC foreign policy indulging in the economic destabilisation of South Africa's neighbours.

Moving abroad, Cosatu in another resolution condemned the human rights violations inflicted "against unions and the freedom loving people in Indonesia". Cosatu has also called for "mass activities" during the visit of the Indonesian dictator, Suharto, to South Africa in 1998. Indonesia has been one of the ANC's largest donors of funds.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

Despite areas of controversy, Cosatu was once again able to paper over serious issues which had threatened the unity of the federation in the months preceding the Congress. The release of the September Commission which for the first time projected a coherent strategic vision for the federation coupled with a renewed determination to put socialism back on the agenda of the Tri-partite Alliance, undercut demands by some elements in Cosatu that the Alliance no longer represented the working class interests of labour.

Unlike in the past, however, the balance of power no longer sits comfortably with the forces of socialism, a miscalculation that simply postpones the inevitable dissolution of the Alliance until after the 1999 election. The logic of the global economy and broader national imperatives which guide current ANC policy at government level, will preclude the attainment of many of objectives set out in the September Commission and subsequently endorsed at the Congress. Short of an internal political coup de tat, Cosatu will remain removed from the engine room of political and economic governance. It is an inevitable conclusion, drawn from the failure of the federation's leadership to appreciate that in a pluralistic environment of contending and competing centres of power, national and labour interests do not necessarily coincide and in fact run counter to one another's interests on most occasions.

In many respects, Cosatu's Sixth National Congress represented a last ditch Don Quixote-like attempt to regain working class hegemony and control over the political, economic and social levers of power within the Tri-partite Alliance and the government. The ANC leadership will make short-term concessions to its labour partner but cannot contemplate a U-turn on current economic policy without risking serious economic dislocation to the economy. Cosatu's Congress rhetoric carry's with it the seeds of ill considered outcomes that will count heavily against the labour movement in the medium to longer term.

## **APPENDIX VII**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

**COSATU 6th NATIONAL CONGRESS:**

**FINAL ADOPTED TEXTS**

## **6th NATIONAL CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS**

### **BUILDING THE ORGANISATION**

Role of COSATU  
COSATU Demarcation  
Women Leadership  
National Women's Movement  
In the Workplace  
Parental rights agreement  
In the union  
Build our women's structures as follows  
Strengthening organisation  
Give greater focus to the staffing resources  
Worker Control  
Build Workers' Unity  
Strengthening the Farm Workers  
Building the Domestic Workers  
Unemployed Workers  
Finances  
Constitutional Amendments

### **POLITICAL STRATEGY AND VISION**

The struggle for socialism  
Relations and attitude to the Government  
Local Government  
Tripartite Alliance  
Building the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM)  
Building Community Structures  
Policy on deployment  
Crime and Violence  
Declaration on GEAR

### **INTERNATIONAL POLICY**

The context  
The Response of the International Trade Union Movement  
An overall approach  
International Affiliation  
Africa  
IMF World Bank and WTO  
Multinationals  
Declaration on International Solidarity



## **BUILDING THE ORGANISATION**

### **ROLE OF COSATU**

1. COSATU must intervene in affiliates where it has identified problems, where problems have been brought to its attention and / or has been requested to do so. The CEC should draw guidelines on how and under which circumstances the federation and its structures may intervene taking into account clauses 3.9 and 3.10 of the constitution. Such intervention should not undermine affiliates where such problems exist.
2. COSATU leadership must be visible during major disputes between affiliates and employers and co-ordinate solidarity with workers involved in such disputes.
3. This require resources and certain powers to be concentrated in the federation to enable it to intervene effectively in the sectors both in terms of enforcing federation policy and assisting weaker sectors.
4. The balance between the centrality of the federation and the autonomy of affiliates should be clearly spelt out.
5. The CEC should use the September Commission proposals to build the capacity of COSATU and affiliates.

### **COSATU DEMARCATION**

6. All affiliates must be compelled to implement COSATU decisions.
7. COSATU must be empowered to enforce decisions that relate to poaching of members. Any affiliate that currently holds membership in a sector that is not classified as their scope in terms of current COSATU demarcation, should hand over such membership to the affiliate organising in that sector within a period of not more than six months.
8. Any affiliate which breaches the terms of this resolution, shall be subject to sanction by the CEC.
9. Congress agree in principle to the establishment of key broadly defined sectors/cartels within the federation such as Manufacturing, Mining and Energy, Public Sector, Private Sector Services and Agriculture as outlined in the Secretariat report. These sectors should be organised into cartels that should take responsibility for defining sector policy, take responsibility for collective bargaining and set parameters for all other union work of national competence. The CEC should finalise the precise number of broad sectors.
10. The congress mandates the first CEC to commission a study on the implication of broad sectoral unions and how to establish them taking into account its implications on the following areas:

- accountability & mandates
  - bureaucracy
  - service to membership
  - administration
  - worker control
11. The mergers and process for such broad sectors should be completed by the next congress (three years).
  12. In the meantime the CEC must ensure that no affiliate varies its scope into an area already covered by the scope of another affiliate.

## **WOMEN LEADERSHIP**

13. To ensure that all workers are equal as stated in the new constitution. To fight against all forms of discrimination against women, and to promote affirmative action in the workplace, unions, federation and society i.e. education and training. To ensure that women take up more meaningful positions of leadership and reflect more equitable representation within society. These principles should also be contained in the workers charter.
14. To defend women workers from all forms of exploitation, oppression and abuse; and to educate them about their rights regarding these issues.
15. To encourage all affiliated unions to elect women as shop stewards at every workplace where there are women members. Women must be encouraged to become shop stewards with the assistance of organisers. Where they are not elected as shop stewards they could be elected as alternates who must be provided with training.
16. To encourage unions to negotiate time-off for women to ensure effective participation in programmes of COSATU and affiliates as a way of empowering them.
17. To target groups of men to be trained on gender issues so to assist in women development. The barriers that exists between female and male workers need joint efforts to be broken down.
18. The Gender Sub Committee of COSATU should play a more active role in the work of affiliates and report to the Executive which should ensure compliance by affiliates of all agreed positions.
19. All affiliates should appoint full time Gender Co-ordinators.

## **NATIONAL WOMEN'S MOVEMENT**

20. COSATU should initiate the building of a national women's movement led by the Alliance to advance the needs of working class women based on concrete issues facing them.

21. There is a need for a Conference of the Alliance to be held in 1998 to further concretise this issue. COSATU must engage on an internal preparatory process as a build up towards such a conference. The CEC is mandated to look at how best to effect this decision.
22. The following measures should be taken to ensure the implementation of this resolution:
23. COSATU should popularise this resolution amongst its workers by educating male workers on the relationship between capitalism and oppression and exploitation of women, parental responsibility, etc.
24. NEDCOM should ensure that all resolutions on women are included in the training manuals.
25. The Shopsteward magazine should include series of articles on gender issues.

## **IN THE WORKPLACE**

26. To forward the following demands on non-discrimination and affirmative action in every negotiation and to campaign and fight for an agreement by employers which should include the following:
  1. Companies commit themselves to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the company.
  2. To commit themselves to investigating forms of affirmative action to reverse the effects of past discrimination. The investigations will be designed to lead to an agreed programme of affirmative action, which will result in:
    - i all jobs in the company being open to women workers. COSATU and its affiliates should initiate a campaign to increase employment of women in all sectors, and that each affiliate set appropriate targets and framework to realise this goal. The Federation must monitor this process as well as ensure that the provisions of the Employment Equity legislation are observed.
    - ii appropriate training programmes, including literacy training, for all women workers, which do not unfairly discriminate against male workers;
    - iii equal pay for work of equal value.
27. The Federation and its affiliates should conduct research into forms of affirmative action in the workplace, occupations, wage levels, and forms of discriminations against women workers in the factories.
28. To actively campaign around health, safety and environmental issues affecting women workers - in particular; cervical cancer, aids and working conditions for pregnant women.



29. All company Health and safety committees should include women.
30. The Federation should develop and campaign for the implementation and upgrading of parental rights in all workplaces. These should include paid maternity leave, childcare leave and child care facilities. The following issues should become part of our demands in centralised bargaining;

### **PARENTAL RIGHTS AGREEMENT**

31. Companies to pay for health screening for women workers. A binding sexual harassment code must be negotiated in the NEDLAC Labour Market Chamber. The code should provide for companies to pay for shop stewards to be trained by the union.

### **IN THE UNION**

32. To take the following steps to encourage participation and leadership of women in all our activities and structures:
  1. Encourage the appointment of women as Organisers as well as other senior positions in the Federation and its affiliates.
  2. Step up our education of both men and women on women's issues. Step up the special education of women in such areas as skills training and broad union issues.
  3. Take disciplinary action against all those violating the sexual harassment code of COSATU and its affiliates.
  4. Ensure the proper discussion of women's issues at all union meetings and structures.
  5. To allocate adequate resources to enable the federation to implement policies on women empowerment.
  6. Childcare facilities be provided at all meetings.
  7. Where meetings take place after hours, the union should be sensitive to the needs of women, by for example, arranging transport for women comrades for after hours meetings.
  8. Women should be encouraged to attend meetings at all levels.
  9. Workplace general meetings should include women's issues.
  10. Affiliates should operationalise COSATU's Sexual Harassment Code.

### **BUILD OUR WOMEN'S STRUCTURES AS FOLLOWS**

33. The Federation should continue to ensure that Regional and Local Gender fora are properly co-ordinated, and to establish these structures where they do not exist.
34. COSATU and its affiliates should ensure the inclusion of women within any required delegations to meetings, conferences, congresses and workshops.
35. The CEC should develop a broad political programme with a specific focus to develop and deepen the consciousness of our members on gender issues, building women leadership, their capacity in the federation and in affiliates, promote their participation in structures as well as eliminate gender imbalances and all forms of gender discrimination. Furthermore, the CEC should set and monitor the implementation of measurable targets by affiliates and the federation to achieve the above. Affiliates and the federation should share information on progress as well as education programmes.
36. In addition to the above, the CEC should also consider proposals in the September Commission related to building women leadership with the exclusion of the areas which have been resolved by congress.

#### **STRENGTHENING ORGANISATION**

37. COSATU to strive for building the trade union movement and its capacity to defend and advance the transformation process in our country and the interests of workers and the working class. To strengthen the role and capacity of the federation in taking up the problems and challenges facing working people and their communities
38. COSATU to build programmes of unity in action to resist attempts by capital to divide and mislead workers.
39. To request the CEC to address the staffing and financial situation of the trade union movement:

#### **GIVE GREATER FOCUS TO THE STAFFING RESOURCES**

40. Eliminate work duplication, and increase the productivity of all staff in the federation, including where necessary, through the consolidation of the number of posts.
41. Improve the service to members at workplace level, both in dealing with day to day problems, and in campaigns to change working conditions.
42. Develop a uniform set of conditions of employment and training, for all staff in the federation and its affiliates, with a common wage structure, which applies to all affiliates, and the federation. The federation and its affiliates should commit themselves to full disclosure of information to effect this paragraph.
43. A new sense of belonging to a single organisation has to be cultivated in the federation. This requires that we eliminate destructive competition amongst

affiliates. In this regard:

1. Each affiliate should be obliged to release or second staff when requested by the Executive after analysis of the problems faced by another affiliate. The onus of payment for seconded staff should be on the seconding affiliate, unless the affiliate receiving assistance can afford to pay, or as decided by the CEC or EXCO.
  2. Unions should agree to co-operate and share resources, including rental of office space, hiring of office equipment, employing organisers and other staff in rural areas where the potential membership of all or most affiliates is insufficient to sustain the opening of offices and the employment of organisers in terms of the relevant affiliate constitutions. Control of these resources should be placed under joint committees established by co-operating affiliates.
  3. COSATU RECs should be empowered to encourage these negotiations and to identify areas where this type of cooperation is possible. Such cooperation should be subject to the decision of the NEC's of unions affected and subject to periodic review. If, as a result of the success of this strategy, the membership of one affiliate grows to the point where it can afford to open a branch or local office, such a union should be able to negotiate its withdrawal from such cooperation.
  4. Resources such as media skills and the production of union newsletters should be shared, particularly education materials such as organisers' manuals.
  5. While steps should be taken to assist affiliates, no union should be allowed to abuse these measures to claim permanent poverty whilst it is mismanaging its resources - financial and human.
  6. COSATU and affiliates should commit themselves to a campaign for organisational renewal.
44. The CEC should look at the September Commission recommendations on building organisation for implementation where appropriate.
45. To build a stronger layer of leadership in order to compensate for the loss of skills as trade union activists are deployed in other structures, through:
1. Creating regional internal forums where debates can take place regularly.
  2. Active engagement in campaign and struggles, which still provide the best school for trade union leaders.
  3. Strengthening the federation's capacity to deliver training to shop stewards and staff, through its own staff and through other trade union educational institutions, and to make financial resources available from affiliates for this function.
46. To facilitate the growth of the federation through:



1. A major new recruitment drive to reach at least a 50% level of unionisation of COSATU affiliates in all sectors.
2. Seconding experienced trade unionists at national and regional level to assist the federation to run these campaigns.
3. Opening doors to affiliates of other federations who seek to join COSATU.
4. A membership drive among workers that COSATU has not traditionally organised including layers of vulnerable workers, white collar and white workers be initiated.

### **WORKER CONTROL**

47. To strengthen worker control at all levels of COSATU.
48. To advance worker control / participation and working class leadership at all levels of society based on class struggle.
49. Promote worker participation in all structures outside COSATU (community, ANC, SACP ) and meetings with the State and Capital.
50. Educate workers politically about the importance of worker control.
51. That we continue to demand and struggle for working class control within the Alliance and broad mass movement.
52. To continue our struggle for socialism.

### **BUILD WORKERS' UNITY**

53. The federation needs to have a frank discussion on how we can achieve unity with other federations without diluting our ideological content and vision, at the same time as recognising that there are significant differences in political outlook. A dynamic approach to unity will need to combine firmness on fundamental principles, combined with flexibility to allow us to overcome non-antagonistic differences.
54. To deepen the emerging co-cooperation and call on the federations not to confine their co-operation to NEDLAC but to strive for joint activity at an national level and regional co-operation around campaigns such as wage struggles.

### **STRENGTHENING THE FARM WORKERS**

55. COSATU leadership should assist SAAPAWU in mobilising funds to boost the financial viability of the union.
56. SAAPAWU should encourage its leadership at all levels to fully participate in

COSATU structures in order to be empowered.

## **BUILDING THE DOMESTIC WORKERS**

57. The CEC should request NALEDI to conduct research on the establishment of advice centres for servicing and assisting domestic workers. As part of the demarcation study, we should also consider finding a viable home for them.

## **UNEMPLOYED WORKERS**

58. The CEC should request NALEDI to investigate possibilities of various forms of organising the unemployed.

## **FINANCES**

59. The first CEC should look into mechanisms for the effective participation by affiliates in FINCOM. Furthermore the CEC should look at how to ensure that the qualifications by the Auditors are dealt with including the possible write off of arrears.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

### **60. National**

#### **1. Central Committee (New clause)**

- The Central Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "CC") shall adopt general and specific policy measures between congresses by means of resolutions in furtherance of the Aims and Objects of the federation and will consider and /or decide on the following:
  1. The confirmation of the agenda;
  2. The credentials of delegates;
  3. Reports of the National Office Bearers of the Federation;
  4. Resolutions;
  5. Any such matters that may be deemed to be in the interest of the federation other than amending the constitution.
- The CC shall be composed of the Federation's President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and delegates of affiliated unions as specified below:
- Each affiliated union in good standing shall be entitled to one (1) delegate for each completed four thousand (4 000) members or part thereof, provided that all delegates from an affiliated union shall consist of a majority of members of such affiliated unions in good standing.
- The CC shall ordinarily meet at least once a year (except in the year

which a congress or special congress is held) on a date to be fixed by the CEC.

## **2. Central Executive Committee**

- Delete clauses 7.1.8, 7.1.9 and 7.1.10 relating to the appointment by the CEC of the Education Secretary, Organising Secretary and Administrative Secretary respectively. Their appointment should be in terms of the normal employment procedure.

- Amend clause 7.2.1 as follows:

Two (2) representatives who should be national leaders from each affiliated union with a membership of less than eighty thousand (80 000), at least one (1) of whom must be a member of such affiliated union, and four (4) representatives from each affiliated union with a membership greater than eighty thousand (80 000), at least two (2) of whom must be members of such affiliated union.

## **3. Executive Committee**

- Amend 8.1 as follows:

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and two delegates who should be national leaders from each affiliated union in good standing which is represented on the Central Executive Committee, provided that at least one (1) of the two (2) delegates is a member of such affiliate.

- Amend 8.3.1 as follows:

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once every two (2) months.

# **61. Regional**

## **1. Regional Congress**

- Amend clause 9.2.2.6 as follows:

To elect a Regional Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer from among its members, at least once every three years.

- Amend clause 10.1.1 as follows:

Two (2) delegates who should be regional leaders from each affiliated union in the Region with a membership of less than eight thousand (8 000), and four (4) delegates from each affiliated union with a membership greater than eight thousand (8 000).



- Amend clause 10.3.1 as follows:

The last Regional Executive Committee (hereinafter referred as the "REC") meeting in each calendar year shall set dates for the normal meeting of the Regional Executive Committee for the following year, which shall be held every month.

## **62. Locals**

- Add the following clauses in section thirteen (13):

### **1. Local meetings**

Each local shall decide on its meeting days and times and delegations.

### **2. Local Executive Committee**

The Local Executive Committee shall be composed of affiliate local office bearers or any representative of that affiliate where that affiliate does not have a local structure. The LEC shall meet at least once a month.

### **3. Local Office Bearers**

The local shall elect four Local Office Bearers to manage the affairs of the local.

## **63. Other issues**

Amend all reference to Assistant General Secretary as Deputy General Secretary.

## **POLITICAL STRATEGY AND VISION**

### **THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM**

1. Political transformation in our country has presented us with new challenges and new points of struggle.
2. One of the challenges that faces COSATU presently, is to concretely translate its commitment to socialism into a practical and understandable programme.
3. While this is clearly no easy task, our commitment to socialism remains unwavering.
4. The main strategic opponent of the working class has always been, and still is, domestic and international monopoly capital.
5. In South Africa, we are faced with a democratic state where economic power is still largely in the hands of a minority.
6. The political arrangement that presently exists is a compromise born out of complex forces involved in the transition to democracy and not necessarily the ideal outcome for the working class and the disadvantaged.
7. As a federation our ultimate objective is the transfer of political and economic power to the working class.
8. In line with this objective, COSATU re-affirms its commitment to the struggle for a socialist society.
9. COSATU must develop strategies that engage both the state and capital for the improvement of the material conditions of the majority, while developing a long-term vision of a socialist society.
10. Our policies, in the short, medium to long-term, must be underpinned by our ideological vision of a socialist society and the creation of a socialist state.
11. What this means is that COSATU has the responsibility to begin building socialism now. COSATU accept and acknowledge that no trade union movement can on its own fight and win socialism. The struggle for socialism should be led by a working class political party. The federation needs to fight for building blocks towards socialism. Such building blocks should include:
  1. Engaging in relentless criticism of capitalism
  2. Strengthening working class organisations
  3. Rolling back the domination of the market in the meeting of the basic needs i.e. housing, transport and other social wage related issues
  4. Fighting for a powerful role of the public sector and the state in the economy

5. Experimenting with non-capitalist forms of ownership and notions of social capital (communally owned companies)
  6. Introducing new socialist forms of work organisation and management which advance worker control
  7. Developing working class hegemony on issues such as sport, culture values, the media and politics
  8. Emphasising the concept of equality and ending all forms of discrimination and oppression, particularly those affecting women
  9. Demanding that the state plays a developmental role
  10. Reducing higher echelons of bureaucracy
  11. Creating a more responsive state administration
  12. Moving beyond traditional notions of capitalist democracy and introducing participatory forms of democracy
  13. Building accountability of government institutions and of retirement fund investors
12. For the above measures to be real building blocks towards socialism, they need to be located and form part of a broader socialist programme.
13. Such a programme needs to outline in detail:
1. The nature and type of socialism that we are fighting for
  2. The strategy and tactics to be used to realise our socialist objective
  3. Short and long-term demands of the working class to be used in the march toward socialism
  4. The social forces that will play a crucial role
14. While COSATU must play a role in the formulation of such a programme, such a task is not only for the federation, but a mission for all socialist forces.
15. As recognition of the role that must be played by socialist forces outside of the Federation, COSATU should develop links with credible socialist organisations nationally and internationally in order to challenge capital on a global front.
16. We also need to increase the depth of our relationship with the SACP as a political party with a socialist vision.
17. In deepening the relationship with the SACP, COSATU should provide resources that will help strengthen the SACP and transform it into a formidable force capable of meeting the challenges and leading the struggle for socialism.

18. COSATU should further establish party units in workplaces and strengthen the SACP branches where they are weak and help and build new ones where they do not exist.
19. With the SACP and the ANC, COSATU should develop mass media instruments (papers, programmes etc.) which give an alternative view of society, international issues and provide an outlet for socialist intellectual debate
20. As a way of developing a socialist programme, COSATU should internally educate and mobilise workers and the working class broadly about the importance of their role and contribution in realising socialism. Within COSATU and its affiliates this could take the form of Socialist Forums at local level.
21. Once a socialist programme has been developed, COSATU and SACP must discuss and jointly develop a broader programme for taking us to socialism. Such a programme could include joint programmes of action, continuous discussion, education fora and move towards a conference of the left with the ANC as one of the partners.

## **RELATIONS AND ATTITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT**

1. Our relationship with the government should be based on COSATU advancing the interests of the working class. This means that we should support the government when it adopts progressive policies and oppose it when it advances policies that are against the interest of workers.
2. COSATU should develop a clear vision on public sector transformation which will form a basis for engagement with the Alliance.
3. Also important is to restructure the Tripartite Alliance in such a manner that the ANC in government is subject to the political control of the ANC party structures and is guided by the policies of the Alliance.
4. COSATU must build the organisational authority of the ANC in all tiers of government, as a way of ensuring that Ministers and other elected representatives are not absorbed by agendas of the new elite.
5. COSATU should work closely with all members of parliament and people in government who are supportive of the programme of the working class.
6. NEDLAC was born out of our struggle to involve workers and society in the formulation of policies, which directly affect them, particularly on social and economic issues. Its composition and character therefore means that it contains many contradictions and is a terrain of struggle. It is an institution that we should defend, since it constitutes a deepening of democracy and recognition of the central role of organised labour in social and economic transformation.
7. NEDLAC should not be counter-posed to parliamentary democracy but should be seen in the context of the need to deepen that democracy. Negotiations in NEDLAC are not a substitute for the responsibility of parliament to legislate. At



the same time parliamentarians needs to be sensitive to agreements reached in NEDLAC. To ensure a dynamic and interactive relationship between parliament and NEDLAC, parliamentary committees should be briefed and to have open access to all processes. Further, parliamentary committees where appropriate, should engage in the discussions while they are under discussion in NEDLAC, to broaden participation in debates.

8. As a way of ensuring that the potential of NEDLAC for organised labour is fully exploited, COSATU should regularly assess and review its performance against the criteria set out at the 1996 Policy Conference.
9. As a matter of urgency, the Federation should convene a workshop of senior leadership to develop strategies to involve regions and locals in the NEDLAC processes.
10. Also critical for making government accountable to the working people and the poor, is a campaign by COSATU to have the country electoral system changed. COSATU must propose an electoral system that combines a proportional party list and a constituency based system.
11. The federation and its affiliates should co-ordinate its activities to engage with the parliamentary process at national, provincial and local level.
12. Congress empowered the CEC to consider calling for a "workers' parliament" aimed at educating and equipping working people to understand and influence the parliamentary processes at the national and provincial level. The first national workers parliament, to be preceded by provincial parliament, could be held in the run up to May Day celebrations in 1998.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

1. The radical restructuring of local government administrations, a redrawing of the municipal boundaries where appropriate and the methods of funding is essential for the survival of local governments and the effective delivery of services.
2. To give effect to this restructuring the following measures should be undertaken:
  1. Changes to the current employment ethos of these institutions in terms of personnel and content.
  2. Campaign strongly for the re-introduction of prescribed assets.
  3. Push for national tariff reform in respect of all basic services. This reform should include what constitutes lifeline levels of service and make provision for cross-subsidisation.
  4. COSATU members, and especially municipal workers, should become directly involved in building the Masakhane Campaign.

5. Campaign to change legislation preventing municipal workers from standing as councilors in areas where they are not necessarily working.
6. To actively encourage more workers to stand for elections as councilors
3. Mechanisms must be explored as to how to recall councilors who are not accountable to the communities they represent.
4. Workers elected to local government should be developed so that they have the necessary capacity to implement working class programmes. In addition the alliance should develop a programme to empower activists involved in local government.

### **TRIPARTITE ALLIANCE**

1. COSATU must take forward the recent decisions of the Alliance Summit which agreed that there should be a broad agenda for transformation which must deal amongst others with:
  - The form and content of a joint Alliance transformation programme
  - The Alliance approach to policy formulation
  - The relationship between the Alliance and government
  - Our vision for transforming the public sector
2. This will provide the basis for engagement to continuously shift the power balance in favour of and to prepare properly to marshal the democratic forces' victory in the 1999 elections.
3. Despite the shifts on the part of the ANC in government and despite other obvious weaknesses of the Alliance, such as the lack of a common program, lack of accountability and co-ordination, the ANC-COSATU-SACP alliance remains the only vehicle capable of bringing about fundamental transformation for the country.
4. More than ever before, COSATU should maintain and strengthen the Alliance with the ANC and the SACP.
5. Together with the policy of maintaining the Alliance, the Federation needs a plan to revitalise the Alliance. Such a plan must entail:
  - Developing a clear transformation programme for the Alliance
  - Regular summits to co-ordinate and guide the activities of the Alliance
  - A strategy of how to rebuild the Alliance at all levels and to promote the culture of democratic decision making
  - Establishing an Alliance political centre to be co-ordinated by the Alliance leadership
  - To provide resources to the components of this Alliance and to ensure

- effective functioning of all constituent organisations of the Alliance
  - The CEC is requested to work out how this can be effected
6. The common programme of the Alliance must be based and built on the RDP. It must centre on the delivery of basic needs of our people, particularly those in the rural areas.
  7. COSATU and its affiliates should consciously organise workers to engage in the structures of the Alliance at all levels to ensure working class bias in the programme and policies of the Alliance prevail.
  8. While COSATU should remain committed to the Alliance, such commitment must be coupled with vigorous defense of the Federation's political independence. Partners must fearlessly but constructively criticise each other.
  9. The CEC must be empowered to review from time to time the workings of the Alliance.
  10. An election platform must be developed at Alliance level for the 1999 elections to amongst others cover the following areas:
    - Providing financial resources
    - Agreement on the candidates list process
    - The key policies for the election manifesto
    - Electioneering support for the ANC at workplace and in communities
    - Implementation and review structures in regard to policies of governance
  11. COSATU should convene a Central Committee in 1998 to finalise and endorse a proposal for the platform.

## **BUILDING THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDM)**

1. Presently, there is a need for the struggles of the various mass organisations to be united and co-ordinated.
2. For this purpose COSATU should initiate a broad popular movement for transformation around common struggles on issues facing the working class. As the first step in the process, COSATU must actively engage in anti-poverty and equality campaign together with the NGO movement, communities, religious organisations etc.
3. The MDM is a necessary attempt to regroup the forces of democratic transformation and socialism and should not be seen as a narrow electoral coalition.
4. It should be seen as a home for popular mass formations that currently lack a common agenda and programme.
5. The forces for the MDM from the Alliance, youth, civic, women, religious and progressive non-governmental organisations need to be rallied behind a radical



democratic and socialist agenda.

6. The federation must forcefully articulate this position to ensure that the masses do not remain passive spectators in the transformation process of the country.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY STRUCTURES**

1. The federation should regard the building of strong and democratic organs of civil society as important for the strengthening of our democracy and for ensuring that communities are able to mount effective campaigns around socialist orientated development.
2. COSATU should therefore actively participate in the rebuilding of the civic movement and engage SANCO on issues that have a direct effect on what the federation stands for - i.e. our opposition to the privatisation of municipal services. As part of this process COSATU should initiate a discussion on the nature and the role of the civic movement.
3. As part of the process of building community structures the Federation should encourage the following:
  - Participation in CBOs
  - Engagement in the overhauling of the LDFs and participation therein
  - COSATU Locals to conduct research into community issues and to liaise with communities on these issues.

## **POLICY ON DEPLOYMENT**

1. This congress reaffirms the 1991 National Congress resolution on deployment.
2. COSATU should allow the most capable cadres including its National Office Bearers to stand for positions in Alliance structures, Mass Democratic Movement formations and other strategic institutions like the public sector and parastatals.
3. No COSATU cadre shall be allowed to occupy two full time positions in any of the organisations referred to above.
4. COSATU shall defend its independence and that of its Alliance partners. The Alliance will continue to function based on mandates, report backs and the need to develop a consensus on issues relating to the National Democratic Revolution and transformation.
5. There should be open debates on deployment in the constitutional structures of the federation. There should be a distinction between people being elected by structures and deployment. In this regard no person shall stand for election in the Alliance and in civil society and then claim this to be deployment by COSATU.



## CRIME AND VIOLENCE

This Congress resolves:

1. COSATU to mobilise all workers and communities in the fight against all crimes especially domestic violence, violence against women, children and the aged.
2. Campaign for a speedy transformation of the police and justice system. This would include engaging all ministries (National and Provincial) of Safety and Security and the Parliamentary portfolio committees dealing with safety and security matters.
3. While acknowledging Governments initiative in combating corruption within the justice and police systems, COSATU must campaign around the Following:
  1. Government must intensify its efforts and include organised formations of civil society especially affected sectors of labour.
  2. To expose and report those corrupt police who are in cahoots with criminals as well as others who assist in the perpetration of crime.
  3. To work with the independent complaints Directorate to ensure that policemen involved in corruption are dealt with and discharged from the service.
  4. That harsher penalties be contemplated for those who betray community trust.
4. We welcome the Bill tightening bail conditions for certain crimes and insist on its speedy implementation.
5. To identify specific underlying socio-economic problems in our society, and implementing the required plan of action to remedy these in line with other socio-economic initiatives. To further urge Government and Business to create job opportunities to alleviate crime linked poverty.
6. To input in the process of formulating legislation which will assist the Government to regulate private security companies.
7. That we commit ourselves as COSATU to participate in all attempts directed against crime. As part of this, we should:
  1. Encourage all COSATU members to participate in building grass root structures like the Community Policing Forums and support those police who are dedicated in fighting crime. COSATU should also encourage all members to enroll as police reservists.
  2. To ensure that these dedicated policemen are remunerated fairly.
  3. To discourage members of the communities from buying stolen goods. Harsher penalties should be imposed for this offence.

8. Further measures should include:

1. The close monitoring and deployment of both logistical and human resources to ensure service delivery particularly to crime-ridden areas, sectors and disadvantaged areas.
2. Ensuring integration of police service with other services.
3. The Prisoners must be rehabilitated and prisons must no longer be the universities of crime. Criminals arrested by police should be kept beyond bars and must not be allowed to walk out of prisons. The Correctional Services must avoid giving impression that crime pays by taking sick or wounded criminals to the high class private clinic whilst their victims are treated in the public hospitals.

9. This Congress further resolves that:

1. Special attention should be placed on;
  - Exposing and reporting to the police, domestic violence within our communities.
  - Combating child abuse, rape and armed robberies.
  - Smash organised crime syndicates by active community involvement and the development of a specific action plan in this regard, especially where syndicates are active in the workplace.
  - Exposing and combating white collar crime.
  - Witness protection system must be developed as mechanism of encouraging crime reporting by communities

## **DECLARATION ON GEAR**

**This Congress notes:**

1. That Government has adopted and implemented GEAR as its macro-economic strategy and already working class people are feeling the effects.
2. GEAR is based on unacceptable neo-liberal policies and principles, such as:
  1. Reducing the role of the state in the economy, and of the public sector inadequate service delivery
  2. The mechanical pursuit of deficit reduction targets
3. This framework will have the effect, and is having the effect of:
  1. increasing job losses

2. sacrificing job creation
  3. reducing social services expenditure,
  4. encouraging ideologically driven privatisation programmes
  5. introducing labour market deregulation, which reduces and undermines labour standards
  6. unacceptable industrial and trade policy objectives, such as accelerated tariff reductions
4. The Alliance Summit agreed that GEAR was unilaterally imposed and is not cast in stone
  5. GEAR represents a unilateral departure from the policies and principles enshrined in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

**This Congress declares that:**

1. COSATU rejects GEAR as an unsuitable macro-economic strategy for South Africa's socio-economic transformation, and calls on the ANC government to adopt a developmental macro-economic framework, based on the principles of the RDP.
2. In line with the decision of the Alliance Summit, the Alliance must continue to engage in an alternative economic strategy.
3. COSATU will take the following immediate steps to advance our interests on this issue:
  1. Embark on a campaign, incorporating like-minded institutions in civil society, to:
    1. Publicise and resist the GEAR elements of subsidy cuts, privatisation, labour market flexibility, etc
    2. Develop a macro-economic policy, based on RDP principles, which has as its key objective, socio-economic transformation;
    3. Reject high interest rates
    4. Support of our policies as outlined in the Social Equity document;
    5. Advance COSATU's vision on the transformation of the public service
    6. Defend jobs and for job creation
    7. Call for a people's budget,
    8. Strengthen the role of the state in economic activity;

9. Convene a special Central Committee within the next 6 months, to concretise our anti-GEAR campaign, and develop an alternative macro-economic strategy that will effectively underpin our transformation objectives;
10. To continue to engage with the Alliance partners, to advance the following agreements reached at the last Alliance Summit:
  - The form and content of a joint Alliance transformation programme
  - The Alliance approach to policy formulation
  - The relationship between the Alliance and governance
  - Our vision of transforming the public sector



## **INTERNATIONAL POLICY**

### **THE CONTEXT**

1. Capitalism is becoming more global in its operations. The movement of bosses, capital, technology and products across borders is increasing.
2. Globalisation has been marked by a concerted strategy by capitalists, in particular transnational corporations, to safeguard their interests and to destroy any possibility of socialism.
3. The central tenets of this neo-liberal strategy are:
  1. Major cuts in levels of tariff protection for local industries
  2. Financial deregulation - including lifting of exchange controls
  3. Reducing the active participation of the state in the economy - i.e. privatisation
  4. Flexibility in the labour market
  5. Export oriented economic strategies - making national economies dependent on the more industrialised countries.
4. More power is increasingly shifting to international institutions like the WTO, World Bank and IMF, which are controlled by the most industrialised countries.
5. In the name of globalisation and international competitiveness there is a new ideological attack on worker rights, trade unions and labour standards. Increasingly, investment is being shifted to countries where no unions are allowed.

### **THE RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT**

6. The neo-liberal strategy has had certain successes in rolling back gains workers have made in highly unionised societies and in preventing the growth of strong trade unionism in other societies.
7. The labour movement has fought each of the symptoms of this new global onslaught separately, with limited success, in countries such as South Africa, Brazil, Korea, France, Ghana and the United States.
8. COSATU has initiated international work such as our campaigns around Swaziland and Nigeria. However this work has not always been effective or properly co-ordinated. While COSATU is beginning to engage in such solidarity work, there is a need to continuously shift in order to galvanize and move away from symbolic forms of solidarity to international work in a way that allows for concrete forms of solidarity that advance the struggle for socialism by the working class.

9. The COSATU International Relations Committee should include, International Officers and National Office Bearers of affiliates who are involved in international work. Furthermore the federation should assist in the co-ordination of sectoral activities by affiliates.

## **AN OVERALL APPROACH**

1. The trade union movement is more vital and necessary now, as the voice of those displaced by economic adjustments and the brutal policies followed by the international business community.
2. A successful response under these conditions requires a serious review of current separate, and uncoordinated struggles, and requires too that we develop new tactics, and adjust our strategies in this new period, to more effectively promote the cause of solidarity in economic and social policy, in international work, and in the daily struggles of affiliates.
3. COSATU must counter the free market system and deepen the crisis of imperialism by developing an alternative humanistic project consistent with a socialist perspective.
4. To pursue the above the federation needs to do the following:
  1. Promote democratic and worker controlled trade unions
  2. Promote trade union unity in all countries
  3. Actively build campaigns such as the anti-privatisation campaign
  4. Promote the rights of women
  5. Continue with other federations to support workers who are denied the right to organise by repressive regimes
5. COSATU should campaign for coordinated international action every year by organised workers, to draw attention to the negative consequences of globalisation, and to put forward our alternatives. This should provide the basis for uniting workers globally in what are currently separately fought struggles over:
  - Job security
  - Deregulation of the labour market
  - Neo-liberal macro-economic policies
  - Privatisation of basic services
  - Improvement in basic conditions of employment
  - Reductions in social spending and social welfare
  - Reforms to multilateral institutions such as the ILO, World Bank, IMF and WTO.
6. Such action should be to develop an international programme of action in two phases:

1. In the first half of the year, an international week of focus on globalisation that would end with May Day celebrations focussing on a specific international theme. During that week, COSATU should produce posters, information, T-shirts in regard to the theme adopted.
2. In the second half of the year an international day of action on a normal working day, which consist of demonstrations, pickets, stoppages and a global strike by workers. Such a day should be on a date agreed by the CEC, and taken up in all international worker federations as well as within OATUU and SATUCC, and by affiliates through their international trade secretariat. Furthermore support should be sought in all progressive worker organisations regardless of affiliation.
7. The first CEC after the congress should consider the mechanisms of putting aside a certain percentage of the federation's affiliation income to set up a solidarity fund to be used to build trade unionism in Southern Africa and other parts of the developing world. A programme for international solidarity should be established and its focus must be on organising the unorganised, developing effective structures as well as a campaign capacity of the trade union movement.
8. The CEC is to receive reports regularly on the progress made in this campaign, with a target of organising a million workers through these programs in the next three years.
9. To mobilise, educate and organise workers and people in Southern African and internationally against the current globalisation of the world economy, which is taking the form of amongst others:
  1. Undermining of the sovereignty of nation states in determining their economic and social policies, inter alia through structural adjustment programmes;
  2. Rolling back of social security for working people;
  3. Deregulation of the labour market;
  4. Rampant financial speculation;
  5. Entrenchment of poverty and inequality between and within nations.
10. To develop an international platform of progressive forces, to advance proposals for an alternative economic order, and to develop a fighting programme to achieve our goals.
11. To vigorously campaign for a world economy based on People's needs.
12. To embark on programmes within Labour ITSs, for redistribution of the international wealth.
13. In response to the effects of capital mobility, the following is proposed:



1. Build and strengthen the labour movement in Southern Africa
2. Demand the representation of the federation in all multi-lateral trade negotiations.
3. Imposition of strict regulations on labour rights abusing countries.

#### **INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION**

1. COSATU should seek affiliation to the ICFTU. COSATU needs to continuously develop a visible programme that will serve as a guide to COSATU's participation and perspective in the ICFTU.
2. COSATU should work closely with other progressive forces within the ICFTU with COSATU affiliates doing the same through engagement within their respective ITSs in the transformation of the ICFTU.
3. COSATU should continue to strive to build maximum unity amongst workers - including the WFTU, WCL - as well as contacts with the non-affiliated trade union federation, in pursuit of a single progressive international federation.
4. In line with the above, COSATU should:
  1. Consider hosting the next Indian Ocean Regional Conference with all centres making financial contributions.
  2. Establish more concrete ties with unions in the South-South Region and develop a network of links with major unions which have a militant and democratic approach to economic and political issues similar to ours.
  3. COSATU should continue to engage in meetings that follow up on the discussion on the round table meeting that was held in Egypt.

#### **AFRICA**

1. The African continent is characterised by major struggles for democracy against feudal and undemocratic military regimes.
2. The structural adjustment and other economic programmes imposed by the IMF, World Bank, military regimes and the imperialist countries remain the single greatest threat to this democratisation process as they unleash a massive attack on the living standards of the people. COSATU commits itself to continue to play an active role to assist and support the democratisation and political struggles in the region and the continent as a whole.
3. The interests of South African workers are integrally linked to those of workers in the Southern African Region and the entire continent.
4. The unity of workers in the region and the continent becomes more important as more companies, both South African and international, have operations in



various countries in the region and on the continent.

5. It is therefore imperative for COSATU to actively and concretely support the development of strong, independent worker controlled unions in Africa by:
  1. Working with other progressive African trade union federations in building and strengthening OATUU and SATUCC on the basis of a progressive working class programme.
  2. Organising exchange programmes for African shop stewards and Union officials.
  3. Organising jointly with OATUU and SATUCC around a common programme of action targeting particularly anti-working class international programmes, organisations and multi-national companies.
  4. COSATU affiliates should set up African Shop Stewards Councils where economic policies can be debated.
6. In order to overcome the fragmentation of co-ordination of labour federations in Africa, COSATU should encourage co-operation between AFRO and OATUU structures.
7. COSATU CEC should decide on a competent female comrade to take up the position of Vice President in OATUU.
8. In conjunction with the other trade union federations in the region, organise a conference of the labour movement and governments in Southern Africa to discuss social and economic policies appropriate to our region. This will ensure that the labour movement plays an important role in shaping the discussions on the economic trade within SADC. Prior to the conference taking place, SATUCC will have to develop an approach which will guide our input at the conference. We should draw on experiences of workers from other countries where such regional structures exist, such as NAFTA.
9. COSATU affiliates should establish firm links with their counterpart unions in the region, with the aim of analysing the problems in their sectors and developing ideas about how their industries could be developed in a mutually beneficial way across countries.
10. COSATU should support the struggle for decent labour standards in all countries in the region. Affiliates should establish cross-regional company shop steward councils to build solidarity. COSATU should also assist unions in the region to develop their organisational, research and educational capacities.

#### **IMF WORLD BANK AND WTO**

1. Both the IMF and WTO (GATT) have caused further impoverishment of poorer countries, thus creating a re-colonisation of these countries.
2. As South Africa participates in the world economy and engages with both the

IMF and the World Bank we need to ensure that these unelected multilateral institutions do not dictate economic policies to independent countries.

3. The IMF has remained silent on the need to close the apartheid wage gap while it is vocal on its attack to the wage rates in South Africa.
4. Though international institutions should serve the needs of all citizens, the structure of the IMF allows for domination by imperialist countries, which are able to hide their interests under the cloak of objective economic advice.
5. Such advice has destroyed many economies, e g: sections of the Zimbabwean economy thus forcing Zimbabwe to appeal for special trade agreements with South Africa.
6. COSATU should condemn the activities of the IMF and the World Bank in South Africa and call on the government to remain true to the Reconstruction and Development Programme drawn up by the Alliance, which promotes the need for income redistribution.
7. COSATU should support the convening of an international conference, such as the one which was convened in Cuba, involving trade unions, community groups, political parties, NGOs and sympathetic government officials, to discuss how best to respond to this new imperialism and to exchange experiences and programmes. The next conference is planned for Brazil in 1999.
8. While South Africa should observe WTO rules and provisions, COSATU should wage a campaign calling for:
  1. The review of unfair and unjustified provisions.
  2. The inclusion of the social clause in trade and investment agreements.
9. COSATU will continue to develop links with working class organisations and progressive governments internationally to develop a programme to engage and negotiate with such institutions on the broadest possible front.

## **MULTINATIONALS**

1. South African multinationals are buying factories/mines all over the world, especially Gencor and Anglo-American, who are buying mines in Ghana Columbia, Brazil etc. They have started trampling on workers rights as they have done in South Africa.
2. Multinational Corporations (MNCs) today control both the national and international debate on economic issues.
3. Multinational Corporations avoid taxation in the following manner:
  1. Forcing governments to adopt investment incentives e.g. tax holidays, Export Processing Zones

2. Transfer pricing.
4. Multinational Corporation's ensure that the IMF & World Bank dictate policies favorable to them. They employ lawyers and economists to lobby for them in these institutions.
5. We need to deal with these features of international capital in various ways, including:
  - a. Ensuring that the international trade union movement develops a coherent counter-strategy
  - b. To mobilise internationally for imposition of taxes on speculative investment (casino economies)
  - c. Negotiating codes of conduct with multinationals in their regional and international operations including:
    - Trade union rights
    - Measures to protect unions under repressive regimes
    - The right to take solidarity action within a particular MNC
  - d. Developing mechanisms in COSATU to monitor their activities and also setting up co-ordinating councils where the multinationals straddle all sectors of our economy

#### **DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

1. Gathered at our 6th National Congress, COSATU has taken note of the fact that the end of the twentieth century has seen an ugly resurgence of violation of human and worker rights and repression of trade unions and worker leaders as part of a conscious programme to trample the interests of poor and working people throughout the world.
2. We are committed to take our place alongside all organisations of the working class throughout the world to see to it that the increasing integration of the world economy leads to the improvement of the conditions of working people and, ultimately, sees the eradication of poverty in the world.

#### **In particular we note:**

1. That the colonial and neo-colonial legacy in Africa has prevented the realisation of democratisation and human development. It has also fostered the emergence of military juntas (such as in Nigeria) and the continuation of repressive semi-feudal regimes (such as Swaziland)
2. The continued blockade against Cuba is an act of imperialist aggression, which violates the right to self-determination of the Cuban people.
3. The continued occupation of East Timor by Indonesia and the continuing



genocide and other violations of human rights throughout Indonesia.

4. COSATU, therefore, declares its commitment to the following solidarity activities:

**1. Swaziland & Nigeria**

- Embark on mass action with other solidarity forces to put pressure on the undemocratic regimes in Swaziland and Nigeria.

**2. CUBA**

- Commemorate the 30th anniversary of the murder of comrade Che Guevara
- Participate in the second globalisation conference being hosted in Brazil.
- Support all other activities of the Cuba Solidarity Organisations in SA

**3. Indonesia & East Timor**

- Convey and express support for comrade Mandela's intervention to secure the independence of East Timor.
- Campaign against the continued human rights violations inflicted against unions and the freedom loving people in Indonesia.
- Organise mass activities during the visit of the Indonesian dictator, Suharto to South Africa, in order to raise the issues of the independence of East Timor and continuing repression in Indonesia

**4. Western Australia**

- Campaign against the neo-Liberal attack against workers and trade unions in Western Australia.
- In addition to fighting all forms of covert repression of human rights and workers and worker organisation, COSATU will oppose any systematic violation of workers interest through the casualisation and informalisation of labour market, and through the introduction of anti-worker growth models, such as, Export Processing Zones.
- COSATU, together with the workers of the world, must strive to smash all forms of anti-worker growth and repression, wherever in the world these backward tendencies rear their ugly heads.