



Declaration of the CEC of POPCRU

23-24 September 2021

Birchwood Hotel

Boksburg

Theme: “30 Years of Working Class consciousness, Defending Workers Rights and Building a Self-Sustainable Union”

We delegates from 09 Provinces representing more than 140 000 members from all institutions within the South African Police Service, Correctional Services and Traffic Department, all policing and the whole criminal justice cluster met over the past two (02) days at Birchwood Hotel In Boksburg. Our membership as we meet has declined as a result of many factors mainly natural attrition, retirements and the impact of COVID19.

POPCRU convened the Central Executive Committee Meeting from the 23rd – 24th of September 2021 to take stock of the work of the organization since the 9th National Congress in November 2019. The CEC held under the congress theme “30 years of Working Class Consciousness, Defending Workers Rights and Building a Self-Sustainable Union” was indeed a Parliament of the workers both in content and character.

We gathered at this important Central Executive Committee, the first after the General Congress aimed at giving a broader direction covering organizational, political, international, educational and policy issues within the union and also in our society at

large. This also includes giving effect to the aims and objectives of the union and to assume such powers as necessitated by our constitution. This CEC had a task to fulfill its constitutional mandate in the interest of the organization and its members.

Held under new conditions imposed by the novel Covid-19 pandemic it was an unfamiliar setup for delegates and members to interact in this manner. This virus has caused the death of more than 4.5 million people around the world, many of them workers and those generally in the frontline being health and security.

This pandemic further exposed the failures of the capitalist system of greed and financialisation and commercialization of public services especially in the health sector.

During these past 20 months the pharmaceutical companies bosses made more Billions than they have made in the past decade. Richer countries showed their lack of commitment to collective human survival by hogging over vaccine, a life giving service. This vaccine nationalism must be condemned and commends the South African government for rallying the rest of the world to make vaccines available for all as a public good.

Some countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom bought more than 3 times doses more than their population. Today as we speak due to this greed more than 56 % of the world population is not vaccinated and in the developing world less than 2% of the populations have been vaccinated a far cry from the 11 billion doses that are required to get herd immunity for the world. In this regard we wish to commend the ANC led government for ensuring that under the circumstances a reasonable number of South Africans have been vaccinated among them our own members. More can still be done to reach the most vulnerable and the poorest of the poor. In this regard the CEC welcomed the production of vaccines in Cuba and Russia and calls on the South African government to open up for these vaccines to be used in our country to save the lives of our people, than wait for donations from western countries.

Moreover, our country is currently in recession and this recession found the working class already living under socio economic conditions of recession. Employers continue to use the current Covid-19 imposed economic situation to retrench the workers, thus sinking them more into deeper poverty despite the more than R500 billion relief package (in tax payers money) to rescue business and save jobs; this includes the shrinking of our own

sectors. The unity of workers in the public sector and generally is of paramount importance. As workers we are not enemies of each other but have one enemy which is capitalism and intransigent employers against whom as workers we must build optimum unity.

The CEC paid due tribute to the 1012 of our fallen heroes and heroines and the millions across the world who have perished as a result of this pandemic; where we have lost many of our members and leaders. Among some of the key leaders that have passed on are the former Secretary of POPCRU in the Western Cape, Comrade Mbolekwa, two recipients of the Gregory Rockman awards former President of Zambia Dr Kenneth Kaunda and founding president of the liberation movement of Swaziland PUDEMO Comrade Mario Masuku, His Majesty king Goodwill Zwelithini ka DinuZulu, Cde Jackson Mthembu and many other leaders of our people.

Also, addressing the CEC were the ministers in the ministries we organize in; Minister Bheki Cele who attended physically and delivered an encouraging message. The increase in gender based violence is the new pandemic that is devastating our societies and increasing the responsibility on our members to be vigilant and professional in dealing with such cases.

The CEC took note that the COSATU Central Committee is ending today as we start our CEC. We are holding this CEC under a new normal with our meeting held in three different venues which is new to us. But CEC had to comply with the regulations and conscious of the dangers that the pandemic still poses. POPCRU is clear that we need a strong COSATU that is capable of leading workers unity and protect our gains as our collective voice.

The CEC further noted that state capture has crippled our economy and a lot of resources spent to deal with this in the Zondo Commission which has just been concluded. We observe that the country may not have enough resources to address the recommendations of the commission.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we unfortunately could not have among us our traditional allies from other countries as travel restrictions have been put in place to contain the virus. The CEC nonetheless explicitly reiterate the organisations commitment to continue working closely with our allies in Cuba, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zambia,

Mauritius, the Trade Union international for Public Service and the broader class oriented trade union movement under the banner of the World Federation of Trade Unions-WFTU.

The security situation in our neighbouring countries especially Mozambique is cause for concern and the CEC believes that SADC must take full responsibility to assist than wait for colonialist to lead the way. The CEC also condemns the granting of Israeli an observer status at the African Union-AU. Israel has no business in African Affairs and this decision must be reversed.

This CEC provided us with an opportunity to engage on matters that affect us as workers and further charted a way forward in ensuring that good relations are forged with all the Departments. We are fully aware of all current challenges within these Departments, but we will never be discouraged by such, we will continue building healthy relations with the prime aim of ensuring that a POPCRU member indeed remains a priority and their interests are always rightfully represented. This CEC provided the necessary measures as a sign of a democratic culture within the organization, building unity and cohesion.

We further had an opportunity to thoroughly voice out our members' grievances for decent jobs, employment, and environmental protection and against the flaunting of agreements by the employer. This is a direct attack on collective bargaining and we commit to do all we can to defend this workers gain which did not come easy. The expansion of the information economy also places a new challenge on trade unions in general to put in place new methods of organizing. POPCRU members must be capacitated to fight. There must be balance between workers struggles and broader societal social, economic and political issues as they continue to impact on our live directly. In this regard political education of our member's is very important.

The CEC sits as we prepare for what is going to be the most highly contested Local Government elections scheduled for 1 November 2021. We are conscious of the challenges faced by the ruling party which are both internal and external issues that have a potential to weaken showing at the polls. In this regard we understand clearly our role in ensuring victory of the African National Congress so that there is accelerated service delivery to our people. As a COSATU affiliated trade union, we are going to participate robustly in the elections campaign as the victory of the ANC is the victory of the nation as a whole and workers in particular.

We believe that the ANC remains the legitimate leader of the society and it is the responsibility of all to build the ANC from within than fight it from outside. Also important is the cleaning of our service itself where our members are involved. We will work hard to remove from among us those that give a bad name to our members by engaging in corrupt activities. We must root out corruption, improve service delivery and build a better society. We reiterate our resolve to be part of a broader movement to pull all like-minded forces together to pull society out of the crises and build an activist based society that has the capacity to hold the leadership accountable.

The CEC noted that the 54th National Conference of the ANC held at NASREC in 2017 resolved on the establishment of the National State Bank and in this regard POPCRU will be pursuing this resolution together with SACP and other forces.

Alongside that we sit at a time of unprecedented historic developments in our country where a former State President had been arrested and jailed to serve term which led to wide spread social unrest to which our members were called to bring back order. This is not only demonstrative of the independent institutions of our democracy being the judiciary, but sadly note the tendency of some within the judiciary to over reach their mandate and want to play in the political space.

The propensity of our movement to want to solve political differences in courts will cripple the ANC and the movement at large. The CEC observes that the degeneration of political consciousness and closing of robust comradely and honest debates in the movement creates other centres of engagements outside of the organisation. Factionalism must be defeated, and dissenting voices must be accommodated and listened to. POPCRU will not be drawn into factional battles but build unity and support the ANC. The new tendency within the movement of using money and other forms of patronage to buy political allegiance must be defeated.

The CEC took time to debate extensively the organisational challenges and matters including the leadership issues in the organisation with a clear purpose of strengthening the union and build true unity and cohesion. Leadership restructuring is a critical measure to renew the organisation and must be seen as a natural process of rebuilding, re alignment and capacity building.

The progress on work of the organisation since the last congress was delivered to CEC and the number of campaigns that the organisation has been involved in. As an internationalist union, there have been a lot of solidarity campaigns that we have been involved in. Important among these are our solidarity activities with the people of Cuba, Venezuela, Palestine, Swaziland and all struggling people of the world. POPCRU remains committed to playing a key role in international working class solidarity. It is within this context that we collectively dedicate our efforts to defend the interests and aspirations of the working class and the poor. The CEC must give hope to our members and present a hopeful future.

We therefore resolve and declare that:-

- There must be one law that regulates members of the Police which must be the Police Act. Those employed under the Public Service Act must be translated to the Police Act so that there is synergy and resource allocation at the Police station level;
- There must be capacity in fighting crime by releasing many of those who have been removed from operations to join the fight against crime. The police structure in particular is top heavy and there is serious shortage of the tools of the trade which makes our work difficult in fighting crime.
- Restructure the Police force to be able to make a lean head office and resourcing of the HAWKS to be able to do their work adequately.
- The fighting of crime must be a joint effort together with the prosecution; reconfigure the criminal justice system under one ministry to be able to have a centralised and coordinated effort to fight crime.
- A Policing Indaba is of paramount importance to streamline and reshape how the system works as a whole inclusive of other departments such as Justice, Prosecution and Correctional Services.
- Government must take all necessary steps to alleviate overcrowding in Correctional facilities as this puts the lives of our members in danger.
- Rehabilitation of offenders must have a local content so that rehabilitated inmates can be safely re-incorporated into society; and we will push forward with the eradication of Private Prisons.
- To further strengthen the organisation the CEC resolved that the provincial congresses must be held in February 2022 and that all structures must be aligned and be capacitated to defend the integrity and image of the organisation. POPCRU is under attack and must be defended. And that all provinces that do not have full leadership compliments must convene Provincial Shop Steward Councils in

November 2021. Going forward thereafter (from 2024), the terms of office off the provinces must be aligned to the term of office of the national term and will improve synergy in terms of functioning of the structures.

- The decrease in membership is a worrying development and the CEC calls on every POPCRU member and structure to embark on an aggressive recruitment campaign to put POPCRU back where it belongs as the overwhelmingly preferred union in the sector. This will also help strengthen our financial capacity to be able to implement the many programmes that we have assigned ourselves.
- We need to consider and re-consider the restructuring of our Collective Bargaining approach in terms of members' interests and improvement of their working conditions. Failure of the employer to implement the wage agreements has demoralised our members, COSATU must be engaged to lobby the ANC to review this bad decision.
- We stand by COSATU Central Committee-CC resolution to support the ANC in the upcoming local Government elections. But the ANC must also keep its promises to workers and understand that the reason for the continued support is based on the founding principles of the ANC the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution. But if the ANC chooses to move towards the right, as workers we will be forced to reconsider our position in relation to giving our vote to the ANC. It is not a blank cheque. We are not voting the name but the bias towards the working class.
- POPCRU supports the COSATU led campaigns and will intensify solidarity campaigns in support of progressive struggles across the world especially our neighbouring countries Swaziland and Mozambique. The security situation has a potential to degenerate into full scale war in the region and place South Africa in a precarious situation.
- In light of the vaccine nationalisation, POPCRU will liaise with COSATU to persuade the South African government to support Cuba materially. Strengthen the research in that country. Push SAPRA to approve the vaccines developed in Cuba, Russia and China. It can't be correct that only Western developed vaccines are allowed in our country. In addition to that RSA must bolster its own capacity to manufacture vaccines locally.
- The CEC commits that members and officials of the organisation must work under conducive environment hence the provision of PPE to all must be a priority in order to contain the spread and exposure to the COVID 19.

- The CEC further received and accepted a number of constitutional amendments from a constitutional task team that are aimed at strengthening the organisational capacity to fight for members and improve expansion of membership.

We therefore conclude that the discussions, debates and the resolutions adopted at this august occasion – the Central Executive Committee, have provided an intense reflection of our strategic position. The outcomes of the CEC must be implemented as a matter of urgency in order to realise the aspirations of our members.

Long Live POPCRU Long live!

Forward to overwhelming victory for the ANC!

Forward to workers Unity!