



JOINT STATEMENT BY MAJORITY UNIONS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CO-ORDINATING BARGAINING COUNCIL

22 March 2023

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), an affiliate of COSATU, together with the unions affiliated to the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) namely NAPTOSA, PSA, HOSPERSA and SAOU, driven by the mandate from members, have since the 17th of February 2023 engaged in wage negotiations for 2023/24 at the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council. Together, these unions form a 53,9% majority in the Council.

On the 17th of March 2023, the employer presented the final offer as follows:

1. An average of 7,5% for year 1 (Translation of the current non-pensionable cash gratuity into a pensionable salary). The 7,5% is implemented in a sliding scale where the lower salary levels would receive a larger percentage to close the wage gap. For an example at salary level the percentage would be 14,8% pensionable increase or what is known as baseline. The increase would apply to salary levels 1 – 12 including those remunerated in terms of an Occupation Specific Dispensation.
2. The difference between our demands on COLA and the final offer is 0,5%. As part of good faith negotiations labour had to revise its demand from 10% to 8%(7,5% employer and 8% labour) hence we are subjecting the offer to members to decide.
3. The current cash gratuity translated into a pensionable increase was also cushioned by adding its tax as part of pensionable increase.
4. If the cash gratuity of R1000 plus tax portion was removed as claimed by those who seek disunity and dominance, the level 1 basic salary would be increase by 7,5% per annum to R22397,62. This would translate into R1562,62 per annum. However, through tough negotiations, the employer acceded to 14,8% increase for salary level 1 which translated into R1539 per month.
5. Those who preach unity but continue to mislead workers with the intention to dominate and have negative hegemony must explain why nurses at lower salary levels would be receiving 8,8%.

6. In year 2 which is the financial year 2024/2025, the employer has proposed to pay workers a pensionable increase set at CPI (Projected CPI for the relevant period will be deemed to be 4.5% and, in the event, the Projected CPI for the relevant period is above 6.5%, the Projected CPI will then be deemed to be 6.5%.
7. On housing allowance: the employer referred organised labour to a prior agreement that a CPI benchmarked increase would be effected yearly, hereafter referred to as the status quo.

It is noteworthy that throughout this process, other trade unions that form part of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council, namely, NEHAWU, POPCRU. DENOSA and SAPU elected not to be part of the negotiations for the year 2023/2024.

The settlement between those on strike is not a council agreement but a bilateral deal which was about bringing an end to the strike. Among others, they committed to the following:

- They would abandon the strike,
- return to Council,
- the no work no pay rule would apply.

Conclusion

It is deeply concerning that unions in the public sector seem to be at odds with each other. This should not be the case as it is a well-known fact that all unions carry a mandate of their members. We are mindful of the fact that negotiations are a give and take. We would like to assure our members that they are the ones leading these negotiations through the mandates given to our negotiators.

These mandates will decide how these negotiations will be concluded. We urge our members to engage in the mandate seeking process in their numbers so that we can secure what we have gained so far and more.

The Pay progression of 1,5% shall be paid with effect from the 1st of July 2023 in accordance with sectoral collective agreements. This will further improve the notch by 1,5% for all those who shall have qualified. We regard the reinstatement of the pay progression as an achievement we have scored in 2023.

The End

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