

**Address To The POPCRU 2nd National Political School - 20  
August 2013  
KOPANONG CONFERENCE CENTRE - BENONI**

Programme Director;

National Office Bearers of POPCRU;

National Executive Committee Member of POPCRU;

Leaders of the Alliance;

PGC Delegates;

Our International guests;

Officials of our Union;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen

I bring you the revolutionary greetings from the collective National Office Bearers of POPCRU. Let me commence by acknowledging that this political school comes at a very critical time in the country's trade union movement. We are all aware of the recent developments at COSATU, which have seen the suspension of the General Secretary. Some have assumed this period as a crisis for the federation and the headlines are as misleading as ever. POPCRU is and has always been affiliated to a COSATU that looks after the interests of all workers without placing the needs of one sector above those of others. We advocate for a united federation that will

continue championing for the rights of all workers and work hand in hand with the alliance to solve the current problems of unemployment. As such we do not believe there's a crisis in the movement nor brewing troubles that should cause us sleepless nights.

Programme Director, coming back to the occasion at hand, I must stress that Political Education on its own contributes to the maturity of any leader and helps strengthen the ordinary cadre's political commitments. We all need to look at what happens around us sharply and ponder about our own status in the context of our political life-lines. A lot of the challenges we are grappling with today did not happen overnight, nor did they get manufactured outside our organizations. It is only when we are able to distinguish true cadre-ship from the bogus politician who seeks only the lime-light and glory that we can say we are seasoned politicians.

POPCRU has always been proud of itself with regard to organizational structures and discipline. The decision to call all of you together here today arose from the realization that we cannot keep priding ourselves with that which we are not cultivating. The truth is that every system and even education needs maintenance; we cannot expect that the wheel will keep moving if we do not take some time to stop and inspect it. That is exactly what we are doing here today, investing in what has already been built as we ensure

that we offer to our members and the public in general leaders and politicians who are conscious of their responsibilities and duties.

The success of this gathering is however dependent on active participation by all delegates. The organization has invited speakers from a vast pool of knowledge and hopes that everyone will make use of the opportunity provided in this forum. The aim of political education is not only to rejuvenate the passion we all have in the subject matter or ideology, but it is also to remind us about where our responsibilities lie. The link between education and development is undoubtedly paramount. One can never stress the importance of the two as co-dependents of each other.

We must be in a position where we are able to analyze and assess political situations for the benefit of our constituents. The level of political consciousness among our members is a reflection of the work we are doing. We cannot have a situation of the blind leading the blind. The timing of this Political School is of utmost important. I appreciate the inclusion in our programme discussions centered around the role of Trade Unions in general. We ought to reflect on our relevance every now and again with the aim of establishing whether we are still fulfilling our roles in an effort to be the voices of reason in our respective organizations and communities.

Comrade Chairperson, we have all been bestowed with the responsibility of safe-guarding the interest of workers. We are governed as POPCRU by a mantra that says “A POPCRU member is our priority.” This can only be reality if we ourselves are capacitated and able to break down the true meaning of this mantra with our exemplary actions. Our theme rightfully states that what we seek to achieve is a deep political knowledge that will allow for effective leadership to flourish.

Investing in Political empowerment ensures that when one leader oozes great qualities, another can easily resemble that because this would mean we are all drinking from the same well of knowledge. Hence we acknowledge the value of political education as it creates a platform to deliberate, broaden and sharpen political understanding in strengthening our political debates within the labour movement.

Another important aspect of this gathering comrade; is of cause to learn more about the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). This emanates from the resolution taken by the 7<sup>th</sup> National Congress, which was implemented a year ago when POPCRU formally joined this Federation of progressive unions. We are honoured to have in our midst, comrade Nikolas who will share more with us on this subject of WFTU. It will be of great value that by the end of this gathering we should all depart here with a deeper

understanding of the history and operations of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Some of the objectives that have led us here today include the following:

- Capacitate political knowledge and understanding from the perspective of the working class;
- Provide an understanding of Communism in the modern day society;
- Assess the influence of WFTU during the Cold War era; Understand the impact of trade union movement in the modern day society;
- Promote responsive leadership and encourage ethos of Socialism;

Comrade Chairperson, I have to remind everyone of the words of our world icon, our father Nelson Mandela who continues to fight for his life in hospital when he said and I quote “education is the engine to personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the president of a great nation. It is what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another”, I believe that his input is as valid now as it was then. There isn’t a cut-off age or amount of power for education. The continuous cultivation of one’s mind is almost mandatory for those

who are committed to continuing their service to an ever changing society which is influenced by new and old trends. Comrades, I hope just like myself you are looking forward to the deliberations of the coming days as we ensure that we remain relevant to the struggles of the working class. It is key that during our entire discussions, we bear in mind the following outcomes that this sitting is due to meet:

- Improved understanding of political ideologies;
- Enriched knowledge on WFTU
- Well informed political leaders who are capable of cascading education to the lower structures of the organization;
- And finally, delegates should come out of this magnificent event with deepened political knowledge that will enable them to become more effective in the execution of their duties.

Lastly Let us also take this opportunity of the women's month to honor and salute the role played by women in the struggle against apartheid and for the reconstruction and development of our country. During this women's month, we should also honour and salute women communists like Dora Tamana, Frances Baard, Ruth First, Ray Alexander, Ncumisa Kondlo and many others for their heroic role in the struggle for women's emancipation. They also deeply understood that the struggle for gender equality is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism.

On that note, ladies and gentlemen, I declare this 2nd POPCRU National Political School officially opened.

I thank you

**Amandla!**