



## ADDRESS TO THE POPCRU CEC

03 NOVEMBER 2013

ST GEORGE HOTEL - CENTURION

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Programme Director  
Representatives from the Alliance  
Government officials including representatives from the South African  
Police Service, Department of Correctional Services and the Department of  
Transport.  
Members of the POPCRU CEC  
The National Executive Committee of POPCRU  
Delegates from the POPCRU Group of Companies  
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media....

Good Morning Comrades. I am honoured to stand before you once again, bestowed with the responsibility of sharing with you the state of our organisations and the aspirations which continue to inspire us. It has been a rather busy year in the union and elsewhere in our Political movement. But one thing is certain; I stand here to speak for a united POPCRU that loves COSATU, the SACP and the African National Congress. **There's no ambiguity about that. The outlook tells a lot – that this organization is united.**

### POLITICAL

Our CEC comes as we sharpen our tools ahead of the National Elections next year. It also comes at the backdrop of violent protests in some parts of the country where residents have taken to the streets to protest what they believe is a lack of service delivery on the part of our government. We have seen the disturbing images from Bekkersdal in Gauteng where a teenager was shot in broad daylight and the worrying state of chaos in Malamulele

up in Limpopo. Comrades I mention this because it is our members who are in the fore-front of the struggle to maintain peace in these hotspots where protests are accompanied with criminal intent. Theirs is to maintain law and order while ours is to educate our communities about the right channels through which they can voice their dissatisfaction. It is however also the responsibility of our comrades in the Cabinet to find solutions to these challenges and fast-track delivery where need be. **Our findings are that indeed some of the grievances are legitimate, and it is the responsibility of our government to work on it where necessary. We have seen lies being peddled by those who are unable to deal with their differences internally in the ANC; those comrades must be identified by the movement and be dealt with. Because they cannot hide forever under the piece of failure to dispense service delivery by government. The other group we have identified is situated outside government and the ANC, those who fail to compete with the ANC and start to peddle lies as a way of dealing with the ANC as we approach elections next year. This is the collection of the people that we have identified in the whole protests which is out there and being meted by our members.**

The ANC has since taking over government in 1994 achieved more for the people of this country than many old governments have ever done for their citizens across the world. Our support for this party is not based on an unrealistic notion but on the knowledge that work is being done to change the lives of all South Africans for the better. Millions of people have received free houses, electrification and clean water in the 20 years of democracy. Clinics are being built in places where healthcare was unknown. **In a place where I was born in Washberg in Ladysmith there is a**

big clinic. This is because of the ANC. We do not say this movement doesn't have problems and shortcomings; it has to deal with the problems.

The Land Reform question which also seeks to correct a lot of past injustices is a great initiative by the ANC and once the model is perfected, thousands more of our people will receive the land which was taken from their families years ago.

It is through the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which POPCRU continues to defend that such great successes have been attained. The NDR, comrades, was described in the COSATU 9<sup>th</sup> Congress Resolutions as the shortest route to socialism. This is indeed true, that for as long as we seek to live in a state that prioritises the needs of the poor and the working class above those of capital, the only way to get there is through socialism. The SACP General Secretary – Comrade Blade Nzimande once wrote that the NDR means non-capitalist or socialist orientated transition in South Africa. We are indeed in transition, we are building on new terrain as we attempt to equalise where centuries of oppression have left gaping wounds and that can never be easy. The NDR may be understood by many differently, but we believe it is the programme that will deliver the majority of our people to the Promised Land if it is not misconstrued.

And we say comrades today that will win the election and we will win it with a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority. We are convinced that we have the capacity and the will to win it. We are going to win this election for our people, for ourselves and the true liberation of the people of this country. We know that we have problems but these are problems we have the capacity to deal with. Comrades, it is our responsibility to educate each and every South African

about the ANC facilitated gains of our democracy and what the future can be like if we all continue to vote for the ANC. We are also very certain that next year's elections will be won by the ANC. There's absolutely no question about that. The 2009 elections were won with a 65.9% majority. To ensure that we reach new heights, the onus is on us to continue working for the movement.

We also trust that you, our members employed in the SAPS will maintain law and order during the elections as we ensure that they are as free and fair as possible.

In recent times there have been tremors within the federation, COSATU. Albeit that the tremors are only figurative, they have managed to shake the beloved organisation to over 2 million South African workers who rest their hopes and aspirations in its strength and power. There are events in past months which have taken place and threaten to shape the manner in which things are done in the federation and greater Alliance and it is these trends which forces us to reflect on what the role of the federation is, in order to ensure we are all still on the same page about our core mandates from the workers. When it was launched in 1985, COSATU set forth its main broad strategic objectives:

- To improve material conditions of our members and of the working people as a whole.
- To organise the unorganised
- To ensure worker participation in the struggle for peace and democracy principles

It would be fair to therefore ask, in whose interest are those who run to the courts to challenge decisions made in the federations' constitutional gatherings are doing so? When suspended leaders defy the COSATU constitution and insult remaining leaders, once again we ask – in whose interest? Many preach unity within COSATU, but it is our deeds which will speak for us. We cannot have a situation as a federation where affiliates communicate to one another through the media, this indicates to an organisation driven by something else other than the COSATU of Elijah Barayi. Instead of dealing with the triple challenges of economic exploitation, racial and gender oppression, we find ourselves bombarded by queries which to be frank will not ensure that the living standards of our workers improve in any way. The question becomes, whose side is POPCRU on and so forth. Comrades, there are no sides – there is a single federation in this country and it is COSATU. Its strength doesn't lie in those who lead it but in the muscle of the men and women, who work as cleaners, nurses, traffic officials and bus drivers among others. We must never lose sight of this reality.

Comrade Chairperson, it is normal in every organisation that there will be disagreement. These however should not be centred on personalities but rather issues. If we debate burning issues such as the One industry, one union principle – it isn't a given that we will always agree, but let that be on the basis of principles and nothing else. Even when that happens, we always find our way back to one another because we subscribe to Democratic Centralism. Above all else, we prioritise our unity and transparency in our dealings as a COSATU affiliate. We declared the following at the last COSATU Bargaining Conference, I quote; "We will

work to leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the unity of the federation is restored and that cooperation between leaders of the Federation and affiliated unions is enhanced. We will also work harder to ensure unity between the working class axis within the tripartite Alliance and between all components of the Alliance. We shall ensure that the unity of the organs of people's power is enhanced in particular by pursuing the struggle for radical economic transformation, as the main content of this phase of our transition.”

Comrades, when we met last year as the Central Executive Committee of POPCRU, we did so a few weeks after the regrettable loss of lives in Marikana in the North West. We condemned the violence that had taken over the township and the mine and mourned those who had died as a consequence. To this day the country is still reeling from that day as we seek answers through the Farlam Commission of Enquiry. We urge those running the commission to ensure that it proceeds in an orderly fashion as to meet its mandate soon.

We have to condemn the continued killings of NUM members and shopstewards in that area. No-one can claim dominion by taking the lives of those who are of a different ideology to them. We stand by the National Union of Mineworkers during this time and believe that they will once again be a majority union in Marikana and other parts of the platinum belt. We have also witnessed attempts by the Free Market Foundation to destabilise the country's labour industry by proposing frivolous ideas, including a challenge that the inclusion of non-party employers in bargaining council collective agreements is unconstitutional. We are governed by laws in this

country and the existence of the Labour Relations Act is an important tool that protects employees from mostly greedy capitalist employers.

This notion is a direct attack on COSATU's mantra which says an Injury to one is an Injury to all. The reality is that even the biggest unions in the country such as NUM and NUMSA have difficulty convincing the employer to pay workers what is rightfully due to them, what will therefore happen to the small unions in sectors which are away from public light – it will simple give employers the licence to exploit workers and it is on this basis that we should fight any attempts by this Foundation to infiltrate the labour market. This is why we must stay vigilant and continue to keep our eyes on the ball instead of taking part in public spats that will result in nothing but a weakened federation.

Comrades; we have also taken practical steps to strengthen the SACP, and we hope that you will embrace some of our proposals in this forum as it will meet the organisation's ideals in relation to the Communist Party. We cannot continue to claim love for the SACP but sit on the side-lines and watch it limp. We need a strong party that will continue to nourish our minds and serve as a vanguard of the working class.

## **SECTORS**

Comrade Chairperson; this year we were driven to the streets by the employer in SAPS as they continued to abandon agreements from the bargaining council and also failed to implement a DPSA directive which

would improve the salaries of Public Service Appointees. Because of the effects that such a decision has on the financial wellbeing of the workers, it was decided a march to the National Commissioner's office will be used to persuade the management to honour their agreements. We are happy that there have been positive movements in that regard, but it is truly regrettable that we should still resort to such means in order to get moving on such key issues. Our members employed in SAPS should be ranked among the most satisfied and happy employees in this country as we cannot afford to have unhappy people serving in such a key sector in the country. No matter the level of their commitment, they also deserve to be happy. We also hope that the recommended changes by COSATU to the Single Public Service Bill will be taken into consideration if we are to reach a stage where all workers are paid an equal amount of money for work of equal value. This organisation is committed to the fight against crime in this country. We have a list of campaigns which we have embarked upon to ensure that we are party to the change we want to see in our communities. We are also disturbed by the reports in the media about the failures of those who wear the blue uniform. We are explicitly against that but still pride ourselves with the majority who work extremely hard to serve and protect this country.

Comrades, I am also pleased to report that since the last time I stood here and described our relations with the Department of Correctional Services as having hit the ultimate low, there have been positive changes. A Ministerial Task Team was set up to deal with all the outstanding issues in the department and albeit that we aren't satisfied with the pace with which it is proceeding. The task team which comprises of us, as POPCRU and the

department should see to it that all issues that workers have are addressed fully. We have also informed the department that they should cancel their contract with the British company operating the Private Prison in Mangaung. POPCRU has never hidden the fact that it opposes the presence of Public-Private Partnerships in Prisons in this country. We are witnessing the system's utter failure in Mangaung and G4S have been exposed for being nothing more than a greedy, exploitative company that seeks to degrade the laws which govern operations in our prisons.

We are also pleased that a new Steering Committee of Five which will look into nationalising the country's traffic departments. This committee will look at the progress or in this case lack thereof in establishing this since the process was launched so many years ago. We cannot lose hope on this one, Comrades we cannot afford to because the problems which exist in the sector as a result of the current fragmented state are plenty.

Comrade Chairperson; this CEC is still to discuss in detail many of these issues and I wish you all the best as you look into important matters for the benefit of our 160 000 members. I declare this Central Executive Committee meeting officially open.

VIVA POPCRU VIVA

VIVA ANC VIVA

VIVA SACP VIVA

VIVA COSATU VIVA!

AMANDLA!

I thank you.