



# NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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## NAPTOSA NATIONAL COUNCIL 2021: PRESIDENT'S OPENING ADDRESS

NAPTOSA's 12<sup>th</sup> National Council meeting (virtual), attended by 80 delegates, was held on 16 October 2021 under the theme "Taking the lead: Innovating, Inspiring, Challenging".

In his opening address the President, Mr Nkosipendule Ntantala, paid homage to the number of colleagues who succumbed to Covid-19 and urged those of us who remain behind to take lessons from the sorrow, the suffering and the tribulations brought about by Covid-19. Especially, not to give credence to conspiracy theories but to support initiatives intended to help overcome the challenges of Covid-19. Mr Ntantala also praised all the teachers, educationists and education leaders who have ensured that teaching and learning continue during the pandemic.

Turning to the theme of the meeting, the President called on leaders of the union to tackle their responsibility to lead, with vigour, to identify future needs and opportunities, to be open to new ideas and to inspire membership.

The President warned against a spirit of discouragement taking hold in our organization and urged members to steer clear of the South African tendency of attacking personalities, but to rather pour our energies into healthy debate and discussions. Provided we treat one another with respect in our engagements, differences of opinion can be beneficial and lead to organizational growth. In this regard the President called for unity, not uniformity, in NAPTOSA, citing that unity is only attainable through variety.

**"We must continue to embrace the diversity of our union and always work to ensure that we sustain and jealously protect our diversity. It is our strength."**

While NAPTOSA supported the initiative at the end of 2020 to temporarily appoint Teacher Assistants and General Assistants, the President warned that, as a union, we should be wary of a trend developing whereby funds are sourced for grants and stipends (to again temporarily appoint Assistants) instead of creating or maintaining employment. One cannot on the one hand have mass temporary employment, however noble the initiative, while on the other, some provinces are talking retrenchment of teachers due to a lack of funding.

As part of our innovation role, the President called on NAPTOSA to revive the debate around the decolonization of our education in order to develop African languages as languages of learning and business and for NAPTOSA to ensure our involvement in the DBE's process of repackaging the

History curriculum, so as not to have another distorted version of our history. Innovation in NAPTOSA's professional development program was also acknowledged with the President commending the PDI for a much more coordinated approach to courses and for having taken advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic by exploiting virtual platforms.

Other matters raised by the President were the following:

- Acknowledgement of the media coverage NAPTOSA has been receiving during the pandemic and the reputation we have managed to build
- A call for our SRGBV initiative to gain more ground at school level
- Appreciation for the work done by provinces, structures, and membership to ensure stabilization of our membership despite losses suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic
- A call for NAPTOSA to strengthen its recruitment in the TVT/ CET and ECD sectors
- A warning to members to refrain from acts of sexual misconduct and assault (including corporal punishment) as SACE is considering a review of its policy on mandatory sanctions to bring about much more stricter sanctions for these offences

Lastly, the President wished the matric class of 2021 well with the NSC examinations while trusting for an irregularity free examination. He extended NAPTOSA's thanks and appreciation to members for the efforts made to prepare these learners for the examination amidst the difficulty of having to catch up with the learning losses of the previous year.

**BASIL MANUEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**