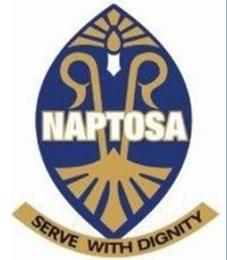


NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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WORKERS' DAY MESSAGE 2022

1 May is Workers' Day, a day on which the achievements of the labour movement are commemorated and a day to rejoice in all the labour rights that have been won for workers in South Africa.

NAPTOSA is proud to have been there at the start of the labour relations regime in the public service and in education in particular, and to still be at the forefront to this day. This is all attributable to NAPTOSA's loyal membership.

Looking back over the nearly 30 years of collective bargaining in the public service and seeing the many collective agreements that NAPTOSA has been party to (i.e., where we have been signatories) we can be satisfied with what we have been able to achieve in terms of rights and benefits for our members.

Our sphere of influence has further been enhanced by our membership of FEDUSA which enables us to now be directly involved in NEDLAC where all legislation that impacts workers' rights are consulted before it can be tabled in Parliament.

The road to the establishment of labour rights in South Africa has not been an easy one and the maintenance thereof also comes with its own challenges as was clearly demonstrated by the State as employer's undermining of our collective bargaining rights when they reneged on the 2020 salary implementation. Our hopes that the Constitutional Court would come to our rescue were sadly dashed when the Court ruled in favour of the employer leaving the unions within the PSCBC with a serious trust deficit in the employer.

A month ago, NAPTOSA and the other unions engaged with the employer in a collective bargaining summit to attempt to restore the broken trust relationship. With the 2022 wage negotiations to commence soon, only time will tell whether collective bargaining rights will be restored to its pre-2020 level.

Yesterday, 28 April 2022, "World Day for Safety and Health at Work" was commemorated which ties in with Workers' Day because the right to a safe and healthy working environment is one of the key labour rights.

The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) theme for this day was "Act together to build a positive safety and health culture", the thrust being that social dialogue should be the vehicle to achieve this culture.

In South Africa we have the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (OHSA), the object of which is to *inter alia* provide for the health and safety of persons at work.

As with collective bargaining, the right to a safe and healthy work environment is on the statutes but it is in the application thereof that the problem often lies. Whereas the Department of Employment and Labour is eager to act against employers who fail to adhere to the OHSA and the regulations, this is clearly not the case when it concerns the State as employer. How else can one explain that many teachers still have to work in mud schools and in schools without basic facilities such as proper ablutions, fencing or security.

Members regularly face threats and attacks from pupils and external elements, and we have in recent times even seen “hits” on teachers inside school premises. Many teachers also teach in gangster ridden areas where their safety is continually compromised.

NAPTOSA has on numerous occasions raised the issue of school safety with the DBE, but social dialogue has clearly failed in this instance. It is strange considering the co-operation displayed between the Department and the recognised education unions during the COVID-19 pandemic as was aptly demonstrated in the successful collaboration between the parties with regard to the vaccination roll-out.

It is true that in some instances during the pandemic period the unions were forced to take up tough positions to protect the health and safety of members, like refusing their return to work. The fact remains that even in these instances parties were able to reach compromises by talking to each other.

On Worker’s Day 2022 NAPTOSA calls on the DBE to display the same co-operative approach to all aspects of school health and safety so that the positive health and safety culture propagated by the ILO can be instilled in the South African education system.

The leadership of NAPTOSA wishes all our members an enjoyable Workers’ Day.

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PRESIDENT: NAPTOSA