

## **REMARKS BY PREMIER TSP MAKWETLA AT THE SEVENTH PROVINCIAL CONGRESS OF NEHAWU HELD ON 15 JULY 2005 AT THE ZITAHBISENI RESORT**

Programme Director

Officials and members of NEHAWU

Leaders and members of fraternal organisations

Comrades and compatriots

Allow me to convey through the leadership of NEHAWU to all comrades, members of NEHAWU, revolutionary greetings and sentiments of solidarity with your provincial conference from members of the Executive Council of the Province and the leadership and membership of your sister organisation, the African National Congress in Mpumalanga.

Programme Director, I also wish to express my personal appreciation for the privilege and honour accorded to me through the invitation to come and address this important forum in the public life of our province.

It is my wish that over the next two days we will jointly take seriously the issue of working out strategies on how we can improve and accelerate quality service delivery.

It is important that we do so because it is only through a sound partnership that we can alleviate the indignity of poverty, joblessness and lack of basic amenities.

Participation at all NEHAWU for a will always be a valuable opportunity because if there is any one union which ideally should consist of comrades only, we will all agree that that union is NEHAWU.

Education, health and other service sector government departments constitute to a large measure our people's dream of freedom.

We must leave these portals having reached agreement on how NEHAWU members can further enhance their important role in service delivery in the public service.

We must do so well aware of the frustrations experienced by the community when we fail to fulfil our promises of a better life for all. What we also need to ask is whether as senior and middle managers we understand what hardships we cause when we fail to deliver services to the people.

Almost a year ago we met at the public sector summit in Loskop in order to try and enhance service delivery through a partnership based on the common understanding of what it was in the first place that made us rise against the apartheid system.

That historic meeting propelled us into working towards and finally adopting the PGDS strategy at Badplaas early this year.

As we meet here today we must be able to say, and honestly so, how much we have achieved over the past year. Have we been able to take forward the summit resolutions?

Have we as a union been able to instil the requisite discipline in our members that make them worthy comrades to walk in the steps of J B Marks, Oliver Tambo, Jack Simons, Florence Mphosho, Gert Sibande, Dora Tamana, Lilian Ngoyi and others?

Are we worthy of being called public servants whose interest is serving our people? Do we have managers that respond to the needs of the people in a way that builds the trust of the community? Managers that take care of employee's grievances?

I am heartened by the fact that some progress has been registered in the implementation of the Loskop Summit as the Director General, Adv Stanley Soko, will indicate in his input. This modest achievement must serve to urge us on.

As we are all aware, further scoping of challenges pertaining to the public sector was done by the Badplaas PGDS Summit processes within the ambit of the Governance work-stream of the PGDS.

One of the fundamental pillars that will ensure effective implementation of the Summit resolutions is good governance. The GDS Working Group on Governance has identified the following key programmes:

- Strengthening joint planning with all social partners and improving inter-governmental planning systems;
- Broadening and improving participation in integrated development planning processes within municipalities;
- Effective implementation of performance management systems to enhance systems of performance accountability;
- Improving systems of internal control and risk management;
- Strengthening the functioning of ward committees to enhance service delivery at the local level;
- Effective implementation of employment equity to ensure the empowerment of targeted groups identified in the Employment Equity Act;
- Improving government back-office processes to increase effectiveness in the entire service delivery value chain;
- Improving public financial management to enhance service delivery

Organised labour has an important role and responsibility to sharpen debates within the GDS Working Group on Governance. Of particular concern therefore is NEHAWU's recent decision to withdraw its members from the Performance Management and Development System. As government we are committed to deepen engagement with organised labour so that we entrench the culture of performance and accountability for results. Organised labour, through its participation in performance management, plays a critical role in preventing protracted labour disputes, which invariably impact negatively on service delivery, in particular to the poor.

**Comrades, as government we are all aware that unions are important actors in the labour market. Trade unions are a legitimate system for organising workers and to voice their rights and grievances. Without them companies would become either too paternalistic or too dictatorial. Responsible unions help to create a middle path in the relationship between management and labour while maintaining the responsibilities of the former and the dignity of the latter.**

Where things go wrong is when the management becomes authoritarian, or when a trade union leader allows emotion and ego to overcome reason. Fortunately today, workers have become better informed and aware of the economic forces that impact their industry. The media has also helped to create much greater economic awareness.

Over the past years we have, through close partnership, achieved a harmonious industrial relations climate. We have also developed many programmes to improve the working conditions of workers thus enhancing the quality of their life.

On Wednesday we met with COSATU to take forward our commitment we took last year to meet and share information and ideas from time to time and whenever the need arises.

Comrades raised a number of issues including the need to monitor efficiently the implementation of the Provincial Growth and Development Summit agreements by departments.

We were in agreement with COSATU that we need to strengthen and empower our managers if we are to speed up service delivery and accelerate economic growth. We all agreed that we have achieved a lot over the last 11 years, but that a lot still needed to be done. In this regard, we can report to this Conference that the skills audit project is progressing very well. The auditing of senior managers has been completed and tabled with Cabinet. This unprecedented undertaking within the public sector, has proved to be valuable and exciting from a managerial consideration.

We can quietly share with this Conference the results of the audit by indicating that on a scale of 1 – 4 our senior managers scored an average of 1,6. The question whether this is something to worry or be happy about, is difficult, because there is no similar audit in government to compare our results with. Of significance though, is the information that the South African private sector stands at an average of 1,7.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend labour for the leadership they have provided in this initiative. We will continue to count on their progressive partnership in the interest of our transformation. Cabinet is awaiting recommendations on developmental and corrective interventions to address the established gaps and weaknesses. The auditing of middle managers will be concluded by the end of July.

One sharp concern raised by COSATU leadership which I believe NEHAWU can assist to address, is alleged corruption when vacancies are being filled in government departments, specifically within the Health and Education departments. The culture of complete disregard for merit in favour of friends and relatives when appointments are made must be combated.

It is our understanding that invariably the officials involved in such practices are themselves in some instances members of NEHAWU. This vice cannot be countenanced nor tolerated.

The President of the ANC, Cde Thabo Mbeki, reminded us of the challenges of our mission at the closing of the NGC when he said that as a ruling party our members have access to state resources and opportunities such that those who are in business and who seek opportunities have to interact with us, members of the movement in government.

This means that, “ *Those of us who serve in the organs of the state have the possibility to dispense patronage. It therefore means that we have the possibility to purchase adherents, (and to advantage our families, my addition) with no regard for the principles that are fundamental to the very nature of the African National Congress... It makes membership of the ANC an easy route of access to state power. It makes membership of the ANC an attractive commercial proposition* ”, warned the President.

The involvement of labour in strategic planning by departments was also raised with the view to enhance labour's participation in the execution of government and departmental programmes. We also agreed that COSATU needs to be appraised of government programmes, including the HIV and Aids programme, in order to improve participation.

Programme Director, Comrades, the ANC has just come back from its mid-term National General Council. It is expected that many members of NEHAWU as members of the ANC would have been part of the experience ANC cadres were exposed to during the processes in preparation to, and the sitting of the NGC itself, at the University of Pretoria.

As we meet here today none of the ANC cadres can disagree that the Pretoria NGC was a watershed in the history of the ANC. Never before was public interest guaranteed in the internal affairs of the organisation as the NGC did.

Whereas we have always expressed concern that the media is setting the agenda of the country, at times to the detriment of the transformation challenges, it is now clear that the media is also substantially determining the agenda of the party.

As difficult as the case of the Deputy President of the ANC, Cde Zuma, is, there can be no denying that the extent to which it has polarised the ranks of the organisation could not have happened without the role the media has played and is playing in the equation.

There is validity to the fact that in the post-1994 period, ANC NGC's have acquired a reputation of being vibrant national political schools because of the amount of energy and purpose they unleash within the ranks dedicated to nothing else but policy discussions and implementation evaluation. This is more than ANC conferences are able to achieve because of the space NGC's have by being free from conference contestations over leadership. This NGC was different because it was polarised more than what conference normally contend with.

It is our firm view that whatever the challenges and difficulties are that are thrown up or occasioned by the case of the Deputy President, can not be handled in a manner that divides us as cadres and members of the organisation. For as long as we take personal interests out of the equation and prioritise the interests of the organisation, we will always find each other. For as long as we all observe the constitutional obligations we carry

as individual members and act within the established traditions and practices of the organisation, no situation can overwhelm us.

The questions we must pose to ourselves are – What are we dealing with? What is the definition of the problem? How must we approach it? Can we discern the challenges involved beyond the individual actors? In what way were we ready to govern? How do we preserve unity and why?

The Oath says that our members commit themselves to " *work towards making the ANC an even more effective instrument of liberation in the hands of the people* ".

To achieve this goal means that we, as members of the ANC, must see and conduct ourselves as part of this effective instrument of liberation that serves and is part of the masses of our people. This means that we must in the fullest meaning of these words, internalise the principled position that we have joined the organisation voluntarily and without motives of material advantage or personal gain, as our Oath says.

The National General Council has pointed the way forward towards the further acceleration of the process of reconstruction and development. It has directed us to work even harder to strengthen the people's contract to advance the vision of the Freedom Charter. It has committed us to intensify our contribution to the continuing struggle for Africa's renewal.

It has directed that we must guard the unity of our movement and the unity of the Alliance. It has instructed that we should move forward together as this united force selflessly to serve all the people of South Africa and Africa, and act in solidarity with all other progressive forces throughout the world.

I believe and trust that at the conclusion of your conference, the transformation movement in our province will be stronger and further mobilised as a result of the clarity of your thoughts.

I wish you well in your deliberations.

**I thank you.**