**FEDUSA in KZN**

**May Day**

**01.05.2023**

**Chairperson**

**LEADERS OF FEDUSA AND ITS AFFILIATES PRESENT**

**OUR ESTEEMED GUESTS**

**MEMBERS OF FEDUSA**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN….**

**(PROTOCOL OBSERVED)**

AMANDLA! MAATLA!! MATIMBA!!!

I GREET YOU IN THE MEMORY OF THE ALL MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE BLOOD WAS SPILLED FIGHTING FOR BETTER WAGES THAT MATCH THEIR EFFORTS. THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST EXPLOITATION OF TALENT, SKILLS AND EXPERTISE.

WE GATHER TODAY CONFRONTED WITH A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES AS THE WORKING CLASS BUT ALSO WITH MANY VICTORIES TO CELEBRATE DUE TO THE WORK OF THE SHOPSTEWARDS WHO CONTINUE TO CHAMPION THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS.

TODAY, AS WE COMMEMORATE WORKERS' DAY, WE HONOUR THE HARD WORK AND DEDICATION OF THE MILLIONS OF WORKERS ACROSS OUR COUNTRY WHO CONTINUE TO BEAR THE BRUNT IN THE INTERST OF OUR COLLECTIVE LIVELIHOODS AND THE GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY. FEDUSA CHOSE THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S COMMEMORATION, “SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT IN WORKPLACES” IN RECOGNITION OF THE LAPSES IN OHS BY MANY EMPLOYERS AT THE EXPENSE OF WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

WORKERS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR HAVE TOLD US OF THE HORRORS ENDURED DUE TO THE CONTINUED IMPOSITION OF PIT LATRINES ON THEM BY THE GOVERNMENT. IT WAS IN THIS VERY PROVINCE WHERE WE GATHER TODAY WHERE TODDLER MICHAEL KOMAPE FELL INTO A PIT TOILET WHILE AT SCHOOL IN 2014 AND DROWNED. MANY YEARS LATER, THE GOVERNMENT IS YET TO RID ALL SCHOOLS OF THE PIT LATRINES WHICH ARE A HEALTH HAZARD FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS ALIKE.

THESE ARE THE UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS THAT WE CALL ON WORKERS TO REPORT. WE APPEAL TO SHOPSTEWARDS TO ALWAYS REMAIN ON GUARD AND CONTACT THE EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR DEPARTMENT’S INSPECTORATE SERVICE SOTHAT WHERE NEEDS BE – BUILDINGS MUST BE DECLARED NO GO ZONES UNTIL EMPLOYERS ARE COMPLIANT.

AS WE REFLECT ON THESE STRUGGLES – WE ALSO TURN TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE VITAL ROLE PLAYED BY UNIONS IN SECURING BETTER WAGES, IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE FEDERATION OF UNIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA (FEDUSA) IS ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COUNTRY AND HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ADVANCING WORKERS' RIGHTS.

FEDUSA HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN MANY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, FIGHTING FOR BETTER WAGES FOR WORKERS AND IMRPVED WORKING CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS. IN ADDITION TO ADVOCATING FOR BETTER PAY, FEDUSA ALSO CHAMPIONS HEALTHY AND CONDUCIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL WORKERS. THE ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH EMPLOYERS TO CREATE SAFER WORKPLACES, WHICH INCLUDES ENSURING THAT THE NECESSARY PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) IS AVAILABLE FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS. FEDUSA HAS ALSO BEEN ADVOCATING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT WORKERS WHO ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE STRESS AND ANXIETY CAUSED BY VARIOUS FACTORS.

FEDUSA HAS ALSO BEEN WORKING HARD TO ADDRESS THE RISING COST OF LIVING, WHICH IS A SIGNIFICANT DRIVER OF MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESSES FOR MANY WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ENGAGING WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO NEGOTIATE BETTER SOCIAL PROTECTIONS FOR WORKERS, INCLUDING IMPROVED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE, AND A LIVING WAGE.

FEDUSA'S EFFORTS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL IN ENSURING THAT WORKERS' VOICES ARE HEARD, AND THEIR RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED IN THE LABOUR MARKET. THE ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO ENSURE THAT WORKERS ARE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT, AND THAT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR SOCIETY ARE RECOGNIZED AND VALUED. AS WE CELEBRATE WORKERS' DAY, WE MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CHALLENGES THAT CONTINUE TO CONFRONT THE LABOUR MARKET, INCLUDING MASS UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE GENDER PAY GAP. THESE ARE ISSUES THAT REQUIRE URGENT ATTENTION AND ACTION, AND FEDUSA IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ADDRESS THEM.

WE MUST ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN LOSSES ALONG THE WAY. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE LABOUR MARKET, LEADING TO JOB LOSSES AND A REDUCTION IN WORKING HOURS FOR MANY WORKERS.

SINCE LAST YEAR FEDUSA HAS BEEN FIGHTING FOR DECENT WAGE INCREASES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. IT WAS A LONG JOURNEY, ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT GET WHAT WE WANTED BUT WE FOUGHT HARD FOR OUR WORKERS.

FEDUSA WENT ALL OUT TO SUPPORT STRIKING PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS IN RALLIES LAST YEAR, WE HAVE BEEN PUSHING FOR A WIN FOR ALL OUR MEMBERS.

NOT ONLY WERE WE NEGOTIATING FOR PUBLIC SERVICE BUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR TOO… FOR EXAMPLE THE UNITED NATIONAL TRANSPORT UNION (UNTU) CELEBRATED A VICTORY AFTER THE LABOUR COURT RULED IN THEIR FAVOUR AND ORDERED THE PASSENGER RAIL AGENCY OF SOUTH AFRICA (PRASA) TO HONOUR OBLIGATIONS TO THE 2020 SALARY/WAGE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

PRASA NEEDED TO MAKE PAYMENT FOR EACH UNTU MEMBER, A 5% WAGE INCREASE IN TERMS OF THE WAGE AGREEMENT CONCLUDED ON 23 OCTOBER 2020 WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 MARCH 2022.

THE TWO-YEAR-LONG BATTLE TO GET UNTU MEMBERS THAT IS DUE TO THEM HAS FINALLY PAID OFF, BUT THE WAR IS FAR FROM OVER. HOWEVER, FEDUSA WOULD LIKE TO THANK UNTU FOR THEIR DETERMINATION TO FIGHT UNTIL THE VERY LAST END.

IN CLOSING, AS WE CELEBRATE WORKERS' DAY, WE MUST REMEMBER THE CRITICAL ROLE PLAYED BY TRADE UNIONS IN PROTECTING JOBS AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN THIS COUNTRY. TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE WITH DECENT WORK FOR ALL.

FINALLY, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO ALL WORKERS WHO HAVE HELPED BUILD OUR COUNTRY AND CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT. YOUR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION HAVE NOT GONE UNNOTICED, AND FEDUSA WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS IN THE LABOUR MARKET.

THANK YOU!