

WORKERS' DAY – FEDUSA KEYNOTE ADDRESS

- **KIMBERLY, NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**
- **1 MAY 2024**

Leaders of FEDUSA...

Leaders of respective Affiliates present...

Stakeholders...

Ladies and Gentlemen...

Good morning, Kimberley, and greetings to all of you who have gathered here in the heart of the Northern Cape!

Today, as we stand together to commemorate May Day, we celebrate the indomitable spirit of workers across South Africa and right here in Kimberley. This day is not just about reflection; it's about celebration. It's about celebrating our diversity, our unity, and the resilience that defines us as workers and as a nation.

In Kimberley, where the echoes of the mining past still resonate, workers have shaped not only the physical landscape but the social fabric of this region. The Northern Cape's economy, with its rich mining heritage, agriculture, and dynamic renewable energy sector, depends

profoundly on you, the workers, who contribute tirelessly in temperatures that swing from the extremes of heat to cold, day in and day out. Recent articles in "The Kimberley Echo" and "Northern Cape News" have highlighted the challenges you face—from job insecurity to health risks in mines and fields alike. Today, we recognise and honour your resilience.

Amidst mines retrenching thousands of workers, unsafe government buildings, high interest rates attacking workers disposable income.

As FEDUSA, we've stood by your side, advocating for your rights, negotiating better terms, and ensuring your voices are heard where it counts. Our unity in diversity has been our greatest strength—bringing together workers from all sectors and backgrounds to fight for a common cause. Here are some of the gains we've achieved together:

Improved Working Conditions: We've seen significant strides in improving safety standards in the mining and agricultural sectors, reducing accidents and health risks. **It is alarming that EMS workers are threatened with their lives whilst performing their duties. This calls for urgent intervention and we need assurance on the safety of our members.**

- **Wage Increases and Benefits:** Through persistent negotiations, we have secured above-inflation wage increases for many, alongside improved benefits that support not just workers but their families too. **Additionally, the national minimum wage increased steadily taking about 6 million workers out of poverty.**
- **Legislative Reforms:** Our advocacy has helped shape policies that protect workers' rights, ensuring that labour laws are not just on paper but part of everyday business practice.

Another win includes, the Worker Share Ownership (ESOPs) will benefit 500,000 workers from shareholding in their companies. As a Federation, we are aiming to strengthen the role of workers in the economic fabric of South Africa, ensuring that they not only share in the wealth generated by their labour but also have a decisive voice in the management and governance of their workplaces.

Our diversity is not just in our backgrounds, cultures, or languages—it's in the variety of our skills and industries. Each of you, whether in the service sector, agriculture, mining, or emerging tech industries, plays a pivotal role in building our economy and our country. This diversity makes us stronger, more resilient, and innovative in our approaches to solving problems. As we embrace our differences, we

strengthen our unity, making us a formidable force in the face of adversity.

Our journey together does not end with today's rally. It continues as we face new challenges and seize new opportunities. The global economy is changing, and with it, the nature of work itself. We are committed to:

- **Embracing Technology and Innovation:** Ensuring that workers are trained and ready for the jobs of tomorrow.
- **Fighting for Equality and Inclusivity:** Breaking down the barriers that prevent women, youth, and marginalised groups from full and fair participation in the workforce.

Sustainable Development: Advocating for policies and practices that not only create jobs but also protect our environment for future generations. **We call on government to fast-track fixing of the ports to ensure economic development, manufacturing, and job creation. We need increased economic growth urgently to address the high unemployment rate in the country.**

As we stand in Kimberley today, let's renew our pledge to each other and to the labour movement. Let us be guided not by fear, but by hope.

Not by division, but by the unity that our diversity affords us. Together, we have achieved much, but together, we can achieve much more.

Thank you, Kimberley. Thank you, Northern Cape. Your strength, your resilience, and your contributions power the heart of South Africa. Happy Workers' Day! Let us march forward with pride and determination, for together, we are unstoppable!

AMANDLA!!!!!!!