



# THE WORKERS' VOICE

*Voices That Matter!*

## FEDUSA Celebrates 29 Year Anniversary



*FEDUSA Bosberaad 2025, Pretoria*

### #FEDUSATURNS29

**E**stablished in April 1997, the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) has grown into the second-largest trade union federation in South Africa. In 2026, it marks 29 years of advancing workers' interests.

Founded on the need for a strong, independent, non-racial, and stable federation, FEDUSA continues to advocate for workers' rights and promote social justice.

# WORKERS TAKE TO THE STREETS OVER RISING GEMS CONTRIBUTIONS



**Public service workers participate in the National Day of Action against GEMS in Menlyn, Pretoria.**

Public service workers took to the streets on 21 February 2026 to protest against the proposed increases by the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS). A memorandum was handed to GEMS Principal Officer, Dr Stanley Moloabi, and the Scheme was given seven working days to respond to the demands.

GEMS was required to respond to the Memorandum of Demands by 3 March 2026. Instead, on the working day before the deadline, the Scheme requested an extension to 13 March.

FEDUSA has acted reasonably but firmly, granting a limited extension until 6 March 2026. Public servants cannot be subjected to delays while un-

affordable increases remain in place.

In January, GEMS announced a 9.8% increase, later adjusted to 9.5% and implemented on 1 February 2026, following a 13.4% increase the previous year. Contributions have therefore risen by more than 23% in just two years, at a time when wages remain constrained and the cost of living continues to rise.

FEDUSA is demanding the withdrawal of the 9.5% increase, full financial transparency, and a review of the Scheme's funding and reserve model. Public servants built GEMS and sustain it every month—it must serve them.



Public service workers march to the GEMS offices in Menlyn, Pretoria.



From left to right: GEMS Principal Officer, Dr Stanley Moloabi, and FEDUSA General Secretary, Riefdah Ajam, during the hand-over of a memorandum to the medical aid scheme. Photo Credit: PSA



National Day of Action against GEMS, held on 21 February 2026 in Pretoria.

# #GEMSSeMoer

# WORKPLACE SAFETY IS NOT OPTIONAL



**FEDUSA General Secretary, Riefdah Ajam, addresses delegates at the National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference 2026, held from 17–19 March at the Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg. Photo Credit: Department of Employment and Labour**

FEDUSA's General Secretary addressed the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference hosted by the Department of Employment and Labour, reaffirming FEDUSA's unwavering commitment to the protection, promotion, and advancement of OHS for all workers.

Ajam emphasised that safe and healthy workplaces are not a privilege—they are a fundamental right and a cornerstone of decent work, productivity, and sustainable economic growth. As a member state of the ILO, South Africa has a shared responsibility to act collectively and collaboratively with its social partners to uphold these standards.

Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Jomo Sibiya, said safe and healthy working conditions are not optional; they are a fundamental human right.

"For South Africa, this principle is not only an international commitment but also a constitutional imperative.

"Our Constitution guarantees the right to an environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing. This right extends directly into our workplaces.

"It means that protecting workers from occupational injuries and diseases is not simply a regulatory requirement, but also a constitutional responsibility," he said.

The Deputy Minister added that workers are not tools of production; they are made of flesh and blood. It is imperative to protect their lives and dignity.

# FEDUSA WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP AT THE NATIONAL UNION OF LEATHER AND ALLIED WORKERS



**Members at the NULAW Congress celebrate the union's 100th anniversary.**

The National Union of Leather and Allied Workers (NULAW) held its congress in conjunction with its 100th anniversary, during which new leadership was elected.

The union welcomed its new President, Xolisa Donald Ngxonono, and Vice President, Thando Mbambo, as they begin their term of office.

NULAW was formed in 1924 and formally registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act on 16 March 1926, at a time when South Africa was deeply unequal and structured by laws that institutionalised racial discrimination and economic exclusion.

Through FEDUSA, NULAW has strengthened its voice in national economic policy discussions, particularly within the structures of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NED-LAC). In the Trade and Industry Chamber, the union has contributed to key debates on industrial development, trade policy, and strategies to protect jobs.

The congress adopted several resolutions, including protecting the footwear and leather industry from illegal imports and customs fraud; promoting Proudly South African and local manufacturing; and advancing a campaign to eliminate non-compliance and “sweatshops” through collaboration with the Department of Employment and Labour and other stakeholders.

# DITSELA TRAINING EQUIPS UNION MEM- BERS WITH ESSEN- TIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

*"The training was very informative for me as a young worker who is new to the labour movement. I am confident that the knowledge and tools gained will contribute positively to my professional growth and to the overall efficiency of the organisation," —*  
**Simo Hlophe.**

As part of skills development at FEDUSA, Ditsela hosted a four-day training programme for labour, aimed at enhancing administrative skills and equipping administrators with practical tools to improve efficiency, professionalism, and workflow management.

The course focused specifically on the competencies required for the daily operations of administrators working within unions and federations.

The training provided both practical administrative guidance and contextual knowledge relevant to the labour movement, ensuring that participants developed a broader understanding of their roles within their respective organisations.

FEDUSA Social Justice Intern, Simo Hlophe, gained practical skills that will improve her work performance.

*"The training was very informative for me as a young worker who is new to the labour movement. I am confident that the knowledge and tools gained will contribute positively to my professional growth and to the overall efficiency of the organisation,"* said Hlophe.



**FEDUSA delegation attends a four-day training programme hosted by Ditsela, aimed at enhancing administrative skills.**

# KEY LEADERS ADDRESS FUTURE OF WORK AT NEDLAC LABOUR SCHOOL



**FEDUSA Vice President for Training and Education, Basil Manuel, participates in the NEDLAC Labour School. Photo Credit: NEDLAC Organised Labour**

FEDUSA, at the NEDLAC Labour School, called for the Labour School to not simply be a forum for reflection, but a site of repositioning.

It must be a place where organised labour sharpens its analysis and asserts a credible programme for economic transformation that places workers at the centre of growth, not at its margins.

Deputy President Paul Mashatile, also addressing the NEDLAC Labour School, said this year's Labour School must be more than a forum; it must be a platform for shaping the future. He challenged federations to develop a Digital Workers' Charter, grounded in the right to re-training, data sovereignty, digital dignity, and human oversight in all automated systems.

He added that government cannot achieve its goals without organised labour.

"Through NEDLAC, in the upcoming National Dialogue, we have an opportunity to forge a new social compact that unites government, business, labour, and civil society. But dialogue alone is not enough. Dialogue must lead to action!" he said.

Former President Thabo Mbeki also delivered a keynote address reflecting on the National Dialogue, while Eskom Group Chief Executive Officer Dan Marokane engaged the Labour School on the state of the energy sector, Eskom's operational and financial recovery efforts, and the implications for workers within the context of South Africa's just energy transition.

*"It must be a place where organised labour sharpens its analysis and asserts a credible programme for economic transformation that places workers at the centre of growth, not at its margins,"*

— FEDUSA.

# STRENGTHENING WORKER FINANCIAL LITERACY: FEDUSA PARTNERS WITH ATLEHA-EDU FOR NATIONAL TRAINING ROLLOUT



*FEDUSA Training Officer, Boniswa Mbewana, at the Financial Empowerment Training held at the Parktonian Hotel, Johannesburg.*

Atleha-Edu, in partnership with FEDUSA, continued with the national rollout of Financial Empowerment Training for FEDUSA affiliates. The sessions covered debt management, budgeting, savings, investments, the two-pot retirement system, death benefits, and other essential topics that support financial resilience.

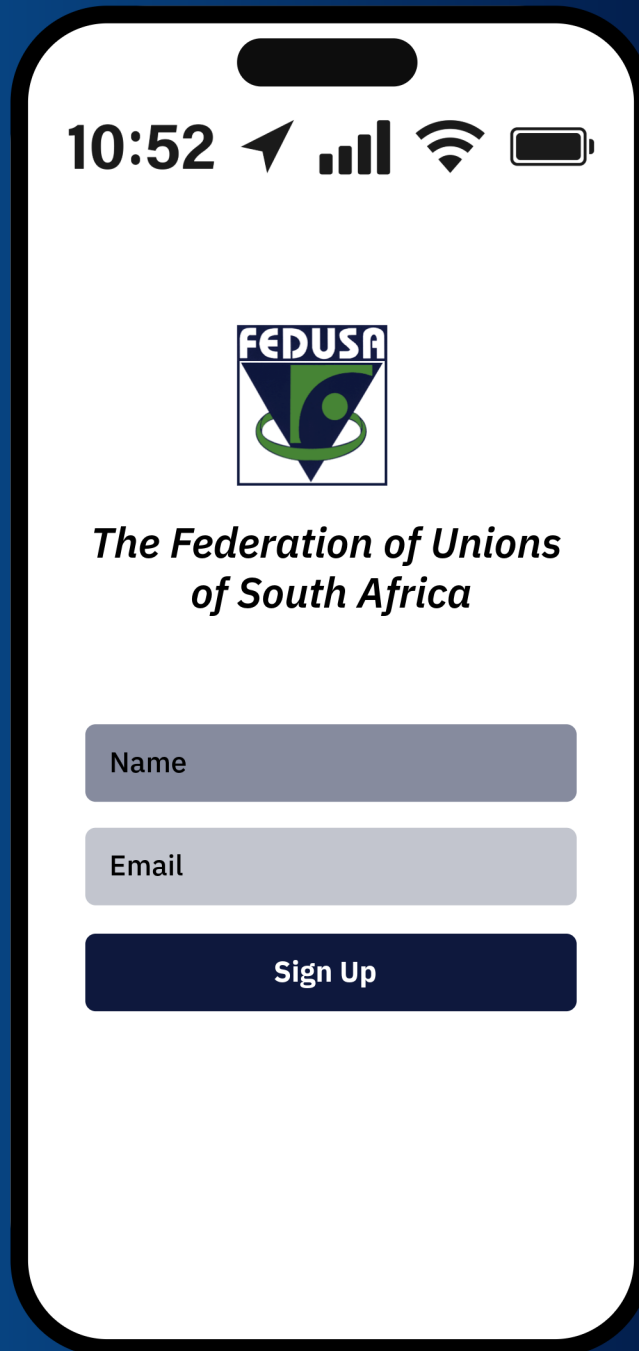
FEDUSA Training Officer Boniswa Mbewana noted that while attendance posed some challenges, proactive measures improved participation and ensured meaningful engagement.

“The level of participation shows that these trainings are vital. Shop stewards deal with these issues daily, and this knowledge supports both their work and their personal financial well-being,” she said.

Atleha-Edu is a purpose-driven non-profit organisation that collaborates with financial service providers to deliver accessible and compliant financial education, aligned with FSCA Conduct Standard 1 of 2025 and the Financial Sector Code.

The partnership reflects FEDUSA's long-standing commitment to empowering workers both at the workplace and in their financial lives.

# COMING SOON: FEDUSA Mobile App Relaunch.



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# COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN A DIGITAL AGE TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT PSCBC SESSION



*Delegates at the PSCBC Strategic Planning Session. Photo Credit: PSCBC*

Addressing the PSCBC Strategic Planning Session under the theme “Collective Bargaining in the Digital Era: Building Trust, Managing Disputes, and Ensuring Good Governance,” FEDUSA President Godfrey Selematsela emphasised the importance of the PSCBC as one of the most critical governance structures in the public service.

President Selematsela noted that it is not merely a meeting place, but a platform where power is balanced through negotiation, where disagreements are resolved before they escalate into crises, and where agreements provide stability to the public service.

“We must protect that role. Building trust in a digital era is not easy. Information moves quickly. Rumours spread faster than facts. Decisions are increasingly driven by data that many workers do

not fully see or understand.

“Trust cannot be built on speeches. It is built on transparency, consistency, and honesty,” he said.

He further added that technology can assist workers. Digital document systems can improve access to information. Shared data platforms can make negotiations more informed. Real-time communication can reduce confusion.

He also highlighted that technology can also create fear among workers.

“Workers will not trust systems that monitor them without consultation. They will not accept algorithms that affect their performance ratings, deployment, or restructuring without clarity. They will not support change if it feels imposed,” said Selematsela.



Day 2 of the ILO “Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work” National Symposium reinforces a central message: productivity growth and decent work must go hand in hand to drive inclusive and sustainable development in South Africa. Credit: ILO Pretoria Office

# ILO SAFLEC PROJECT SYMPOSIUM

*The* International Labour Organization (ILO) SAFLEC Project Symposium, held in Johannesburg, highlighted successes through practical case studies in the footwear, leather, and automotive sectors.

FEDUSA General Secretary, Riefdah Ajam, said a major achievement is that participating employers and workers have not only benefited from improved productivity but have also gained access to international markets through the SAFLEC Footwear and Leather initiative.

“The remaining challenge is the lack of government support, particularly in providing additional support measures, including stronger policy options and targeted interventions,” she said.

Ajam added that, as a next step, FEDUSA would like to see greater advocacy and marketing of these successes to expand the project to more employers and workers.

At a sectoral level, she called for greater collaboration with stakeholders, particularly the involvement of bargaining councils and SETAs.

She further noted that, at a national level, there is a need for a more nuanced approach from government agencies, as well as increased involvement of sectors with active Masterplans.

# ITUC-AFRICA AND ITUC CONVENE PRE-PARATORY MEETING AHEAD OF 114TH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE



*Africa Pre-ILC Meeting, Lomé, Togo | 16–17 March 2026. Photo Credit: ITUC Africa*

The ITUC-Africa and the ITUC convened a preparatory meeting in Lomé, Togo, ahead of the 114th International Labour Conference (ILC), which will be held in June in Geneva.

One of the major discussions at the meeting focused on strategies for Decent Work in the Platform Economy, as it continues to evolve and become part of daily life. This prompted a call for platform work to be formalised and for platform workers to be recognised as workers.

There was also a review of the International Labour Organization (ILO) standard-setting processes and the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS). In addition, participants coordinated African positions ahead of the ILC in Geneva (June 2026) and identified priority cases for the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS 2026).

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

2026 TRAINING ACTIVITIES 				
TRAINING	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<b>FEDUSA SHOP STEWARD TRAINING</b>	18-19 Polokwane	14-15 PSA EC specific training Oumbu	12-13 Nelspruit	22-23 PSA EC specific training Bizana 24-25 PSA EC specific training Maluti
<b>CAMPAIGNS</b>		28 World Day for Safety and Health at Work		
<b>FEDUSA-SANLAM FINANCIAL WELLNESS PROGRAMME</b>		01 & 28 Virtual	19 Virtual	23 Virtual

## *We value your feedback.*

*Please complete the survey for the training you attended.*

*If you have already completed the survey, no further action is required.*



**FEDUSA TRAINING PROGRAMMES FEEDBACK**

SCAN ME



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28 April  
19 May  
23 June  
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM



Virtual

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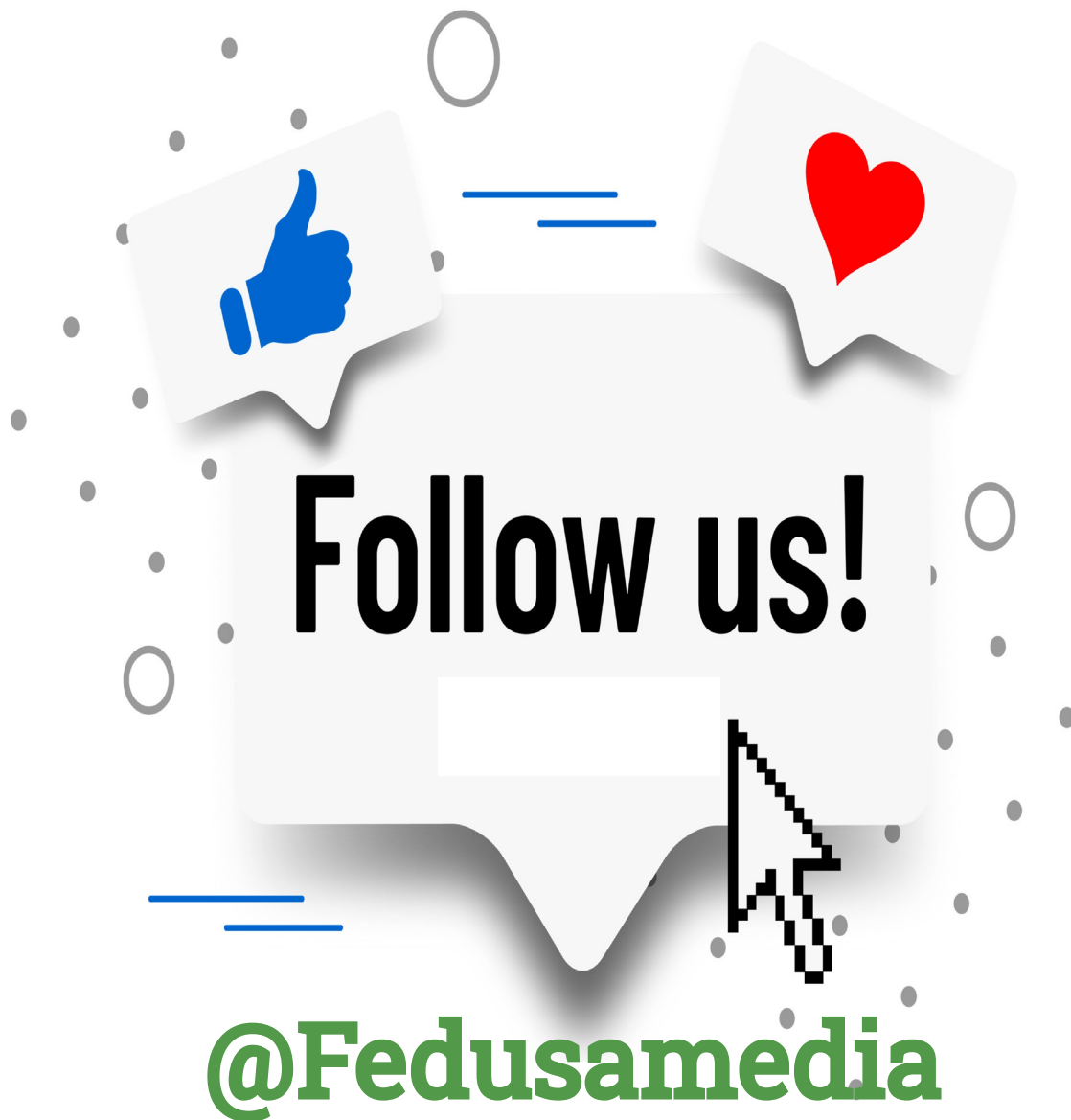
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### Registration

Participants are kindly requested to register using the following link or scan the QR Code.

<https://forms.gle/y1RNBXeolXnLoxo6A>





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