



NAPTOSA NATIONAL CONGRESS: 22/23 OCTOBER 2019

POST CONGRESS STATEMENT

NAPTOSA's 6th National Congress gathered at Emperor's Palace Convention Centre, Kempton Park, on 22 and 23 October 2019.

Congress was graced by the presence of the Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshekga; leaders of education unions; the PSCBC, ELRC, SACE and the ETDP SETA as well as two former Presidents and the former Executive Director of the union.

A video-recorded input by the General Secretary of Education International added further luster to the occasion.

THEME

Delegates confronted a range of issues that are impacting, or will in future impact, educators and the education sector. The theme of Congress: **"Too soon to despair"** was spot on, because it was clear from the debates that it is in the DNA of NAPTOSA to stay the course and to remain positive, whatever the situation. That is not to say that delegates shied away from criticism where criticism is due, or demanded that ills in the education system be addressed, as can be gleaned from *inter alia* the following:

EDUCATION-RELATED MATTERS

School and School-related Gender-Based Violence

Congress expressed condemnation of the escalating acts of school violence and reiterated the union's position that it has evolved into a national crisis and even beyond. It was agreed that a multi-disciplined approach was needed. In this regard, the importance of the provisioning of sport in schools, as an intervention tool, was emphasized. It was therefore proposed that the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture be engaged to consider allocating a slice of their budget to schools.

On the issue of School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV), NAPTOSA recommitted itself to propagating and rolling out its anti-SRGBV programme. A presentation by Prof Moletsane of the University of KwaZulu-Natal also cast new light on the many facets and depth of gender-based violence in our communities and its impact on schooling.

School safety

This remains one of the main areas of concern for the union. It is felt that the Department only pays lip serve to this matter and that the many pleas of NAPTOSA in this regard are not taken seriously by the Department as evidenced by the number of letters written to it without response.

Education-related Resolutions and issues

The following education-related Resolutions were adopted by Congress:

- A call on the DBE to expedite the pace of change in curriculum and assessment policies that will empower teachers to take teaching, learning and assessment into their own hands.
- A demand that DBE should publish guidelines for the implementation of the assessment accommodation policy for special needs learners, *inter alia* to clarify the cost implications for providing scribes and readers for learners who qualify for this type of accommodation/concession.
- A demand that DHET should quality assure all institutions offering educator qualifications, so as to eliminate cases where students study at these institutions only to find that the qualifications are not recognized by the employer.
- A call on DBE to develop a transparent, fair selection policy for markers of the NSC exams – in other words subject competency tests.

Congress also expressed concerns regarding the following education-related issues:

- After 3 years of piloting, there are learners who will be completing the Technical Occupational Curriculum (TOC), yet will be without a recognised qualification (General Certificate in Education: Technical Occupational Curriculum), because the certificate is still not accredited by UMALUSI.
- The implementation of DCAPS for Grade R-5 Learners with Severe Intellectual Disability remains under threat as the planned workshop on the finalisation of the curriculum, prior to it being submitted to UMALUSI for accreditation, was cancelled due to a lack of funds, leaving this vulnerable group of learners marginalised in the absence of an appropriate curriculum.
- The lack of funding was severely impeding service delivery in the education sector.
- School infrastructure development and maintenance is compromised because it is dealt with as a provincial, and not a national, competency.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (NHI)

A presentation by Prof Alex van den Heever of Wits University, highlighted the many perceived ills of the proposed South African version of a NHI. It is clear that this proposed policy by government requires further in-depth analysis within the union. Provincial Executive Committees and the NEC will deliberate the matter in order to formulate a NAPTOSA position.

THE SELLING OF POSTS

Because it is perceived that pockets of this practice are still in existence, the outcome of the Volmink report was questioned, with delegates indicating that they wish to see the Minister and the Department of Basic Education act on the report.

NAPTOSA RELATED ISSUES

Leadership

This was also an elective Congress. The trust placed by members in the leadership of the union, that has been the hallmark of NAPTOSA since inception and a great source of stability in the union, was once again evident when the leaders who completed the previous term of office, was returned unopposed. The national leadership is as follows:

President - Mr Nkosipendule Ntantala

Deputy President – Mr Moses Standaar

Vice-President – Mr Tinus du Preez

NAPTOSA Motto

Congress resolved to amend the NAPTOSA motto to read “Serve with dignity” to accommodate all our members who work in the education sector, be they educators or non-educators. The service of members to their schools, learners, the communities in which they operate and to the country was highlighted and celebrated. Leaders of our union, at all levels, were also reminded that the positions they hold are primarily to serve the members and the union and that once elected it is expected of each of them to make the maximum contribution.

Gender equality

A call was made on female members of the union to, in greater numbers, participate in the structures of the union and to avail themselves for leadership positions.

WAY FORWARD

Many of the issues before Congress were delegated to the various PECs to deliberate on and to obtain mandates for finalisation in the NEC. Members will be kept abreast, as and when further Resolutions are adopted.

B.L. MANUEL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR