

Resolutions Adopted at SAMWU 1st Congress: 24-25 October 1987.

1. In launching of Samwu, practical steps were taken into considerations.

This congress of municipal workers' representatives having established SAMWU and adopted its constitution thereby establishing the union, and **noting**:

- a) That the union shall be a registered union.
- b) That the CTMWA is an established and registered and constitutes a viable self-sufficient union.
- c) That we are committed to ensure that SAMWU is able to operate fully on its own name, as soon as possible.

And **noting** that the following steps be adopted to establish the unions legal status.

- a) CTMWA will adopt the constitution and name as adopted by this congress and amend its registration accordingly.
- b) Municipal workers who are members of TGWU shall be transferred to SAMWU. ALL subscriptions from TGWUs municipal members will with immediate effect be transferred and banked with the National account of SAMWU. TGWU shall transfer its registration rights and recognition agreements or rights gained on behalf of its municipal members to SAMWU.
- c) Municipal workers who are members of GWUSA and SAAWU shall be transferred to SAMWU. They shall sign stop order forms in the name of the union and all subscriptions received shall as soon as possible be in the name SAMWU. Books issued for that purpose by the NEC and banked in the national account of SAMWU.
- d) MWUSA shall dissolve itself and ensure its full and proper liquidation. The members of MWUSA shall thereafter be transferred to SAMWU.
- e) That all of the above unions transferring members will cease immediately to recruit further in their own name.

2. Members Subscriptions

Noting that the unions participation in the Inaugural congress, all have different rates of membership.

Resolves

- a) That subscriptions for members on stop order shall be 0, 5% of gross basic earnings or R2 per month, whichever is greater.
- b) That subscription being collected by hand shall be R2 per month.
- c) That subscription as in (point 1), be deducted from the members wages by the employer on the receipt of a signed stop order authorization form signed by each

member, save as in 2, where subscriptions forms for current paid up member's may be collected by hand as an interior measure subject to method being duly approved.

3.Membership applications.

Noting:

- a) The unions participation in the inaugural congress all have different systems for membership applications which need to be standardized so as to avoid confusions.
- b) Section 2.2 of the constitution sets out the basis of further members to apply to join the National Union.

Believes:

- a) The smooth transfer of members of the unions participating in this inaugural congress to the National Union, regulating admission of future members to the National Union and centralized administration of membership records are important for organization and unity.

Resolves:

- a) That all paid up members of the union's participation in the Inaugural congress, as approved by the credentials committee, shall be deemed to be the members of the National Union subject to inclusion of additional members employed at municipalities where recognition is currently being concluded and where stop order payments are received by the National Union.
- b) That the years of membership of one of the unions participating in the inaugural congress shall be transferred to the national union.
- c) That all future members of the National Union shall apply for membership on the National Unions application form and stop order authorization form according to 2.2.1 of the constitution which shall be printed and distributed by the Head Office of the National Union.
- d) That to facilitate the process of recognition of the national union by the employers of members, all structures in the union shall ensure that :
 - ✓ The rights and duties contained in all recognition agreements in force between the unions participating in the inaugural congress and the employees concerned, be transferred to the National Union and that copies of such agreements be sent to the Head Office.
 - ✓ Where any such agreement is presently being negotiated by the members of any of the unions participating in the inaugural national congress, such an agreement shall be amended to reflect the name of the National Union.
 - ✓ Where such negotiations have not yet been commenced, such members shall sign the National Unions, stop order authorization forms in respect of the deduction of

the union's subscription and the NEC through the head office shall assist and monitor the progress of such members towards recognition of the National Union.

- * The options given above, together with the NEC through the head office shall assist and monitor the progress of such members towards recognition of the National Union.
- e) That the National Union shall develop a uniform to approach to recruiting and organizing members towards concluding consistent recognition agreements and that the NEC be instructed to hold seminars at the earliest possible time to facilitate this process
- f) That all necessary particulars of each paid up members as approved by credentials committee be sent to the head office as a matter of urgency to enable the Head office of the National Union to issue membership cards in the name of the National Union to such member's.
- g) That the national Executive Committee should investigate a system for keeping national membership records on computer and work towards establishing a centralized data base for the National Union.

4. Shop Stewards Committee

Noting :

- a) That the Constitution provides for the establishment of committee for shop stewards in each local authority or establishment /section of a local authority or establishment (hereinafter described as "local authority").
- b) That workers in any given local authority often work far apart from one another , and often in small groups

Believes

- a) That the strength of the Union at any given local authority depends on the unity amongst the majority of the workers in the local authority
- b) That it is a right of the workers in the local authority to democratically elect shop stewards for each constituency within that local authority to represent them ; and that such shop stewards should negotiate for the recognition of the union by that local authority and recognition of their status as representatives of Union members in that local authority
- c) That members must participate fully and actively in giving mandates to their shop stewards to represent them in the shop stewards committee and other bodies of the National Union to ensure democratic decision-making and strong united workers; action within the National Union.
- d) That Shop Stewards should meet as often and regularly as possible amongst themselves and with the workers whom they represent to best enable them to lead represent the workers to whom they are accountable , outside working time and where possible within working time .

- e) That it is a priority of the National Union to establish such structures.

Resolves

- a) That workers in a local authority should only elect such a shop stewards committee once the majority of the workforces at such local authority are members of the National Union.
- b) That a priority for such Union members through their shop stewards is the negotiation of recognition of the union's majority membership by their employers and the granting of stop-order deduction facilities in respect of subscriptions .
- c) To strive for employers to grant time off during working hours for shop stewards to meet amongst themselves and with the members whom they represent, as a right.

5. Organising Principles

This congress recognises:

- a) That we here gathered today represent a very small minority of municipal workers.
- b) That it is our objective to unite all Municipal workers in South Africa.
- c) That the process of organising the unity of workers is a process of opposing the many divisions imposed by the bosses.
- d) That we must continually assess the bosses power and that of their sweetheart unions
- e) That we are committed to uniting the municipal workers irrespective of race, sex, creed or present economic status.
- f) That walls are built brick by brick

Therefore resolves.

- a) That our union shall use the board strategy of recruitment from below and opposition to all divisive institutions.
- b) That our unions should be flexible in its strategic applications of the tactics of the "boycott" and "take over" of such institutions.
- c) That we must organize firstly to consolidate and alternative to advance
- d) That accordingly we must organize by targeting establishments, organising and establishing such unity of workers. Then advancing to prove our effectiveness and unite further workers.
- e) That the Union shall be judged by its ability to unite workers to common expression of purpose.

6. Establishing of the union structures.

This congress **recognize**

- a) That the levels of organization in pre-existing structures are at different stages.
- b) That the organization varies in its strength over time
- c) That worker leadership and control is based on such leaders having a clear constituency and mandate.
- c) That the effectiveness of the constitution will be tested by our efforts to make it operate

”That interim arrangements must be aimed to establish practices in line with the constitution.”

And further **noting** that:

- a) Pre-existing structures and forms of organization have created the following categories of organization.
- b) Members on stop-orders in establishments where employers recognize and negotiate with them on the basis that they represent 50% of workers in a local authority or section
- c) Members who have signed in majority of workers in a local authority or section on stop- orders and are fighting for recognition and rights to bargain
- d) Members, who are contributing by hand, represent a 50% of the workforce in a local authority.
- e) Individual members whose position within their establishment is weak and who are unable to be effectively represented in structure.

Therefore **resolves**:

- a) That the NEC and/ or General Council may by resolution define the status or any organ within the union and /or:
- b) Prescribe such remedies as are needed to ensure the proper function of such organ
- c) Detail the rights which such organs shall exercise within the union until it meets the criteria for formal status under the constitution.
- d) Establishes the following categories as guidelines to determine the status of an organ or segment of an organization.

7. Organizing Projects

- a) Where members have individual rights but not representative status as a structure. This shall be determined by the NEC.

8. Interim Structures

- a) This shall have collective rights of representation to participate within the Union as structures through delegates without voting rights.

(Which substantial membership has been organized, not yet majority, not yet paid-up)

9. Formal Structures

- a) Which are official structures of the union.

(Where there is majority of paid-up members)

- Adopts the categorization as outlined above, and that shop stewards committees be formed on the basis of majority of paid-up membership and in line with SAMWU'S resolution on shop steward committees subject to progress reports being submitted to the National Office bearers for discussion and guidance by the National office bearers with the view to establishing the structures of the union and convening the first NEC meeting.
- e) That this first NEC shall and be deemed to have full status as the union's NEC and may call a General Council or further National Congress if need be .

And further **noting**:

- The extent to which structures are under organized as reflected above further resolves that:
 - ✓ Only formal and interim shop stewards Committees.

10. Head Office.

This **congress noting**

- a) That a Head Office has to be established to fulfil the requirements prescribed in the Constitution.
- b) That various specialized units are essential for the effective functioning of the Union.

Therefore **resolves**

- a) That the Head Office shall be established as determined by the National Executive Committee.

11. Affiliation to Cosatu.

Noting

- a) That COSATU represents all major industrial Unions in this country.
- b) That COSATU believes in strong and democratic organizational structures at every workplace.
- c) That COSATU believes in fighting for new society free from oppression and exploitation

d) The vital role of COSATU within the working class struggle in South Africa.

Resolves :

- a) To affiliate to COSATU.
- b) To adhere to the principles and practices of COSATU.
- c) To strive to forward the aims and objectives of COSATU by building a strong and democratic National Union of municipal workers through the democratic participation of such affiliate within its structures.

12. Sexual Discrimination

This congress notes:

- a) That exploitation and oppression against workers exist within the context of the South African racial capitalist system.
- b) That female workers carry the double yoke of oppression in the municipal and others.

Believes:

- a) That all workers should be treated on a fair and equal basis.
- b) That there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex.

Resolves .

- a) To work relentlessly against the exploitation and oppression of workers on the basis of their sex until full and equal rights are achieved for all.
- b) To actively promote a greater understanding of the specific discrimination suffered by women workers and ways in which these can be done.
- c) To actively promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the National Union.

13. Non Racialism

This congress noting:

- a) That non-racialism rejects the unscientific concept of “race”
- b) That government structures seek to divide the working class on the basis of an unscientific classification according to “race”
- c) That local authorities segregate and discriminate amongst their workforce along “racial “ lines.
- d) That the Congress of South African Trade Unions has resolved to strive for the building of a united working class movement regardless of “race”, colour, creed or sex.

Believing that all people are members of one race-viz. the human race- this congress hereby rejects all racial classification imposed by the government and accordingly **resolves:**

- a) To actively campaign against job discrimination or any other form of discrimination relating to workers in all local authorities.
- b) To actively campaign to build unity among all municipal workers regardless of racial classification.
- c) To support and promote working class campaigns in the non racial democratic struggle.

14. Political Policy

Noting:

- a) That individual members and groups of members from pre-existing unions have differing political views and come from varying political backgrounds within the broader liberatory movements.
- b) That we are all committed to building a common base in the National Union through the development of democratic structures.
- c) That COSATU adopted the Freedom Charter at its Second National Congress.
- d) That we are all committed to the leadership of the organized working class in the struggle.

Believing:

- a) That unity of members, the sharing of experiences and the development of open and comradely debate within the Union are of paramount importance to develop the political consciousness of members and to develop a clear political direction for the union. Such an approach is also necessary in view of the potential to organize and represent wide layer workers throughout the country.
- b) That the development of the Unions structures will provide the base for debate and facilitate the process of democratic decision-making.
- c) That discussion and thorough debate must take place in the light of COSATU's political policy.
- d) That concrete development of this kind will develop a worker leadership on the broadest possible level.

Resolves:

- a) To develop democratic control over our organization;

To foster honesty in expressing our views and ideas, freedom to promote these ideas within the structures of our organization, discipline when debating and the democratic right for constructive criticism.

To carry out the views of the majority.

- a) To consolidate the organization of members in the sector, to set up structures in line with the constitution and resolutions, to organize all unorganized municipal workers

throughout the country , and to ensure maximum debate and democratic decision-making in the Union.

- b) To discuss the Freedom Charter and all other progressive program at all levels of the structures in order to arrive at a coherent working class understanding of their respective demands.
- c) To ensure that the union's worker leadership advances the working class struggles in the broadest possible sense.

15. Self Sufficiency

This congress **believes:**

- a) That political independence of an organization is closely related to its financial independence.
- b) That the financial self- sufficiency of the National Union is in the interests of its members and the broader working class.
- c) That the National Union can only become financially self-sufficient if clear steps are taken in this direction.
- d) That in terms of the Unions constitution, all structures forming part of the National Union have a role to ensuring that the Unions financial policy, program and constitutional requirements are carried out.

Therefore **Resolves:**

- To work towards financial self sufficiency in all respects.
- That the first step in this direction is to work towards all running expenses being met by subscriptions paid by members
- That subscriptions be structured by Congress on an ongoing basis and in such a manner that it meets the Unions financial requirements for expansion and progress
- That the financial provisions as laid down in the constitutional be strictly adhered to, and that the Head Office be accordingly instructed to monitor developments on this level and report to the NEC on a regular basis. If necessary, the NEC shall take stringent disciplinary steps if requirements are not met.
- That applications for financial assistance for the National Union for specific projects be controlled by the NEC according to the constitution.

17. International Policy

That this **congress** noting:

- a) Municipal workers still have to achieve unity that would see the emergency of a single powerful National Union.

- b) In the present situation South Africa affiliation by the new municipal union to any international trade secretariat, will not allow municipal workers to participate fully and actively in all activities of these organizations.
- c) Any affiliation is bound to draw us into the controversies of international politics and introduces the danger of division and collapse that arises out of the practices of these organizations.
- d) South African workers are engaged in a struggle against apartheid and exploitation which is also a struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism.
- e) There is division in the international trade union movement caused by imperialist forces.

Therefore **resolves.**

There new Municipal Union will not affiliate to any ITS or TUIS.

But **Undertakes:**

- a) To strengthen fraternal links with progressive worker organizations in all countries which are committed to our struggle for freedom in our country and the building of true international working class solidarity.
- b) To develop a systematic program of travel , study , research and activities that would broaden the education and perspective of our working class leadership and membership.
- c) To establish greater direct contact with workers in developing countries especially in Africa where such workers suffer the same hardship as workers in South Africa under foreign and national corporation domination.

18.Migrant Labour and Hostel System Must Be Done Away With.

South Africa is a fully fledged bourgeois state and that this in itself presupposes that no tribal communities could truly exist side by side with industrial communities without being deliberately maintained for sinister motives. In many countries of the world today the development of capitalism resulted in the dissolution of tribal communities but in South Africa the existence of tribal communities is purposefully encouraged by racist government in collaboration with the employers. The nationalist government has passed the most atrocious laws like land acts to ensure the existence of these tribal communities in order to reap more profit and undermine the unity of the working class. The migrant labour system is used a source of cheap labour .It is this migrant labor system used by the government that resulted in the establishment of hostels which are in no way good for human beings to stay. It is this migrant labor system that resulted in our fellow countrymen straddling both in rural and urban areas with no homes. We therefore move that migrant labour system and hostels must be dispensed with as it is the bourgeoisie alone that benefit from such system.

19. Living wage

This **congress noting:**

- a) That the majority of municipal workers in South Africa earn poverty wages, some as little as R30.00 to R 60.00 a week.
- b) That municipal workers provide services considered essential to the well being of the urban living areas.
- c) That the provision of such services cannot be remunerated on the basis of “profit” but on the maintenance of social standards.

Therefore **Resolves:**

- a) As a matter of priority to research and publicise the unacceptable wages paid to municipal workers.
- b) To set standards for the progressive achievement of living wages as determined by the NEC arising from collective discussions and mandates within the Union.
- c) To discuss and develop strategies through negotiation, mobilization and organization to achieve a Living wage.

20. The right to Strike.

This **Congress Noting:**

- a) The internationally recognized weapon of workers in their struggle against the system of exploitation, is the workers right to strike over disputes and workers demands.
- b) In South Africa the Labor Relations Act denies local authority workers, along with other “essential services” workers, the right to strike and instead provides for the compulsory settling of disputes and workers ‘ demands outside collective bargaining through expensive , time consuming arbitration in the hands of an outside party.
- c) The nature of municipal work, the spread of municipal workers and the absence of a representative National Union have weakened the collective strength of municipal workers throughout the country.

Believing :

- a) The universally accepted right to strike will strengthen the collective power of workers and the broader working class struggle.
- b) All workers including “essential services “workers should have the right to strike, picket , take solidarity action and be protected from dismissal when taking such action.
- c) The birth of the National Union for municipal workers is the base from which will strive to gain the right to strike.

Resolves:

- a) To build links with workers internationally particularly workers in the public sector.
- b) To develop a spirit of solidarity towards all workers fighting for the right to strike.

- c) To solidly build the structures of our National Union, to ensure maximum participation of all members of the Union and to launch a nationally co-ordinated campaign for the right to strike.

