



NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION

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**WORLD TEACHERS DAY CELEBRATION AND RENAMING OF TDI HALL
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
27th OCTOBER 2023
EMADADENI
09H00**

Greetings to:

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR – Deputy President GM Mabuza.
NATU BISHOP – Dinangwe and his better half.
NATU GENERAL SECRETARY – Mr D. Ngema.
NATU VICE PRESIDENTS – B.Z. Mbatha, A.S. Dlamini, M. Mabija and A.N. Nhlapho.
Members of the Enlarged Executive Board and Members of Council.
DIRECTOR – Teacher Development Institute, Prof. Imenda, Ndabezitha!
NATU Former Vice President, Ms Mbele.
The Thompsons, Mrs Thompson the Senior (Mother to President Thompson) and Mrs Thompson the Junior (Wife to President Thompson).
NATU retired Stalwart Mr Molefe, former Durban Region Chairperson.
Hon. Minister Nxesi, minister of Employment and Labour.
Hon. MEC for Education in KZN, Mbalenhle Cleopatra Frazer.
Head of Labour – Mpumalanga Province, Mr Hlahla Ngwenya and his better half.
Mr Khuzwayo, the representative, Amajuba District.
FEDUSA GS, Sisi Rifa.... Happy Birthday!!!
JVC, Brother Jerome, his Wife and daughter.
PSCBC, comrade Omang.
KZN ELRC Secretary Mr Mncwabe.
GEPF, SACE, NECT, Media.
NATU staff and FTSS.
NATU UPhongolo Choir.
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me Programme Director to extend my gratitude to the Board for scheduling this auspicious activity today. We gather in this fashion to celebrate teachers, I mean the professionals behind the success of the country, our country South Africa.

The 5th of October was proclaimed by United Nations Education and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1994 as World Teachers Day. They with International Labour Organisation (ILO) made recommendations concerning the status of TEACHERS.

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Those recommendations set forth the Rights and Responsibilities of teachers as well as international standards for their initial preparation and further Education, Recruitment, Employment, Teaching and Learning conditions. Since its adoption, the recommendations have been considered an important set of guidelines to promote teachers' status in the interest of QUALITY EDUCATION.

VIVA NATU VIVA!!!! VIVA the Teaching Profession VIVA!!

The National Teachers' Union has identified this day for two main reasons 1. To celebrate the most ignored and marginalised public servants (TEACHERS), 2. To pay tribute to our late President, Mr Alan Thompson. We did not want to confuse our day with the 5th because NATU has a very good and true story to share on Teacher's commemoration than any other organisation or the employer, and pay the well-deserved tribute to our National Icon without any form of disturbance, above all to give NATU members an extra holiday because you are so special and you deserve better for your right choice, you chose NATU. The alternative organisation that stood the test of time over the period of 105 years without selling members to the employer, the organisation that fought with atrocities of the past during apartheid regime. The organisation that is still relevant in our democracy because of her golden principle of politically nonalignment to any political formation.

Actually, there is no need for long speeches because the writing is on the wall, what has been achieved by Teachers is well known but deliberately ignored by those we put in power. We should be chanting NATU slogans, singing revolutionary songs and enjoy coming together as NATU with our social partners. We are here to honour President Thompson for his bravery approach on issues affecting teaching, learning and conditions of service of the working class. I mean a leader who could work for NATU without fear or favour. I mean a leader who nearly lost his life for this organisation, he survived brutal attack after raising the issue of corruption and maladministration in KZN DoE. It is so unfortunate that NO arrest had been made and the file is closed. Corruption has been the order of the day in our community and in government.

I am referring to the National Icon that respected and worked cooperatively with his predecessor, Hon. President S.L. Ngcobo the living ancestor of NATU. Mr Thompson was young, eloquent, energetic, and charismatic but he was loyal to the President as the Deputy President. He could not shake hand with anyone before the President could because he understood the culture and ethos of the organisation he loved so much. That is why the Board and the Policy Conference endorsed that this structure / hall be named after him. We want to preserve our organisation and our leader's legacy. Thanks to his wife MaKhumalo, his family (the Thompsons) and Madadeni community for sacrificing him to come and serve the organisation with love and dignity. This hall is officially named after him just for that reason.

We need to celebrate, you colleagues as teachers for your dedication in shaping the future of our country's children making sure they become the future responsible leaders and citizens that will contribute meaningfully to the collapsing economy of our beautiful country. Our country is fully resourced, economy should not be collapsing, the challenge is our country, and her resources are poorly if not mismanaged by those given a responsibility to manage it. Despite all odds you still soldier on because you

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are convinced that teaching is a noble calling and indeed is a mother off professions. It is so flabbergasting, painful, and disturbing that the communities we serve look down upon us as teachers. What went wrong? Even our employer is looking down upon us, it is impossible to keep experienced teachers in the profession, they opt for private sector because of unbearable working conditions. It is even hard to recruit young blood because there is nothing 'good' about being a teacher these days. The majority of teachers today are those considered our profession as the second if not the third choice when they chose careers, that is why we have so many cases against teachers at SACE, the department has to take the blame for failing us, we deserve better Hon. Minister and Hon. MEC as the public servants. Nothing can replace teachers even in the changing or totally changed world we are important, and we are the true agents of change.

I don't think the government as an employer does recognise teachers and employees in the sector, we don't get the recognition we deserve. Since 1994, the conditions of service are almost the same. For a very simple meeting to discuss issues affecting teaching and learning with the DoE officials, you need to beg them. Teachers and their organisation are not taken seriously especially in the provinces. These officials seem to be very busy, but you can't see what are they doing to improve the employees conditions of service. Teachers, principals, and schools are suffering under their supervision. Principals of schools in KZN are running schools from their pockets, major provincial educational centres had no electricity in KZN, and you think we have a caring administration. This is a disaster and cannot be accepted as it impacts negatively in service delivery. It does not need one to have a PhD to understand that meeting with stakeholders and role players is a platform where the officials get briefed of challenges and possible solutions and both parties take a first step towards service delivery to ensure that our poor learners get quality education.

VIVA NATU VIVA!!!!

The government and the ruling party always claim that they prioritize education, do they? If they do why:

1. They imposed budget cut in the department of education allocation. The progressive country led by progressive leaders invests more in education and health departments. It is impossible to achieve what is said by the theme of this year if we continue to implement the budget cut. We can't get the teachers we need for education we want under this situation. Where the money goes is a serious question.
2. Are doing justice to those learners in multi grade classes, what about their educators. Those learners are robbed of their contact time on daily bases. Are we serious about the education of those poor learners. This is totally unacceptable.
3. Nothing has been done so far to eradicate pit toilets used by both teachers and learners in deep rural area, for how long should we stay with this challenge inherited from the apartheid regime. These toilets are hazardous. No, my dear leaders, comrades, and compatriots, we have nothing to celebrate as teachers.
4. We still have a lot of dilapidated infrastructure; I mean roads leading to schools are not attended to and school building. Last week more than 40 schools have been stormed damaged and the Premier of KZN announced that they will fix

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- them before examinations commences, it is unbelievable if you look at their record. Where to get money as they failed to deposit norms and standards in schools, principals are running schools from their pockets.
5. I pray that it does not rain during examination as many schools are inaccessible during rainy days because access roads are never attended to such that invigilators and learners would travel long distances to reach school and leave their transport miles away, what is a problem in engaging department of transport and municipalities and have access roads attended to. Let us prioritize schools as government departments if we are serious about our education.
 6. We still experience shortages of educators, support staff and officials in our circuit and district offices, most districts offices run with skeleton staff and that impacts negatively in operation in education. Let us not be heartless and turn a blind eye on these challenges. Our department is a crisis.
 7. The issue of Safety and Security has been there for a long time, unfortunately it fell on deaf ears. Teachers are not sure if they would get back to their homes in the afternoon because they are vulnerable and targeted. They are robbed of their possession and killed at work. Remember, it is a responsibility of an employer to provide safety and security at workplace. How many teachers to be robbed and how many teachers should die at workplace for the employer to give this issue the urgency it deserves.
 8. Insufficient Elsen schools in our country is a disgrace because it manifests that we look down upon these learners with disabilities. It is not enough that we have so few in the country. They also need teachers trained to teach so that they feel that they are part of the society and taken care of.
 9. Deployment vs Employment, it is so unfortunate that some teachers belonging to a particular union are deployed to senior positions in schools, circuit offices, district offices, provincial offices and at head office, just because of the colour of their shirt they put on. Competency has become secondary. That is why the DOE is experiencing challenges. NATU members are deprived of opportunities and are told to join a “preferred” organisation to be promoted. This rubbish of Cadre deployment is a shame, it compromises our system and collapses the government. Let the competent candidates get the job for the love of our country.
 10. I don't want even to talk about norms and standard issue, some provinces have paid it and some have not especial KZN. Unfortunately, no explanation given. Principals of schools are frustrated they have to run schools from their pockets, they use their money to buy electricity, service photocopiers, buy papers and run examination and at the end of the day they are forced to account for poor results. I suggest Madam MEC that let circuit managers account, let the district directors account, let the MEC account and the Minister because you would be equally responsible for the damage that would have been cause. How can you run an institution from your pocket and expected to account, account for what? Kuyadlalwa ngathi bo!
 11. Employees in education have gone through QMS and PMDS respectively as per agreement and this process occurs annually, it is worrisome that other provinces including KZN have not paid it. Where is the money, employees are hungry! This is not an emergency; it is something known and budgeted for. We want our money Madam MEC!
 12. Grade R educators are taken for granted by both the government and the department. Madam MEC when you graced our conference in September 2022

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you promised to make at least 500 grade R educators permanent. We applauded you as we were hopeful that you will expedite the process as you understand challenges faced by these educators as a teacher yourself, a Departmental Head, as the principal, as you were the SADTU leader and as the Political Head of Education in KZN. The poor educators are earning nothing, they don't have benefits like you and me and they have dependants. Let us not be heartless, they deserve better as citizens of this country. Are we really changing the lives of the people and is this what we need to celebrate on our day?

13. We have thousands of qualified unemployed educators in our country while we experience overcrowded classes. We have a number of unfilled vacancies in our schools and classes are full to their capacity. The government and the department are creating no posts. You know what, kids are produced in this country by producing them they create educators' job but there stand the authorities blocking job opportunities for poor educators. At least new posts should be created triennially and invest in education wisely.

My main question is, the theme of this year Teacher celebration is 'THE TEACHERS WE NEED FOR EDUCATION WE WANT: The global imperative to reverse the teacher shortage', Is the department doing enough to mitigate and prepare the teachers to face the challenging world educationally. Any attempt has been made by the department to engage Universities, Faculties of Education to shape the curriculum to produce THE TEACHERS WE NEED FOR EDUCATION WE WANT. Retraining educators would be the short-term intervention and won't give us the desired results.

Thanks to the NATU Teacher Development Institute, Prof. Imenda and Vice President Professional Matters, B.Z. Mbatha, you are working very hard to train our members to acquire skills, making them to be teachers we need for education we want and NATU prides herself that we are doing the little we can as a nonprofit making organization because we have passion in educating of our nation. NATU members and the Institute are very busy with this regard and make us a different organisation, an alternative organisation, a progressive organisation, a focussed organisation, and a very professional organisation that is guided by her third principle, PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO TEACHING INSPIRED BY CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO LEARN.

As the National Senior Certificate Examination commences next week on Monday the 30th, we pray for all candidates, invigilators, and their schools. We wish them all the best; they are the future of this country. Teachers with passion in education, NATU teachers have done all they could to prepare them for these examinations. Each candidate should know that she / he is the pride and hope for her / his family. May God the Almighty protect them.

As we unveil a bust (half statue) of the late President (Mr Thompson) and the new name of NATU Teacher Development Institute Hall, let us think of all teachers and employees in the sector who passed on including President Thompson. I pray that we make a commitment to say we will soldier on although we have nothing to celebrate, through hope we **'realize that our mission is always and often plagued with hardships, we will strive to always do our utmost best despite the trials along the way. We promise to find the spark in every learner and kindle it to a blazing flame'** for the benefit of our country South Africa a patriot.

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VIVA! The spirits of all the late NATU Presidents of NATU VIVA!

1. Rev. J.H. Xaba
2. Prf. Z.K. Matthews
3. Mr A.W. Dlamini
4. Mt T.R. Guma
5. Mr D.D. Mthimkhulu
6. Mr M.T. Moerane
7. Mr P.O. Skhakhane
8. Mr M.J. Mwelase
9. Mr G.T. Hadebe
10. Mr T.R. Shandu
11. Prof. A.J. Thembela
12. Mr. S.A. Thompson

Thank you.
God bless you.

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