

Media statement

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DENOSA calls for solidarity with SADTU in defending collective bargaining agreements

As one of the public sector unions in South Africa, Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) would like to add its voice in support of South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)'s campaign in defense of collective bargaining agreements, because tolerating disrespect of the collective agreement will nullify the essence of organised labour, an act which can lead to labour unrest if it is not managed responsibly.

This is in the background of the unilateral withdrawal of SADTU's employer from collective agreement 1 of 2011 in respect of the remuneration of the markers of the examination papers, which was an agreement that was reached after three years of both parties not finding each other.

DENOSA feels the move by the Department of Basic Education is likely to set a wrong precedent in other departments too as far as disrespecting agreements that are taken at the bargaining chamber. This disregard is tantamount to attacking the heart of organised labour and ought to be rolled back by all public sector unions if collective agreements are to be respected by all parties.

While SADTU is faced with this set of challenge, DENOSA is experiencing its own similar challenges regarding the implementation of bargaining agreement. On many occasions, for example, DENOSA has to enforce the implementation of the occupation-specific dispensation (OSD) for nurses especially in the national Department of Correctional Services through the costly court process. The OSD agreement was reached in 2007, and yet the employer has applied all tactics that aim to frustrate and delay the implementation of this award.

"Collective bargaining chambers in a democratic South Africa are essential in improving the conditions of the workers in the public sector. If the surfacing unilateral tendencies are not addressed soon, where one party does not implement the collective agreement reached at the bargaining tables, the roles of bargaining chambers are likely to lose the respect that they deserve," warns General Secretary of DENOSA, Thembeke Gwagwa.

DENOSA views the challenge faced by SADTU as the beginning of a strange and foreign tendency that will set a negative precedent across the board, which is short of rendering bargaining processes ineffective.

DENOSA finds this unacceptable and unfaithful, and so should other unions.

We call upon all stakeholders involved to take this matter in a serious light, including the Department of Public Service & Administration, whose role is to ensure labour peace in public service as a whole.

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Issued by Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA)

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