

NUMSA CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Wednesday 14 December 2011

COP 17 & Class Struggle

Amidst the deepening crisis of climate change and in the context of the COP17 negotiations that were taking place in Durban, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa convened its first International Seminar on Climate Change and Class Struggle on the 4th December 2011.

Climate change cannot be resolved separately from the resolution of the capitalist crisis. Capitalism is currently devouring its own children throughout the world. The crisis is a global class war. We need to link our struggles around climate change with global anti capitalist struggles.

Delegates at the Numsa International Climate Change Seminar called on government to review the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM's) and other elements of carbon trade that are being championed by global finance institutions and believe that an emerging carbon market could potentially undermine the need for a socially owned Renewable Energy sector. We reject market based solutions to climate change. Negotiations are not delivering so far. There is a need for massive reductions, NOW. Agreement needs to be much faster than 2020, since people are dying now. COSATU must take a policy to block CDM's and other market based climate change solutions.

We believe Just Transition must be based in worker controlled, democratic social ownership of key means of production and means of subsistence. There is a need for long term collective planning of wealth and production and how needs are met. Collective and democratic planning is needed in order to make far reaching interventions that are on the scale that is needed and at the pace it is needed, and doing so in such a way that workers avoid bearing all the costs of the transition. Without this struggle over ownership, and the struggle for a socially owned renewable energy sector, Just Transition will become a capitalist concept, building up a capitalist "green economy".

Within this, the question of ownership of hydrocarbons is central to the struggle against climate change. There is a need for nationalizing them. This

will give political control of the industries and ensure that the economic revenue stays in countries where the fossil fuels are located. The example of Bolivia is key, and there is a need to learn from this experience.

There is a need for such nationalizations to be based on a state that is really of the whole people. It involves a political struggle.

The CC noted that, in the ongoing realities of a deepening global crisis of Capitalism, it was totally misplaced to expect any real movement on the Kyoto Protocol on the Environment and any significant agreements and on reductions in capitalist modes of production which pollute the Earth and heat it up.

While the CC welcomes the increasing emphasis being placed on a safer and greener Earth, the CC emphatically noted that the main enemy of the world today is the global system of capitalism which is profit driven and has no regard for the quality of our environment and now is moving fast to turn so-called Green Fields into new sites of private profit accumulation.