

PRESS STATEMENT

Date: 07 May 1993 (C 5' 15

re: Education Crisis

We the ANC, SACP, NECC, Cosas, Cast, SADTU and its allies have called today's press conference to give clarity on the current education crisis and campaigns.

Since 1992, the National Education Conference of which we are all a part, have been requesting the establishment of a National Education and Training Negotiating Forum.

All stakeholders other than the Government, have indicated their support for this forum which is considered crucial to address the impending crisis as well as medium and long-term issues. The Government persists in postponing the establishment of the forum on various pretexts which results in their neglect of urgent issues. This has seriously undermined the confidence of people in negotiations in education and it is of the utmost urgency that the forum is formally constituted without delay.

Some of the consequences of the States failure to act are seen in the current crisis in secondary schools where the Government has deadlocked in negotiations around exam fees. Another consequence has been the collapse of negotiations around teachers salaries and retrenchments.

We are facing a crisis of immense proportions in that the collapse of the negotiations for which we have been consistently calling has left no recourse but mass action. Our organisations believe that such action must be disciplined and accountable.

Cosas has since the beginning of this week, embarked on a five-day programme of action in the form of demonstrations, marches and pickets in and around schools. These campaigns will culminate in a regional march to DET offices in Braamfontein tomorrow, Friday, May 7. The action is embarked upon on to demand the following:

- scrapping of exam fees
- re-opening of negotiations on teachers salaries

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- delivery of textbooks to students and
o the establishment of the National Education Negotiating Forum.
This campaign does not include the closure of schools. Incidents of
looting of shops and burning of vehicles are unacceptable and are
definetly not part of the action.

We, the allies gathered here today, distance ourselves from all
incidents and activities of looting, hooligalism and damage to property.
We call on all our people to ensure that any action is disciplined and
accountable and that criinal activities are strongly discouraged.

Incidents that are outside the programme of action must be reported to
leaders of out organisations in communities that are affected.

The high levels of frustration with the failure of the governemnt to
negotiate in education has resulted in calls such as the one to occupy
schools. This call will remain high on the agenda until the Government
does what only it can do and that is to become part of the education
forum so that at last we can sit down together around a table and
address the crisis and longer term issues in responsible manner.

In these difficult and trying times, we must ensure that there is
normal schooling. We therefore, call upon all students to report to
their respective schools on Monday, May 10 and to embark on various
programmes aimed at making up for lost time and in preparing for
exams. We reiterate that the campaign for the scrapping of exam fees
will continue while the students are in their classrooms. We call upon
all students to continue to register and to write examinations without
paying.

We call upon the Government and police in particular to stop
harrassing students and to contribute to the creation of a climate
conducive for learning. We also call upon the police to charge or release
all detained students. .

ISSUED BY: ANc (PWV), SACP (PWV), NECC (S.TVL), SADTU
(S.TVL), COSAS (S.TVL), SANCO (S.Tvl) and SASCO (S.TVL)