

Saftu's struggle for Nedlac acceptance continues

Members of the South African Federation of Trade Unions (Saftu) picketed last week outside the annual summit of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), protesting against delays over its right to affiliate to Nedlac and the submission of a notice under Section 77 of the Labour Relations Act to allow for protected strike action on socio-economic issues. 'Nedlac has stonewalled the federation's application to affiliate to Nedlac, despite it being the second biggest union federation. We will use all legal avenues open to us to challenge this attempts to continue cutting deals behind the industrial proletariat,' Saftu acting spokesperson, Patrick Craven is quoted in a **Polity** report as saying. **Six unions affiliated to Saftu had submitted a notice to Nedlac in December last year under Section 77 of the Labour Relations Act** in support of demands for an end to job losses and rising poverty for the creation of a new economic growth path centred on the creation of jobs through industrialisation of the economy. The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union has also expressed dissatisfaction with the way Nedlac handled its Section 77 application to protest against job losses in the mining industry, which was declined.

Nedlac says it is not biased in its issuing of Section 77 certificates, which protect workers embarking on socioeconomic protests. Denying that it deliberately stalled any applications, **Business Day** reports Nedlac said: 'Nedlac remains committed to its founding declaration of strengthening co-operative mechanisms to address the challenges facing our new democracy in an impartial manner.' **Nedlac said anger over its approval of a Cosatu protest application was undue,** as Cosatu also had other applications pending, just like other unions and federations.

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) is, meanwhile, pushing Nedlac to accept the newly formed Saftu as a member, reports **Eyewitness News**. Numsa first deputy president Basil Cele said: '**Ours is to fight issues that affect us as workers. We want to be part of this Nedlac;** they're saying since we're still young, we're four months old, we cannot form part of Nedlac and in our understanding, there is no policy that says that.'

Numsa has vowed to keep fighting until Saftu is accepted into Nedlac, reports **The Citizen**. 'Government is scared of having Saftu as part of Nedlac. They are terrified of being confronted by a truly militant, independent trade union federation and that is why they only want to deal with Cosatu and Fedusa in Nedlac. Nedlac cannot claim to have consulted labour if Saftu is not part of that structure. **Saftu is only four months old but it represents almost a million South African workers and their families.** Nedlac has no legitimacy if Saftu is not part of that structure,' Cele is quoted in the report as saying.