

## **Statement by Zwelinzima Vavi on the statement issued by the Alliance Summit on 1 July 2015,**

The statement issued after the alliance summit on 1 July 2015 marks a serious retreat from COSATU's 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress policies. In some cases it correctly identifies problems but fails to formulate the concrete solutions contained in COSATU resolutions. Other issues are simply omitted from the statement.

The most outrageous feature of the statement is its silence on the basic bread-and-butter issues facing the working class. There is not a word about the crisis of mass unemployment, poverty and inequality. There is silence on the outsourcing and casualisation of labour and the continuing use of labour brokers, our dysfunctional public education and health services. There is nothing about burying the apartheid wage structure, progress on the national minimum wage, comprehensive social security or national health insurance.

Does this mean that the summit did not discuss these critical issues, or that they were not considered important enough to mention in the statement? Either way, it is a crushing indictment of the COSATU leadership that they signed a statement that ignored such matters, and again confirms that they are no longer an independent, militant workers' voice.

The Summit statement is also silent on the crucial areas of macro-economic policies, including the NDP. It says nothing about commitments by all the Alliance partners to a radical economic transformation but confines itself to vague commitments to "a democratic and prosperous South Africa" and "working together to put in place a better life for all".

The absence of any critical comment in this crucial area of policy therefore reinforces the impression that COSATU and the alliance have indeed become "uncritical supporters" of government policies.

This proves that the Summit failed completely to play the role of monitoring government's implementation of policies which COSATU has demanded. The summit declaration says absolutely nothing on this crucial area of the Lula moment., which implies that that this is no longer an issue.

Apart from a general statement on the developmental role of SOEs, the Summit statement says nothing about the ongoing crises in many state-owned enterprises and public institutions – Eskom, SAA, PetroSA, SAPO, NPA, SAPS, SARS, IPID, Hawks, etc. The only exception is the SABC, though even there it falls short of demanding the implementation of the Public Protector's damning report.

Corruption is the one area in which the Summit statement is a bit more specific, when it talks of "a growing social distance between leadership and our mass constituency, including:

o a disconnect between the focus of branch activities and the social and economic realities of communities

o crass displays of wealth and arrogance.

“The Summit resolved that these deviations must be dealt with firmly and without fear or favour. Those guilty of funding factions and those guilty of accepting money for these purposes must be exposed.

- Internal disciplinary processes must be pursued speedily and consistently
- Where money intended for our organisations is diverted into private pockets, civil and criminal cases must be preferred
- Those found guilty in court must be placed on the Registry of National Treasury which makes them ineligible for being awarded public tenders.

“Let us remind ourselves that leadership of society must be earned through exemplary conduct and adhering to revolutionary morality.

“The Summit agreed that each alliance partner, having identified the challenges, will work out its specific responsibilities and that these will be reported to the Political Council, which will monitor implementation and execution of responsibilities.”

This must however be speedily implemented if it is not just to be words.

On the key issue of the overspending on Nkandla the statement rejects the COSATU view that the government must take responsibility and shifts blame to scapegoats - “those responsible for the gross inflation of both the scope and costs of the project” - as if the government itself is not ultimately responsible.

Although the Summit statement makes the obligatory call for unity within the federation and alliance, and rolls out the usual Alliance slogans such as “An injury to one is an injury to all”, there is absolutely no attempt by leaders to take responsibility for the disunity which exists at the moment. It therefore amounts to a complete endorsement of the actions taken by the COSATU leadership which have brought about the current disunity.

The Summit statement says nothing about the lack of any mass mobilisation by the alliance for many years. Yet it says that “in the difficult days of Apartheid, millions of ordinary South Africans understood that they needed to be their own collective emancipators. The liberation struggle was grounded in community activism, solidarity struggles and neighbourhood organisation... but these strengths and traditions have become somewhat weakened by a message that *“the state will deliver...* Our grassroots organisational structures must play a leading role in mobilising communities to appreciate that freedom comes with rights and responsibilities.”

It is thus shifting responsibility to the “grassroots” and absolving the Alliance leaders for their failure to mobilise mass struggles. It is also silent on the SACP’s rabid

condemnation of civil society organisations which are mobilising popular struggles as “counter-revolutionary, anti-state” forces.

There is no mention of COSATU’s **demands for a restructured alliance all of which are buried including the need for rebuilding of independent, democratic and militant trade unions not as a slogan but as a living Programme members can attest to.**

The Summit statement confirms that the Political Centre and Alliance Pact are dead in the water. In effect the alliance has become exactly what was feared – a transmission belt for government to try to popularize its policies.

On Marikana there was a welcome commitment to “a comprehensive review of the migrant labour system must be undertaken to ensure a more humane dispensation that allows for more stable family life”, but not a word about prosecution of those found guilty of murder, nor any acknowledgement of the government’s overall responsibility.

*A detailed audit of progress, or lack of progress, in implementing key COSATU resolutions will be issued shortly.*