

## **COSATU salutes the former British Anti-Apartheid Movement (now ACTSA) on the occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in London**

At the outset, dear comrade, please allow us to convey militant salutations of the South African working class on this great historic occasion of your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This period marks 50 years of profound internationalism, unconditional solidarity and affirmation of the most advanced ideals of human dignity beyond borders.

We have reason to celebrate as workers of South Africa, for we are living testimony to the power of international solidarity, even against the most insurmountable force in history, the apartheid regime. As we struggled against apartheid in our country, we felt your presence dear comrades. While you were thousands of kilometres away, it was as if you were a mile away, if not next to us. You made it impossible for apartheid to slaughter us silently and outside the full view of the world's people.

We know very well comrades that in your own country, Britain, with a very conservative society and ruling class that colonised major tracts of land globally, you faced major obstacles and challenges. You were called names, insulted for supporting "terrorists" and "barbarians", however you refused to be cowed into submission. You marched on, raising the profile of our struggles, patiently explaining to those who could be won over and taking to the streets against those who were arrogant.

You won the credentials as a force against imperialism, not through academic debates, but through struggle and clarity of thought about the tasks of the world movement for change and the global revolution in general. We have learnt a lot from you and do know that you have never been arrogant to admit that you have also learnt a lot from us too. This is essentially what struggle and solidarity are about, mutual and equal space to learn and share each other's experiences.

You celebrate this momentous achievement at a critical time in our own political life. COSATU is holding its own International Solidarity Conference to reflect on the work done and the road ahead. We seek to take stock of our post-apartheid international work and challenges, critically evaluating ourselves and our perspectives, not without drawing rich lessons from you and those who supported us elsewhere. It also coincides with major political changes in our country, having won the recent national elections as the ANC-led alliance under trying conditions, where a splinter group of petty-bourgeoisie sponsored elements sought to reverse all the gains of the national democratic revolution in the holy name of "the rule of law". It was a well-calculated move to allow, through the back-door, remnants and residue of apartheid reaction, to once again take us back to the dark hell of apartheid. Our people and workers, in particular maintained a higher standard of vigilance and consciousness, hence the defeat of this force for rightwing opportunism.

Your celebration also coincides exactly with the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our historic document and guiding compass, the Freedom Charter, which is turning 54 years exactly on this date of your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, what a coincidence. It echoes the momentum on both sides of the globe that for years inspired both our peoples into militant action, not only against apartheid, but also against imperialism and all forms of colonialism.

Dear Comrades, we are not seeking to write a history book about this rich historical fact, but are merely sharing in your celebrations and affirming the value of that historic institution of our modern day society, the Anti-apartheid movement.

We apologise for having not made it to this important moment that is ours too, for reasons of our own Conference and a number of other such engagements, but please comrades, do note that we are with you all the way.

We further indicate that we have followed developments of this important institution beyond the demise of apartheid, as it turned itself into ACTSA, working to support and raise the profile of other people's struggles in this region. We know and fully support your good work in Swaziland and Zimbabwe, where we have also placed a very high premium and taken it upon ourselves to ensure that democracy is restored and our region is a safe place for all who cherish human dignity.

We are going to the our 10<sup>th</sup> National Congress in September, a remarkable moment in our forward march and we are as much determined to deepen our democratic space as we are to consolidate the gains we have made in order to speedily advance towards a new and just society.

We must continue working together to confront poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment and the crisis of climate change. We all bear testimony to the fact that capitalism is not the solution for humanity, with the current global economic crisis, it has thrown all of us into a serious crisis that has caused untold suffering to millions of people in developing countries, particularly. This is not an accident, but an integral part of the very functionings of capitalism as a system. We must not only reject the products of this system, but itself entirely.

On trade, we face a serious crisis that further threatens the survival of millions of our people and more solidarity is required, even at the expense of our own comfort sometimes.

May your energies triple, your foresight amplify and passion intensify as we seek to redefine our roles in the changing global conditions. Ours is a journey and we must continuously travel, seasons change, but the destination remains.

Long live the anti-imperialist traditions of the AAM!  
Bongani Masuku  
International Secretary

