

Restructuring COSATU headquarters

"We are redefining our role as COSATU. We have occupied the central stage as a political trade union movement, and we are not about to relinquish that right," says Sam Shilowa, COSATU assistant general secretary, adding "we must therefore build a strong COSATU."

In January this year, the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of COSATU reviewed the general situation within the federation and took important decisions on restructuring and reorganising its headquarters and staff so that the federation can keep pace with the current rapidly changing situation.

The COSATU CEC took its decisions in accordance with the recommendations of the 1991 Fourth National Congress of COSATU. This established a three year programme on political, economic, organisational, social and international issues to "develop long term perspectives and approaches to our work," according to Shilowa.

Highest constitutional bodies

In between COSATU national congresses, the CEC is the highest constitutional structure. No decisions can be implemented unless agreed to by the CEC which includes representatives of all the affiliate unions, as well as COSATU regions.

In between CEC meetings, the Executive Committee (EXCO) carries on the running of the organisation. EXCO consists of two representatives per affiliate, and observers from the COSATU regions.

Instead of meeting once in every two months, EXCO will henceforth meet every month. It will play the role of monitoring negotiations and mandating negotiating teams.

National office bearers and secretariat

The role of the office bearers and the national secretariat is to implement decisions of the CEC and EXCO. In an effort to rationalise and utilise the national office bearers and headquarters staff to best effect, COSATU has allocated each of its top office bearers specific

areas of responsibility within the structures. However, they take collective responsibility for the running of the federation as a whole.

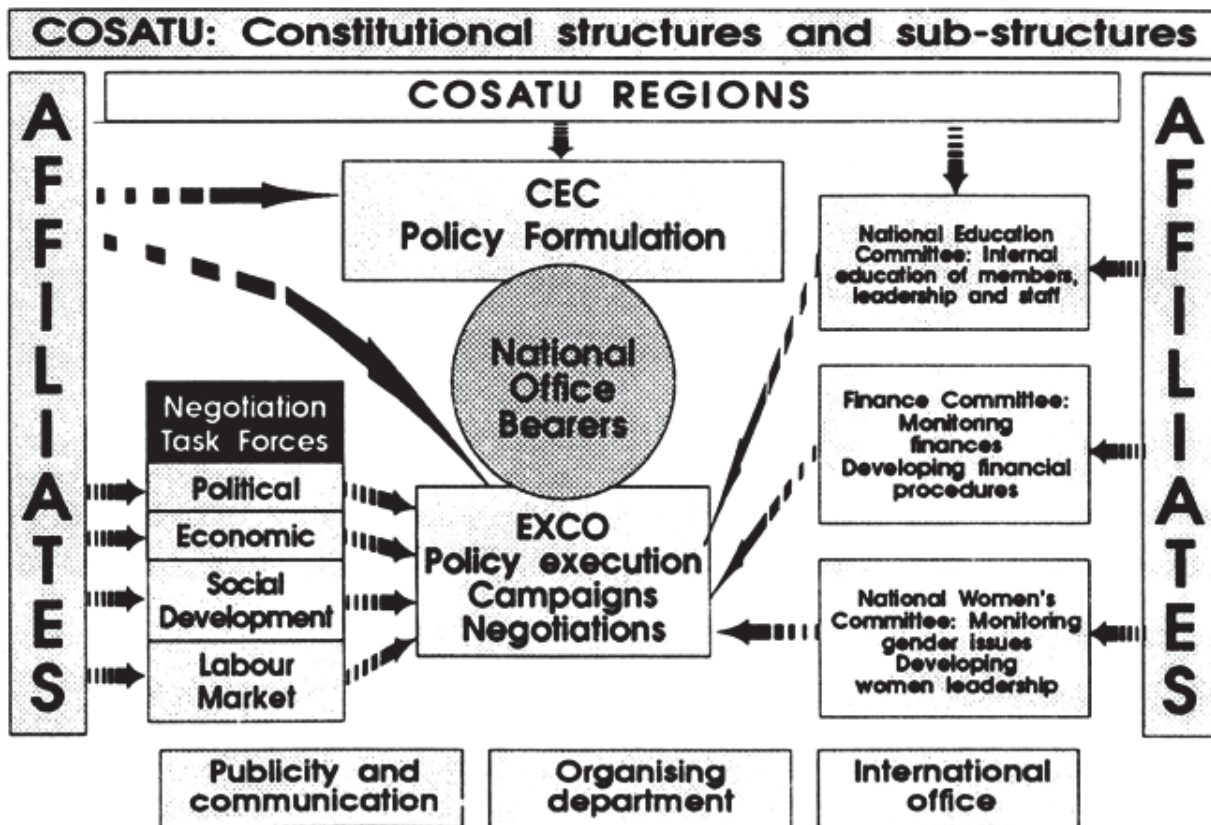
First vice president, Chris Dlamini and assistant general secretary, Sam Shilowa are responsible for political negotiations. General secretary, Jay Naidoo and president, John Gomomo are responsible for economic negotiations. Second vice president, Godfrey Cliphant will cover education, and national treasurer, Ronald Mofokeng the development of financial procedures.

COSATU has expanded its secretariat, incorporating researcher Rahmat Omar and international officer Bangumzi Sifingo. A fully-fledged organising department has been established with Zwelinzima Vavi as the organising secretary.

Campaigns and negotiations

Shilowa says that COSATU has always had a problem that campaigns have been run with a top down rather than bottom up approach. He reported that COSATU has now phased out the campaigns department and incorporated the campaigns co-ordinator into the secretariat. It has set up instead four 'task forces' to focus on: political negotiations, economic negotiations, social development and the labour market.

The task forces, explained Shilowa, must suggest what campaigns are needed and how they should be carried forward to ensure that demands are met. These will be sent through the secretariat to EXCO to decide on the course of action. "In this manner," says Shilowa, "we are ensuring that affiliates drive the process and also actually strengthening the participation of workers."



1 The political negotiations task force consists of six people selected by the CEC. Jayendra Naidoo (COSATU overall negotiations co-ordinator) has been appointed co-ordinator of this task force. Their job is to strategise with COSATU's allies regarding positions in the political negotiations.

2 The economic task force is co-ordinated by Sallie Manie. Ibrahim Patel deals with the National Economic Negotiation Forum. Alec Erwin is on research and Lisa Seftel on VAT/Food.

3 The social development task force is co-ordinated by Enoch Godongwana. It will be dealing with child care, UIF, and pension schemes.

4 The labour market task force is co-ordinated by Mike Madlala. Its responsibilities are to look into the NMC, workers rights and training.

Each affiliate is to nominate suitable people to each of these committees.

Education

The National Education Committee (NEDCOM) chaired by the second vice president, Godfrey Oliphant will be responsible for internal education and training.

Mapeto Leeuw is the current head of the department and Geno Govender is responsible for developing manuals. NEDCOM will service all the affiliates.

Gender issues

COSATU has employed a gender co-ordinator, Dorothy Mokgalo. Her task is to monitor, assist and strengthen affirmative action in COSATU and encourage the development of women leadership in all the affiliates.

Publicity and communication

Publicity, communication and information have been combined into one department called communication which will combine public relations as well as information liaison with affiliates.

As part of this restructuring, Shilowa reported, COSATU will be launching a shop stewards bulletin, on 12 June, in order to "ensure that decisions in constitutional structures reach all shop stewards in all the affiliates. COSATU wants to make sure that shop stewards are well informed, so that the federation can carry its affiliates with it." ☆
Snuki Zikalala