



# **Numsa Policy Resolutions**

**Edited Version**

**Section 7**  
**Numsa Gender**

**1987 to end June 2012**  
**(includes NC 2012)**

## **Section 7**

### **Numsa Gender**

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## Gender Perspective

### Policy Statement

Numsa's resolutions on women take as a starting point the principles laid down in its Preamble:

We, the members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, firmly commit ourselves to a united South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation.

We believe that this can only be achieved under the leadership of an organised and united working class. Our experience has taught us that to achieve this goal we must fight and oppose discrimination in all its forms within the Union, the factories and in society."

Numsa acknowledges that the status of women workers both in society and in the union environment is not equal to men. Exacerbating this is the fact that black women are further discriminated against on the basis of colour.

At the workplace women face many challenges. Women are often placed in unskilled and low-paying jobs. At other times they do the same job as men but are paid less despite laws that prevent this. Aggravating this are gender stereotypes that define jobs that men do and jobs that women do. This is particularly so in Numsa's sectors which are male dominated particularly at the more skilled level of the artisan. Another threat hanging over women is that of sexual harassment.

Pregnant women face specific challenges at work. Since Numsa was formed in 1987 it has managed to secure maternity leave in all its sectors that secures time off and a guarantee of work once they return from maternity leave. However some pregnant women still find that their job is no longer available when they return. This is particularly so for those working on short-term contracts or who are employed through labour brokers. Others are forced to work in dangerous environments eg extreme heat during the course of their pregnancy causing potential harm to the unborn baby.

South Africa has a very high level of violence against women. Its rape statistics are amongst the highest in the world. Despite progressive legislation that protects women against domestic violence as well as codes on sexual harassment, attacks on women persist. This puts women at risk particularly if they are working night shift or if their work ends after dark.

Numsa acknowledges that 'gender' plays a big role in influencing the involvement of women in society, in the workplace and in the union. Its gender and women's resolutions since that founding congress spell out ways in which all the challenges detailed above can be overcome so as to achieve its long term vision of a society "free of oppression and economic exploitation".

The present ideology plays a major role in restricting women to typical female jobs. Education from pre-school to tertiary education is necessary to combat a stereotype sex role .

## The road to women's empowerment

1. Numsa resolves to fight:
  - 1.1. Against all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the union.
  - 1.2. For the equal right of women and men to paid work as an important part of the broader aim to achieve full and freely chosen employment.
  - 1.3. For equal pay for all work and skills of equal value - the value of work must be determined by organised women and men workers themselves; women's skills must be recognised and paid.
  - 1.4. For the restructuring of employment so as to allow women and men the opportunity of qualifying for jobs of equal value.
  - 1.5. For childcare and family facilities to meet workers' needs and make it easier for workers to combine work and family responsibilities.
  - 1.6. For full maternity rights, including paid maternity and paternity leave and job security.
  - 1.7. For the protection of women and men from all types of work proved to be harmful to them, including work which interferes with their ability to have children.
  - 1.8. Against sexual harassment in whatever form it occurs.
  - 1.9. For adequate and safe transport for workers doing overtime and night work.
2. Numsa commits itself:
  - 2.1. To actively campaign in support of these resolutions.
  - 2.2. To negotiate agreements with companies wherever possible as part of this campaign.
  - 2.3. To actively promote within its education programme, a greater understanding of the specific discriminations suffered by women workers and ways in which these can be overcome.
  - 2.4. To actively promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the union.
  - 2.5. To establish in each region of the union a worker controlled sub-committee to monitor the progress in implementing this resolution and to make proposals to the regional congress in order to promote these aims. These regional sub-committees shall be coordinated nationally in a way to be formulated by resolution from the regional congresses to the Central Committee.
  - 2.6. To budget for the workings of such sub-committees.
  - 2.7. To encourage women to take up training opportunities in non-traditional areas of skilled work.
  - 2.8. To actively encourage women members' involvement in women's organisations in the community<sup>1</sup>.

## Understanding Gender

1. A discussion document must be developed and we must work with Cosatu and the Party on the content. This document is to help us to clarify what must constitute gender.
2. The document must be given to the regions to drive it so that the next Congress has a different gender breakdown<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> NC 1987 and 1991

<sup>2</sup> NC 2000

### **Building Women Union Leaders**

1. We must continue to campaign for the election of women as shop stewards and actively work towards the election of women into leadership positions and ensure that gender sensitive people are elected as office bearers.
2. Concrete affirmative action measures and strategies must be developed and implemented ensuring that women in leadership positions are effective, that they are linked to programmes of empowerment and that decision making structures are transformed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Mini NC 2009

## Women and employment

### Women in the workplace and the labour market

1. There is a need:
  - 1.1. for extensive challenge of the sexual division of labour and stereotypes that limit women's access to certain positions.
  - 1.2. to move beyond traditional gender roles in the labour market
2. The need should find expression through the Employment Equity Act by giving male dominated jobs to women in order of preference.
3. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Convention of Elimination of Discrimination against Women should through active campaigning be implemented in all workplaces.
4. We must encourage employment of women in our sectors and abolish gender bias in promotion and recruitment procedures (eg. bias in advertisements).
5. Employers should implement affirmative action programmes to redress the sexual division of labour by employing females in typical male jobs.
6. Education & Training in companies should target women and ABET should be run during working hours with paid education leave.
7. Job-creation schemes should prioritise the employment of women.
8. The state & employers should assist with the implementation of childcare facilities to facilitate the full participation of women in the workplace and with parental rights agreements
9. As part of our struggle for this demand for equal wages for equal work and equal wages for work of equal value, thorough research should be done to determine to what extent there is discrimination in wages<sup>4</sup>.

### Wage Equity

1. Cosatu should work towards an increase in the employment of women in all areas of work and especially in higher paid job categories. This requires a conscious attempt to integrate gender aspects in Cosatu affiliate wage policies by linking the demand of equal wages for equal work and equal wages for work of equal value to the living wage campaign. This will ensure that affiliates take up the struggle against the oppression & exploitation of women, so that this is not regarded as a "women's" issue but a problem of every member of the union.

### Childcare facilities and their location

1. There must be childcare and family facilities to meet workers' needs and make it easier for workers to combine work and family responsibilities.<sup>5</sup>
2. The state & employers should assist with the implementation of childcare facilities to facilitate the full participation of women in the workplace and with parental rights agreements<sup>6</sup>.
3. There should be full parental and childcare rights for all trainees<sup>7</sup>
4. Numsa must offer professional assistance and responsibility to identify an area/spot to build the facilities and set up professional teams to coordinate the project. We must take steps to avoid the facilities being located in industrial areas where children will be exposed to industrial

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<sup>4</sup> NC 1996 and 2000

<sup>5</sup> NC 1987

<sup>6</sup> NC 1996

<sup>7</sup> NC 1991

environmental hazards. Instead, childcare facilities should be in communities where the union must advance social integration to avoid the danger of tying parents to companies.

5. This resolution must be implemented within 12 months where there is agreement; the CC must monitor implementation.
6. Childcare must be extended to all Numsa sectors<sup>8</sup>

### **Transport**

1. Campaign for adequate and safe transport for workers doing overtime and night work<sup>9</sup>

### **Skills Development**

1. Through collective bargaining, Numsa should demand industry training for women to ensure that a significant % of women occupy male-dominated jobs.
2. Education and training in companies should prioritise and target women. Adult basic education and training during working hours and with paid education leave should be implemented in all companies.
3. Office bearers from local to national level as well as bargaining team members should drive this programme<sup>10</sup>.
4. 50% of apprentices should be women.
5. Numsa through the Setas must make a budget available for training employees; preference given to women on technical skills like welding, boiler etc.<sup>11</sup>.

### **Affirmative Action**

1. The union must negotiate an affirmative action programme with employers that will ensure:
  - 1.1. That there are adult basic education classes and the necessary infrastructure both in the workplace and in the communities to benefit the entire working class and particularly disadvantaged sectors such as, women, unemployed and the marginalised youth.
  - 1.2. That there is employment equity.
  - 1.3. That more women are trained in specialised fields including apprenticeship in order to combat gender ghettoisation.
  - 1.4. That unfair taxation of women is ended<sup>12</sup>.
2. Bargaining teams should provide regular report backs and be educated on gender politics. All sectors should prioritise the demand for childcare facilities at workplaces.
3. There should be a continuous campaign for:
  - 3.1. Maternity leave of 6 months at full pay,
  - 3.2. Paternity leave of 16 days,
  - 3.3. Childcare leave of 20 days,
  - 3.4. Abolition of nightwork for pregnant women,
  - 3.5. 20 hours a day safe transport for women in particular and all other employees in general to be provided for by employers and government<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> NC 2012

<sup>9</sup> NC 1987 and 1996

<sup>10</sup> NC - 2000

<sup>11</sup> Mini NC 2009

<sup>12</sup> NC 1993

<sup>13</sup> NC 2000



## Sexual harassment and violence

### Sexual Harassment

1. Sexual harassment must be outlawed.
2. We need to define policy principles and adopt a code on Sexual Harassment.
3. Such a code should include sections on:
  - 3.1. confidentiality
  - 3.2. report procedure
  - 3.3. procedures for settling grievances
  - 3.4. informal procedure
  - 3.5. correctional / disciplinary procedures
  - 3.6. dispute resolution
  - 3.7. implementation of policy<sup>14</sup>.
4. We will conscientise our members on Nedlac's sexual harassment code through workshops and meetings
5. The code should be presented to our respective industries and negotiated at company level with immediate effect<sup>15</sup>.

### Violence against women

1. We must link violence against women as a workplace issue; there must be continuous education on this issue to raise awareness and change the attitudes of our members
2. We must step up our participation in the campaign (nationally and internationally) by networking more closely with similar minded organizations.
3. We must designate International Women's Day (March 8) as a Cosatu Day of Action, to demonstrate our serious commitment to eradicating violence against women<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> NC 1996

<sup>15</sup> NC 2000

<sup>16</sup> NC 2000.

## Women beyond the workplace

### Empowering women in the community

1. Women should be empowered with education and information sharing.
2. With involvement of the National Gender Co-ordinator, women should be encouraged and persuaded to actively participate in community structures<sup>17</sup>.

### International Networking

1. Cosatu and Numsa to network with local and international Non-Government Organisations on gender<sup>18</sup>.

### Women's emancipation

#### Women everywhere

1. Support implementation of CEDAW, Beijing Platform of Action and the Women's Charter for effective equality.
2. Participate in the process towards the formation of a movement for the emancipation of women<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> NC 2000

<sup>18</sup> NC 2000

<sup>19</sup> NC 1996

## Gender Structures, Representation and Coordination in Numsa and Cosatu

### Gender Representation on Union Structures

1. From the factory shopsteward councils, local shopsteward council and regional level, a minimum of two gender representatives from gender sub-structures or gender office bearers must be nominated to be represented on all constitutional structures. The Central Committee must be reflective of Gender balance. The national Gender worker office bearers must be appointed to represent gender at both the National Executive Committee and the Central Committee<sup>20</sup>.
2. The women's structure is allocated three places on the National Campaign Committee:
  - 2.1. Not less than two of the three representatives shall be workers.
  - 2.2. The National Women's Committee shall elect the three representatives<sup>21</sup>.
3. NALEDI to conduct research on women representation and submit findings to the CEC for consideration.
4. Numsa must research women's representation and submit to CC<sup>22</sup>

### Gender structures

1. Factory gender committees shall monitor progress and report from time to time to local gender co-ordinators and local shopstewards councils; the Locals must forward reports to their Regions<sup>23</sup>.
2. Gender structures should be established from factory to national level:
  - 2.1. Factory Gender Committees to report to factory shop steward committees,
  - 2.2. Gender reps should elect Office Bearers who should attend and sit in shop stewards meetings, be part of meetings with management,
  - 2.3. Male and female members to participate in gender structures
  - 2.4. The union should negotiate for the recognition of gender structures in the factories,
  - 2.5. Local Gender Committees to report to Local Shop steward Councils, Regional Gender Committees to report to REC and National Gender Structures to report to CC<sup>24</sup>.
    - 2.5.1. A committed staff member must be given the task of co-ordinating gender and a Local Office Bearer should be tasked with the responsibility of the portfolio of gender
    - 2.5.2. Local gender co-ordinators with factory office bearers must ensure that women are capacitated politically at factory level.
    - 2.5.3. Gender co-ordinators to be involved in policy formulation so that they understand the context of resolutions for monitoring and implementation purposes and attend to sexual harassment cases.
3. Gender structures should be formed at local level<sup>25</sup>; they should continue to be gender structures - we cannot go back to women's structure because the concept of gender also includes men.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> CC Dec 1998

<sup>21</sup> CC 18 - 19 February 1989

<sup>22</sup> Mini NC 2009

<sup>23</sup> NC 1996

<sup>24</sup> NC 2000

<sup>25</sup> CC 27-30 Nov 2003

<sup>26</sup> NC 2012

## Gender Coordination

### National Gender Coordination

1. Numsa should employ a full-time gender co-ordinator to ensure that programmes relating to collective bargaining are seriously taken up by all sectors in the union, whilst women should be included in the respective bargaining teams.
2. The coordinator's functions and duties should be clearly spelt out with a view to address co-ordination of gender structures from factory to national level.
3. The NGC should ensure the effective monitoring of labour legislation i.e. EEA, Skills Development, OHS Act etc<sup>27</sup>.
4. The union must make sure that national and regional leadership take responsibility for effective co-ordination and running of gender structures within their respective regions and locals.<sup>28</sup>
5. Gender must fall under the OCCB department and together with the Youth Forum form a working unit.<sup>29</sup>
6. The CC must decide the allocation of the coordination of people with disability. There are two proposals: this coordination must be allocated to the national gender officer or a new person must be appointed to coordinate<sup>30</sup>

### Regional Gender Coordination

1. The proposal to create new regional gender posts across regions was rejected.
2. All gender co-ordinators should sit in constitutional structures at all levels<sup>31</sup>.
3. The Regional Education Officer to co-ordinate Gender at the Regional Level and in the absence of the REO (in the case of the position being vacant), in those instances a suitable person be identified, if not, the ROB and REC to appoint a responsible person to co-ordinate Gender<sup>32</sup>

## Gender issues in the union and federation

### Womens' Participation

1. There must be an active programme to increase worker participation in the union and particularly to address gender issues. This should include:
2. A commitment to fight all forms of harassment and discrimination against women in all spheres of life including the union structures.
3. Ensuring that women are part of policy formulation both in the union and society at large<sup>33</sup>.

### Women's Empowerment

1. We need to devise mechanisms which will empower women in the union; these should include:
  - 1.1. Develop education & training modules (on women's needs). These to be given to Numsa's women membership from factory to regional level.
  - 1.2. Develop organisers to understand women's demands/concerns.

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<sup>27</sup> NC 2000

<sup>28</sup> Mini NC 2009

<sup>29</sup> NC 2012

<sup>30</sup> NC 2012

<sup>31</sup> CC March 1995

<sup>32</sup> NC 2000

<sup>33</sup> NC 1993

- 1.3. Encourage male comrades to take part in gender education programmes so as to raise understanding of the concept of gender.
- 1.4. Integrate gender into mainstream union activity
- 1.5. Implement an affirmative action campaign including training shop stewards to serve as Affirmative Action officers.
- 1.6. Provide 2 training courses per year for women<sup>34</sup>.
- 1.7. Provide childcare facilities at all union meetings
- 1.8. To accommodate family responsibilities, partners of shop stewards should be invited to union activities to conscientise them on what the union is all about<sup>35</sup>.
- 1.9. The union must ensure that women get home safely after late meetings<sup>36</sup>.

### **Numsa as Employer**

1. An employment policy should be developed to ensure that female staff are trained and empowered to take up previously male-dominated jobs.
2. To implement the Cosatu resolution which calls for the appointment of women in top positions traditionally reserved for male comrades<sup>37</sup>.
3. There should be clear programs that promote equitable access to reputable and accredited institutions, aimed at addressing access to promotion opportunities that are skewed in favour of male employees.<sup>38</sup>

### **Women Delegates to Cosatu Meetings and Workshops**

1. Numsa to implement the Cosatu resolution that says that all affiliates should include women in their delegations to federation meetings and workshops<sup>39</sup>.
2. We support the Cosatu resolution from its 9th Congress including:
  - 2.1. By 2015 where applicable all affiliates should have a 50% quota of women at all leadership levels
  - 2.2. A quota system applicable to the Federation should be set by the CEC, and quota systems applicable to affiliates should be set by affiliates. Quotas should be based on the share of women in membership and the need to rapidly develop women leadership.
3. We should ensure that these and Numsa's resolutions are implemented.<sup>40</sup>

### **Shop Steward Elections**

1. The federation and affiliates must ensure that conditions under which shop steward elections take place are conducive to electing women shop stewards<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> NC 1996

<sup>35</sup> NC 2000

<sup>36</sup> Mini NC 2009

<sup>37</sup> NC 2000

<sup>38</sup> NC 2004

<sup>39</sup> NC 2000

<sup>40</sup> Mini NC 2009

<sup>41</sup> NC 2000

### **Cosatu Staff**

1. The federation should draft a gender profile of its staff which seeks to set targets for increasing the number of women and disabled persons in job categories where they are under-represented<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> NC 2000

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