

the unifying perspectives of the Conference for a Democratic Future'.

Does this include the PAC and Azapo?

'If they agree to the minimum programme, they will be welcome', is the answer.

'We feel it is important for all youth sectors opposed to apartheid to participate. If we can come with one forum, the youth can learn to understand each other. We can lay the basis for a multi-party democracy ... we have to learn to co-exist'.

Talking about fronts, what about Sayco's relationship to the United Democratic Front - particularly the congress resolution calling for the UDF to disband?

'We feel the UDF, in its current form, should phase out', says Mphakwana.

'The UDF is no broader than the ANC. We see, rather, a patriotic front with the ANC and its allies at the core'.

To strengthen this front, Sayco says it is building closer links with the SACP and Cosatu, and now has a full-time official to co-ordinate its labour department.

'We want to encourage the youth to join trade unions, and teach them about unionism', says Mphakwana.

'We want the working youth to join our organisation, whether it be Sayco or the ANC Youth League, and to participate in community activities'.

And what about those young lions to the left of the ANC?

'The ANC Youth League must be mass-based, but the Communist Party is different. It is not for everybody. Therefore, the Party youth has to be qualitatively different to the ANC Youth League.'

'Within Sayco, there has been no real discussion around that ... perhaps the

Party will indicate the line of march'. - *WIP Correspondent*

NAMIBIA

Labour code on its way

Namibia is soon to unveil details of a new labour dispensation.

Addressing a May Day rally at Windhoek's Independence Stadium, president Sam Nujoma announced that a labour code for the country was on the way.

The president told the 2 000 to 3 000-strong crowd that collective bargaining between employers and trade unions was essential for sound labour relations.

The government had already formulated the code, he said, and would soon be submitting it to the cabinet for approval.

In addition, a competent labour court would be established in the near future. Nujoma also gave an assurance that his government would not neglect its traditional role of protection for workers in the form of provisions like minimum hours and compensation for injuries sustained at work and for occupational diseases.

The code will be the first real indication of the new



Witbooi: labour administration will play developmental role

government's approach to labour. The Namibian constitution guarantees the right of freedom of association and upholds the right of workers to withdraw their labour. It also commits Namibia to joining the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and, where possible, to adhere to its conventions and recommendations. But few details of the nuts-and-bolts of labour policy have since emerged. The legislative legacy of the old South West African administration is a mixture of the antediluvian and some fairly sound law. The main statute governing relations between trade unions and employers is the Wage and Industrial Conciliation Ordinance of 1952 as amended.

The ordinance is in effect the equivalent of South Africa's Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937. It does confer the right for workers to take strike action provided certain procedures, including referral of the dispute to a conciliation board, are followed.

But SWA never had its equivalent of an industrial council system in terms of which agreements struck between unions and employers become binding as law, as applies in South Africa. It also never had a labour court or any equivalent, nor any provision for concepts like unfair labour practices. On the other hand, the existing provisions for basic protections for workers - the equivalent of South Africa's Basic Conditions of Employment Act - are deemed to be 'acceptable' by labour law experts.

In February this year Professor Nic Wichahn, architect of the labour reforms instituted in South Africa from 1979 onwards, handed to former SWA



Nujoma: announced new labour policy

administrator Louis Pienaar the second of two reports of a commission he headed into the territory's labour legislation. It has been left to the new government to respond to its

recommendations and the extent to which they have influenced the code referred to by Nujoma is not clear.

Labour and Manpower Development minister Hendrik Witbooi and John Shaetonhodi, president of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), also delivered speeches at the May Day rally. Witbooi declared current arrangements for labour administration 'grossly inadequate' and said serious measures would have to be taken

immediately. He also said labour administration in the republic would not only perform the traditional role of protecting labour, but it would also play a developmental role.

Shaetonhodi signalled that the unions intended to play a pivotal role in Namibia's political life and said workers had to forge their weapons of struggle so that they could also participate in the effective management of the country's industries. He also confirmed the unions would stay in Swapo.

Some months ago, when the constitution was being finalised, there was speculation in the press about discontent in the labour movement following a leak of its

provisions. And critics of the new regime have been quick to note that the recent rally attracted far fewer people than has been usual in Namibia, and that a march down Windhoek's main street before the rally drew only a few hundred workers. There have even been suggestions that differences in the labour movement may have led certain factions to boycott the event.

However, Petros Ilonga, general secretary of NUNW-affiliated Namibian Public Workers' Union, denies that labour is discontented. The speculation at the time the constitution was leaked was a product of attempts by Johannesburg newspapers to discredit the federation, he insists. 'Namibian workers voted Swapo into power. We, together with other unions in the federation, submitted our proposals for the new labour code. We have an understanding of our situation and the process that has to occur and there is no unhappiness', he says.

Independent sources would seem to confirm Ilonga's perceptions. 'There might have been some discontent at the amount of consultation involved in the proceedings which produced the constitution, but I would say relations between the unions and the government are reasonably harmonious now. Labour and unemployment are the government's biggest priorities. It has promised reform and if it delivers, the good relations should continue', a well-informed Windhoek told *WIP*. But Namibia also has to attract new foreign investment if it is to alleviate unemployment and Swapo will have to walk the tightrope between the two priorities. Will it get the mix right? - *Robyn Rafel*

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