

on the issue.' In addition, the CDF will represent a wide range of interests within the parameters of the 'unifying perspective'.

'We will be seeking common ground, not differences', says Morobe.

It is possible that the major emphasis of the international support element of the CDF declaration will be on 'isolating the apartheid regime politically and economically' rather than spelling out the nuts-and-bolts of a pro-sanctions position.

Aside from the 700 seats allocated to the union movement and the churches, organisers have proposed a general allocation of seats on the basis of two for national organisations, plus two for each region in which the organisation has an organised presence. Smaller organisations have been allocated two seats a piece.

'It is thus possible that the UDF will have the same number of seats as the health workers in Sahwco (South African Health Workers' Congress)', says Morobe. This is less important, he believes, than the fact that the conference is generally representative of opposition opinion in its various flavours, and that between them they can draft a common programme and a set of perspectives.

The organisers also believe that, unlike last year's attempt at an anti-apartheid conference, the state will not act against the CDF.

'They cannot afford to', they say. 'The CDF already has a high international profile - 100 foreign observers are expected, international organisations like the OAU, Nam and the Commonwealth have expressed their support, and (US president George) Bush and Thatcher have been personally briefed on it.

'Acting against the conference would undo everything De Klerk has attempted to achieve since he took power'.

WIP Correspondent

Postal workers go for unity



A SINGLE union for postal and telecommunications workers is imminent in the new year, increasing Cosatu's membership by about 6 600 and securing yet another sector within the federation.

The merger involves three staff associations - the Postal Employees Association of South Africa (Peasa), with a membership of 5 309 coloured workers; the SA Post and Telecommunication Employees Association (Saptea) with 1 262 Indian members; and the Cosatu affiliate, the Postal and Telecommunication Workers Association (Potwa) with 17 278 black members.

Both Peasa and Saptea have conservative backgrounds and existed until recently as traditional staff organisations.

Peasa was formed in 1957 to organise coloured workers in the sector. Saptea, formed in 1972,

organised Indian workers.

Although the constitutions of both staff associations were amended a few years ago to allow for non-racial membership, neither association managed to draw in workers of other races - apart from a handful of white members in Saptea.

Unity talks called by Saptea in July 1987 were not taken further, partly because Peasa's leadership backtracked after the first meeting. But talks resumed in March this year after the three staff associations had visited SA Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) and ANC leaders in Lusaka.

Since then the three associations have committed themselves to unity and affiliation to Cosatu.

Regional and national co-ordinating structures have been set up to facilitate the process. Working committees are also being set up at major regional depots.

Discussions have also been held on the political policy and structure of the new union.

Peasa co-ordinating member Godfrey Wright said unity in the sector was long overdue. 'Potwa was alone in the major postal workers and telecommunications strike in 1988. Had we been involved then, workers would have stood a better chance and the workers would have been so much stronger', he said.

Wright said the bulk of Peasa members were not active in the association, which detracted from its militancy.

The new union, likely to be launched in January 1990, faces many challenges. Pertinent issues are the restructuring and privatisation programmes currently in process; racially segregated facilities and racial quotas in staff recruitment; and the LRA campaign.