



**NUMSA defends all workers regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation**  
**15 November 2024**  
**Press statement**

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) is participating in the ILGA conference which is taking place at the Century City conference Venue in Cape Town. NUMSA participated as part of the delegation of the International Transport Federation (ITF), our sister union. The purpose of the conference is to highlight the struggles of the LGBTQIA+ community and their struggles for equality.

NUMSA aligns itself with this issue because as a union, our primary responsibility is to defend all workers, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. As a Marxist-Leninist inspired trade union we believe in equality off the sexes and we reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

The preamble of the NUMSA constitution states:

*“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:*

- (a) Fight and oppose discrimination in all its forms within the Union, the factories and in society;*
- (b) Strive for maximum unity amongst organised metalworkers and organise every unorganised metalworker into our national industrial Union;*
- (c) Ensure that all levels of our Union are democratically structured and controlled by the worker members themselves through elected worker committees;*
- (d) Encourage democratic worker leadership and organisation in our factories and in all spheres of society;*
- (e) Reinforce and encourage progressive international worker-to-worker contact so as to strengthen the worldwide society of metalworkers.*

*We call on all metalworkers that identify with these principles and aims to join us and the metalworkers we represent, as comrades in the struggle ahead. We call on all metalworkers to set aside any prejudices they may have and strive for unity under the guiding slogan of the international working class, from each according to their ability; to each according to their needs”*

Our constitution is our guide and it demands that we must fight for genuine equality for all members of the working class, and reject all forms of discrimination.

We also believe that prejudice, including that which is on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, is used to scapegoat certain sections of the working class. Capital uses tactics to divide the working class in order to dilute its power.

We reject this because it is our responsibility to unite the working class regardless of gender, race, nationality or sexual orientation. A united working class can defeat oppression and transform society for the benefit of everyone. The gains we have made, through labour law

protections such as the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Equity and the Bill of Rights were secured because the working class of this country fought for these rights during the dark days of Apartheid. This is why we take our role in defending these rights very seriously, and we will continue to play our role in protecting and fighting for a just and free society.

The ILGA conference will continue until the 15<sup>th</sup> of November.

**ENDS**

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