



ONE VOICE: Teachers unions Sadtu, Naptosa and SAOU led a march of teachers and education employees.

Thousands march to support call for quality education

Ntando Makhubu

PRETORIA: South African teachers joined thousands of education workers and pupils in a global campaign for equal and quality public education on Saturday, marching together and sitting down to discuss their progress.

Three teachers' unions – the SA Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu), SA Teachers' Union (SAOU) and the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of SA (Naptosa) supported teachers, pupils and others in marking the year-long campaign.

Saturday's activities were part of the campaign to force the government to recognise the need to improve conditions so that the ideal of quality education could be met.

The campaign was spearheaded by international union federation Educa-

tion International following a call by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, for action in the provision of good education. "We took him on and mobilised our membership to find ways to get governments to do this," Education International general secretary Fred van Leeuwen said.

"There is a fading awareness of quality education in government policies, and while all stakeholders agree on the need for it, there are differences in the methods to achieve it."

The Brussels-based federation has a membership of more than 30 million teachers in 171 countries, and Pretoria was one of six capitals on six continents chosen to host the culmination of the year's events. Present were representatives of teacher unions from Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho.

They agreed education was the tool to fight poverty and liberate minds, with Sadtu saying it had gone into communities to discuss, among other issues, teenage pregnancy and bullying, which directly affected education.

Speakers emphasised the need to enforce the three pillars upon which the campaign was based: quality teachers, quality tools and quality environments.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga, who attended the event, said: "We need to get every child a quality education, and teachers must commit to a set of non-compromisable principles including being at school on time and teaching for at least seven hours."

From the National Education Collaboration Trust, Goodwin Khosa said the campaign could only succeed with the participation of all stakeholders.

"It needs government, civil society,

teachers, community members and the business community to unite."

SAOU president Jopie Breedts called on the government to recognise the bread-and-butter issues of teaching and learning, and that information technology should not be ignored.

"There should be emphasis on the adequate financing of education," he said, adding the link between smaller class size and better output was real.

Naptosa said marginalised and poor children would slip through the cracks if not given quality education.

"Today we unite to say no to the lack of equal and quality education for children," president Basil Manuel said.

He said there was still too much wrong, like mud schools and those without water, sanitation and electricity.

"It is no longer a matter of choice; we cannot postpone the agenda any longer."



South Africa's education unions Sadtu, Naptosa and the SAOU joined teachers and education employees in a march for quality education.

NTANDO MAKHUBU

SOUTH African teachers joined thousands of educators in a global campaign for equal and quality public education on Saturday.

Three teacher unions – the SA Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu), the SA Teachers Union (SAOU) and the National Professional Teachers Association of SA (Naptosa) – were joined by teachers, pupils and the public in the event to mark the year-long campaign.

Saturday's activities marked a culmination of the drive to force the government to recognise the need to improve conditions if the ideal of quality education was to be met.

The campaign was spearheaded by international union federation, Education International (EI), launched in Paris last year.

This followed a call by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for action in providing good education. "We mobilised our membership to find ways of getting governments to do just this," EI general secretary Fred van Leeuwen said.

"There is a fading awareness of quality education in government policies. While all stakeholders agree on the need for it, there are differences in the methods of achieving this between teachers and governments."

The Brussels-based federation has a membership of more than

SA teachers join global drive for quality education

30 million teachers in 171 countries, and Pretoria was one of six capitals on six continents chosen to host the culmination of the year's events.

At the event were representatives of teacher unions from Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho.

They agreed that education was a key tool to fight poverty and liberate minds, with Sadtu saying it had gone into communities to discuss, among other issues, teenage pregnancy and bullying, which directly impacted on quality education.

Acting president Magope Maphila said: "We will continue to fight for funding and for the future of the country by demanding the professionalisation of teachers."

Speakers emphasised the need to enforce the three pillars on which the campaign was based – quality teachers, quality tools and quality environments.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga, who attended the event, agreed.

She said: "We need to get every child in society quality education. Teachers must commit to a set of non-compromisable principles, including being at school on time and teaching for at least seven hours a day."

The government knew the system could not be better than the teachers, she said.

It had committed to investing in the conditions of service: "We need to talk about this jointly and discuss ways to implement what we have come up with."

From the National Education Collaboration Trust, Goodwin Khosa said the campaign could only succeed with the participation of all stakeholders.

"It needs the government, civil society, teachers, members of the

community and the business community to unite," he said.

SAOU president Jopie Breedt called on the government to recognise the bread-and-butter issues around teaching and learning.

Satisfactory levels of the curriculum and information technology should not be ignored, he said.

"There should be an emphasis on adequate financing of education," he said, adding that the link between smaller class size and better output was real.

Naptosa raised the challenges faced by marginalised and poor children, who would slip through the cracks if not given quality education.

"Today we unite to say 'no' to the lack of equally and quality education for children and demand our rightful place in the system," president Basil Manuel said.

There was still too much wrong in the education system, he said, like mud schools, and schools without water, sanitation and electricity.

"It is no longer a matter of choice, we cannot postpone the agenda any longer," he said, adding that equal and quality education had to happen now.

All conclusions will be presented to Ban on Thursday, by Leeuwen and the EI, in a strong message from the millions of teacher affiliates across the world.

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