

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**12 July 2010**

### **BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY DESPITE STRIKE ACTION BY SATAWU MEMBERS**

After keeping a close eye on the progress of the strike action by the 186 SATAWU members, the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is happy to announce that it is business as usual, thanks to the contingency plans put in place in preparation for the strike. It was also noted that less than 100 employees are actively participating in the strike.

In addition, SACAA's management has also been inundated with queries from SATAWU registered staff members regarding their wish to resign from the union. This is a clear sign that some members feel that they were misled or bullied into supporting an undesirable strike action. This development could also explain why SATAWU leadership has been misleading the public and media on facts that led to an impasse during the wage negotiations process as well as the subsequent strike action.

SACAA management can confirm that all the services offered by the SACAA are being performed as usual. In addition, examinations were conducted on the SACAA Midrand premises today as per the norm.

There are indications currently that management and the union will meet tomorrow i.e. Tuesday, 13 July to try and find ways of resolving the dispute. This is evidence that management is committed to a speedy resolution of the impasse.

### **SATAWU misleading the media and the public**

The SACAA has gotten accustomed to SATAWU's concerted efforts to mislead the public and the media about facts that led to an impasse during the wage negotiation process as well as the subsequent strike action.

It is important to correct the assertion that management is requesting the unions to give up their rights to negotiate salary increases for their members. This is blatantly untrue.

Management's proposal is that the union and management come together annually as usual to agree on a base for the increase but over and above this base, management wants to implement an additional increase for those employees who perform well during the financial year. Looking at this proposal closely means that this is an opportunity for individual

employees who perform well to get something over and above what everyone else is getting. An objective, metrics based performance management system is used to measure performance and is currently used to determine the quantum of incentive bonus that each employee is paid.

Earlier today (Monday, 12 July), the union misinformed the media, claiming that hundreds of striking employees were causing traffic chaos outside the SACAA's Waterfall Office Park in Midrand. There was no interference by picketers with traffic movement within or outside the office park.

As per the picketing rules that were agreed upon by both management and labour over the weekend, picketing is confined to 20 picketers in the parking lot of the main building of the SACAA whilst the rest of the picketers are at the parking lot of the secondary building situated a hundred meters away from the main one.

However, there was temporary disregard of picketing rules by the 20 picketers who sang and blew *vuvuzelas* in an attempt to disturb students writing exams. Management intervened and the situation returned to normal.

### ***Inflated numbers***

Some media reports claimed that 12 000 SACAA employees would take to the streets. The truth is that the SACAA has a total staff complement of 433 employees of which only 186 are eligible to strike. The majority of the 186 employees on strike are support staff. After the SACAA pointed out this deliberate attempt to misinform the public, the union changed its tune and reverted to claiming that 200 employees are participating in the strike.

### ***Attempts to cause alarm***

SATAWU has gone out of its way to falsely claim that the SACAA will not be able to conduct investigations in case of aircraft accidents. The SACAA wishes to clarify that it has enough capacity to deal with an accident should there be a need. In addition, the SACAA has had for some time and as part of its support structure, a team of pro-tem investigators, countrywide, who are specialists that have been vetted and subsequently appointed to assist following an aircraft accident.

### ***Deliberate misinterpretation of the SACAA's offer***

Most critically, the union is misinforming the public and possibly its members by falsely alleging that management has linked the 9% increase on offer, to SATAWU members giving up their right to negotiate salary increases in future. The SACAA would like to state categorically that this is not and never has been management's position. Annual wage negotiations will still take place to determine what the average increase of employees will be.

The proposed performance increase will afford those employees who perform well, a higher than average increase. Moreover, the SACAA has in place a Performance Management System which is used to determine incentive bonuses to those employees who perform well during a financial year.

The SACAA further wishes to reiterate that in terms of the negotiations, management had initially offered a seven percent (7%) salary increase with no conditions attached to the increase, whilst labour demanded a fourteen percent (14%) increase across the board. At the time of the deadlock, management was offering a nine percent (9%) salary increase across the board for bargaining unit employees, coupled with the following conditions:

- that salary increments for employees within the category C4 and above on the Patterson grading system be based on performance as from the fiscal year 2011/2012; and
- employees within the categories A1 to C3 retain their status quo in the SACAA collective bargaining forum.

SATAWU rejected the proposal, which resulted in both parties reverting to their previous position, i.e. seven percent (7%) by management and fourteen percent (14%) by SATAWU. As a result, the two parties reached a stalemate and on Friday, 2 July 2010, met at the CCMA to seek conciliation in order to reach a settlement on the impasse.

It is worth noting that management tabled the discussion concerning performance based increments for the bargaining unit, during the wage negotiations of 2009/2010. Following these discussions, management and SATAWU agreed to refer the matter to the general session of the bargaining forum.

On 05 August 2009, management tabled the matter of performance based increments in the general session of the SACAA bargaining forum for debate. Subsequent to these discussions, management arranged a workshop for SATAWU leadership on performance based increments, which was held on the 22 January 2010 and was well attended. Management further arranged workshops for all employees belonging to the SACAA bargaining forum to be taken through the performance based salary increment process. Workshops were held on 02 and 03 March 2010.

During the course of the wage negotiations for the fiscal year 2010/2011, when management tabled the performance based increment concept, SATAWU again demanded that it should not form part of the negotiations and instead be referred to the general session of the bargaining forum which can be viewed as a delaying tactic.

It is further worth noting that the proposed wage increment based on performance will not take away their right to bargain; management and organised labour will still meet to determine the base or average increase.

**Ends**

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