

COSATU women's seminar

Women are demanding to be represented in all COSATU structures. The national women seminar in Cape Town in March called for proportional representation. This means that if women are 1/2 the membership of the union, women should be half the leadership in each structure.

Each affiliate reported about women members in their union. What jobs they did, what work was being done, wages, maternity rights, sexual harassment, women in structures and so on. The seminar agreed that women were taking big steps forward with winning maternity rights.

interested in.

The seminar also discussed the COSATU code of conduct. This code looks at how we behave as comrades; whether all our actions help to build the organisation. Delegates stressed that we must fight sexual harassment. In

It was the first national seminar on women. Almost all delegates were women. There were also delegates from community-based women's organisations. Other important decisions of the seminar were:

- The national women's planning committee must carry on meeting. They must co-ordinate activities on women and locals.
- We must build campaigns on the most important resolutions of the 1988 Women's Conference.

These are:

- A campaign around cervical cancer. This would mean demands to the bosses for regular check ups and education among our members about cervical cancer and contraception.
- The Living Wage Campaign with women's rights as part of this campaign. Important women's demands are:
 - Equal pay for equal work;
 - The right of women to buy a house and get housing loans.
- Childcare and violence against women. We must join hands with community-based women organisations in taking up these issues.



his speech to the seminar, COSATU General Secretary Cde Jay Naidoo said: "Forced sex is rape and must be treated as a very serious crime in the struggle. No comrade, no matter how senior he is, should be forgiven for such a crime. He should be isolated from the struggle."

This seminar evaluated the Women's Conference in 1988. It was agreed: There was no proper discussion before that Conference. Unions came with rigid positions and did not want to compromise. Also men and officials dominated discussions. It was agreed that women comrades must speak

more and chair meetings. This will make women more confident.

Also, women are more confident and active in union work. But a lot more work needs to be done in building the women's struggle.

Only 6 women's locals are working. They are Springs, Secunda, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, Durban and Rustenburg. Not all are working properly. Women comrades said: "Our biggest problem is lack of direction. We don't have a clear idea on what the women's locals should be doing."

All locals should take up the same campaigns at the same time on concrete issues that women are

Another problem with the 1988 Conference was that there was no follow-up. Good resolutions were just left in the air, the seminar said. Affiliates and regions should discuss the resolutions from the seminar and see what can be done to build the power of women in our organisation. There will be another seminar later in the year. The report from the seminar will be made into a booklet. This booklet must be out by the Third COSATU National Congress.

COSATU women organise!