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Dear Colleagues,

PSI SUPPORTS THE DENOSA AND NEHAWU NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION ON 22 FEBRUARY

PSI salutes the Democratic Nurses Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) in taking the bold step of struggling for health employment and improving the South African health system, with your joint mass action on 22 February 2017.

Considering the fact that President Jacob Zuma was co-Chair of the United Nations High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, it is quite disheartening that the South African government still maintains a permanent closure on all vacancies in the public service, including the health sector. What this amounts to is a freeze on employment and career progression. Work-overload, which as a result of this is fast becoming the norm in service delivery, has severe adverse consequences on health outcomes.

It is equally worrisome that professional development opportunities, necessary to ensure that nurses and other health workers have cutting-edge competencies to deliver quality services in a context of increasing microbial resistance and other health challenges, are being discontinued. We are strongly of the opinion that on-the-job training in the health sector should rather be prioritised.

Your demand for “speedy implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI)” underscores the fundamental place of health as a human right, which the South African government and governments across the world must be made to respect and realise.

At the heart of the problem, as your unions have identified, is the fact that profit and not people is being placed at the centre of state policy. This is manifested in macabre proportions with the implementation of austerity measures. It is thus very significant that DENOSA and NEHAWU was marching as a body on 22nd February, being Budget Day in South Africa.

We stand in solidarity with you as you fight for a better future for South Africa, with quality public health for all, which can be guaranteed only with: improved funding; enhanced health employment and decent work; accountability and inclusive decision-making.

We enjoin you not to relent in this struggle, till victory is won. Amandla! Ngawethu!!

In solidarity,

Rosa Pavanelli
General Secretary