



4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2023

# Newsletter

NEC Agriculture



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## Foreword

The year 2023 draws to a close, and the year has indeed been an eventful one. The close of the year always presents a chance for reflection, and the consensus seems to always be that there is so much more to be done. However, one cannot also help but recognise the rich vein of successes and passage of events of 2023 that have been achieved through the collaboration of the many actors in the industry. Collective Bargaining Agreements have been concluded in record time for most subsectors. New innovations have also been brought about such as the translation of the principal Collective Bargaining Agreement of the Industry, which has been one of the flagship projects of the year.

Additionally, the NEC Agriculture has continued to grow in membership of employers and employees registered, as it continues to provide valuable services to its stakeholders. Testament to this growth, as will be seen in this newsletter, is the opening of two new fully resourced, fully staffed branches in Karoi and Rusape, which will only add to the convenience enjoyed by stakeholders in bringing services closer to them.

The NEC Agriculture has indeed continued to be a leader in providing advisory and industrial relations services, a fact which has been well and publicly recognised at the NECs Symposium held at Kariba. We are immensely proud to inculcate a tradition of top-class service and to be a shining example of innovation, high performance, and excellence. I would like to emphasise that the unity between the social parties and our ability to cooperate with other stakeholders up and down the agricultural value chain will, more than anything else, be the factor that helps the industry to face up to any adverse conditions. As the country prepared to contend with the drought conditions anticipated because of the El Niño phenomenon, the ability to come together and harness hard work, ideas, collaboration and unity of purpose will no doubt mitigate the effects of conditions that are otherwise not in the control of any person. They are conditions that we will have to weather down and find solutions to together. With that, I would like to wish all stakeholders the very best of the end of 2023, and a fruitful 2024 to come.

David Madyausiku,

**Chief Executive Officer**

# NEC Agriculture shines at NECs Designated Agents annual Symposium

**Dumoluhle L. Ndebele**

One author once stated that, "gaining knowledge is the first step to wisdom. Sharing it is the first step to humanity". Behind this quote is the fundamental assumption that humanity is known for knowledge sharing. It is part of knowledge sharing that propelled NEC Agriculture to fully participate at the NECs Designated Agents' annual symposium organised by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare. The symposium was held in Kariba from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2023, under the theme 'Reengineering NECs to anchor sustainable growth and deliver on vision 2030'. NEC Agriculture left an indelible mark among the attendees at this event.

## **Attendance**

It was observed that most NECs had sent few representatives to the annual symposium. This was not the case with the NEC Agriculture as it managed to send 11 Designated Agents and the Chief Executive Officer was also in attendance. It was a decision informed by its vision of becoming a premier industrial relations service provider Zimbabwe, which cannot come about unless the staff members are fully capacitated with knowledge to effectively carry out their duties. The Director from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare congratulated NEC Agriculture for full representation at the symposium, further remarking that other NECs should emulate this example by ensuring that all their Designated Agents attend such events.

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*Standing are NEC Agriculture delegates at the annual symposium.*



## **Participation.**

NEC Agriculture delegates actively participated during the symposium. One of the Designated Agents, Sibusisiwe Maruma, participated as a Session Chair in the symposium and she represented the NEC Agriculture well through her outstanding engagements with the attendees. The valuable contributions by the NEC Agriculture CEO were also recognised, with the Directors of ceremony naming him as the “Dean of CEOs and General Secretaries”.

## **Symposium Content**

The deliberations and discussions at the symposium provided an enriching experience worthy of the investment in participation. The discussions were broad enough such that the stakeholders of the NECs will be enhanced by the application of the matters discussed. The first day of the symposium was action-packed with discussions on the topics “Unpacking the Labour Amendment Act number 11 of 2023”; “Occupational Safety, Health, and Social Security”; “The Retrenchment Process and the procedure following the Labour Amendment Act number 11 of 2023”; and “NEC Governance: Roles and duties of the secretariat.” The second day of the symposium saw some equally engaging and topical discussions including “Labour Disputes settlement and Procedure”; “Key ILO issues in the world of work”; and “Redefining Retirement”.

One speaker expressly noted that if there were awards to be issued NEC Agriculture would have obtained one judging from the order, attendance, participation, and general presentation. It is highly hoped that with the knowledge sharing and enhancement received at the symposium, the benefits will trickle down to the agricultural industry through our practices.



NEC Agriculture delegates 2023 annual symposium with Directors from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare

**.Dumoluhle Ndebele is a Designated Agent of the NEC Agriculture stationed in Bulawayo.**

# Planning for retirement

## **Sarafina Shoshore**

The COVID-19 pandemic was an eye opener for a lot of people. It gave a snippet of what retirement would be like under the circumstances of that time. We saw families trying to make ends meet to put food on the table. People spending 95% of their time at home, under one roof, managing with the bare minimum and lack of access to extra funds. We saw the “hustlers” selling wares, food stuffs and vegetables to people in the comfort of their homes. Some families could not afford to purchase the basics required for day to day in the home. Saved income was depleted, and so were the few resources that were within the homestead.

For some it was an opportunity to measure if the investments they had put in place towards life after work were viable. Only a handful of the people managed and to keep afloat and have access to their normal life and maintain it. It therefore provided evidence of the need to have a proper retirement plan in place to guard against the loss of livelihood (colloquially termed “from the office to the grave”) after retirement due to the stressful situation of resource strain at the home.

The dictionary definition of retirement reads “The act of retiring or of leaving one's job, career, or occupation permanently, usually because of age.” In Zimbabwe normal age of retirement is 60 years according to National Social Security Authority (NSSA), and 55 years for those who go on early retirement depending on the type of work and reasons. It is statutorily mandated that every employer and employee be registered with NSSA and make 50% contribution each. The benefit is derived from the monthly contributions by both employer and employee.

In addition, we have the National Social Security Authority that also provides some insurable earnings that come monthly depending on individuals' salary. In addition, the Agriculture Industry is classified as arduous employment by NSSA where one can retire at least seven of the 10 years prior to turning 55 years old this includes those in the Forestry section. Employers are encouraged to register their employees with NSSA and remit the deductions religiously.

### **How to access Retirement benefit?**

The claim is submitted within 12 months after date of retirement. A P9/P10 form that is filled by both employee and employer and submitted to any NSSA office. These forms are accompanied by valid identification particulars, a valid passport, or National Identity card together with a bank statement. The P9/P10 form is supposed to be completed by all employers the contributor was engaged with.

In conclusion there is need to engage various projects that enhance the financial stability during employment to cater for the after retirement. One can

engage in goat or cattle rearing, or projects that have gradual growth. There is need to utilize the pieces of land, where available, in the rural areas for income generating projects. To add on, one should be conscious that their first day at work is the first step towards retirement.



**Sarafina Shoshore is a Designated Agent of the NEC Agriculture and is stationed at the Karoi Branch.**

## NEC Agriculture Opens New Branches

### ***Tatenda Linnet Jena***

In a bid to extend our reach to all farmers countrywide, the National Employment Council for the Agricultural Industry in Zimbabwe has opened brand new branches in Mashonaland West and Manicaland Provinces. The branches are in Karoi town and Rusape town.

This is an effort to increase visibility and most importantly to extend services to stakeholders even closer to where they are. This has resulted in stakeholders not spending much in terms of travelling seeking services from NEC Agriculture. The branches are fully resourced with the infrastructure and staff complement to provide the first class services that stakeholders have become accustomed to from the NEC Agriculture.

Please visit the branches at the addresses below and contact us on our telephone numbers also listed below for your convenience. Our staff are ready to serve you!

<b>BRANCH</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>CONTACT NUMBERS</b>
Rusape	Stand 1328 Delta Industrial Area, Opposite Delta Willows Road Macheke Sub-catchment House Rusape	0252050334
Karoi	Stand 6274 Office Number 5 Jubilee Lane Karoi	0612157623 0612156690 0612156691





*CEO, Industrial Relations team, and the Karoi branch team*

**Tatenda Linnet Jena is a receptionist of the NEC Agriculture based in Karoi.**

## El Niño Effects in Agriculture

### *Nomathemba Masuku and Fionah Masudze*

El Niño is a climatic phenomenon that affects the weather patterns and rainfall. According to the [National Geographic Society](#), it is a climate pattern that is caused by the warming of the surface waters of the Pacific Ocean, thereby impacting ocean temperatures, and in turn, the speed and strength of ocean currents. It can have negative impact on agriculture and food production, especially in regions that depend on the monsoon winds. It can cause drought, flooding, extreme temperatures, or erratic rainfall which can damage crops, reduce yields, increase the incidence of pests and diseases, and affect food security and livelihoods.



Close to 5 000 cattle have succumbed to drought and diseases countrywide at the time of writing this article, with Matabeleland provinces most affected as the El Niño induced dry weather spell takes its toll on the national herd.



Recent heatwaves have also affected crops because they influence moisture levels in the ground and the rate of evaporation. El Niño conditions create conducive conditions for the outbreak of crop diseases and pests. When the crops are weakened, they become more susceptible to infestations and diseases, further affecting agricultural yields.

### **SOLUTIONS**

As Zimbabwe braces for the potential return of El Niño, farmers are urged to adequately prepare for irrigation mechanisms, intensify water harvesting, conserving, and protecting wetlands to mitigate the effects as boreholes are drying up. Paddocking and cattle supplementing feeding to avoid the movement of cattle for a long distance. Farmers are encouraged to plant early, go for short-season maize varieties, and adopt drought-resistant and early-maturing crops.

Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe has been urging farmers to adopt climate-proof farming methods and particularly championing the Pfumvudza/Intwasa scheme, through which it hopes to enhance food security at household level. For the 2023/2024 cropping season, the government is targeting over one million hectares under the Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme.

**Nomathemba Masuku and Fionah Masudze are receptionists at the NEC Agriculture based in Bulawayo and Bindura respectively.**



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