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Media release: immediate

CLOTHING INDUSTRY BECOMES FIRST INDUSTRY TO PAY OUT COVID-19 UIF RELIEF FUNDS

Workers in the clothing manufacturing industry have become the first in our country to receive an industry-wide COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) relief pay-out.

This follows on the ground-breaking collective agreement which was concluded under the auspices of the clothing industry bargaining council, on 23 March 2020, and which was promulgated as law by the Minister of Employment & Labour on 26 March 2020.

The provisions of that unique collective agreement caters for clothing industry employees to be paid their full wages, made up of a combination of voluntary employer contributions and worker UIF monies, for a 6-week lockdown period.

The agreement was concluded between the COSATU-affiliated Southern Africa Clothing & Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU), the Apparel & Textile Association of South Africa (ATASA), and the South African Apparel Association (SAAA).

On Friday 17 April 2020, the bargaining council received its first tranche of worker UIF funds, which was to compensate workers for loss of wages for the first full day of the lockdown, 27 March 2020, and which was the last day of that pay-week in the clothing industry.

On the same day, these worker UIF monies were seamlessly transmitted from the bargaining council's special dedicated COVID-19 bank account to the wage-bank accounts of 367 companies employing 38 751 employees.

While there are still very serious delays in the receipt of COVID-19 UIF monies due to clothing and textile workers, our bargaining council is pleased that this innovative payment transmission system which we had designed in conjunction with the UIF, has concretely proven to be efficient and effective. It is now our hope that the outstanding worker UIF funds still due to clothing and textile workers will now be speedily processed and transmitted to the bargaining council for transfer to workers.

The signatory parties of our COVID-19 Lockdown Collective Agreement remain committed to work closely with the UIF, to help resolve the remaining practical difficulties which we are still confronted with.

Issued by



**Marthie Raphael,
National Chairperson
National Bargaining Council for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry of South Africa.**

If further comments are required, kindly contact:

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