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SB/km

12 November 2010

Dear Comrades,

It is with great sorrow, indeed shock that we have heard the sad news of the passing of our dear Comrade and friend, Alina Rantsolase.

The international labour movement has lost a vanguard fighter and strong voice on behalf of struggling workers and the millions of disempowered and disenfranchised the world over.

As an exceptional friend, colleague, and comrade to so many of us in the movement, she exuded her convictions for justice and fairness, but also for militancy and activism, whether in her personal relations as well as within international trade union meetings, as well as at the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The daughter of a servant on a farm in the Free State, she became involved in the anti-apartheid movement while at school.

She started her working life at Checkers (a store chain) where she quickly became shop steward. She distinguished herself as a tough negotiator, a function she became responsible for at the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union.

She became the national treasurer of COSATU in 1999 where she was known as a hard but compassionate, no-nonsense straight-shooter when it came to rules and procedures. She then joined the Governing Body of the ILO where she was never afraid to take on employers and governments, including her own.

A disciplined comrade, she accepted her responsibilities and went to parliament as an MP following the elections in 2009. She brought with her to Cape Town the same dedication and convictions which she was known for in COSATU and which we all appreciated her for. Once there, she was quickly appointed Chairperson of the ANC's parliamentary caucus and served on the Home Affairs and Labour Portfolio Committees.

To say that she always remembered where she came from and those she was fighting tirelessly for is to state the obvious for all those who knew her. Her passing is a terrible loss to the world's working class and to all of us who cherished her.

On behalf of all of us at the ITUC, we mourn with you and her daughter Puleng our loss.

Her memory however, will continue to inspire us and move us forward in the struggle.

In Solidarity,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. B. Ramoelo'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

General Secretary