

shelve that idea because although we've got a strong presence, there is already an established union - MAWU - in that industry. MAWU is one of the unions participating with us in the unity talks. When the idea of bilateral discussions between unions organising in the same industry was raised, we felt that we could come together with MAWU and look at the possibility of a merger. This would facilitate the formation of a unified trade union federation.

**WIP:** So you are saying that in relations with MAWU, you have been a positive participant in the question of demarcation?

**Mufamadi:** Yes. We did commit ourselves to the question of industrial demarcation, and we saw it as an obligation on our part to sit down with any union organising in an area where we were also organised. Even the consideration of a merger was positive.

**WIP:** Have you signed your members in the metal industry over to MAWU?

**Mufamadi:** No, but that is one possibility we were toying with. Unfortunately, we were then asked to take a new status in the unity talks, and that status does not enable us to discuss that question with MAWU at the moment. But when unions were asked whether they could commit themselves to meeting with other unions where they overlap in areas of organisation, we indicated that we would be prepared to sit with MAWU in as far as our membership in the metal industry is concerned, and also with the Food and Canning Workers Union.

**WIP:** What are GAWU's long-term plans on trade union unity, given that you've now been offered observer status only, and that you're not able to accept that?

**Mufamadi:** We still see ourselves as very much part of the unity talks. That is why we see the coming mandate which our members will give us as very crucial, and something which cannot be hastily decided on. We need a lot of

discussion within GAWU itself.

We have no ill feelings towards those still participating in the unity talks. When we get a mandate, we will see how those participating in the unity talks can accommodate whatever mandate we have been given. We don't think that the doors for co-operation with those unions, either individually or collectively, have been closed. We are still trying to co-operate with them as ever before. All possibilities are still there for us to work towards unity with them.

**WIP:** One final question on GAWU's strength: how many signed up and paid up members does GAWU have?

**Mufamadi:** One cannot be categorical about this. It's a fluctuating position. Last year, for example, we experienced recession, and this affected organisation. Our current estimate is that our signed up membership is 30 000; and paid up membership in the region of 18 000



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