

Telkom outsourcing on hold: Solidarity

Telkom's large-scale outsourcing plans have been put on hold for the time being, trade union Solidarity said on Tuesday, 31 March 2009.

"This follows after Telkom management had met with certain trade unions again last week regarding the issue and concluded an agreement. In terms of the agreement, there will be no retrenchments and no redundancy in Telkom," it said.

The trade union said that although it already received the agreement, it had not yet signed it and planned to meet with management next week to discuss the agreement.

"Reportedly it was decided to put the process on hold due to concern about Telkom's service delivery for the soccer World Cup in 2010," the union said.

Solidarity said it was demanding to be given full details about the Telkom agreement.

"Among other things, Solidarity is demanding that Telkom be upfront with its employees regarding the duration of the agreement, whether or not the agreement would possibly include voluntary severance packages and early retirement packages, and whether the agreement will only be valid for employees of Telkom SA," it said.

Solidarity spokesperson Jaco Kleynhans warned: "The past year, a storm has erupted in Telkom over the possibility of outsourcing. This has led to tremendous uncertainty for most Telkom employees. Now employees are being placated with further agreement that the restructuring plans have been postponed for the time being."

Telkom put the restructuring on hold last year and put it off until April this year. Solidarity said it had in the meanwhile declared an internal dispute with Telkom on Monday regarding the handling of wage negotiations in the company.

"Wage negotiations have already been postponed several times and the first official round of negotiations, scheduled for yesterday [Monday] and today, was once again postponed late on Friday afternoon.

"In January, Solidarity was already set to conduct wage negotiations, but in the interim employees' interests are still not being looked after and negotiations are put off time and again. Solidarity is now demanding that the recognition agreement with trade unions be respected," explained Kleynhans.

"The three-year wage agreement in Telkom must be implemented by 1 April," said Solidarity.

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