

## Message from INAT President May 2025

May 1<sup>st</sup>, also known as May Day, Workers' Day, and International Workers' Day, is recognised in most parts of the world. The day is set aside to honour the struggles and advances made by working people and their organisations. The aim of appropriate technology to empower people and their communities is consistent with the call to struggle symbolised by May Day. The *Appropriate Technology Manifesto (ATM)* outlines strategies for various stakeholder groups to promote the adoption of appropriate technology. The stakeholder groups addressed are: 1) educational institutions; 2) government structures; 3) international agencies; 4) non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Non-profit organisations (NGOs), and community organisations; 5) the private sector; and 6) engaged citizens. Focusing on the 'engaged citizens', their "most profound impact will come through organization at the community, regional, national, and international level." (page 70 of *ATM*)

One shortcoming of the manifesto is insufficient attention to the role of workers' organizations and political parties in advancing appropriate technology. The citizens most active in technology use are working people - miners, farmers, factory workers, and those engaged in service delivery, who use machinery, technology, and techniques that enhance productivity. The idea presented in the manifesto is that every citizen must take responsibility for advocating appropriate technology and eliminating the use of inappropriate technologies, and that this is best done through organizations. The necessity for citizens to promote appropriate technology in the workplace is implicit in the Manifesto. This would require workers to have their unions and other workers' organisations discriminate in technology and techniques. The tools, machinery, and techniques workers use are selected and controlled by the owners of the workplace. Under capitalism, the owners have a clear mandate to choose technology and techniques that maximize their bottom line – profits. Historically, that has been detrimental to workers' health and safety and has caused extensive environmental damage. Corporate and military operations have generated tons of toxic waste, causing extensive damage to the water, soil, and air across communities. Workers must organise to reverse this historical precedent. There must be an assessment of the damage done and a call for accountability. Prioritising worker and planet, health and safety over profits must be demanded of all workers' organisations and political parties.

Addressing government structures as a stakeholder group requires more attention to political parties. Activist citizens engage with political parties and their affiliated organizations. Political parties seek to control their government to enact policies consistent with the party's goals and objectives. Most countries are run by political parties or coalitions of political parties. The political parties in control enact laws, allocate funds, and enforce policies that direct and regulate the use of technologies. From funding of select research to tax policies on certain industries, political parties through the government greatly influence the trajectory of technology development. Citizens must force political parties to hold government, military, and corporate structures accountable. This requires policies that safeguard the environment and serve to improve the well-being of citizens.

## **We strongly appeal to the engaged citizen. You can make a difference.**

If you are a member of INAT become more active. If you are new to INAT please join us in this struggle for humanity. Please check out our Appropriate Technology Manifesto for ways you can make a difference. Our first INAT book, *Appropriate Technology Manifesto: Shifting the Forces of Production to Empower People and Protect the Planet*, is now available from Africa World Press - <https://africaworldpressbooks.com/science-technology/>.