i-DEAL
03
ISSUE: 2026





The Department of Employment and Labour's Inspection and Enforcement Services (IES) branch led by its Deputy Director-General, Aggy Moiloa (in a blue dress) and the organising team of the recent successful National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference 2026. The logistics acumen of the team coupled with engaging presentations left an indelible mark in the minds of attendees. The event held at Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg sought to position South Africa to modernise its OHS system in line with global standards while protecting the dignity, health, and productivity of its workers.

4 Security is everyone's responsibility

5 Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya Meet with Chinese Business Owners in Textile Industry in Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal

13 Managers must STOP abusing their powers towards their subordinates. Bullying, harassment, intimidation and abuse of power will not be tolerated in the workplace

Fraud hotline number

Fraud hotline number.....0860 666 883 and also the National Anti -Fraud Hotline at PSC 0800 701 701; email: Fraud@labour.gov.za

EDITORIAL

Ahead of the World Day for Safety and Health, which is commemorated in April the Department of Employment and Labour hosted an National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) conference during the course of March 2026 to discuss mechanisms to promote compliance and to reimagine the future of OHS in South Africa.

The goal of highlighting the OHS as enunciated by International Labour Organization (ILO) is to prevent the occurrence of occupational accidents and diseases. In the same breadth World Day for Safety and Health at Work is celebrated every April 28. The day is about safe work and awareness of work-related accidents and diseases.

Despite the Department's regular inspections and advocacy initiatives - breaches in compliance continue to be a concern to the department, and these come at a high cost to human life.

The recent collapse of the Ormonde building once again highlighted that if statutory prescripts are by-passed in favour of short-cuts the consequences are dire. South Africa is not short of case studies when it comes to consequences of non-compliance. Here, one can think of Injaka bridge collapse, Tongaat Mall collapse, Grayston/M1 temporary bridge collapse and George Building collapse.

While the construction industry has come in for some attention no-compliance on OHS cuts across all sectors.

In his address at the Occupation Health and Safety (OHS), 2026 conference held on 17 to 19 April 2026, in Gauteng province, Employment and Labour Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya said, "Where non-compliance is persistent, there must be consequences, failure to comply with the labour laws undermines worker dignity, fair competition, and economic stability".

As we commemorate human rights month, let us be reminded that worker rights are human rights. Therefore, both employers and workers in the world of work must do things right and do the right things. All parties in the labour market have obligations and responsibilities to ensure workplace compliance to enhance safety of workers.



Teboho Thejane
Editor-in-Chief

#YAZINI

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DIARY OF EVENTS

APRIL

03 April 2026 = Good Friday (national holiday)

06 April 2026 = Family Day (national holiday)

16-17 April 2026 = Department of Employment and Labour's National Employment Equity Consultative Forum (NEECF) meeting. The Department's National Employment Equity Consultative Forum meets quarterly, unless there are pressing matters in the organisation that demands immediate attention. NEECF meets to discuss issues relating to development of EE plans, monitor the implementation of EE plan and quarterly progress report submission, identify employment barriers, ensure smooth implementation of EE plans

27 April 2026 = Freedom Day (national holiday)

28 April 2026 = World Day for Safety and Health at Work (also known as OSH Day) will be observed. This annual international campaign, organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), aims to promote safe and healthy work environments and prevent occupational accidents and diseases globally.

MAY

01 May 2026 = Workers' Day (national holiday)

28 May 2026 = Department's Public Employment Services (PES) Branch Management Committee (BMC) meeting

JUNE

1-12 June 2026 = The 114th Session of the International Labour Conference is held in Geneva, Switzerland. The Conference sets the international labour standards and the broad policies of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It meets annually. Often called an international parliament of labour, the Conference is also a forum for discussion of key social and labour questions.

13 June 2026 = The 357th Session of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization (ILO) meets in Geneva, Switzerland. The Governing Body of the International Labour Office is the executive body of the International Labour Organization (the Office is the secretariat of the Organization). It meets three times a year, in March, June and November. It takes decisions on ILO policy, decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference, adopts the draft Programme and Budget of the Organization for submission to the Conference, and elects the Director-General.

16 June 2026 = Youth Day (national holiday)

29 June 2026 = Department's Public Employment Services (PES) Branch Management Committee (BMC) meeting



> "Security is not user-friendly. We must make it friendly to ourselves by accepting it as such, cooperating and contributing towards improvement"

Department of Employment and Labour Security Services Directorate Director, Nonhlanhla Tshetlo … Security is essential for the survival of any organisation or institution.

Security is everyone's responsibility

The Department of Employment and Labour's (DEL) Security Directorate recently conducted a security awareness campaign, and the message that reverberated was "take security seriously or be sorry".

Security Services Director, Nonhlanhla Tshetlo, set the scene in the day-long, three-day session campaign when she told the Departmental officials that the awareness campaign was intended to sensitise all Department of Employment and Labour officials on their roles with regard to security issues, affecting them directly or indirectly.

Ms Tshetlo emphasised that the Security Services, which derives its legal mandate as outlined in the National Strategic Act of 39 of 1994, has a counter intelligence operations to protect intelligence operations and any classified information by vetting classified information, conducting vetting investigations, and to counter any potential threats, among other functions.

She also said the business unit exists to protect the institution's information and assets and provide protection to staff and visitors.

A simple dictionary definition defines security as all the measures that are taken to protect a place, or to ensure that only people with permission enter it or leave it. The word "security" originates from the Latin secures, meaning "without care" or "free from concern".

Mr. Isaiah Seapose described security as an attitude: "Security is not user-friendly. We must make it friendly to ourselves by accepting it as such, cooperating and contributing towards improvement". He said security was "a conscious mind".

He described security as consisting of various components, including: physical, operational, information, and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) compliance.

Mr. Seapose cautioned officials not to use work offices for study groups or treat the workplace as a storage space to keep their personal possessions. He said officials leave their personal belongings in offices and resort to coming during "wee small hours" to collect them. Said Mr. Seapose that there must be a justifiable reason for an official to be on the premises after hours.

His word of advice is that officials must take responsibility and accountability for their office space. He said they do not need to duplicate their keys and must always report incidents that threaten security.

The Security Awareness campaign was also graced by the presence of Compensation Fund's Mr Vincent Nemasetoni who delivered a presentation on compensational for occupational injuries and diseases; SAPS Sergeant Thabang Nkhumise whose presentation focused on the levels of crime in the central business districts, the measure taken by the SAPS to prevent, investigate, maintain public order, protect and secure inhabitants and their property; City of Tshwane Emergency Services Department Chief, Dr Tshepo Sethakha focused on fire safety, protection of property and safety of buildings.

Ms. Mmakgabo Moitsi, Department's Deputy Director, Monitoring: OHS and Security Compliances stressed the importance of housekeeping. Ms. Moitsi said each divisional head must ensure a safe and healthy working environment.

By Shadrack Mashalaba



Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour Jomo Sibiya addressing Chinese textile factory owners during an advocacy session in Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, where employers were urged to comply with labour laws or face severe consequences.

Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya meets with Chinese Business Owners in the Textile Industry in Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal

On Tuesday, 10 March 2026, Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Mr Jomo Sibiya, led a high-level delegation from the Department of Employment and Labour to Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, for an advocacy engagement with Chinese-owned textile factory operators.

The engagement focused on addressing serious labour law compliance challenges and on developing a structured programme to improve working conditions and ensure full compliance with South African labour legislation.

This meeting followed a series of inspections conducted in Newcastle by Deputy Minister Sibiya and departmental officials, during which widespread non-compliance with labour laws was identified at several Chinese-owned factories operating in the area.

Addressing factory owners, Deputy Minister Sibiya urged employers to treat workers fairly, issue formal employment contracts, maintain safe working environments, and comply fully with all applicable labour laws. While emphasising the importance of cooperation and constructive engagement, he cautioned that continued non-compliance could result in intensified enforcement measures, including fines, criminal prosecution, and, where necessary, closure of non-compliant businesses.

The Deputy Minister further indicated that concerns regarding labour law violations had been raised with the Chinese diplomatic mission in South Africa. According to Mr. Sibiya, Chinese authorities expressed concern that non-compliance by some companies is negatively affecting China's international reputation.

One of the key issues highlighted during the engagement was the employment of undocumented foreign nationals. Mr. Sibiya stressed that employing undocumented migrants constitutes a criminal offence and warned that such practices would not be tolerated. He noted that several factories employ significant numbers of undocumented workers from neighbouring countries, including Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, and urged employers to prioritise the employment of South African citizens.

Deputy Minister Sibiya also emphasised that all workers must be provided with written employment contracts, be registered with the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and the Compensation Fund, and must not be housed or required to work in unsafe or unsuitable conditions.

The Department's Chief Inspector, Ms. Milly Ruiters, raised further concerns following recent inspections of textile factories in the area. She reported that some facilities showed little to no compliance with occupational health and safety standards.

As a result, the Department has instructed affected factories to implement proper workplace health and safety systems to safeguard employees and prevent workplace injuries.

Ms Ruiters warned that failure to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act could result in severe penalties, including fines of up to R100,000 or imprisonment for up to two years, particularly in cases where negligence leads to injury or loss of life.

Kundai Govere, a candidate attorney at Chothia Attorneys representing Chinese business owners in the Newcastle clothing and textile sector, stated that 31 factories had voluntarily approached the Department of Employment and Labour seeking guidance on improving compliance and strengthening their understanding of labour legislation.

Of these, four factories employ only South African workers, while the remainder employ a combination of South African and foreign workers.

By Sephewe Tshabalala



Employment and Labour Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya with Departmental officials and Chinese employers during the advocacy meeting held in Newcastle recenty.

Back by popular demand Employment and Labour HQ employs a former intern

The Department of Employment and Labour's (DEL) Head Office Financial Management Unit is proud to announce the appointment of the Department's former intern, Mr. Tlotlo Rammala, as an Accounting Clerk: Deductions, Salaries Administration Subunit.

The 32-year-old, Mr. Rammala, said he was ecstatic when he received the news of his appointment and to return to the same Department that he had worked for as an intern for 24 months.

Mr. Rammala commenced with his duties at the Department of Employment and Labour Head Office on 17 February 2026.

"I am a proud product of the Department of Employment and Labour. I was an intern here from 2022 to 2024, where I was stationed at Risk Management. After the contract ended, I focused on my studies.

"I am extremely happy to be back in a place where I feel at home, and I look forward to serving the DEL community to the best of my ability," said Mr. Rammala.

His job requirements and functions as an accounting clerk are: administer travel claims, administer suspense accounts, compile various journals, administrator services benefits, perform PERSAL and BAS reconciliations, administer deductions for the subsidised vehicles, and medical aid and garnishee orders.

When asked about his future plans with the Department of Employment and Labour, Rammala said: "Being an assistant to the Department by sharpening my skills and obtaining as many qualifications as possible to better serve the DEL community."

Mr. Rammala said he would like to thank "God Almighty who makes everything beautiful at his own time". He was full of praise for Directorate Risk Management, which played a critical role in his character development and ensured he was adequately trained, and he would also like to thank his family, who instilled in him the correct values and encouraged him to study.

He said the best moments in his career so far were the opportunity to attend various conferences where he had the opportunity to learn from industry professionals and the opportunity to travel to various provincial offices and explore various parts of South Africa.

As to what helped him to triumph in the job opportunity, he said: "The confidence that my previous Directorate Risk Management developed, and ensuring I leave my shell, and I can fully integrate into public service. The various training opportunities I received from the Department made me a standout candidate when attending interviews."

Mr. Rammala wishes to be known by his colleagues as an avid gamer (video games), and after he graduated from university, he was even a semi-professional player.

He said he enjoys sports and his favourite sports team is Arsenal Football Club.

"I am an open and transparent person, and I enjoy engaging in health debates. I am a proactive and solution-oriented person," he said.

Mr. Rammala is currently studying at the University of South Africa, completing a Bachelor of Accounting Sciences in Internal Audit.

And other qualifications he has achieved are from the University of the Free State, Bachelor of Administration (Public Administration); University of South Africa, Advanced Certificate in Accounting Sciences.

By Siyabulela Dzanibe



Newly-appointed Accounting Clerk: Deductions, Salaries Administration Subunit, Mr. Tlotlo Rammala, at the Department of Employment and Labour Head Office.

HR trains New Investigators, Initiators, and Presiding Officers



Department's Mpumalanga Province Human Resources Deputy Director, Mr. Mothusi Nkotsoe, chaired the training session.



Department's Mpumalanga Province officials who attended the HR training session aimed at empowering officials to serve as Investigators, Initiators, and Presiding Officers in disciplinary cases.

Last month, the Mpumalanga Provincial Office hosted a comprehensive Human Resources (HR) training session aimed at empowering officials to serve as Investigators, Initiators, and Presiding Officers in disciplinary cases.

The session forms part of the department's ongoing efforts to strengthen internal governance, promote procedural fairness, and ensure consistent application of disciplinary processes.

The training was led by the Human Resources Deputy Director, Mr. Mothusi Nkotsoe, who emphasised the importance of integrity, objectivity, and adherence to due process when handling workplace cases. He highlighted that properly-trained officials play a critical role in safeguarding both organisational standards and employee rights.

Prior to the training, Human Resources circulated a call inviting interested officials to volunteer to serve in these important roles. The positive response reflected a strong commitment among staff members to contribute to maintaining discipline, accountability, and ethical conduct within the department.

During the session, officials were taken through the procedures involved in managing disciplinary cases, including:

- Understanding misconduct and applicable policies
- Conducting fair and thorough investigations
- Gathering and analysing evidence
- Drafting investigation reports
- Preparing charges and notices
- Ensuring compliance with labour legislation and departmental policies
- Participants were equipped with practical knowledge on how to approach investigations objectively, maintain confidentiality, and ensure procedural fairness at every stage of the process.

The Employee Relations Officer, Ms. Sindisiwe Dlamini, also played a key role in the training. She guided officials through the step-by-step process of conducting investigations and explained how disciplinary hearings are structured and managed. Her presentation provided clarity on the responsibilities of each role-player, including the distinction between investigators, initiators, and presiding officers.

Ms. Dlamini further outlined how disciplinary hearings should be conducted, from opening proceedings and leading evidence to cross-examination, mitigating and aggravating factors, and ultimately delivering a fair and reasoned outcome. The interactive nature of the session allowed participants to engage in discussions, ask questions, and share experiences, enhancing their understanding of both the technical and practical aspects of disciplinary case management.

The training marks an important milestone in strengthening internal capacity and ensuring that cases are handled professionally, consistently, and in line with labour law principles. By investing in the development of its officials, the department continues to demonstrate its commitment to good governance, accountability, and a fair workplace environment..

By Hlanganisa Mbatha

SECURITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN – PRETORIA

In a drive to increase the level of awareness - the Department of Employment and Labour's (DEL) Security Directorate recently conducted a security awareness campaign to officials.

The three-day campaign was attended by dozens officials and offered an intense education on security matters.

The campaign was addressed by officials from the Security Directorate, Compensation Fund, and external experts from - the SAPS and City of Tshwane. The campaign focused on protection of documents and personnel, injury on duty, disaster management, trend of criminal activity in city areas, physical security and occupational health and safety.
















DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR PARTNERS WITH DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (DRKKDM) AND ITS LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES IN AN EMPLOYER'S SESSION - JB MARKS TOWN HALL IN POTCHEFSTROOM

The Department of Employment and Labour in the North West Province recently held in a partnership with the DRKKDM an employer session to discuss the high unemployment rate in the provinces.

The joint session was attended by representatives of national and provincial government, business, organised labour, and society. It focused on a range of issues from unemployment, crime, lack of compliance to labour laws, enabling a conducive environment for business to invest,

The Employer's Roundtable Session took place alongside the Jobs/Careers Fair. The session was addressed by representatives from the Unemployment Insurance Fund, Compensation Fund, Productivity SA, and CCMA.







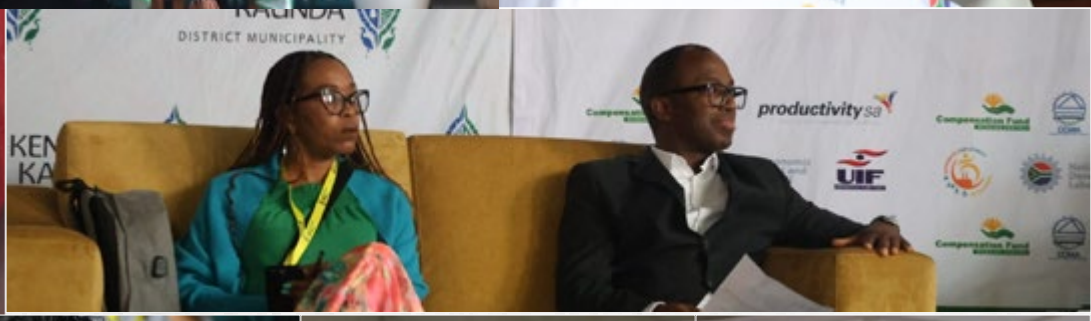






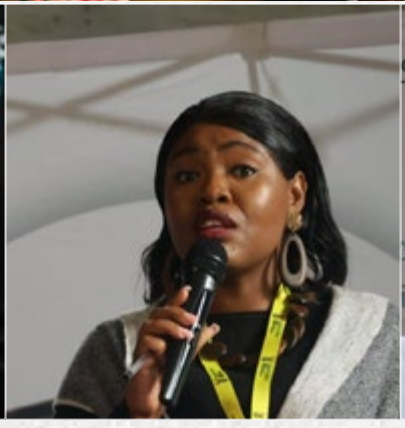
















JOBS/CAREERS FAIR - MADIBA BANQUET HALL IN POTCHEFSTROOM, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

The Department of Employment and Labour in the North West Province under the guidance of the Public Employment Services (PES) business unit held a Jobs/Careers Fair in the province.

The Jobs/Careers Fair serves as one of the intervention mechanisms to empower work seekers. The province's Jobs/Careers Fair took place alongside an Employer's Roundtable Session. The Jobs/Careers Fair is held to help work-seekers to gain valuable insight about different career opportunities, including learnerships, internships, apprenticeships, bursaries, and networking.

It also seeks to assist work-seekers to receive career counselling, register and apply for available opportunities on the Employment System of South Africa (ESSA) matchmaking system.













THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNIT IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE HELD A SERIES OF OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS AS PART OF THE BUILD-UPS AHEAD OF THE 2025/26 JOBS FAIR IN DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

The Department of Employment and Labour in the North West Province, through the Public Employment Services (PES) branch in partnership with the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District (DrKKD) and its local municipalities, held a series of service delivery campaigns as part of the 2025/26 Career/Jobs Fair that was held in Potchefstroom.

During these build-up campaigns, members of the public received a basket of services offered by the Department, Municipalities, and other government and private institutions.

Services offered were from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), Compensation Fund (CF), Public Employment Services, Work-seeker Registration (ESSA Database), Inspection and Enforcement Services, Employer Services, Community Services, Economic Development and Supply Chain Services (DRKKD).

These build-ups were held in Boikhutso near Ventersdorp, Wolmaranstaad, and Jouberton areas within the City of Matlosana, Maquassie Hills, and JB Marks local municipalities from 02-05 March 2026.

























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QUALITY MANUFACTURER

Managers must STOP abusing their powers over their subordinates. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, and abuse of power will not be tolerated in the workplace

Every employee deserves to work in a conducive, healthy work environment which is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation, abuse of powers, and intimidation by managers.

One should not get discouraged when they think of going to work on any regular day. In fact, all employees should look forward to going to work on any regular day. Managers are also employees of the Department, like the rest. The only difference will be authority and pay grades.

However, that does not give managers and supervisors the right to bully and harass their subordinates and treat them like kids in the workplace.

Section 10 of the Constitution states that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. In terms of the Code of Good Practice on Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the workplace, harassment is defined as an unwanted conduct which impairs dignity, which creates a hostile or intimidating work environment for one or more employees, and is calculated to, or has the effect of, including submission by actual or adverse consequence.

Harassment definition makes reference to bullying as one of the forms of harassment, and it includes verbal bullying in the form of threats, shaming, hostile teasing, insults, constant negative judgment, criticism, racist comments, sexist, or LGBTQIA + phobia language.

Furthermore, bullying can also include intimidation, isolating the target, spreading rumours and lies, intentional exclusion, and enlisting others to a target on their behalf. In most cases, bullying may be repeated or a one-off incident, and most of the time it is linked to power imbalances.

Bullying in the workplace has a negative impact on the bullied in that it may cause mental health problems like anxiety and depression, which can lead to some employees having suicidal thoughts and being admitted to Psychiatric hospitals. Furthermore, it can lead employees to poor performance and to miss important deadlines, which will result in managers, being the same bullies, taking disciplinary actions against the bullied.

It should be noted that bullying, harassment, and abuse of power are considered gross misconduct and should be managed by the Directorate: Employment Relations. If it is proven that a manager and or a supervisor has harassed and bullied other employees, disciplinary actions will be taken against the bully, which may result in Dismissal from the Public Service.

It is therefore advisable that all bullies should stop bullying and harassing other employees, and if such conduct persists, those affected should report the unacceptable conduct to the Directorate: Employment Relations, who will take appropriate steps to eliminate bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Collegiality is key to improving service delivery and executing the mandate of the Department effectively.

(Mr. Takalani Mashau is the Department of Employment and Labour Assistant Director in the Employment Relations Directorate)



> **“Bullying in the workplace has a negative impact on the bullied in that it may cause mental health problems”**

RESEARCH DISSEMINATION SEMINAR ON 'BENCHMARK STUDY ON SILICOSIS IN NON-MINING SECTOR – KEMPTON PARK

Department of Employment and Labour's Labour Policy and Industrial Relations (LP&IR) branch recently released findings of a study on the prevalence of silicosis in non-mining sectors. The outcome of the study is another step towards eliminating silicosis in the affected sectors.

In the conducting of the research the Department partnered the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University) and Wits Health Consortium (WHC).

The study was aimed at establishing a benchmark of silicosis cases in non-mining sectors to strengthen targeted elimination interventions. Through the findings and recommendations the Department also seeks to help in the elimination of this occupational hazard affecting workers in the country.

The study focused on cconstruction, artificial stone, bricks manufacturing, and pottery/ceramics sectors. It found that the occupational lung disease caused by inhaling crystalline silica dust still poses a serious threat. The Department's plan is to eliminate silicosis in South Africa by 2030.



























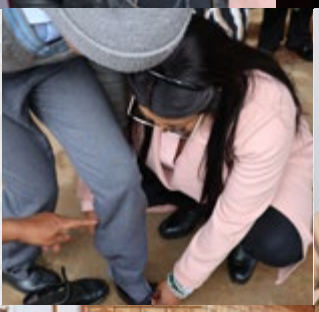



IZANOKHANYO PRIMARY SCHOOL BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAMME – WEST RAND REGION, GAUTENG PROVINCE

The Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala embarked on yet another back-to-school programme in Gauteng as part of the Parliamentary back-to-school campaign; which aims to assess school readiness, promote access to education, and motivate learners at the start of the academic year 2026.

At Izanokhanyo (meaning bringing light) the Deputy Minister's delegation donated school shoes and also embarked on planting trees as part of a fight against climate change.










DEPUTY MINISTER NEMADZINGA-TSHABALALA BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAMME – KHOLWANI PRIMARY SCHOOL, JABULANI, SOWETO

Employment and Labour Deputy Minister Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala embarked on a back-to-school programme in Gauteng as part of the Parliamentary back-to-school campaign.

The campaign at Kholwani (meaning - to believe/trust) aimed to assess school readiness, promote access to education, and motivate learners at the start of the academic year 2026. During the visit the Deputy Minister donated school shoes to learners from destitute families and also planted trees in the school.

The Deputy Minister's visiting delegation included Basic Education Deputy Minister Makgabo Reginah Mhaule, officials from the Department of Employment and Labour and Department of Basic Education, Pakistan High Commission in SA, South African National Civic Organisation, local ward councillor and other stakeholders.










New ILO data confirm women face higher workplace risks from generative AI than men



A new report finds that women face higher risks, as they are concentrated in tasks more prone to automation and remain underrepresented in technology and science fields.

GENEVA (ILO News) – Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is reshaping the world of work, with the potential to boost productivity, support job creation and improve job quality, but its impacts are far from gender-neutral.

A new research brief from the International Labour Organization (ILO) warns that GenAI is set to affect women's jobs more than men's, with female-dominated occupations almost twice as likely to be exposed to the technology.

The brief, Gen AI, occupational segregation and gender equality in the world of work, shows that women are disproportionately exposed to GenAI for three main reasons: they are overrepresented in jobs most susceptible to automation; they remain underrepresented in AI-related and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations; and AI systems themselves often reflect and reproduce the gender biases embedded in societies.

Women concentrated in high-risk jobs

Across countries with available data, occupations dominated by women are almost twice as likely to be exposed to GenAI as male-dominated ones, the study finds. Around 29 per cent of female-dominated occupations are exposed to GenAI, compared to just 16 per cent of male-dominated occupations. The difference is even starker when looking at high automation risk: 16 per cent of female-dominated occupations fall into the highest exposure categories, compared to only 3 per cent of male-dominated ones.

These risks are closely linked to occupational segregation. Women are heavily concentrated in clerical, administrative and business support roles, such as secretaries, receptionists, payroll clerks and accounting assistants, where many tasks are routine and codifiable and therefore at higher risk of substitution by GenAI. By contrast, men are more represented in construction, manufacturing and manual trades, where tasks are less easily automated.

At the country level, women are more exposed to GenAI than men in 88 per cent of countries analysed. In several economies, more than 40 per cent of women's employment is exposed to GenAI, including Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the Philippines, as well as small island developing States in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In high-income countries overall, 41 per cent of jobs are exposed to GenAI, compared with just 11 per cent in low-income countries, reflecting differences in occupational structures and digital readiness.

"Generative AI is not entering a neutral labour market," said Anam Butt, co-author of the ILO research. "Discriminatory social norms, unequal care responsibilities and economic and labour market policies that do not fully address the needs of women and men continue to shape who enters which occupations and on what terms. As a result, women are concentrated in occupations that are more likely to be exposed to automation and remain underrepresented in AI-related jobs, facing higher risks but fewer opportunities from this technological shift."

Locked out of AI opportunities

While GenAI is expected to drive job growth in technology-intensive sectors, women remain largely excluded from these opportunities. Globally, women accounted for only about 30 per cent of the AI workforce in 2022, only 4 percentage points higher than in 2016. They are also underrepresented in STEM jobs more broadly, particularly in high-demand fields such as engineering and software development.

This imbalance matters. When women are missing from AI-related jobs and decision-making roles, they are less likely to benefit from new employment opportunities and skills development. At the same time, enterprises lose out on talent, diversity and innovation.

Technology shaped by society

The brief underlines that GenAI, like technologies that came before it, is not neutral. Technologies are designed, trained and deployed within existing social and economic structures and can therefore reproduce biases and discrimination. The underrepresentation of women in the development and adoption of AI increases the risk of gender-biased technologies. AI systems trained on biased or incomplete data have been shown to disadvantage women in recruitment, pay decisions, credit scoring and access to services. Such risks are compounded for women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability or migration status. Without safeguards, GenAI can amplify these inequalities at scale.

Policy choices matter

The ILO stresses that the most widespread impact of GenAI is likely to be on job quality rather than job quantity. GenAI can change tasks, intensify workloads, increase monitoring or reduce autonomy. But if designed and implemented responsibly, it can also improve working conditions, enhance productivity and support work–life balance.

"The choices made today will determine whether GenAI becomes a force for greater equality or one that entrenches existing gaps," the brief notes. Embedding gender equality in the design, deployment and governance of GenAI is essential, alongside tackling occupational segregation, expanding women's access to skills and ensuring their representation in AI-related roles.

"The impact of generative AI on women's jobs is not predetermined," said Janine Berg, senior economist in the Research Department and co-author of the report. "With the right policies, social dialogue and gender-responsive design, we can avert reinforcing existing discrimination."

Strong labour market institutions and social dialogue are critical to this process. By involving governments, employers and workers in shaping how GenAI is introduced at work, technological change can support decent work and advance a more inclusive future of work for all.

Article sourced from ILO



Towards pay equity: Laws, wages, care policies, and social dialogue are key to delivering pay equity

GENEVA (ILO News) – The global gender pay gap remains high despite decades of commitments and can only be closed through coordinated action and deliberate policies, a new publication from the International Labour Organization (ILO) finds.

The report, titled Pay Equity: A Comprehensive Response to the Gender Pay Gap, proposes a new Theory of Change and Intervention Model based on coordinated actions and deliberate policies aimed at delivering real change in women's pay and working lives. The findings show that laws and institutions, wage policies, pay transparency, objective job evaluation, social dialogue, labour inspection, social protection, care policies, and actions are essential to tackling gender stereotypes and reducing the gender pay gap.

Globally, women in wage employment still earn on average 20 per cent less than men, with even wider gaps for women with children, women in informal work, women with disabilities, and migrant women. At the same time, powerful transformations – from digitalization and artificial intelligence to demographic change and rising care needs – are reshaping labour markets, with the potential to either widen inequalities or help close them.

Building on the ILO's 2013 Equal Pay Guide, the new publication sets out a comprehensive "whole-of-society" approach to achieving equal pay for work of equal value.

The guide captures changes in the policy landscape since 2013 and covers the rapid expansion of pay transparency laws, new tools for objective job evaluation, the growing role of technology, and stronger links between pay equity, minimum wage, and living wage policies. It adopts a life-course perspective, showing how unpaid care work, career breaks, and part-time work accumulate into lower pay and a gender pension gap. It also places greater emphasis on informal work and intersecting forms of discrimination.

The guide – available in multiple languages – is aimed primarily at governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations. It also speaks to a wider audience. By combining data, legal analysis, policy guidance, and "snapshots of practice" from countries around the world, it is a useful reference and manual for change for broader audiences.

Towards Pay Equity grew out of the work of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), the global multi-stakeholder initiative coordinated by the ILO, OECD, and UN Women. Many of the most up-to-date good practices highlighted in the guide come from EPIC members, who shared concrete examples of laws, pay transparency measures, job evaluation tools, and wage policies that are already making a difference.

A call to immediate action

Towards Pay Equity is also a call to action for stronger global commitments, new policy tools, and growing public attention, so that the right conditions are put in place for pay equity to be achieved. The guide also makes clear that equal pay for work of equal value is both a fundamental principle and right at work and an economic and social necessity that benefits everyone.

The guide was developed with the generous support of the French Government, Ministry of Labour, Health, Solidarity and Families, under the France–ILO Partnership.

(Article sourced from ILO)



Every day Ethics in the Public Service: Doing What's Right, Always

As employees of Department of Employment and Labour, we are entrusted with the responsibility to serve people with honesty, fairness, and integrity. Ethical conduct isn't just about major decisions—it's about the small, everyday choices we make that either build or break public trust.

Every day, ethics means doing the right thing even when no one is watching:

- Processing claims with diligence and care
- Refusing bribes or favours
- Treating colleagues and members of the public with respect
- Using the resources of the department responsibly
- Reporting unethical conduct, even if it's uncomfortable

These actions may seem small, but they are powerful. They uphold the values of the Constitution, the department and reinforce the principle of Batho-Pele, ensuring that as employees of the department, we put people first in all we do

Why does it matter

It matters because unethical behaviour, no matter how small, erodes trust in public service and weakens service delivery. On the other hand, everyday ethical choices promote transparency, fairness, and professionalism in all spheres of the public service.

Let's be reminded that ethics is not an event or a campaign - it's a way of life for every public servant.

Serve with integrity, lead by example. Honour the public trust, build stronger relationships and a positive reputation.

Be bold and uphold the code

SEE Showcases Factory Readiness and PPE Innovation at Africa Energy Indaba 2026



SEE Exhibition Stand at Africa Energy Indaba

As the doors opened at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from the 3rd to the 5th of March, the energy was palpable.

The 18th Annual Africa Energy Indaba, themed: "Africa Energy - Pathway to Prosperity", served as the backdrop for a significant strategic milestone for Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE).

Led by Chie Executive Donald Nkadimeng, the SEE delegation had a clear mandate to signal that the entity is not just a participant in the economy, but a technically proficient partner ready for the upcoming financial cycle.

The conference was high-powered from the outset. In his keynote address, President Cyril Ramaphosa underscored that Africa's energy transition must be an industrial one. "Industrialisation cannot take place without secure supply chains... and reliable, affordable and scalable energy," the President told delegates.

He further noted that "Africa's energy agenda must be linked to an industrial agenda," a sentiment that mirrored SEE's presence at the exhibition hall.

For SEE, this link between energy and industry is forged through "Development & Operational Efficiency" the title of the final marketing campaign for the financial year. The Indaba was the campaign's highlight. The campaign emphasises technical training and factory readiness, positioning SEE as a key player in the supply chain that will build the infrastructure the President described.

The importance of this sector was further cemented during the "Nuclear Forum", where Dr. Ramokgopa delivered a keynote address emphasising that nuclear power would "shape the architecture of our development."

As these high tech sectors expand, the demand for certified, high quality protective gear produced by a workforce committed to dignity and inclusion is set to skyrocket.

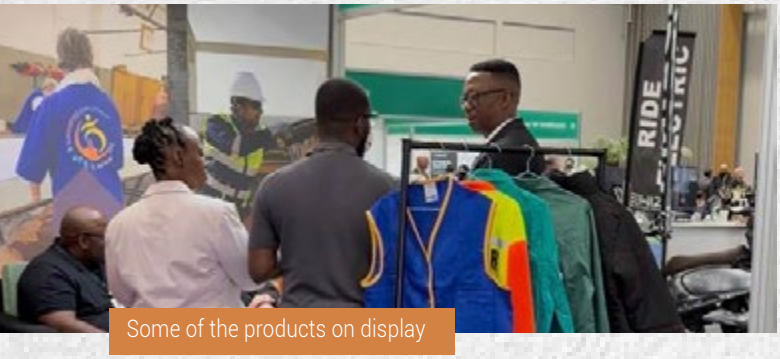
The exhibition was not merely about display, it was a hub for business development. The team actively pursued B2B contracts and leads, also MOUs with Government Departments and State Entities. By securing these partnerships, SEE will ensure that the "Pathway to Prosperity" mentioned in the Indaba theme includes the most vulnerable members of the South African workforce.

An undertone to the proceedings was the spirit of integrity. The CEO and the team used the platform to demonstrate that SEE operates with the institutional discipline called for by Minister Ramokgopa, ensuring that "actions match words" in the delivery of government mandates.

As the Indaba concluded, the message from the SEE stand was clear, the factories are ready, and the operational efficiency is at an all-time high.

President Ramaphosa concluded in his speech, "Africa has what it needs to succeed ... The remaining task is to match this potential with sustained implementation." For SEE, the implementation has already begun.

By Unarine Ramaru



Some of the products on display



CEO Nkadimeng with team

SEE Stands Firm Against Corruption: A Partnership for Integrity and Inclusion

In another display of inter-departmental collaboration, Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE) joined forces with the Compensation Fund (CF) to commemorate International Anti-Corruption Day on the 12th and 13th of March 2026. As an official partner of the event, SEE's participation highlighted the critical link between ethical governance and the fulfilment of its social mandate.

The event, led by CF Acting Commissioner Ms. Farzana Fakir and supported by partners like GEMS medical scheme, was organised around the 2025 theme: "Uniting Against Corruption Towards a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State." While the world officially observes this day on December 9th to strengthen global anti-corruption efforts, this local commemoration served as a reminder of the ongoing battle for transparency within South African institutions.

Taking to the stage, SEE CEO Mr. Donald Nkadimeng delivered a presentation on how unethical practices directly hinder the entity's ability to provide sustainable opportunities for persons with disabilities. He noted that when corruption influences procurement, contracts are often diverted away from organisations like SEE that support inclusive employment.



SEE CEO Mr Donald Nkadimeng delivering his presentation



CF Acting Commissioner and SEE CEO handing trophies designed by SEE to the award winners

"Corruption does not only harm institutional performance but also undermines national efforts to promote economic inclusion and dignity for persons with disabilities," Nkadimeng emphasised. He explained that despite offering quality products and competitive pricing, SEE occasionally encounters "unethical procurement practices" where officials expect personal benefits before awarding business. This loss of legitimate opportunities directly impacts the entity's capacity to sustain and expand its workforce.

The partnership was not merely rhetorical. SEE's team was responsible for the full stage set-up, utilising high quality SEE manufactured products to create a professional environment for the dialogue.

Most notably, the official award trophies presented during the commemoration were designed and produced by SEE. These trophies served as a tangible symbol of the entity's capability, proving that when procurement is fair and transparent, persons with disabilities can deliver world class craftsmanship.

Reflecting on SEE's history, the CEO reminded the audience that the entity, established in 1943 to support those unable to secure work in the open labour market, once thrived under preferential procurement status, employing 3,000 people at its peak. Today, with 13 factories across eight provinces, the fight against corruption is a fight to return to that level of impact.

Closing his address, Nkadimeng urged officials to think of the human consequences before engaging in corrupt acts. "Think of the consequences ... you might be the unlucky one," he warned, citing the devastating impact a single act of corruption can have on a career and the lives of those the department serves.

By standing with the Compensation Fund, SEE has reaffirmed that "Sunlight is the best of disinfectants" and that transparency remains the primary currency of trust in building a developmental state.

By Unarine Ramaru

MULTI GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES INTEGRATED FOR SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMME – DU NOON, WESTERN CAPE

Minister of Employment and Labour Nomakhosazana Meth in collaboration with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies Deputy Minister Mondli Gungubele recently led a campaign to deliver the Integrated Service Delivery Programme aimed at reaching out to communities, and services on wheels. Through this initiative, the two Departments rendered integrated services to the Du Noon community and surrounding areas, in collaboration with other government departments and key institutions.

The Integrated Service Delivery Programme aimed to bring together different government departments and stakeholders to provide coordinated services and information to young people and community in one platform. This initiative sought to improve access to services and ensure that youth receive comprehensive support to enhance their economic participation.

Some of the departments, entities and agencies that were visible and made their presence felt include: Department of Employment and Labour and all its branches, Unemployment Insurance Fund; Department of Communications and Digital Technologies; Department of Social Development and SASSA; Department of Water and Sanitation; Department of Human Settlements; Department of Small Business Development and SAFDA; South African Police Service (SAPS) and Film and Publications Board.



Deputy Minister Mondli Gungubele (left), Minister Nomakhosazana Meth























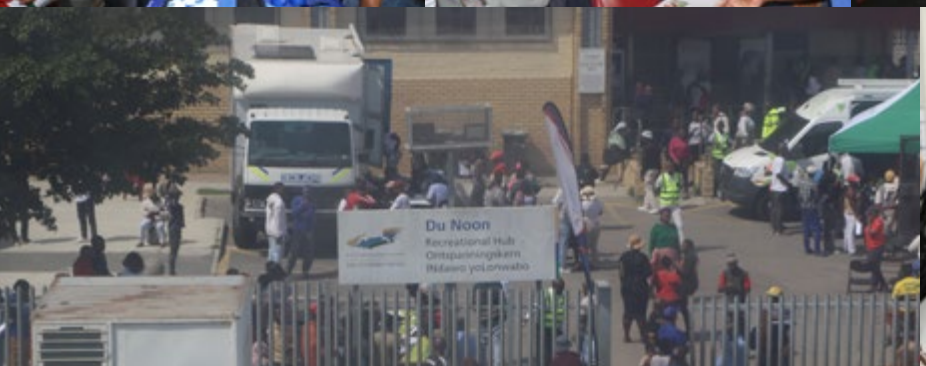
















Opinion piece

Beyond Compliance: Advancing Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development through Occupational Health and Safety in South Africa

In March, as South Africa commemorated Human Rights Month, a period dedicated to reflecting on dignity, equality and freedom, the National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference 2026 convened under the theme "Beyond compliance: prevention in practice." Bringing together more than two thousand participants from government, business, organised labour, regulators, academia and international organisations, the conference marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of occupational health and safety in South Africa. More than a technical gathering, it became a strategic national platform for aligning workplace health and safety with constitutional rights, economic priorities and global development frameworks.

The conference firmly located occupational health and safety within the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, reinforcing that workplace safety is not merely a regulatory obligation but a constitutional imperative. Section 10 guarantees the right to human dignity, which is fundamentally undermined when workers are exposed to preventable harm. Section 11 protects the right to life, placing a clear obligation on both the state and employers to prevent fatal workplace incidents. Section 12 affirms the right to freedom and security of the person, including protection from harm, while Section 24 guarantees an environment that is not harmful to health or wellbeing, an obligation that extends directly into workplaces. Section 23, which protects the right to fair labour practices, reinforces the expectation of safe and healthy working conditions, while Section 27 underscores the importance of access to healthcare, including preventive measures. Taken together, these provisions confirm that occupational health and safety is embedded in the constitutional fabric of South Africa. The conference reinforced that workers are not instruments of production, but human beings whose dignity, health and lives must be protected.

Situated within Human Rights Month, this constitutional framing elevated occupational health and safety beyond compliance into the realm of social justice. The message that resonated throughout the conference was unequivocal: every worker has the right to return home safe and healthy at the end of each working day, not injured, not ill, but whole. This principle reflects both a legal duty and a moral commitment to dignity, fairness and equality, and it anchors occupational health and safety firmly within the broader human rights agenda.

A central theme of the conference was the urgent need to move from compliance to prevention. For many years, occupational health and safety has been approached as a compliance-driven function focused on meeting minimum legal requirements. While compliance remains necessary, the conference made it clear that it is insufficient to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities. Compliance is the baseline; prevention is the objective. Prevention requires a proactive, systems-based approach that anticipates risks before harm occurs, designs safer work processes and integrates health and safety into leadership, governance and operational decision-making. By the close of the second day, a decisive shift in thinking had emerged: prevention is no longer an abstract aspiration, it is a discipline, a system and a measurable outcome. Across sectors, the conference demonstrated that when competence is strengthened, data is used intelligently and regulations are translated into practical action, prevention becomes achievable.

The conference further underscored that occupational health and safety is a shared responsibility requiring strong collaboration among stakeholders. Government alone cannot ensure safe workplaces, nor can employers or workers acting independently. The active participation of organised labour, business, regulators and international partners reflected a collective commitment to prevention. Organised labour federations, including BUSA, COSATU, FEDUSA, NACTU and SAFTU, delivered a unified call for stronger enforcement of labour laws, particularly through increased unannounced inspections. They emphasised that non-compliance must be treated as a serious violation and raised concerns about the exploitation of vulnerable workers, including undocumented foreign nationals, noting that such practices undermine both workers' rights and fair labour standards. At the same time, they expressed a willingness to work more closely with the Department of Employment and Labour, reinforcing that effective occupational health and safety is built on partnership and social dialogue.

At the centre of this system are labour inspectors, whose role was strongly reaffirmed. South Africa's ratification of ILO Convention 81 places a clear obligation on the state to maintain an effective labour inspection system. Inspectors were recognised as the backbone of enforcement and as protectors of workers' lives, ensuring that laws translate into real protection in workplaces. Their role extends beyond

continue on the next page

Beyond Compliance: Advancing Prevention, Human Rights and Sustainable Development through Occupational Health and Safety in South Africa

identifying non-compliance; it includes engaging with employers and workers, strengthening preventive systems and promoting accountability. However, the effectiveness of inspection depends on capacity, integrity and continuous professional development. The conference highlighted the need to strengthen inspector training, reinforce ethical standards and integrate technology into inspection processes. Recognition of excellence within the inspectorate further emphasised the critical contribution inspectors make to advancing workplace safety and protecting human dignity.

The conference also confronted structural challenges within South Africa's occupational health and safety system, particularly the fragmentation of regulatory responsibilities across multiple institutions. The framework, which spans occupational health and hygiene, electrical and mechanical safety, and construction-related activities, is implemented by a range of regulators, including sector-specific authorities. This fragmentation has resulted in coordination challenges and, at times, enforcement gaps. The conference highlighted the need for stronger alignment and collaboration among regulators to ensure a more coherent and effective system. Improved coordination is essential not only for strengthening enforcement but also for advancing decent work and inclusive economic growth, in line with national and continental development priorities.

A significant contribution of the conference was its focus on workers' health and occupational diseases, particularly through the application of medical surveillance. Medical surveillance was presented as an early warning system capable of detecting occupational disease trends and enabling proactive intervention before irreversible harm occurs. This approach reflects the principles of ILO Convention 161 on Occupational Health Services, which, although not ratified by South Africa, provides important guidance on the establishment of occupational health services, health monitoring and disease prevention. The conference emphasised that medical surveillance should be understood not as a compliance requirement, but as a strategic prevention tool. By identifying early signs of exposure and illness, it enables timely intervention, supports evidence-based decision-making and strengthens long-term health outcomes. Without effective occupational health services and surveillance systems, prevention cannot be fully realised.

The protection of young workers emerged as a critical priority, reframed as a strategic element of prevention rather than a compliance add-on. Young workers face heightened risks due to limited experience, developing physical and cognitive capacity and barriers to reporting hazards. The conference emphasised that addressing these risks requires targeted interventions, including task-appropriate risk assessments, enhanced supervision and mentoring, training aligned to experience levels and the integration of young worker risks into occupational health and safety management systems. Safeguarding young workers was positioned not only as a legal responsibility but as an investment in the sustainability and resilience of the future workforce. In parallel, the focus on child labour reinforced that exposing children and young persons to hazardous work constitutes both a human rights violation and an occupational health failure. The conference made it clear that protecting vulnerable workers is central to ethical governance and effective prevention.

The role of technology and innovation in advancing occupational health and safety was also highlighted as a key enabler of prevention. Artificial intelligence and digital tools are increasingly capable of enhancing workplace safety through real-time hazard detection, predictive analytics and improved training systems. These technologies offer significant opportunities to reduce risk, particularly in high-risk industries. However, the conference also acknowledged that digitalisation introduces new challenges, including increased monitoring, psychosocial risks and data privacy concerns. The overarching message was that technology must remain human-centred, supporting workers and strengthening prevention without compromising dignity or wellbeing.

The conference outcomes are closely aligned with South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which emphasises improving working conditions, enhancing productivity and promoting inclusive economic growth. Safe and healthy workplaces contribute directly to these goals by reducing absenteeism, improving worker morale and strengthening economic performance. At a continental level, the conference supports the aspirations of Agenda 2063, particularly the vision of a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Globally, the discussions align with the Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to health, decent work, innovation and strong institutions. Strengthening occupational health and safety systems therefore contributes to both national development and global sustainability objectives.

The conference also reaffirmed South Africa's alignment with ILO Convention 155, which provides a framework for national occupational health and safety systems based on prevention, policy development and continuous improvement. While Convention 187 has not yet been ratified, its principles were clearly reflected in the conference's emphasis on building a culture of prevention, strengthening systems and using data-driven approaches. This alignment demonstrates South Africa's commitment to advancing occupational health and safety in line with international best practice.

As the conference concluded, a clear call to action emerged. The responsibility now shifts from dialogue to implementation. Strengthening occupational health and safety requires sustained commitment, including stronger inspection and enforcement, investment in skills and capacity building, enhanced collaboration across sectors and the effective use of technology and data. Above all, it requires a shared recognition that occupational health and safety is central to human rights, economic development and social justice.

The National Occupational Health and Safety Conference 2026 marked a turning point in how workplace safety is understood in South Africa. It demonstrated that prevention is not only possible but necessary, and that it must be pursued through collaboration, innovation and an unwavering commitment to protecting human dignity. The vision is clear: a South Africa where no worker loses their life or health because of their work. Because when we protect workers, we uphold the Constitution; when we uphold the Constitution, we advance human rights; and when we build safe and healthy workplaces, we lay the foundation for a more just, inclusive and sustainable society.

Ms Bulelwa Huna











FROM OUTREACH TO OPPORTUNITY: MINISTER METH PUSHES BUSINESS TO HELP CREATE JOBS–FREE STATE

Employment and Labour Minister Nomakhosazana Meth has called for stronger partnerships between government and the private sector to tackle persistently high unemployment in the Free State.

Speaking at a UIF employer seminar in Welkom on Thursday 26 March 2026, following a three-day "Taking Services to the People" outreach in the Lejweleputswa District, Meth stressed that sustainable economic growth and job creation require coordinated efforts between the state, business, labour and communities.
Meth warned that South Africa's unemployment rate, currently at 37.2%, alongside high youth joblessness, represents a structural crisis with long-term socio-economic risks. Declaring 2026 the "year of the golden jubilee" in honour of the youth of 1976, she emphasised the need to prioritise youth employment through learnerships, apprenticeships and workplace training.

Highlighting the Free State's agricultural strength, Meth said the province has significant potential to expand into agro-processing and value-added industries but urged employers to invest more actively in local economic development.

She also highlighted the importance of aligning education outcomes with labour market needs, supporting small and medium enterprises, and enforcing labour standards, including the national minimum wage.











From Inspection to Intelligence: How Technology is Redefining Occupational Health and Safety

National Occupational Health and Safety Conference – Day 3 Highlights
19 March 2026 | Gauteng







The final day of the 2026 National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference marked a decisive transition from dialogue to direction. Convened under the theme "Inspection Excellence: Technology and Intelligence equals Impact," Day 3 focused squarely on how digital innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), and research led intelligence are reshaping inspection systems and strengthening prevention across South Africa's workplaces. As the Honourable Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Mr Jomo. Sibiya, reminded delegates, "Occupational health and safety is not optional. It is a constitutional right and a fundamental human right." This framing set the tone for a day focused on moving from intention to implementation.

A Global Lens on AI and Prevention
The day commenced with a technical address from the International Labour Organization (ILO), delivered by Mr Simphiwe Mabhele, which situated South Africa's OHS efforts within a global context. International experience demonstrated that AI and digitalisation can significantly enhance hazard detection, reduce exposure to dangerous tasks and strengthen inspection systems. Echoing this perspective, the Deputy Minister emphasised that "compliance alone does not prevent injuries, illnesses or fatalities. Compliance is the starting point. Prevention is the destination."
He cautioned that technology must serve people, stating that "technology can never replace the human role in building a culture of prevention," and that digital tools must always enhance worker dignity, not undermine it. Ethical governance, inclusion and accountability were repeatedly highlighted as essential pillars of responsible innovation.

AI in Action: From Theory to Practice
Day 3 translated global principles into practical, sector specific applications. Presentations illustrated how AI is already being deployed in the metals, electrical and explosives sectors to identify risks earlier and intervene faster. These examples reflected the Deputy Minister's call to rethink traditional approaches, noting that "for far too long, occupational health and safety has been treated as a compliance exercise focused on meeting the absolute minimum legal requirements."

In high risk environments such as explosives manufacturing and transportation, real time monitoring, predictive maintenance and intelligent access control systems demonstrated how technology can prevent catastrophic incidents before they occur. These interventions brought to life the assertion that "workplace injuries and occupational diseases are not inevitable, they are preventable."

AI Augmented Prevention in Construction
A key highlight was the presentation by Dr Adetayo Onososen from the University of Johannesburg on AI augmented prevention in construction and infrastructure delivery. The research showed how computer vision and machine learning can detect fatigue, unsafe behaviours and defective equipment long before accidents occur. This evidence reinforced the Deputy Minister's observation that "prevention requires more than policies and procedures. It requires anticipating risks before harm occurs and designing safer systems of work."

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The construction sector examples also illustrated another central message from the Deputy Minister: "Prevention is not theoretical. It is practical, measurable and achievable." When data is translated into action, AI becomes a powerful enabler of safer work rather than a mere compliance tool.

Visual Intelligence and Real Time Inspection
Discussions on visual intelligence and real time inspection tools demonstrated how technology is redefining inspection excellence. Body worn cameras, drones and smart monitoring systems are enhancing inspector effectiveness while reducing administrative burdens. These tools align with the Deputy Minister's view that inspectors are "not merely regulators; they are protectors of workers' lives and dignity."

By enabling inspectors to focus on corrective action rather than paperwork, technology supports a shift away from reactive enforcement towards proactive prevention. As emphasised in the Deputy Minister Sibiya's remarks, "enforcement must be understood not as punishment, but as a corrective mechanism ensuring that workplaces meet the standards of health, safety, fairness and dignity."

Research as the Backbone of Prevention
The importance of research was reinforced by Professor S. Kgalamono from the National Institute for Occupational Health, who highlighted how evidence based insights drive effective prevention strategies. This echoed the Deputy Minister's strong stance that "without research, prevention cannot evolve. Without evidence, we cannot improve."

In a rapidly changing world of work, research enables regulators and inspectors to move "from reaction to anticipation," ensuring that emerging risks linked to technology, new forms of work and vulnerable workers are identified early and addressed systematically.

From Conference to Commitment
In his closing remarks, the Deputy Minister issued a clear call to action. "We must move from reactive responses to proactive prevention, and away from paper compliance to practical implementation," he said, urging all stakeholders to take responsibility beyond the conference walls. He reiterated that "prevention is a discipline, prevention is a system, and prevention is a culture," achieved through leadership, accountability, competence and collaboration.
From Conference to Commitment
In his closing remarks, the Deputy Minister issued a clear call to action. "We must move from reactive responses to proactive prevention, and away from paper compliance to practical implementation," he said, urging all stakeholders to take responsibility beyond the conference walls. He reiterated that "prevention is a discipline, prevention is a system, and prevention is a culture," achieved through leadership, accountability, competence and collaboration.



As the conference concluded, his message was unequivocal: "Ours should be a South Africa where no worker loses their life because of their work, and where no worker suffers preventable injury or disease." Day 3 demonstrated that with intelligent inspections, responsible technology and strong partnerships, this vision is not aspirational, it is achievable.

Quotable Quotes – Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Jomo Sibiya

National Occupational Health and Safety Conference 2026

1. "Occupational health and safety is not optional. It is a constitutional right and a fundamental human right."
2. "Compliance alone does not prevent injuries, illnesses or fatalities. Compliance is the starting point. Prevention is the destination."
3. "Prevention is not a sprint. Prevention is a marathon that requires leadership, accountability and continuous improvement."
4. "Workplace injuries and occupational diseases are not inevitable – they are preventable."
5. "Our inspectors are not merely regulators; they are protectors of workers' lives and dignity."
6. "Enforcement must not be seen as punishment, but as a corrective mechanism that ensures fairness, dignity and safety in the workplace."
7. "Technology must serve people. It must enhance worker health, safety and dignity – never replace the human role in prevention."
8. "Prevention is not theoretical. It is practical, measurable and achievable when data is translated into action."
9. "Without research, prevention cannot evolve. Without evidence, we cannot improve."
10. "Ours should be a South Africa where no worker loses their life because of their work, and no worker suffers a preventable injury or disease."

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From Signals to Solutions: How day 2 breakaways at the 2026 Occupational Health and Safety Conference turned data into prevention

By moving beyond compliance and into evidence-led action, Day 2 of South Africa's National OHS Conference demonstrated how early warning systems, practical hygiene tools and medical intelligence can stop occupational disease before it starts.

The second day of the 2026 National Occupational Health and Safety Conference marked a decisive shift from regulatory discussion to applied prevention. Under the sub-theme "Prevention in action: Practical solutions to reduce workplace risks," Day 2 positioned evidence, data and real-time monitoring as the frontline tools for protecting worker health. By the time delegates moved into the afternoon breakaway sessions on 18 March, the message was unmistakable: prevention is not a future ideal, it is a present responsibility.







"You cannot prevent what you do not measure, and you cannot protect workers if warning signs are ignored."
Nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than in the breakaway session , within the Occupational Health and Hygiene (OHH) stream, where medical surveillance and exposure monitoring were reframed as early-warning systems rather than compliance obligations. The session brought together occupational medicine, hygiene and data intelligence to show how subtle signals, physiological, environmental and organisational, can be detected early and acted upon decisively.

At the centre of the discussion was **Dr Mpho Makwela Rakgoale**, Centre Head of Occupational Medicine at the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), who challenged delegates to rethink the purpose of medical surveillance. Rather than viewing it as a periodic medical check to satisfy legislative requirements, she presented surveillance as a continuous system designed to identify trends, anticipate disease and trigger preventive controls long before irreversible harm occurs.

"Surveillance is not about ticking boxes; it is about watching over workers before disease becomes visible."
Dr Rakgoale drew a clear distinction between medical screening and surveillance systems. Screening, she explained, focuses on individuals and typically detects disease after damage has already occurred. Surveillance, by contrast, focuses on populations, patterns and exposures, allowing employers and regulators to identify emerging risks and intervene early. In a country where occupational diseases such as noise induced hearing loss, respiratory conditions and occupational skin diseases remain under reported and often diagnosed too late, this distinction is critical.

"By the time symptoms appear, the opportunity for prevention has often already passed."
Using national data and international research, the session highlighted how occupational disease frequently develops silently, with workers remaining asymptomatic for years while exposure continues. Without active surveillance systems, these trends remain invisible, not only to employers, but also to regulators and policymakers. Dr Rakgoale emphasised that surveillance data does more than protect individual workers; it shapes national understanding of occupational disease burden and informs evidence based regulatory reform.

The presentation moved beyond theory into practical implementation, outlining how effective surveillance systems are built. These systems require clear objectives, standardised data collection, regular analysis of trends and clusters, and ,critically, action when early warning signs emerge. Surveillance, she stressed, must be multidisciplinary, integrating employers, workers, SHERQ professionals, occupational health and hygiene specialists, data analysts and regulators into a single, coordinated system.

"Data without action is ethically indefensible."
The concept of early warning was reinforced through practical exposure monitoring discussions earlier in the OHH stream, most notably through **Sean Chester's** presentation on **Indoor Air Quality (IAQ).** Chester demonstrated how carbon dioxide, while not itself the primary hazard, serves as a powerful proxy for ventilation adequacy and airborne exposure risk. Under the Physical Agents Regulations (2024), indoor air quality is now a legal obligation, not a discretionary good practice, and CO_2 monitoring provides immediate, actionable insight into whether workplaces are protecting or endangering occupants.

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"CO_2 tells a story, not about comfort, but about risk."
In a striking real world example, Chester presented findings from a rapid IAQ assessment conducted at the conference venue itself. During peak occupancy, CO_2 levels significantly exceeded recommended guideline thresholds, revealing inadequate ventilation despite the presence of air conditioning systems. The problem, he explained, was not technological failure but organisational practice: closed doors, recirculating split unit systems and a lack of ventilation awareness. When doors and windows were opened, CO_2 levels dropped measurably, proving that simple, informed interventions can dramatically reduce risk.

"Split unit air conditioning is not ventilation, and pretending it is creates invisible exposure."
This live case study resonated strongly with delegates in Breakaway Session 22, reinforcing the idea that surveillance must extend beyond medical tests to include environmental and organisational indicators. When medical surveillance, exposure monitoring and workplace observation are integrated, they create a layered early warning system capable of identifying failure points before workers become patients.

What distinguished Day 2 was not any single presentation, but the coherence between them. Medical surveillance identified early health effects, exposure surveillance revealed hazard intensity and duration, and environmental monitoring exposed systemic ventilation failures. Together, they demonstrated what prevention looks like in practice: timely data, interpreted intelligently, acted upon decisively.

"Efficient surveillance systems are early warning systems, they tell us where to act before harm occurs."
As the conference prepared to transition into Day 3's focus on inspection excellence, technology and artificial intelligence, the foundation laid on Day 2 was unmistakable. Surveillance is no longer a passive, compliance driven exercise; it is an active prevention strategy that sits at the heart of modern occupational health and safety. The lesson from the OHH breakaway sessions was clear and uncompromising: listening early is not optional, it is the only way to prevent late, irreversible outcomes.

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20 March 2026



Minister's IN YEAR MONITORING MEETING

Minister of Employment and Labour, Nomakhosazana Meth

MTDP Priority 1
Drive inclusive growth and job creation

MTDP Priority 2
Reduce poverty and tackle high cost living

MTDP Priority 3
A capable, ethical and developmental state

The Department of Employment and Labour convened its In-Year Monitoring Meeting on Friday, 20 March 2026, under the leadership of the Minister of Employment and Labour, Nomakhosazana Meth, to assess progress made during February 2026 and to consider the Draft Annual Performance Plan (APP) for 2026/27 for final approval. The meeting formed part of the Department's ongoing internal governance and performance oversight processes aimed at ensuring that all branches, funds and public entities remain aligned to the Employment Mandate of the Department, the Medium-Term Development Plan 2024-2029, the Minister's Performance Agreement and the priorities outlined in the 2026 State of the Nation Address.

The substantive part of the meeting centred on in the Draft APP 2026/27. The Departmental Report served as an important framing input, providing an overview of performance trends and strategic alignment across the broader DEL environment. Particular emphasis was placed on proposed changes and new indicators in the APP, as well as the extent to which planning priorities are responsive to national employment imperatives and the Department's service delivery mandate.

In introducing the session, the Acting Director General(ADG), Jacky Molisane outlined that the meeting was intended to take the Minister, Deputy Minister's and departmental leadership through a focused review of progress on the implementation of resolutions from the previous IYM meeting held on 13 February 2026, while also considering the in-year monitoring report for February 2026 and the Annual Operational Plans and Annual Performance Plans for the 2026/27 financial year. The presentation framed the meeting not only as a performance oversight platform, but also as a key governance process ahead of the tabling of the Department's final plans.

Importantly, the ADG advised that the Department's APPs had already been subjected to scrutiny by internal auditors and the Auditor-General, with testing focused mainly on whether performance indicators comply with SMART principles. Feedback from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation was also being incorporated, with compliance matters reportedly addressed ahead of submission. This assurance positioned the meeting as a final strategic checkpoint before the plans proceed through the next stage of the approval and parliamentary tabling process.



Acting Director General, Jacky Molisane

Attention the Department's APP, with updates presented on Programmes 1 to 4, alongside the Finance Report.

Throughout these presentations, the Minister meticulously integrated the presentions made before her, carefully engaging with the issues raised and ensuring that not only should the presentions be remain aligned to the Department's broader strategic and service delivery priorities, but also further emphasised that the Department's planning and performance framework must remain responsive to the priorities outlined in the 2026 State of the Nation Address, which places strong emphasis on inclusive growth and job creation, expanded public and social employment programmes, improved pathways for youth into the labour market, strengthened employment equity, skills system reform, and enhanced labour law enforcement.

In this regard, the Department of Employment and Labour's mandate remains central to government's broader programme of action, particularly as the President highlighted the need to create more jobs and better-quality jobs, expand public employment opportunities, improve skills development and workplace-based learning, and strengthen compliance through closer enforcement of labour and immigration laws, including the appointment of an additional 10 000 Employment & Labour inspectors.

The reports provided an opportunity for leadership to reflect on implementation gains recorded in February, identify areas where targets may require intensified attention, and consider the budgetary factors that will shape delivery in the 2026/27 financial year. The discussion further highlighted the importance of ensuring that operational planning is underpinned by credible resourcing, measurable indicators and strengthened execution across branches.

The meeting also considered reports from the Department's funds and public entities, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, Compensation Fund, CCMA, Productivity SA and NEDLAC. The entities tabled their draft strategic and annual performance planning inputs for final approval. Across the board, the focus remained on strategic coherence, improved performance management, sound financial stewardship and ensuring that entity plans support the wider policy and employment agenda of government.

The briefing on Quarter 3 and February 2026 performance reflected a largely stagnant performance outlook across the DEL group, with only modest shifts recorded during the period under review.

Supported Employment Enterprises was identified as the only entity to demonstrate an improvement in performance, while the Department's overall performance remained unchanged at 75%. Declines were recorded in the Compensation Fund and, subject to verification, the CCMA, whereas Productivity SA sustained a consistently strong performance. It was further noted that NEDLAC's submission did not contain targets against which progress could be measured, limiting the ability to assess performance.

At departmental level, Inspection and Enforcement Services and Labour Policy and Industrial Relations remained the only programmes to achieve 100% of their targets, while persistent issues in Corporate Services and Public Employment Services continued to constrain overall results. The presentation also underscored the limited time remaining before the end of the financial year, noting that any recovery in underperforming indicators was likely to be minimal. The Minister subsequently called on those responsible to account for the performance picture and to outline appropriate interventions.

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23 MARCH 2026

EXCO closes out financial year with focus on delivery, accountability and strategic renewal



ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL, JACKY MOLISANE

The Department of Employment and Labour's Executive Committee (EXCO) meeting held on 23 March 2026 marked the last EXCO sitting of the 2025/26 financial year, providing leadership with an important opportunity to reflect on what has been a fruitful and demanding year for the Department. Chaired by Acting Director-General (ADG) Jacky Molisane, the meeting brought together senior leadership to assess progress made across the Department and its entities, take stock of key governance, performance and operational matters, and ensure that strategic priorities remain firmly on course as the institution closes out the financial year and prepares for the next.

One of the key areas of focus was the reviewed Integrated Communication Strategy for 2026/27.

In presenting the strategy, the Chief Communication Officer emphasised that the Department's communication work is not done in isolation but is guided by the broader government-wide communication framework, the State of the Nation Address, the Medium-Term Development Plan, the Annual Performance Plan and ministerial priorities. This gives the Department a clear pathway for how it should position its work over the current electoral cycle, while also allowing room to respond to emerging developments and changing national priorities throughout the year.

A key feature of the communication outlook for the year is the deliberate elevation of the **Golden Jubilee** as a major campaign theme. This is not being treated as a once-off commemoration, but as a year-long communication focus that will be carried across departmental messaging and activities. In line with the broader campaign theme, **"the year of putting young South Africans to work,"** the Department intends to use the Golden Jubilee to amplify issues of youth employment, employability and access to opportunities. The campaign is expected to gain momentum around the week of 16 June, but it will remain visible throughout the year as part of a sustained programme of communication and public engagement.

The presentation also made it clear that the Golden Jubilee campaign is meant to do more than mark a historic milestone. It is being positioned as a practical and relevant communication platform through which the Department can connect its current work to the aspirations of young South Africans. In this regard, the campaign speaks directly to the Department's employment-centred mandate and supports efforts to showcase interventions that promote inclusion, opportunity and labour market access.

Equally prominent in the strategy is Operation **Yazini**, which continues to stand at the forefront of the Department's communication work. The CCO described Yazini as a central vehicle for packaging and projecting the work of the Department, particularly its programmes, projects and service delivery initiatives. From jobs fairs and labour inspections to outreach activities and stakeholder engagements, Yazini remains the banner under which much of the Department's ongoing communication effort is being carried. Its role is not merely symbolic; it is the operational expression of the Department's commitment to taking services to the people and ensuring that communication is closely linked to delivery.

The strength of Yazini lies in its ability to bring together various strands of the Department's work into one recognisable and coordinated communication approach. It allows the institution to communicate practical services, policy priorities and public-facing interventions in a way that is coherent and accessible. Regular initiatives such as Yazini Friday and associated weekly visibility efforts have further helped to embed the campaign within the Department's communication rhythm, while also reinforcing the broader principle of one department communicating in one voice.



The Risk Management presentation underscored the importance of the strategic risk profile as a key governance tool to help the Department anticipate, prioritise and manage risks that could affect the achievement of APP outcomes. EXCO was requested to endorse the updated strategic risk profile for both the Department of Employment and Labour and Supported Employment Enterprises, with notable refinements including the consolidation of ICT-related risks, the identification of workforce instability and rising vacancy levels as a root cause of organisational underperformance, and the rephrasing of risks relating to disciplinary matters, litigation and unemployment. Members were also informed that the National Risk Management Committee's self-evaluation reflected an overall positive assessment, with the committee rated as functioning at a "good" level.



The Internal Audit presentation highlighted the need for stronger responsiveness, tighter follow-through and improved discipline in implementing audit resolutions across the Department. EXCO was requested to endorse the Internal Audit and Audit Committee charters, which remain materially unchanged, as well as the Quarter 1 internal audit plans and the Quarter 3 Internal Audit Activity Report.

While progress has been made on a number of audits, the presentation made it clear that delays in responding to audit committee resolutions, weak implementation of management action plans, capacity constraints and poor coordination continue to undermine progress. Internal Audit also raised concern about repeat findings in areas such as planning, procurement controls, audit action tracking and the quality of supporting information, underscoring the need for a stronger operational culture of accountability if the Department is to improve its governance environment and overall audit outcomes.

The UIF presentation reflected both notable gains and areas requiring closer management attention. Among the key highlights was the Fund's continued support for labour market interventions, including work linked to the Teacher Assistant initiative, which has helped create opportunities for more than 150 000 young people, while the Fund also reported that by Quarter 3 it had served about 2.8 million beneficiaries and paid out close to R15.2 billion in benefits. Progress was also reported on the review of the Labour Activation Programme strategy for 2026–2030, with a stronger focus on sustainable employment outcomes and inclusive growth, as well as on changes to the TERS SOP aimed at improving accountability, decentralising processing and speeding up approvals. At the same time, UIF acknowledged persistent performance pressures in some benefit categories, with delays in benefit payments, provincial underperformance and outstanding audit action plans still weighing on overall results, even though implementation of audit actions had reached 72% and same-day capture performance remained high at 99%.

The Compensation Fund reported a mixed but improving picture, with overall monthly performance declining from 69% in January to 62% in February, largely due to underperformance in Programme 2, even as Medical Services and Orthotic and Rehabilitation Services maintained full achievement of their targets. Among the brighter spots, the Fund indicated strong revenue performance, supported by growth in the registered employer base, sound employer compliance outcomes and solid investment returns, while key service-delivery spending in Programme 2 remained high and on track. The Fund also pointed to progress in filling posts, strengthening internal controls and advancing projects aimed at improving claims processing and audit outcomes. However, several areas still require urgent improvement, including the slow implementation of audit action plans, failure to sufficiently reduce disclaimer matters, delays in appointments, weaknesses in claims adjudication and benefit payment turnaround times, persistent historical record-management challenges, and the need for stronger ICT, revenue and litigation controls. Management indicated that a number of these issues are already receiving focused intervention, with recovery measures expected to gain traction by the end of March.

Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE) reported a stable overall monthly performance of 75% in both January and February 2026, with notable progress in some operational areas despite ongoing financial and structural pressures. The entity exceeded its sales growth target, recording a 33% increase against the annual target of 10%, while also surpassing its target for customer agreements and achieving its planned marketing and communication campaigns. At the same time, SEE acknowledged that it did not meet its target of employing 100 additional persons with disabilities by the end of March and indicated that it is now exploring a more flexible contract-based approach linked to its order pipeline. Financially, the presentation showed that although sales have improved, the organisation remains under severe strain due to a high-cost base, weak gross margins, heavy dependence on grant funding, and significant overheads, particularly administrative salaries and idle production capacity. On governance and audit matters, management reported that work is under way to address key qualification areas, including inventory adjustments, operating expenditure, and property, plant and equipment, with engagements continuing with the Auditor-General to reduce audit findings and improve the entity's control environment.

The vacancy report presented to EXCO showed that, as at 28 February 2026, the Department had an approved establishment of 4 106 funded posts and 550 vacancies, translating into a vacancy rate of 13.40%. Management indicated that while progress has been made in recruitment, including 35 internal promotions between April 2025 and February 2026, pressure on the vacancy rate is expected to intensify with 183 officials due to exit at the end of March through the approved voluntary severance package. In response, HRM has moved to fast-track the advertising of critical posts, with 283 of the 293 concurred posts already advertised, 116 filled, 68 at capturing stage and 99 at shortlisting or interview stage. The report also showed that vacancy pressure is concentrated mainly at entry level, particularly within salary levels 6 to 8, and is most pronounced in provinces such as Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape. On Project 20K, the Department reported that 3 702 interns had been appointed against the target of 10 000, with HRM continuing to support the recruitment process, while also developing a strategy to manage attrition after 94 interns exited the programme following appointment.

The procurement and finance update reflected a year-end focus on tightening expenditure management and maximising the use of available funds across the Department. Management reported that the 2025/26 procurement plan comprised 155 projects with a total estimated value of about R699.3 million, with the largest share driven by OCOO: Provincial Operations, followed by Corporate Services, Public Employment Services, Labour Policy and Industrial Relations, and the Office of the CFO. As the financial year draws to a close, the Department has been shifting funds from areas of slower spencing, particularly within capital budgets and underutilised allocations linked to Public Works, to other pressure points to avoid surrendering resources.

Concern was raised about persistent overspending on travel and subsistence across programmes, suggesting that this line item may be consistently under-budgeted and will need to be reviewed more realistically in the new financial year. On a positive note, the finance section indicated that invoice processing remained on track, with all February invoices paid within the prescribed 30-day period and the remaining March invoices still within the required payment cycle.

The ICT presentation painted a picture of a function under pressure but steadily moving to stabilise and modernise the Department's digital environment. Management reported that ageing infrastructure, legacy systems, limited internal capacity and dependence on the SITA network continue to constrain service delivery and expose the Department to operational and cybersecurity risks. At the same time, notable progress is being made through dataline upgrades, the migration of users to Microsoft 365, the gradual movement away from Citrix, and a phased unbundling and reconfiguration process aimed at enabling UIF and the Compensation Fund to operate more independently.
Encouraging gains were also reported on cybersecurity, with the strategy developed and routed for approval, the Security Operations Centre fully functional under CSIR, SIEM deployment completed in the core monitoring zone, more than 80% of CIS controls implemented, and 98% of users already on multifactor authentication. On digital transformation, however, performance remains below target, with only 20% of the funded departmental project plan implemented against a higher annual expectation, largely due to delays in business-case inputs, dependency on Diphetogo modules and the continued burden of legacy systems.

Management indicated that the immediate focus is now on fast-tracking priority initiatives such as e-Recruitment, e-Bursary, the DG's task and resolution tracking solution, and the LP&IR/Employment Services Diphetogo module, while also filling critical vacancies and accelerating approvals needed to improve ICT governance, resilience and delivery.

Taken together, the discussions at this final EXCO meeting of the 2025/2026 financial year reflected a Department that is actively confronting its challenges while also laying the groundwork for stronger delivery in the period ahead.

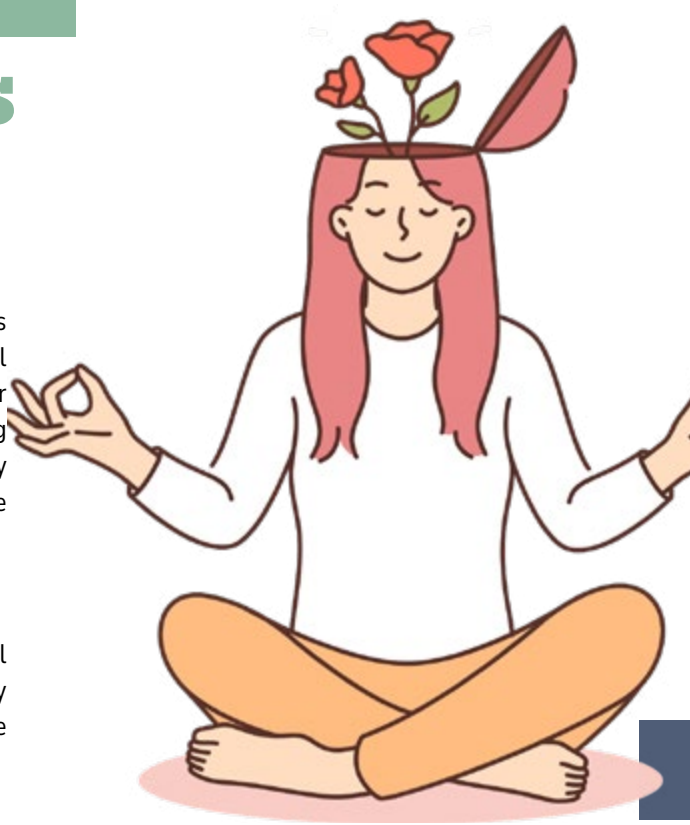
The meeting showed an Executive that has led the Department with focus and purpose, keeping attention firmly on governance, accountability, service delivery and the fulfilment of the Department's mandate. The robust engagements at EXCO continue to strengthen oversight, sharpen decision-making and guide the institution through both challenges and opportunities.

The Department now looks ahead to the next EXCO meeting with the expectation that it will be equally engaging, marked by forward thinking discussion, accountability and sound management as leadership continues working to ensure that the Department meets its mandate.

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Employee Health & Wellness Programme

Setting Boundaries Without Guilt



In today's fast-paced and highly connected work environment, many employees struggle to maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. One of the key reasons for this imbalance is the inability to set clear boundaries—often accompanied by feelings of guilt. However, setting boundaries is not a sign of weakness or lack of commitment. It is a necessary step toward maintaining productivity, mental wellbeing, and sustainable performance.

What Are Boundaries?

Boundaries are the limits we set to protect our time, energy, and emotional wellbeing. In the workplace, boundaries help define what we can realistically handle without becoming overwhelmed. They allow individuals to manage expectations, communicate effectively, and maintain control over their workload.

Why Do We Feel Guilty Setting Boundaries?

Many people experience guilt when setting boundaries due to:

- Fear of disappointing colleagues or supervisors
- A desire to be seen as hardworking and dependable
- Habitual people-pleasing tendencies
- Workplace cultures that reward overworking

It is important to understand that guilt is often a learned response. Feeling guilty does not mean that setting a boundary is wrong—it often means you are stepping outside of old patterns.

The Benefits of Healthy Boundaries

Establishing and maintaining boundaries can lead to:

- Improved productivity and efficiency
- Better mental and emotional health
- Increased self-respect and confidence
- Healthier workplace relationships
- A more sustainable work-life balance

Employees who manage their limits effectively are often more engaged, focused, and reliable.

One of the biggest challenges in setting boundaries is internal—how we think about them.

Instead of viewing boundaries as:

- "Letting people down"

Try reframing them as:

- "Protecting my ability to perform at my best"

Boundaries are not barriers—they are tools for sustainability and effectiveness.

When individuals respect their own limits, they create space for better performance, healthier relationships, and long-term sustainability.

The Impact of Poor Boundaries

When boundaries are not clearly established, employees may experience:

- Burnout and chronic fatigue
- Decreased productivity and focus
- Increased stress and anxiety
- Strained relationships at work and at home

Over time, consistently ignoring personal limits can lead to reduced job satisfaction and overall wellbeing.

Practical Ways to Set Boundaries

1. **Learn to Say No Respectfully:** Declining additional tasks does not make you uncooperative. It shows awareness of your capacity.
   Example: "I'd be happy to assist, but I am currently at full capacity."
2. **Set Clear Work Hours:** Avoid responding to emails or messages outside of working hours unless necessary. This helps create a clear separation between work and personal time.
3. **Prioritise Your Workload:** Focus on high-impact tasks and avoid overcommitting. It is better to do fewer tasks well than many tasks poorly.
4. **Take Your Breaks Seriously:** Regular breaks improve concentration and prevent burnout. Skipping breaks often leads to reduced productivity.
5. **Communicate Early and Clearly:** If your workload becomes overwhelming, communicate with your manager or team before it escalates.

If you need counselling, you may contact Employee Health and Wellness Programme on 0800 409 355 (toll-free)



ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL CALLS FOR STRONGER PRODUCTIVITY ECOSYSTEM TO ADVANCE DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

The Acting Director-General of the Department of Employment and Labour, Jacky Molisane, today 05 March 2026 has called for stronger collaboration between government, business, labour and communities to build a productivity ecosystem capable of advancing decent work and inclusive economic growth in South Africa.

Delivering the opening address at the National Productivity Symposium held in Sandton, the Acting Director-General emphasised that productivity must be positioned at the centre of South Africa's development agenda if the country is to overcome persistent challenges of unemployment, inequality and slow economic growth.

The symposium, convened through a partnership between the International Labour Organization and NEDLAC together with national institutions committed to inclusive growth, brought together representatives from government, organised business, labour and development partners to deliberate on the link between productivity, decent work and economic development.

In her address, Acting Director-General, Jacky Molisane, noted that South Africa stands at a critical point in its economic and labour market journey, with structural unemployment and inequality continuing to constrain inclusive growth.

"In this context, the question before us is not simply about productivity as a technical economic concept, it is about how productivity growth can be harnessed to advance decent work, expand employment opportunities and support sustainable development, she said."

She stressed that productivity should be understood not merely as the efficiency of production but as a foundation for shared prosperity and social progress.

Despite progress in some sectors, Acting Director-General noted that productivity growth across several parts of the economy has remained reserved, limiting the capacity of enterprises to expand and absorb labour at the scale required.

The Acting Director-General also underscored the relevance of the decent work framework promoted by the International Labour Organization.

She explained that decent work goes beyond employment numbers to include productive work that is fairly remunerated, secure and conducted in conditions of dignity and respect. It also encompasses fundamental rights at work, social protection and the ability of workers to participate meaningfully in shaping their working conditions.

The Acting Director-General reaffirmed government's commitment to strengthening productivity through a range of initiatives led by the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities, including Productivity SA.

These initiatives focus on enterprise support, job preservation, workplace productivity improvement and skills development. She said collaboration with industry, labour representatives and development partners is key to ensuring that productivity gains translate into expanded employment opportunities and improved working conditions.

However, she stressed that government cannot achieve this transformation alone.

"The complexity of the challenges before us requires collective leadership and coordinated action across all sectors of society," she said, adding that businesses must invest in innovation and human capital while labour organisations should promote constructive engagement and productivity partnerships at workplace level.

The Acting Director-General said the National Productivity Symposium aims not only to facilitate discussion but also to deepen understanding of the policies, institutional arrangements and practical interventions needed to strengthen South Africa's productivity ecosystem.

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#Yazini

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Portfolio committe on Employment and Labour

PARLIAMENT

04 MARCH 2026



Portfolio Committee Reviews Third Quarter Performance of the Department of Employment and Labour and SEE

Boyce Makhosonke Maneli
Chairperson

The Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour met today on Wednesday 4 March 2026, to review the 2025/2026 Third Quarter Performance Report of the Department of Employment and Labour, together with the Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE).

In her opening remarks to the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour, Minister Nomakhosazana Meth expressed her sincere condolences to bereaved families, including those affected by a recent fatal warehouse collapse in Ormonde.

Minister Meth briefed the Committee on recent enforcement operations conducted in the construction sector. Inspections in Johannesburg and surrounding areas resulted in the closure of a non-compliant construction site operating without a valid permit, arrests of undocumented foreign nationals, and the issuing of prohibition and contravention notices. Violations included failure to comply with occupational health and safety standards, absence of employment contracts and payslips, non-payment in line with the National Minimum Wage Act, and non-registration with the Unemployment Insurance Fund and the Compensation Fund.



Minister Nomakhosazana Meth



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PRESENTATIONS

Corporate Service (CS)

DDG: Corporate Services, Ms Bahumi Matebesi, highlighted that The implementation of the Centre for Internet Security controls was successfully completed ahead of schedule, and the target for women occupying SMS positions was exceeded and it is siting at 50%. All misconduct cases were finalised within the prescribed 90 days, and significant progress was made on the DEL reconfiguration project, including milestones linked to the unbundling of the UIF and Compensation Fund.

The vacancy rate target was not achieved, largely because HR capacity was redirected to the Project 20k initiative. The 30-day invoice payment target fell slightly short at 97% due to LOGIS system challenges and delays in submission of invoices. Procurement targets for youth and persons with disabilities were underachieved, despite exceeding the target for women-owned enterprises.





Inspection and Enforcement Services (IES)

The branch exceeded its inspection target, conducting over 232 000 inspections against a target of 223 578. The branch also surpassed targets for issuing notices to non-compliant employers within 14 days (99%) and for referring or settling non-compliant cases within 30 working days (82% against a 65% target). Advocacy sessions on employment law and occupational health and safety also exceeded planned targets.

Public Employment Services (PES)

The program has the responsibility of facilitating access to employment opportunities, supporting job seekers, and driving inclusive growth and job creation. Performance in Quarter 3 was generally strong, although one key registration target was not achieved. The number of work-seekers registered fell below the cumulative target due to system challenges related to the migration from ESSA to Diphetogo, which affected data capturing. Provinces are currently capturing outstanding data.

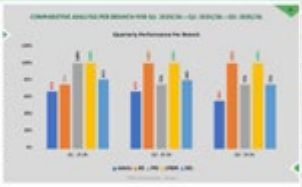
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Labour Policy and Industrial Relations (LP&IR)

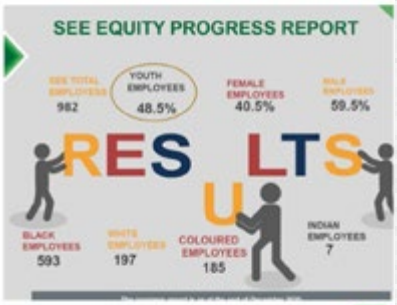
The focus of (LP&IR) is strengthening labour market policy, collective bargaining frameworks and sound industrial relations. In Quarter 3, the programme achieved 100% of its planned targets. Across the three quarters of the financial year, LP&IR has consistently maintained full achievement of planned indicators. The branch continues to provide policy support, manage labour relations frameworks and ensure alignment with legislative and strategic priorities. Its stable performance reflects effective planning and implementation, with no signif

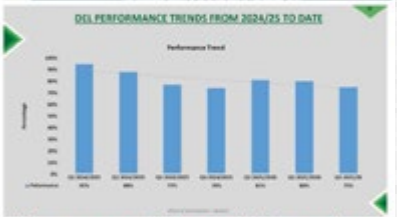


SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ENTERPRISES

SEE performance in the third quarter improved compared to the previous quarter. However, the performance is below the satisfactory target of 80% Financial performance could be reported mainly due to SYSPRO system challenges. The financial report is not updated, reflecting only two months (July & August) of the previous quarter due to inability to drawdown information from the system

The Department achieved 75% of its planned targets in Quarter 3, reflecting a slight downward trend from previous quarters. While Inspection and Enforcement Services and Labour Policy and Industrial Relations performed strongly, Administration faced governance and capacity-related challenges, and Public Employment Services experienced system-related constraints.





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At the Crossroads: South Africa Confronts Its Productivity Paradox at National Symposium

A nation seeks a new social compact linking productivity, decent work, and inclusive growth.

South Africa finds itself at a defining moment in its economic journey, and this reality came into sharp focus at the National Productivity Symposium held in Gauteng on 5 - 6 March 2026. Convened by the International Labour Organization (LO), NEDLAC, Productivity SA, and national partners, the gathering brought together government leaders, organised labour, business, community representatives, and development partners to examine the country's productivity challenges and the future of decent work. The symposium's programme reflected this breadth of engagement, ranging from opening statements by social partners to sessions analysing productivity, employment trends, sectoral experiences, and international lessons for South Africa's development path.



From the onset, the tone was set by the Acting Director-General, Ms Jacky Molisane (ADG) of the Department of Employment and Labour, whose opening address provided both the intellectual and moral anchor for the two-day dialogue. She began by highlighting the timeliness of the discussions, noting that South Africa "stands at a critical juncture" in its labour market and economic development trajectory. Structural unemployment, persistent inequality, and low productivity growth continue to constrain inclusive growth, while global shifts, technological transitions, climate imperatives, and geopolitical volatility are reshaping how economies compete. n this context, she underscored that "productivity is not merely the efficiency of production, but a foundation for shared prosperity and social progress," a reframing that became a central theme throughout the symposium.

Presenters in the early sessions echoed this concern as they examined evidence on productivity and employment trends. Productivity

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growth in many sectors has been modest, limiting the economy's capacity to generate jobs at scale, even as unemployment, especially among young people, has been high. remains alarmingly high. ADG Molisane cautioned against viewing productivity and employment as separate policy domains, pointing to international evidence showing that sustainable employment gains depend on inclusive, innovation-driven, and institutionally supported productivity growth. Her call for a unified approach reinforced the need for coherent policy alignment and strengthened social partnerships.

A major highlight of the symposium was the focus on the LO's Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work project, launched in South Africa in 2022. The concept note outlines how the project seeks to build a virtuous cycle between productivity and decent work through systemic interventions at national, sectoral, and enterprise levels. Pilot projects in the leather & footwear and automotive sectors have demonstrated how improvements in working conditions, skills, and enterprise capabilities can reinforce productivity outcomes and help address unemployment. These pilots were informed by social dialogue through the Project Advisory Committee, reflecting contributions from government, business, labour, and trade associations.

The ADG welcomed this ecosystem approach, emphasising that productivity requires more than upgraded technologies or cost-cutting exercises. She argued that a healthy productivity ecosystem rests on four pillars: a workforce equipped with relevant skills; enterprises that are competitive and capable of innovation; labour market institutions that promote fairness, stability, and worker rights; and strong social dialogue structures, especially NEDLAC, to mediate and guide policy choices. She stressed that "the complexity of the challenges before us requires collective leadership and coordinated action," underscoring that government cannot address these issues alone. Businesses must invest in innovation and human capital, labour must embrace constructive engagement on productivity improvements, and communities must help shape pathways to inclusive development.

The symposium's sessions drew further attention to sector-level realities. Discussions explored how productivity improvements in industries such as footwear, automotive components, and small enterprises could be strengthened through targeted support, better measurement of productivity indicators, and coherent industrial and labour market policies. Additional sessions addressed unemployment, youth



transitions into productive work, and lessons from international partners such as Ghana and Viet Nam, where productivity ecosystems approaches have yielded practical, scalable insights. Each session reinforced the importance of aligning data, institutional arrangements, and evidence-based strategies to improve employment and productivity outcomes together.

n the closing session, delegates turned toward the future, examining how NEDLAC could lead the coordination of productivity ecosystem interventions across sectors and stakeholders. The concept note anticipates an NEDLAC Commitment on Productivity and Decent Jobs, offering shared principles and priority actions that government, business, labour, and communities can take forward. A symposium report, including technical papers, panel insights, and outcomes, will be published to guide future policy formulation and programme design. These outcomes reflect the ADG's insistence that South Africa must shift from dialogue to coordinated action, building institutional leadership to drive a productivity agenda capable of transforming the economy.

n her closing remarks, the ADG captured the stakes with clarity and conviction: "At stake are the livelihoods of millions of South Africans, the competitiveness of our enterprises, and the long-term sustainability of our economy." Yet she also articulated a sense of national possibility. With the right partnerships, coherent policies, and strengthened institutions, she argued, productivity growth can become a catalyst for inclusive economic transformation. The symposium's depth of dialogue, diversity of perspectives, and commitment to shared solutions reflected a country ready to build toward that future.

Ultimately, the National Productivity Symposium emerged as more than a technical conference; it became a platform for reimagining South Africa's developmental path. Through strengthened social dialogue, evidence-based policymaking, and coordinated national action, South Africa now has the opportunity to centre productivity and decent work at the heart of its economic renewal. Whether this moment becomes a turning point will depend on how strongly the commitments made in Sandton translate into sustained, collective action across all sectors of society.



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Deputy Minister Mr Jomo Sibiya

Keeping the Social Compact: How CCMA, Nedlac, and Productivity SA Navigated South Africa's Third Quarter

On 11 March 2026, the Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Mr Jomo Sibiya, opened the Portfolio Committee meeting with a sobering reminder of the urgent human stakes behind the Department's regulatory work. He referenced yet another tragic workplace incident, a preventable building collapse in Ormonde, Johannesburg, that claimed nine workers' lives and injured three others. He emphasised that such tragedies occur not because laws are absent, but because some employers "choose not to comply" in pursuit of profit at the expense of human life.

The Deputy Minister highlighted that the Department does not conduct inspections out of spite or heavy-handedness, but out of a constitutional obligation to protect life, limb, and dignity. He reaffirmed the Department's condolences to bereaved families and its commitment to supporting investigative teams now working to establish the facts, assess compliance with building and safety standards, and recommend remedial measures.

Drawing on recent oversight visits, including the Committee's own engagements in Newcastle, Deputy Minister Sibiya cautioned against employers who repeatedly violate labour and safety laws yet claim unfair targeting. The message was unequivocal: "Respect the laws of the country... If you run your business within the parameters of the rules, we will walk away. But as long as you exploit and kill workers, we will continue to be in your case."

Against this backdrop of real-world consequences, the Deputy Minister framed the purpose of the day's briefing: to assess whether the CCMA, NEDLAC, and Productivity South Africa are on track, offtrack, or require recalibration in their respective third-quarter performance for 2025/26. He highlighted examples of excellence, such as the CCMA's 99.99% uptime and over achievement of legislated targets, Nedlac's progress on automation and dialogue mechanisms, and Productivity SA's signs of recovery despite early-year financial pressures.



ADG, Ms Jacky Molisane

The Deputy Minister closed by handing over to the Department's Acting Director General, Ms Jacky Molisane, and the administration teams to expand on performance details, setting the stage for deeper reflection by the Committee on institutional responsiveness, compliance culture, and the collective responsibility to prevent avoidable workplace loss.

Following the Deputy Minister's statement, the Acting Director General, Ms Jacky Molisane, expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to address the Portfolio Committee. She acknowledged the gravity of the issues raised, noting that the Deputy Minister had already covered the Department in his opening remarks. She reaffirmed the Department's commitment to continuous improvement and cross learning, particularly drawing from the CCMA's strong performance in system uptime and operational discipline.

Acting Director-General Molisane then formally handed over to the respective Executives of the CCMA, Nedlac, and Productivity SA, who proceeded to present their detailed thirdquarter reports, performance highlights, and financial updates to the Committee.

South Africa's labour market institutions often do their best work away from the headlines, mediating disputes before they flare, building consensus on knotty policy files, and quietly shoring up firms and jobs when the economy stumbles. In the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, three pillars of this ecosystem, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), and Productivity SA, offered a revealing snapshot of what steady institutional performance looks like in a volatile environment.



Portfolio Committee Chairperson: Boyce Mokhosonke Morell

The big picture: 100% target delivery and a cautious grip on costs

All three entities reported clean sweeps against their quarterly performance targets, with the CCMA achieving 7 of 7 indicators, Nedlac posting 12 of 13 applicable annual indicators for Q3, and Productivity SA delivering 100% of its quartered targets across its core programmes.

Budget discipline underpinned those operational gains. CCMA's total expenditure reached R767.4 million yeartodate, 71.8% of its annual budget, with a favourable variance of R27.8 million (3.5%), mainly on administration, operating expenses, and case disbursements due to timing differences and efficiency gains. Nedlac, meanwhile, posted a year-to-date surplus of R5.0 million on significantly lowerthanplanned goods and services spend, reflecting delays in National Dialogue activities that will slip into 2026/27. Productivity SA flagged a small consolidated operating deficit of R1.2 million by December 2025, driven by slower-than-planned project starts that deferred revenue recognition, but also signalled a sharp pickup in Q3 delivery momentum.

CCMA: Speed, uptime, and a full slate of cases

If the CCMA is the front line of South Africa's dispute resolution architecture, Q3 shows that line holding firm. The institution exceeded its two most time-sensitive, legislated service standards:

- Conciliation within 30 days: 99.48% of conciliable cases were heard by the first event within the 30day window (107,632 of 108,193 matters).
- Arbitration awards within 14 days: 99.99% of awards were dispatched to parties within two weeks of proceedings concluding (11,759 of 11,760).

Behind the scenes, the CCMA kept its digital backbone almost perfectly stable, 99.99% uptime across critical ICT systems, after tightening monitoring and incident response processes earlier in the year.

Financially, the casehandling engine ran slightly under budget. Part-time commissioner fees were 4.1% below plan, interpreters' fees 3.7% below, and travel and subsistence down 9.3%, reflecting efficiencies like strategic commissioner assignments in outlying areas and greater use of in-kind venues. Administrative and operating lines also showed favourable timing variances, while an isolated R9,600 venuehire incident triggered an irregular expenditure review and corrective reporting.

Why it matters: In an economy where workplace disputes can swiftly escalate, CCMA's reliability, both on turnaround times and on always-on systems, remains a crucial stabiliser for employers and workers alike. The favourable cost picture suggests those service levels are being achieved without straining the fiscus.

Nedlac: Consensus building on a moving policy train

Nedlac's third quarter was defined by high delivery rates on its core operations and administration indicators (100% in both areas) and strong traction on the Presidential Climate Commission and National Dialogue work streams. A single miss, 0% against a capacity-building indicator, was due not to under performance, but to no requests being received from social partners in the period.

Policy and programme highlights included:

- Full engagement on the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement, enabling social partners to input ahead of the National Budget; and strategic dialogues with the DTIC and the Department of Small Business Development to align 2025/26 workplans to industrial and SMME priorities.
- Draft Nedlac Bill gazetted for public comment, updating governance, membership, and consultation roles, signalling institutional renewal.
- Progress on sectoral master plans, energy security dialogues with Eskom, NERSA, and the PCC, and continued processing of six transport-related bills (from RTMC and AARTO to SANRAL and RABS) tabled by the Department of Transport.
- National Dialogue capacity built out through four Secretariat workstreams and appointment of a Project Lead, alongside preparations for the newly announced Steering Committee.

On the numbers, Nedlac's grant income showed a material variance against budget because much of the National Dialogue allocation only lands in Q4, while goods and services came in far below plan as activities were rescheduled into 2026/27, together yielding that modest R5.0 million surplus.

Why it matters: Nedlac's value is cumulative and often intangible, including process integrity, convening power, and policy legitimacy. Q3's milestones, from budget engagement to the Draft Bill and National Dialogue scaffolding, point to an institution tightening its governance while extending its relevance across climate, energy, and industrial policy debates.

Productivity SA: Turning momentum into measurable job retention

Productivity SA's mandate, to lift competitiveness, retain jobs, and build a productivity culture, translated into outsize delivery in Q3:

- SMME competitiveness: 1,130 enterprises supported (vs a Q3 target of 939), thanks to stronger partner pipelines and access agreements.
- Human capital for productivity: 2,136 entrepreneurs, workers, and managers capacitated (vs 1,950 planned), and 353 Productivity Champions trained (vs 242 planned), buoyed by Workplace Challenge cohorts.
- Distress response: 70 companies in distress were supported, and an estimated 6,956 jobs were saved, nearly double the yeartodate quarterly benchmark, after accelerating sign-ups to the Business Turnaround and Recovery (BT&R) programme.
- Knowledge outputs: Publication of the IMD Report, 2025 Productivity Statistics, and drafting of three research reports to deepen the evidence base.

The financial narrative is two-sided: a R1.2 million operating deficit by December due to earlyphase project timing (MoUs, onboarding) that deferred revenue recognition; yet a marked 87% quartertoquarter increase in consulting income, signalling delivery rampup into the back end of the year. Headcount costs ran below budget as vacancies were carefully managed to preserve sustainability.

Why it matters: In a low-growth economy, job saving can be as consequential as job creation. Q3's BT&R and SMME results suggest that targeted productivity interventions continue to deliver immediate employment dividends while building longer-term competitiveness muscle.

Threads that tie the quarter together

1. Execution under constraint: Each entity over-delivered on service indicators while nursing budgets, through timing management (CCMA/Nedlac), vacancy control (Nedlac/Productivity SA), and efficiency plays (CCMA in venue, travel, and ICT uptime).
2. From firefighting to foresight: Beyond day-to-day dispute resolution and firm-level interventions, all three advanced system-level enablers, Nedlac's Draft Bill and National Dialogue workstreams, CCMA's ICT resilience, and Productivity SA's research outputs and Kaizen networks, building capacity for future shocks.
3. Social partnership as competitive advantage: The quarter underscores the dividends of coordinated actionwhether it's CCMA's engagement with councils and sheriffs, Nedlac's crossministerial dialogues, or Productivity SA's partnerships with UIF, dtic, ILO, ICA, and ILO ecosystems.

What to watch in Q4 and beyond

- National Dialogue delivery curve: Expect a budget and activity catch-up at Nedlac as Dialogue items shift from planning to execution in early 2026/27. The immediate test will be converting Secretariat structures into tangible consensus and published outputs.
- CCMA case volumes vs. cost line: With part-time commissioner and interpreter utilisation likely to rise in Q4, keep an eye on whether the current favourable cost variances narrow while the organisation sustains near-perfect turnaround times.
- Productivity SA revenue cadence: The late-year acceleration in consulting income and project delivery should begin closing the small deficit. Watch BT&R jobretention numbers and SMME capacitybuilding totals as proxies for realeconomy impact.

Bottom line

South Africa's labourmarket institutions showed what quiet, competent execution looks like: fast dispute resolution at scale; consensus machinery aligned to national priorities; and productivity programmes that convert technical assistance into jobs saved and firms stabilised. That combination, speed, stewardship, and systemsthinking, is precisely what the economy needs more of in 2026.

In a quarter overshadowed by workplace loss of life and heightened public scrutiny, the CCMA, NEDLAC, and Productivity SA delivered stabilising performance marked by strong compliance, disciplined spending, and measurable economic and social impact. Their work, framed by the Deputy Minister's and Acting DG's opening remarks, highlights the vital role of institutions committed to upholding safety, fairness, and productivity in South Africa's labour market.

Department Provides Clarifications and Progress Update to the Portfolio Committee:

The Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) provided detailed clarifications and a comprehensive progress update to the Portfolio Committee (PC) following questions and comments raised by members.





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Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya addressed several issues raised by the PC, emphasising that the Department highly values the Committee's input, guidance, and oversight. He noted that every comment contributes meaningfully to strengthening the work of the DEL and its entities.

Regarding the Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) and the eKapa Mine matter, the Deputy Minister indicated that there may be a need for a dedicated workshop on TERS applications, requirements, and processing procedures. He stressed that submitting an application does not automatically guarantee approval, as specific conditions must first be met. Although the Department provides applicants with a complete list of required documents, some applicants still fail to submit all necessary information, resulting in delays for which the Department is often unfairly blamed.

In the case of eKapa Mine, the CCMA engaged with the company and found several outstanding documents, including unsigned audited financial statements. A follow-up meeting held on 2 February 2026 sought to address these issues, but the discrepancies remained unresolved until the company-initiated liquidation proceedings. The Department reaffirmed that it is unacceptable for any company to mislead Members of Parliament and emphasised government's commitment to ensuring proper, transparent processes.

On inspection and enforcement matters, the Department confirmed ongoing collaboration with SAPS, Home Affairs, and other partners. While improvements continue, the current number of inspectors nationwide affects the time required to revisit previously inspected sites, particularly in relation to matters in New Castle.

The Deputy Minister highlighted that work in New Castle began well before the current Administration, with teams on the ground as early as the previous year. Both he and the C had visited the area prior to the PC's oversight visit. The DEL also met with the Chinese Embassy last year as part of a coordinated approach to addressing challenges. With New Castle accounting for approximately 50% of the textile industry, the Department is addressing all related issues both operationally and diplomatically and will continue providing reports to the Committee. He reiterated the importance of the Committee's oversight role while noting that inspections remain the responsibility of DEL inspectors.

Addressing backlog reduction initiatives, the Department outlined several measures taken to strengthen internal processes. These include a request for the Committee to convene twice a month to assist in reducing and ultimately eliminating the backlog. A new appeals layer has also been introduced, previously non-existent, to ensure that applications are not dismissed prematurely or without adequate review. Priority cases of national interest, particularly those affecting employment, are also being fast-tracked.

Concerning lifestyle audits for CCMA Commissioners, the Department clarified that the CCMA does not conduct lifestyle audits but does produce annual risk reports and requires annual declarations of interest. Some challenges have been identified and may require further review. The Deputy Minister reaffirmed the Department's strong stance against fraud and corruption and requested that the PC provide the names linked to any allegations so that the CCMA can conduct proper investigations.

The CCMA's operating model, the Department explained that when the CCMA was established, its model provided for a percentage of cases to be heard by part-time Commissioners. Due to ongoing budget constraints, the model is now under pressure, and the CCMA is exploring alternative approaches to ensure its long-term sustainability and efficiency

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Write-Up

PARLIAMENT

UIF SHOWCASES SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRESS WHILE ADDRESSING AUDIT CONCERNS IN PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING



The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) appeared before the Select Committee on Economic Development and Trade to present its operational and financial performance, highlighting both progress made in strengthening service delivery and the steps being taken to address concerns raised through the Auditor-General's oversight processes. The briefing formed part of Parliament's ongoing oversight of the Department of Employment and Labour and its entities, providing Members with an update on the Fund's mandate, operational performance and corrective actions aimed at improving governance and financial management.

During the presentation, UIF 's Acting Commissioner Dr. Maleho Matjila-Thompson, outlined the Fund's continued role in providing social security protection to workers during periods of unemployment, maternity, illness and other qualifying circumstances, while also supporting labour market participation through labour activation initiatives. Performance data presented to the Committee showed that the Fund achieved 16 out of 27 performance targets during the reporting period. Operational improvements were recorded in several areas of service delivery, including the processing of new company registrations within one day and the processing of approximately 92 per cent of unemployment benefit claims within 15 working days. Deceased benefit claims reached a resolution rate of 91 per cent, while simpler claims continued to be finalised within the required turnaround times. The Fund also strengthened administrative capacity by establishing dedicated teams to manage increased claim volumes and invoice processing, ensuring continuity of service delivery despite growing demand.



5 year % achievement per programme per year

Programme	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Administration	93% (170/182)	82% (170/207)	77% (170/220)	82% (187/227)	74% (171/231)
Policy / Research	93% (13/14)	92% (11/12)	89% (8/9)	100% (10/10)	89% (8/9)
Labour Activation Programmes	0% (0/0)	60% (3/5)	67% (2/3)	100% (2/2)	67% (2/3)
UIF	93% (183/196)	80% (184/232)	80% (180/226)	84% (199/237)	82% (181/220)

UIF also reported steady financial performance, with total revenue increasing from R24.8 billion to R26 billion, largely driven by new company registrations and improved compliance with contribution requirements. Benefit payments increased from R15.1 billion to R18 billion as the Fund prioritised the clearance of outstanding claims and responded to rising demand for income protection. Although investment revenue declined slightly due to broader market conditions, the Fund maintained a stable financial position while continuing to meet its obligations to beneficiaries across the country.

Members of the Committee welcomed the progress reported but engaged the delegation robustly on issues raised by the Auditor-General, particularly the reliability of financial reporting, delays in ICT modernisation and recurring audit findings. Several Members expressed concern regarding governance weaknesses, the pace of implementing audit recommendations and the need for stronger oversight of programmes such as the Labour Activation Programme (LAP). Questions were also raised regarding the monitoring of funded projects, employer compliance with UIF regulations and the verification of benefit payments from claim submission to payout.

Responding to these concerns, departmental leadership acknowledged the challenges raised and outlined several corrective measures already underway. Officials explained that some governance processes had been temporarily adjusted during the COVID-19 pandemic to accelerate funding and support workers and businesses affected by the crisis. While these measures enabled the rapid disbursement of relief funds, they also created vulnerabilities that resulted in instances of abuse and irregular payments. To address this, the Fund introduced a comprehensive verification process for all payments and launched the "Follow the Money" initiative, a major recovery programme aimed at tracing and recovering funds disbursed during the pandemic. The Department confirmed that it continues to work closely with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) on investigations related to COVID-19 relief payments, with several cases already progressing through investigative and enforcement processes.

The Departmental delegation also briefed the Committee on steps being taken to strengthen the reliability of financial reporting and address long-standing audit findings. These interventions include improvements to revenue accounting processes, efforts to stabilise and modernise ICT systems and enhanced internal oversight mechanisms. The Department indicated that addressing historical audit findings remains a priority as it works toward improving the credibility and accuracy of financial statements.

The benefit administration, was explained by the Departmental delegation that an interim manual processes and controlled overtime measures were introduced to ensure that beneficiaries continued receiving payments while system upgrades were being finalised. A new digital platform, UIF Online, is scheduled for full implementation from April 2025 and is expected to significantly improve claims processing, system integration and accessibility of services. The Fund is also expanding service channels through partnerships with the banking sector, allowing beneficiaries to access services more easily and reducing reliance on manual processes.

Committee Members also raised concerns regarding the valuation of UIF investments, which have previously contributed to audit qualifications. In response, officials indicated that discrepancies between valuation methodologies used by external parties are being addressed through a revised framework that includes the involvement of internal audit firms and an agreed valuation methodology to ensure consistency and transparency in reporting.

The Department acknowledged challenges related to governance and project monitoring related to the Labour Activation Programme but emphasised that new controls have been introduced to strengthen due diligence, procurement oversight and performance monitoring.



It was reported that LAP projects are now subject to monthly monitoring, with corrective measures implemented where projects deviate from expected outcomes. The programme is also being reconfigured to ensure that funded initiatives deliver stronger labour market outcomes and improved return on investment.

Departmental delegation also emphasised the importance of accountability and institutional reform within the UIF environment and members were also updated on the disciplinary processes that have been undertaken where necessary. Progress was also reported on broader institutional reforms, including the planned unbundling of entities from the Department to strengthen governance and operational independence. These reforms are expected to proceed through Cabinet and Parliamentary processes in the coming period.

The meeting reflected the seriousness with which Parliament exercises its oversight responsibility, with Members emphasising the need for accountability, stronger governance and measurable progress in addressing audit findings. At the same time, the engagement provided an opportunity for the Department and UIF leadership to demonstrate the steps already being taken to stabilise systems, strengthen financial management and improve service delivery to millions of South African workers.

The session concluded with a clear understanding that while challenges remain, the Fund is implementing reforms aimed at restoring confidence in its administration and ensuring that it continues to fulfil its core mandate of protecting workers and supporting labour market stability. The engagement reaffirmed the importance of transparency, accountability and continuous improvement as the Department and UIF work to strengthen the integrity and effectiveness of one of South Africa's most important social protection institutions.



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Employee Health & Wellness 13 March 2026

NEEDS VS WANTS

MAKING SMARTER FINANCIAL DECISIONS

Understanding the difference between needs and wants is one of the most important skills in financial wellness. It helps people make intentional spending choices, avoid unnecessary debt, and build healthier financial habits.

A **need** refers to something essential for survival and basic functioning. These are expenses that support a person's wellbeing, safety, and ability to live and work. Needs typically include housing, food, basic clothing, transportation, healthcare, and utilities such as water and electricity. Without these necessities, an individual's health, safety, or livelihood may be compromised. For example, paying rent or a mortgage is a need because it provides shelter, while buying basic groceries ensures that the body receives the nutrition it requires to function properly.

On the other hand, **wants** are things that improve comfort, enjoyment, or lifestyle but are not essential for survival. These may include dining out frequently, purchasing expensive clothing brands, upgrading to the latest smartphone, entertainment subscriptions, luxury vehicles, or vacations. While wants are not inherently negative, they can become problematic when they take priority over essential expenses or when they lead to overspending and debt.



Why Understanding the Difference Matters

When people cannot distinguish between needs and wants, they may:

- Overspend
- Struggle to save
- Accumulate debt
- Experience financial stress

Being aware of the difference helps individuals:

- Prioritize essential expenses
- Manage money more effectively
- Build savings
- Achieve financial goals



One practical way to determine whether something is a need or a want is to ask a simple question: **"Do I need this to live or function, or do I simply want it?"** If the item is something that could be delayed, reduced, or avoided without significantly affecting daily life, it is likely a want rather than a need. For instance, owning a phone for communication may be considered a need in today's world, especially for work and safety, but upgrading to the newest and most expensive model may be classified as a want. Additional examples:

Situation	Need	Want
Food	Basic groceries	Takeaways every week
Phone	Basic phone for communication	Latest smartphone upgrade
Clothing	Necessary work clothes	Designer brands

Tips for Making Smarter Financial Decisions

- Creating and following a budget is one effective strategy. A budget helps individuals allocate money to essential expenses first before spending on non-essential items.
- Practice mindful spending, such as pausing before making non-essential purchases. Some people find it useful to apply the "24-hour rule," which involves waiting at least a day before buying something that is not a necessity. This pause allows time to reflect on whether the purchase is truly needed.
- Setting clear financial goals can also strengthen decision-making. When individuals have goals such as building an emergency fund, saving for education, or preparing for retirement, they are more likely to prioritize their needs and limit unnecessary spending.
- Track your spending- it can reveal patterns that may otherwise go unnoticed, helping people identify areas where wants may be consuming a large portion of their income.
- Balance is important. A healthy financial life allows for both responsibility and enjoyment, but needs should always come first.



A commonly recommended guideline for balancing spending is the **50/30/20** budgeting rule. According to this approach, approximately 50 percent of income is allocated to needs, 30 percent to wants, and 20 percent to savings or debt repayment. While these percentages may vary depending on personal circumstances, the principle highlights the importance of prioritizing essential expenses while still allowing room for enjoyment and future financial security

Ultimately, distinguishing between needs and wants is a powerful step toward achieving financial wellness. It encourages individuals to spend intentionally, reduce financial stress, and build a stable financial foundation. By prioritizing necessities and making thoughtful choices about discretionary spending, people can create a healthier relationship with money and move closer to their long-term financial goals.

BEYOND COMPLIANCE: PREVENTION IN PRACTICE

17 MARCH 2026



DEL HOST THE NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OHS) CONFERENCE 2026

The Department of Employment and Labour host a three-day National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference 2026 in Gauteng. Held under the theme **'Beyond Compliance: Prevention in Practice,"** the day 1 of the conference officially kicked off on Tuesday 17 March 2026 by the Department's Inspector-General, Aggy Moiloa who provided the opening remarks.

The gathering aims to reaffirm Occupational Health and Safety as a constitutional and fundamental right, while placing renewed emphasis on practical measures to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses. Delegates from government, business, and Organised labour are expected to engage on strategies to strengthen compliance and improve safety standards across sectors.



Inspector-General: Aggy Moiloa

Deputy Minister Sibiya Reaffirms Tougher Stance on Labour Law Compliance

Delivering the keynote address, Employment and Labour Deputy Minister (DM) Jomo Sibiya emphasised that ensuring safe and healthy working conditions is not merely a regulatory requirement but a constitutional obligation.

DM highlighted that every worker has the right to return home unharmed at the end of each working day, reinforcing the principle that workplace injuries and diseases are preventable rather than inevitable.

The Deputy Minister highlighted the importance of proactive and unannounced inspections as a critical tool in identifying non-compliance. He indicated that these interventions are not intended to punish, but to correct and ensure that workplaces meet the required standards of safety, fairness, and dignity.

Reaffirming the Department's position, he stated that protecting workers is central to economic stability and growth. He urged employers to take immediate steps to align their practices with legal requirements, cautioning that continued disregard for labour laws undermines both the rule of law and the broader economy.



Deputy Minister: Jomo Sibiya

Deputy Minister Sibiya also called for stronger collaboration between government, organised labour, and business. He acknowledged the role of social partners in building a culture of compliance and stressed that sustainable change can only be achieved through collective effort and accountability.

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Labour Federations Call for Tougher Workplace Inspections

In a unified show of support, federations and organised labour including BUSA, COSATU, FEDUSA, NACTU and SAFTU as well as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have called for a decisive shift towards stricter enforcement of labour laws, particularly through increased unannounced inspections across sectors.

The federations stressed that non-compliant employers must be held accountable, describing such conduct as a clear violation of the law. They further urged closer collaboration with the Department, expressing their willingness to actively participate in inspection processes.

At the same time, the federations raised serious concern over the exploitation of vulnerable workers, including minority groups, and the use of undocumented foreign nationals as cheap labour, warning that these practices undermine both workers' rights and fair labour standards.



Addressing Regulatory gaps in South Africa's OHS landscape: challenges, enforcement failures and policy reform pathways - Chief Inspector, Milly Ruiters.

Chief Inspector Milly Ruiters stated that the occupational health and safety regulatory framework is structured across three primary areas: health and hygiene, electrical and mechanical safety, and construction-related activities, which include civil works, installations, and the handling of explosives. She emphasised the importance of adhering to legislative provisions and consulting key sections of the law that are often subject to dispute or misinterpretation.



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Picture STORY



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Day 2 of OHS Conference

From Policy to Practice: Prevention Comes Alive on Day Two of the OHS Conference

Gauteng | 18 March 2026

Day two of the National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference marked a decisive shift from regulatory intent to practical, on-the-ground prevention. Hosted under the sub-theme "Prevention in Action: Practical Solutions to Reduce Workplace Risks", the programme delivered a powerful mix of data-driven insights, regulatory application, sector-specific case studies and technical expertise. Together, these elements demonstrated that prevention is no longer merely a compliance obligation, but a critical operational imperative for employers, regulators and industry stakeholders alike.

#Yazini

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Chaired by Professor M. Zungu, the day brought together regulators, insurers, industry experts and practitioners with a shared objective: translating South Africa's evolving OHS framework into tangible reductions in workplace injuries, occupational diseases and fatalities. The programme unfolded as a carefully sequenced journey, beginning with the use of data to understand risk and vulnerability, progressing through practical regulatory implementation, and culminating in sector-specific technical solutions that illustrated how prevention is realised where competence, enforcement and accountability converge.

Prevention in Action: Practical Solutions Take Centre Stage on Day Two of the OHS Conference

The day opened with a health and safety briefing that set the tone for the sessions that followed. Delegates were reminded that prevention begins with awareness and discipline, and that the principles discussed throughout the conference, risk assessment, compliance, supervision and behavioural controls, apply equally within conference spaces and everyday workplace environments. This grounding moment reinforced the importance of practising what is preached when it comes to occupational health and safety.

Leveraging Statistics to Reduce Injuries and Occupational Diseases

The first substantive session focused on leveraging statistics to reduce workplace injuries and occupational diseases and was presented jointly by the Compensation Fund (CF), Rand Mutual Assurance (RMA) and Federated Employers Mutual (FEM). Drawing on national claims data and sectoral trends, presenters demonstrated that injury and disease statistics should not be viewed merely as historical records, but as predictive tools that can guide targeted prevention strategies. RMA illustrated how data-driven prevention programmes, particularly in the mining and













metals sectors, have already achieved measurable reductions in Total Case Incident Rates (TCIR), disease claims and fatalities. The session reinforced a critical message: prevention fails where data is ignored, but thrives where insights are translated into focused, collaborative interventions. When insurers, employers and regulators work together around shared intelligence, prevention becomes systematic rather than reactive.

Turning Regulations into Action: Applying the OHS Framework in Practice

The session titled "Turning Regulations into Action" formed the backbone of Day Two. It explored how South Africa's OHS regulatory framework can be actively applied to prevent incidents, rather than merely respond to them after harm has occurred. The discussion highlighted that regulations only achieve their intended purpose when they are understood, implemented consistently and embedded into workplace systems and decision-making processes.

Strengthening Workplace Protection for Young Workers

Presented by Ms Buleiwa Huna, Specialist Occupational Health and Hygiene, this segment focused on the heightened vulnerability of young workers in the workplace. Drawing on international labour standards, South African legislation and biological development science, the presentation explained why young workers face disproportionate occupational risks, including limited experience, developing physical capacity and barriers to reporting hazards. It emphasised that effective protection of young workers requires task-appropriate risk assessments, enhanced supervision and mentoring, training aligned to experience levels, and the integration of young worker risks into organisational OHS management systems. The key message was clear: protecting young workers today safeguards the future workforce, strengthens safety culture and supports long-term sustainability.

Practical Implementation of Construction Regulations

A central highlight of the morning was the amended presentation on the Practical Implementation of Construction Regulations, delivered by Mr Phumudzo Maphaha, Director: Construction, Explosives and Major Hazard Installations. The presentation reframed construction safety as a life-cycle responsibility extending far beyond the construction site itself. At the core of many construction incidents, Mr Maphaha identified a recurring root cause, the absence of competent, suitably qualified and professionally registered persons across the project lifecycle.

The presentation unpacked prevention responsibilities across all six stages of a construction project. From project initiation and briefing, where the early appointment of a Construction Health and Safety Agent enables hazard identification and baseline risk assessments, through concept and feasibility, design development, tender documentation and procurement, construction management and ultimately project close-out, the emphasis remained consistent. Health and safety must be integrated at every stage through competent appointments, approved permits, continuous auditing, and structured close-out processes.

The amended presentation underscored that construction fatalities are largely preventable where competence, early planning and accountability are applied consistently.

Practical Implementation of Electrical and Mechanical Regulations

Delivered by Mr J.P. Malatse, this session addressed the practical application of Electrical and Mechanical Regulations as a cornerstone of incident prevention. The presentation highlighted that many electrical and mechanical incidents arise from unqualified or unauthorised work, inadequate lockout and isolation procedures, poor maintenance and inspection regimes, and the absence of guarding and safety devices. Key preventative measures included the strict use of qualified and registered personnel, enforcement of lockout and tagout procedures, statutory inspections of lifting machinery, pressure equipment, lifts and electrical installations, and the use of predictive maintenance technologies such as thermography and vibration analysis. The session reinforced that technology, standards and human competence must function together to prevent catastrophic failures.

Preventative Instruments on Workplace Injuries and Diseases: Focus on Child Labour

In a deeply impactful presentation, Advocate Michael Msiza addressed preventative instruments on workplace injuries and diseases with a specific focus on child labour. By linking constitutional protections, provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions with real-world case studies, the presentation demonstrated that hazardous child labour represents both a human rights violation and a profound occupational health failure. The long-term physical, neurological and psychological harm caused by exposure to hazardous work at a young age was highlighted, reinforcing that child labour prevention is a core OHS responsibility requiring vigilant enforcement, education and cross-sector collaboration.

Breakaway Sessions: Sector-Specific Prevention in Action

Following the tea break, delegates participated in parallel breakaway sessions that translated prevention principles into sector-specific solutions. Sessions on machinery supervision and competency highlighted the importance of qualified supervisors, appropriate experience and GCC certification in preventing machinery-related incidents and embedding a strong safety culture. A highly practical session on LPG compliance unpacked the dangers of non-compliant appliances, illegal cylinder filling and poor ventilation, reinforcing the critical role of authorised persons in testing, certification and issuing Certificates of Conformity as a life-saving intervention. Other sessions addressed noise exposure readiness, ventilation strategies, ergonomics, human factors in incident investigations and process safety in major hazard installations, collectively reinforcing that prevention is multidisciplinary and systems-based.

Afternoon Session: Preventing Incidents in Distribution and Transmission Networks

The afternoon featured a technically robust presentation on preventing incidents in electricity distribution and transmission networks, with particular focus on low-voltage systems and the risks introduced by embedded generation. The session demonstrated how strict compliance with standards, certified inverter technology and smart infrastructure can significantly reduce electrical hazards, especially in rural and shared network environments where public and worker safety risks are heightened.

Medical Surveillance as an Early-Warning System

The final open session reframed medical surveillance as a proactive prevention tool rather than a routine compliance exercise. By identifying early signs of occupational disease, medical surveillance enables timely intervention before irreversible harm occurs, effectively closing the loop between exposure monitoring, occupational hygiene and worker health outcomes.

Key Takeaways from Day 2

The dominant takeaway from Day Two was that prevention is achievable and measurable when regulations are applied with intent rather than treated as administrative requirements. Data emerged as a critical enabler of prevention, particularly when used predictively to identify trends and target interventions before harm occurs. The conference also reinforced that competence is the cornerstone of prevention, from construction planning and machinery supervision to electrical work and gas installations.

Another central insight was that prevention is systems based and multidisciplinary. Effective risk reduction depends on the integration of engineering controls, human factors, medical surveillance, supervision and enforcement. Finally, Day Two made it clear that protecting vulnerable groups, especially young workers and children, is not peripheral to OHS, but central to building a sustainable, safe workforce for the future.

Main Sector-Specific Solutions Discussed

The conference showcased a range of practical, sector specific prevention solutions, grounded in real operational challenges:

- Construction Sector: Prevention was addressed through a lifecycle approach to Construction Regulations, emphasising early appointment of Construction Health and Safety Agents, integration of health and safety at design stage, competent professional appointments, continuous auditing, and structured project close out. The solution focused on eliminating risk upstream rather than reacting to incidents on site.
- Electrical and Mechanical Engineering: Sector solutions centred on enforcing the use of qualified and registered personnel, strict lockout/tagout procedures, statutory inspections, effective guarding, and predictive maintenance technologies such as thermography and vibration analysis to prevent catastrophic failures.
- Machinery and Manufacturing: The importance of competent machinery supervision, GCC certification and experienced oversight was highlighted as a critical control to prevent machinery related incidents and to embed a strong safety culture.
- Gas and LPG Installations: Prevention strategies focused on compliance with standards, the role of authorised persons, proper testing and certification, ventilation requirements, and eliminating illegal cylinder filling. Compliance was positioned as a life saving intervention rather than a technical formality.
- Energy Distribution and Transmission: The conference addressed electrical risks associated with low voltage systems and embedded generation, highlighting certified inverter technology, compliance with standards and smart infrastructure as key controls to protect workers and the public.
- Health and Occupational Diseases: Medical surveillance was presented as an early warning system, enabling early detection of occupational disease trends and proactive intervention before irreversible harm occurs.

How the Conference Addressed Young Worker Safety

Young worker safety was addressed as a strategic prevention priority, not a compliance add on. The conference recognised that young workers face heightened occupational risks due to limited experience, developing physical and cognitive capacity, and barriers to reporting hazards. The session dedicated to young worker protection emphasised that effective prevention requires task appropriate risk assessments, enhanced supervision and mentoring, training aligned to experience levels, and the integration of young worker risks into organisational OHS management systems.

In parallel, the focus on child labour prevention reinforced that exposing children and young persons to hazardous work is both a human rights violation and an occupational health failure. By linking constitutional protections, labour legislation and international conventions with real world case examples, the conference made it clear that safeguarding young workers is fundamental to long term workforce sustainability, ethical governance and effective OHS practice.

Prevention Made Practical

Overall, the OHS Conference demonstrated that prevention is achievable when regulations are applied with intent, competence is enforced and data informs action. From construction sites and machinery rooms to gas installations and power networks, the programme showcased practical solutions that move South Africa decisively beyond compliance and into prevention in practice.

Day Two of the OHS Conference demonstrated that prevention is no longer an abstract ideal. It is a discipline grounded in data, enabled by competence, strengthened by regulation and proven through outcomes. By addressing sector specific risks, prioritising vulnerable workers and focusing on practical implementation, the conference laid a strong foundation for moving South Africa decisively beyond compliance and towards prevention in practice.

A Day that Redefined Prevention

By the close of Day Two, one conclusion stood out unmistakably: prevention is no longer an abstract ideal. It is a discipline, a system and a measurable outcome. From construction sites and power grids to factories and farms, the conference illustrated that when regulations are understood, data is used intelligently and competence is prioritised, prevention becomes achievable. Day Two did more than share knowledge; it equipped delegates with the tools, frameworks and conviction needed to turn prevention into daily practice. As the conference moved toward its final day, a firm foundation had been laid: compliance may be the starting point, but prevention is the destination.

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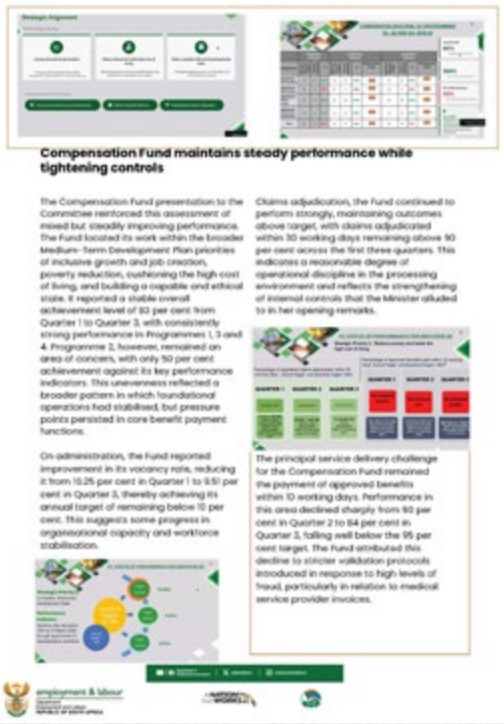
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PARLIAMENT
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR
MARCH 18TH, 2026
MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR, NOMAKHOSAZANA METH
#QUOTABLE QOUTE
The Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour convened virtually on Wednesday, 18 March 2026, to receive a briefing from the Department of Employment and Labour on the third quarter performance of the Compensation Fund and the Unemployment Insurance Fund against their 2025/26 strategic objectives.
MINISTER METH'S OPENING REMARKS
The Minister of Employment and Labour, Nomakhosazana Meth opened the engagement by giving a overview of the third quarter performance of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and the Compensation Fund (CF) within a broader and increasingly complex domestic and global context. She emphasised that the Committee's consideration of these entities could not be confined to administrative or technical compliance alone, but had to be understood against the pressures facing workers and households. Referring to growing geopolitical instability, the Minister observed that "geopolitical conflict is being transmitted directly into the daily reality of our people, particularly the working class," linking global volatility to inflationary pressures, rising transport costs, food price increases and broader economic strain. In this context, he argued that the UIF and Compensation Fund "must not be viewed narrowly as administrative entities" but rather as "strategic instruments of the developmental state," with a responsibility to protect workers against deepening vulnerability.
In her reflections, the Minister acknowledged measurable gains in the performance of both entities, while also cautioning that progress remained uneven and in some areas insufficient relative to the scale of the mandate.


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In reflecting on the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Minister acknowledged several positive developments. She noted that the UIF had increased funds under management by R32 billion between March 2025 and February 2026, taking investments to R202 billion, supported largely by improved investment performance. She further recognised improvements in claims processing turnaround times and the expansion of digital platforms, describing these as signs of a state becoming more responsive and accessible. At the same time, the Minister made clear that this progress remained partial. Contribution collection remained below target, programme performance was uneven, and weaknesses persisted in employer registration, compliance and system functionality. He warned that the labour market was rapidly shifting towards informality, platform work and precarious forms of employment, and argued that unless the UIF deliberately broadened its reach and adapted its instruments, it risked entrenching a two-tier system in which formally employed workers remained protected while many young people, informal workers and gig workers continued to fall outside the net of social protection.
The Minister's remarks on the Compensation Fund followed a similar line of balanced recognition and concern. She described the Fund as a critical pillar of worker protection, especially for those injured in the course of production, and said its third quarter performance showed improved stability across a number of key operational indicators. He highlighted positive trends in claims adjudication, case processing and rehabilitation-related services, and pointed to the Fund's strong revenue position as evidence of institutional resilience.
She also highlighted persistent issues in benefit payments, backlog reduction and internal efficiency, arguing that delays affecting workers and service providers were not merely technical problems but reflected the ongoing challenge of building a capable and responsive state. In one of the most telling observations of the session, the Minister said the quarter's results presented "a clear picture of a state in transition, making incremental progress, yet constrained by structural limitations". She concluded by urging that both the UIF and Compensation Fund be repositioned as active instruments of economic transformation, rather than passive administrators of statutory obligations.


Compensation Fund maintains steady performance while tightening controls
The Compensation Fund presentation to the Committee reinforced this assessment of mixed but steadily improving performance. The Fund located its work within the broader Medium-Term Development Plan priorities of inclusive growth and job creation, poverty reduction, cushioning the high cost of living, and building a capable and ethical state. It reported a stable overall achievement level of 83 per cent from Quarter 1 to Quarter 3, with consistently strong performance in Programmes 1, 3 and 4. Programme 2, however, remained an area of concern, with only 50 per cent achievement against its key performance indicators. This unevenness reflected a broader pattern in which foundational operations had stabilised, but pressure points persisted in core benefit payment functions.
On administration, the Fund reported improvement in its vacancy rate, reducing it from 10.25 per cent in Quarter 1 to 9.51 per cent in Quarter 3, thereby achieving its annual target of remaining below 10 per cent. This suggests some progress in organisational capacity and workforce stabilisation.
Claims adjudication, the Fund continued to perform strongly, maintaining outcomes above target, with claims adjudicated within 30 working days remaining above 90 per cent across the first three quarters. This indicates a reasonable degree of operational discipline in the processing environment and reflects the strengthening of internal controls that the Minister alluded to in her opening remarks.
The principal service delivery challenge for the Compensation Fund remained the payment of approved benefits within 10 working days. Performance in this area declined sharply from 90 per cent in Quarter 2 to 84 per cent in Quarter 3, falling well below the 95 per cent target. The Fund attributed this decline to stricter validation protocols introduced in response to high levels of fraud, particularly in relation to medical service provider invoices.


99%
The Fund indicated that while interventions in prior quarters had improved the quality of records for pensioners and claimants, intensified fraud controls led to more payment rejections, especially among medical service providers. This presents a familiar governance dilemma: stronger controls are necessary to protect public funds, but they can also slow down payments and affect legitimate beneficiaries and providers if not carefully managed.
To address these issues, the Compensation Fund reported that corrective action was already under way. A feedback loop between operations and finance had been completed to streamline payment processes, and collaboration with the banking partner had been initiated to resolve verification mismatches. The Fund further indicated that master data analytics would be developed in Quarter 4, while verification exception reporting was being monitored monthly and progress tracked through weekly ICT governance structures. Management was also reviewing real-time payment performance on a weekly basis with the specific aim of restoring performance to the 95 per cent standard. These measures point to a deliberate attempt to move from diagnosis to implementation, although their effectiveness will need to be demonstrated in the fourth quarter outcomes.
The Compensation Fund also reported high performance in pre-authorisation for assistive devices, achieving 99 per cent against a target of 95 per cent, with broadly consistent results across provinces. Over a three-year trend, the Fund presented evidence of steady improvement across most indicators, with the exception of benefit payments within 10 working days, which had deteriorated due to the tightened fraud-control environment. This longer-term trend is significant because it suggests that the Fund is not in systemic decline but in a period of gradual operational recovery, albeit one still constrained by legacy inefficiencies and persistent bottlenecks in selected functions.
On the financial front, the Compensation Fund presented a strong revenue position. By the end of the third quarter, total revenue stood at R43.5 billion against a budget of R28.4 billion, translating to performance of over 150 per cent. This overachievement was driven mainly by assessment revenue, investment income and favourable fair value adjustments.


UIF business operations deliver gains, but backlogs and delays remain a concern
The presentation by the Unemployment Insurance Fund reflected an institution that improved its overall quarter-on-quarter performance, but which continued to grapple with uneven delivery across programmes. The Fund's overall achievement for the third quarter of 2025/26 stood at 57 per cent, with 8 of 14 targets achieved. This represented an improvement from the 48 per cent recorded in the third quarter of 2024/25.
Administration performed strongly, achieving 75 per cent of its targets, while Business Operations recorded 60 per cent. Labour Activation Programme performance remained under pressure, with only 2 of 5 targets achieved in the quarter, even though some key social inclusion indicators remained on track. The overall picture was therefore one of moderate recovery, but with material weaknesses still evident in service delivery and labour activation.
Despite these gains, the presentation also highlighted areas of concern, particularly in labour activation and certain categories of benefit processing. The Fund did not meet targets for the implementation of audit action plans, in-service benefit claims, deceased benefit claims, ISRS application processing, the number of beneficiaries participating in employability programmes, and jobs created through UIF-supported initiatives. The reasons cited included delays in audit implementation, old applications in some provinces, infrastructure and system challenges, delays in receiving compliance documents, and the late implementation of partner projects, including certification bottlenecks affecting placement into employment.
To address these issues, the UIF indicated that it would intensify the use of the new ICMS system, strengthen monitoring through business intelligence tools, improve ICT support in labour centres, enforce closer oversight of underperforming provinces, review standard operating procedures, verify reported beneficiary data, and apply consequence management where necessary. Overall, the presentation reflected a fund that is making progress in selected administrative and operational areas, but which still faces significant implementation and programme delivery challenges.


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25 March 2026

Select Committee on the unbundling & configuration project



Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Jomo Sibiya

The Department of Employment and Labour appeared before the Select Committee on Economic Development and Trade on 25 March 2026 to provide an update on the unbundling and reconfiguration of the Unemployment Insurance Fund and Compensation Fund, a reform process intended to strengthen governance, improve accountability and enhance service delivery across the labour and employment portfolio.

The briefing was responded directly to the Committee's request for clarity on the strategies aimed at restructuring the UIF and CF by 2027, with particular emphasis on improving operational efficiency, and enhancing institutional agility in fulfilling their respective public mandates.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Jomo Sibiya framed the engagement as far more than an internal restructuring exercise, describing it as a strategic intervention aimed at repositioning the Department to respond more effectively to unemployment, inequality and economic exclusion. He emphasised that government's shift from a narrow labour focus to a broader employment-centred mandate requires institutions that are fit for purpose, responsive and capable of delivering impact at scale.

"The matter before us today is not simply a technical or administrative reform process. It is a strategic intervention aimed at repositioning the Department of Employment and Labour to respond more effectively to one of the greatest challenges facing our country unemployment, inequality, and economic exclusion." Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya.

The Deputy Minister's remarks also sought to anchor the unbundling process in the lived consequences of institutional weakness. He told the Committee that where governance failures, inefficiencies and structural limitations are allowed to persist, it is ultimately ordinary South Africans who bear the cost, particularly workers, unemployed people and employers who rely on functioning public institutions. For that reason, he presented the reform as a necessary intervention to restore confidence in public institutions, strengthen accountability and governance, and ensure that resources intended for workers and job seekers are managed with integrity and purpose.

He further stressed that the Department and its entities must be positioned to play a leading role in employment creation and labour market activation, in line with government's broader priorities, making the case that the unbundling project is closely tied to the Department's developmental and economic role rather than being a technical restructuring for its own sake.

Importantly, Deputy Minister Sibiya also moved to reassure the Committee that the process is being approached with caution and responsibility. He described the reform as carefully considered and phased, undertaken within the framework of the law, through structured consultation with key stakeholders, and with due regard for stability, continuity and the protection of public services.

In doing so, he sought to balance the urgency of reform with the need for orderly implementation, emphasising that political leadership is not pursuing change for its own sake, but change that is necessary, responsible and sustainable.

He concluded by reaffirming government's commitment to ensuring that the process improves service delivery, strengthens financial and governance systems, and supports the broader objective of inclusive economic growth and job creation, while also assuring Members that the Committee would be kept informed throughout the process and that its oversight role would be respected.

"We are not pursuing change for its own sake. We are pursuing change that is necessary, responsible, and sustainable."
Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya.

The presentation by the Department set out the broader policy and institutional context for the reform. It explained that South Africa continues to face persistently high unemployment and that, since the proclamation of the Department of Employment and Labour in 2019, the Department has carried an expanded responsibility to promote economic growth, employment creation and decent work.

Within that broader mandate, the UIF and CF remain critical institutions, yet operationally they have continued to function as branches under the Department rather than as fully autonomous entities. Following an architectural review of the funds and a portfolio analysis conducted with external support, the conclusion was reached that both funds should be unbundled from DEL and more appropriately constituted as PFMA Schedule 3A national public entities.

The Department argued that this would create a stronger institutional basis for governance, operational efficiency and improved service delivery.

The Department further outlined that the rationale for unbundling is rooted in long-standing governance and operational issues, particularly those identified by the Auditor-General of South Africa. These included years of audit disclaimers at the Compensation Fund, irregular expenditure, unreliable financial statements, weak internal controls, outdated systems, service delivery inefficiencies and shortages of appropriately trained personnel.

The presentation made it clear that unbundling is intended not only to correct structural issues, but also to restore confidence in institutions that manage resources meant to support workers, employers and beneficiaries. In this regard, the Deputy Minister's remarks and the presentation were closely aligned in emphasising that the reform is about accountability, integrity and the protection of the public interest.

In reflecting on work already completed, the Department reported that Phase One of the project had established the foundation for change. This phase included the development of situational analysis reports for DEL and SEE, a new operating model for DEL and proposed operating model changes for UIF and CF, draft legislative amendments to the UIF Act and COIDA, draft socio-economic impact assessments, the establishment of workstreams, and approval of a change management and communication strategy.

The Department indicated that these outputs were necessary to define the scope of reform, clarify the rationale for unbundling, prepare for legislative and organisational change, and provide the strategic direction required for implementation.

The Department explained that two processes are running in parallel. The first is the broader DEL transformation project, which involves institutionalising a new service delivery model, finalising functional and organisational structures, and developing business cases for DEL, UIF and CF.

The second is the preparatory work for unbundling itself, including transitional arrangements, agreements on separation matters, implementation metrics, and execution of the change management and communications plan. The project plan presented to the Committee reflected that the business cases for DEL, UIF and CF are on track for finalisation by 30 June 2026, while legal and transitional support processes continue over the medium term.

On the critical question of where the process stands now, the Department reported that engagements with the Department of Public Service and Administration are ongoing and remain central to risk mitigation and the finalisation of the business cases.

DEL is receiving technical support from a dedicated DPSA team to review organisational structures, test the feasibility of the approved service delivery model, and ensure alignment with public service norms and requirements.

The Department also advised Members that the legislative amendment process has advanced, with the first phase of NEDLAC consultations concluded and SEIAS approval obtained for both the UIF and COIDA Amendment Bills. Both bills have been resubmitted to the Office of the Chief State Law Adviser and are awaiting certification before proceeding through Cabinet Cluster processes and the next stages of the legislative pathway.

The status update further indicated that business case development is progressing in both entities. The proposed UIF conceptual model has been workshopped and accepted by the Commissioner and team, with consultations on the macrostructure continuing and the business case expected to be finalised in June 2026.

A similar process is under way in the Compensation Fund, where the conceptual model has also been accepted and the macrostructure remains under consultation, with finalisation likewise anticipated by June 2026. In both cases, the Department said transitional arrangements are already being discussed across workstreams, including strategic, human resource, financial, ICT, legal, and change management implications, in anticipation of legal separation.

The Department also outlined the governance arrangements put in place to drive the process. A Project Management Office has been established to coordinate the unbundling project, supported by six workstreams covering policy and strategy, human resources, communications and change management, finance, legal, and technology.

Oversight is provided through a Minister's Oversight Committee and the Director-General's Unbundling Committee, intended to ensure both political leadership and administrative coordination.

The presentation showed that workstreams have already begun meeting and are refining terms of reference, workplans, financial modelling, legal submissions and technology architecture, while the communications workstream is preparing readiness interventions and internal messaging to support the transition.

Importantly, the Department acknowledged that the process is not without risk.

The presentation identified high risks relating to service delivery disruption, possible budget shortfalls, staff uncertainty, labour instability and ICT failure. Mitigation measures presented to the Committee included business continuity planning, financial modelling, engagement with National Treasury, adherence to staff transfer provisions, retention strategies, transparent communication with staff and unions, and careful planning around functional and legal ICT separation.

The Department's approach therefore reflected an awareness that the reform must be managed in a manner that protects public services while enabling institutional change.

The presentation from the Department did not go without interrogation from Members of Parliament, who subjected the update to oversight scrutiny in line with the Committee's constitutional role.

This interrogation was significant, as it underscored the importance of ensuring that the unbundling process is not only well-intentioned, but also practically sound, legally compliant and capable of delivering measurable improvements in governance and service delivery.

The Committee engagement therefore reflected both support for reform and the expectation that the Department must account fully for timelines, risks, institutional readiness and public impact as the process unfolds.



Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Judith Nomadzinga Tshabalala

Deputy Minister Nomadzinga-Tshabalala outlines government interventions to stabilise SEE during select Committee engagement

Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Judith Nomadzinga-Tshabalala, has reaffirmed the department's commitment to stabilising and repositioning SEE during the engagement with the Select Committee, following concerns raised about the entity's financial sustainability and operational challenges.

Addressing the Committee, the Deputy Minister acknowledged the validity of the questions raised by members and noted that SEE's financial difficulties predate the current administration. She explained that upon assuming office, the Department found SEE already facing significant fiscal distress, requiring urgent and coordinated intervention.

The Deputy Minister highlighted that SEE operates within the framework of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), which obliges it to compete for tenders like other public entities. While procurement preferences exist, she noted that these do not always adequately recognise SEE's unique developmental mandate.

This has posed structural challenges, particularly because SEE was established to advance government priorities related to social inclusion and economic participation, with a specific focus on employing persons with disabilities.

SEE currently employs persons with disabilities across its factories nationwide. However, the Deputy Minister cautioned that inconsistent procurement support from government departments has severely affected the entity's revenue stream. Historically, SEE relied heavily on stable government orders to sustain its operations. In recent years, however, several departments have opted to procure similar goods from alternative suppliers, including the private sector, rather than sourcing directly from SEE.

This decline in procurement has had a direct and measurable impact on employment. At its peak, SEE employed approximately 5,200 workers, but that number has since declined to fewer than 1,080 employees, mainly due to attrition and limited recruitment capacity. The Deputy Minister stressed that SEE's mandate depends on its ability to create jobs annually to absorb additional persons with disabilities, a target that cannot be achieved without adequate procurement volumes.

Against this backdrop, the Department has called for stronger oversight and advocacy at the level of Select Committees. The Deputy Minister urged Members to engage with Premiers and Provincial MECs, especially those responsible for Education and Health, to encourage increased procurement from SEE. She emphasised that such support would significantly contribute to restoring the entity's financial stability and placing it on a sustainable turnaround path.

Several corrective measures are already underway. A new marketing strategy for SEE has been developed, and a comprehensive turnaround strategy is being implemented by the Department of Employment and Labour in collaboration with organised labour. This process includes a review of governance arrangements, organisational structures, and operational efficiencies to ensure compliance with legislative and policy requirements.

In addition, the Department is strengthening SEE's business case and aligning its operations with the 7% preferential procurement target outlined in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). The Deputy Minister reminded Members that this target was reaffirmed by the President during the State of the Nation Address, highlighting government's commitment to inclusive procurement that supports women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

While the Department awaits the finalisation of procurement regulations by the National Treasury, preparations are underway to submit a memorandum to Cabinet and the Presidency. The memo aims to provide clear policy direction on the obligation of departments to procure from SEE. Legislative amendments are also being explored to strengthen SEE's legal standing and address labour-related operational constraints.

Concluding her remarks, the Deputy Minister reaffirmed the Ministry's dedication to ensuring that SEE becomes a functional and sustainable entity. She stressed, however, that meaningful progress depends on coordinated support across all spheres of government. Encouragingly, she noted that SEE has begun showing signs of recovery and has made progress in meeting its performance targets for the current reporting quarter.

Overall, the briefing conveyed that the unbundling and reconfiguration project has moved beyond the conceptual stage and is now in an active implementation phase.

The Department presented the reform as a necessary intervention to create stronger, more accountable and more effective public institutions, while the Deputy Minister reinforced the political commitment to a process that is lawful, phased, responsible and directed toward inclusive economic growth and job creation.

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