

# REWIRING SOUTH AFRICA'S JOBS ENGINE: INSIDE THE SONA-DRIVEN EMPLOYMENT RESET

Wednesday 03 JUNE 2026



#YAZINI



Department of Employment and Labour



@deptoflabour



employmentandlabour



employment & labour

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## 1. GROWTH AND JOB CREATION CONTEXT

### Government

- Inclusive growth and Job creation is a national priority with a target of 6 million jobs
- Section 22 of the Constitution, ILO Convention 122 & ES Act, Section 2 provides the legal mandate.
- Research on NEP reviewed Growth strategies impact on employment
- A New Growth strategy has been tabled by the Presidency
- An IMC has been established on Public Employment Programs and is chaired by the Deputy President
- A ten Point plan has been adopted by Government
- Low inflation at 3.5%

### DEL

- Department has embarked on various initiatives since its renaming i.e NEP, Review of Labour Legislation to support SMME, National Labour Migration Policy
- Modernization of the PES and ESSA system to support employment
- MTDP has allocated 2 million jobs to DEL by 2030
- Minister is Chairperson of an IMC with 4 Departments and Business Leadership
- UIF is undertaking a massive review of its LAP programs
- DEL was tasked to lead the National Pathway Management Network with the Presidency's Program Management Office

### Private & Public

- Unemployment currently at 32.9%
- Increased desperation amongst the unemployed
- Different perceptions and views on government PEPs
- More than 800 000 school leavers and those affected by cyclical retrenchments join the ranks of the unemployed annually
- The continued Geo-political tensions likely to lead to more retrenchments.
- Rate of new investments and jobs created P.A. remains very low
- Growth at 0.5% against projected 1.5%
- 10.3 million young people aged 15-24 yrs in the quarter four of 2025, of which 34,0% were not in employment, education or training. Females were mostly affected than men among the NEET.

- A shift away from labour-intensive industries
- Skills mismatches and spatial inequality
- Limited access to job information and transport
- Rising global instability affecting investments and jobs

## Rewiring South Africa's Jobs Engine: Inside the SONA-Driven Employment Reset

The Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) is outlining a plan to fundamentally reshape how jobs are created, protected, and accessed. Presenting to Parliament on 3 June 2026, the Department reaffirmed that inclusive growth and job creation remain a national priority, with a long-term target of six million jobs aligned with the direction outlined in the State of the Nation Address (SONA).

South Africa stands at a decisive economic crossroads. With unemployment entrenched at 32.9% and over 10 million young people navigating a fragile labour market, the State of the Nation Address (SONA) has catalysed a bold policy response, one that seeks not merely to manage unemployment, but to structurally transform how jobs are created, accessed, and protected.

At the centre of this reset is the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), whose latest presentation to Parliament offers a sweeping blueprint for inclusive growth. The plan is multi-layered and urgent: create millions of jobs, modernise labour systems, enforce compliance, and reposition employment policy as the backbone of economic development.

The urgency of this reform effort is highlighted by persistently high unemployment, currently at 32.9%, and the reality that more than 800,000 individuals enter the labour market each year, placing increasing pressure on government to respond decisively and at scale.

## 1.3. WHY NEP MATTERS

NEP creates a comprehensive vision and practical plan for a country to achieve its employment goal, full and productive employment through coordination of economic, social and sectoral policies

## The National Employment Policy: A Whole-of-Economy Approach

At the heart of the strategy is the National Employment Policy (NEP), a cross-cutting framework designed to align economic, social, and industrial policies around a single goal: full and productive employment.

Unlike previous fragmented efforts, the NEP introduces a nine-pillar architecture that integrates:

- Pro-employment macroeconomic policy
- Labour-intensive trade and industrial strategies
- Skills and education reform
- Active labour market programmes
- Support for small enterprises and the informal economy
- Expanded social protection
- Labour migration management
- Stakeholder coordination
- Data-driven labour market systems

What makes the NEP transformative is its “demand-led” philosophy, shaping the economy itself to generate jobs, rather than relying solely on labour supply interventions. It also explicitly factors in future pressures such as automation, digitisation, and climate change, ensuring policy relevance in a rapidly evolving global economy.

#### 1.4. WHAT IS THE DRAFT NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY (NEP) SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

- The NEP seeks to **guide** decision-making regarding factor choices at a production level, through policy choices that enable energy, demographic and spatial transitions, technological advancements, structural changes, and social factors at both firm and public sector levels.
- The NEP is a cross-cutting, multistakeholder intervention that seeks to analyse the impact on employment of specific policy actions, to influence factor choices at a public employment, firm and household level.
- The NEP Provides a framework for a demand-side, gendered employment growth path that facilitates decent work and inclusive growth. These considerations occur in a context where automation, digitization and climate change influence these factor choices, in a manner that introduces new contests and debates not only in labour regulation but also social protection and security.
- It aims to Reduce the high levels of economic inactivity and discouragement, through the re-activation of discouraged and inactive work-seekers and will do this through social dialogue that brings together workers, employers, communities, and government.

### From Policy to Pipeline: The Rise of Employment Services

If the NEP is the blueprint, Public Employment Services (PES) are the delivery engine.

These services are being repositioned as a central labour market facilitator, tasked with:

- Matching job seekers with opportunities
- Providing career counselling and placement support
- Managing one of the largest unemployment databases in the country
- Acting as a bridge between government, business, and communities. Critically, PES is also spearheading the National Pathway Management Network, a system designed to guide individuals from education into employment through structured pathways. This reflects a shift from passive job searching to active pathway management.

### Youth at the Centre of the Strategy

No demographic is more central to the reform agenda than the youth. With 34% of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET), the urgency is clear.

The government’s response is multi-pronged:

- Presidential Youth Employment Initiative

#### 3.4. DEL'S KEY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

- ❑ **PRESIDENTIAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (PYEI)**
  - A multi-sector action plan addressing youth unemployment through initiatives like the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI), offering, for example, teacher assistant positions.
  - A national flagship programme to address youth unemployment (led by the Presidency and implemented by DEL and partners).
  - Targets young people to work in public schools. Roles include Reading Champions, Curriculum Assistants, e-Cadres, support assistants, lab/workshop assistants, sports & enrichment assistants and more. Phase V (2025) aimed for over 200 000 job opportunities nationwide.
- ❑ **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (YES):** A business-led collaboration with government to provide one-year work experience to young people.
- ❑ **EMPLOYMENT TAX INCENTIVE (ETI):** Encourages employers to hire young work-seekers by reducing the cost of hiring.
- ❑ **TARGETED SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE YOUTH:** The Amavulandlela Funding Scheme through SEFA provides funding for entrepreneurs with disabilities, and specific training is provided for youth in special schools.

(PYEI): delivering over 200,000 job opportunities through school-based roles.

- Youth Employment Service (YES): private-sector-led work experience programmes.
- Employment Tax Incentive (ETI): reducing hiring costs for employers.
- Targeted funding schemes for vulnerable youth and entrepreneurs.

These interventions signal a shift from short-term relief to scalable, partnership-driven youth employment ecosystems.

#### 4.2. 10 000 Inspectors

- ❑ **The President announced 10 000 new labour inspectors that will be recruited through the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL)**
  - Strengthened enforcement of labour laws (BCEA, OHSA, LRA)
  - Massive boost in inspection capacity across all sectors
  - Greater protection for workers in vulnerable sectors
  - Enhanced enforcement against wage theft and statutory benefit violations
  - Increased recovery of amounts owed to employees
- ❑ **IMPLICATIONS**
  - Employers can expect more rigorous compliance monitoring, higher chances of inspections, and stronger legal consequences for non-compliance.
  - DEL must align enforcement with job-creation policies
  - Coordination needed with skills development and youth initiatives
  - Balance worker protection while not discouraging job growth

### A Massive Compliance Push: 10,000 Inspectors

One of the most striking announcements is the plan to recruit 10,000 new labour inspectors, dramatically expanding enforcement capacity.

Currently, about 2,300 inspectors cover just 300,000 workplaces annually, a fraction of the millions of businesses in South Africa.

The expansion aims to:

- Strengthen enforcement of labour laws.
- Combat exploitation and wage violations.
- Ensure fair treatment across sectors.
- Monitor employment of foreign nationals.

But the policy comes with a delicate balancing act: enforcing compliance without discouraging job creation.

To support this, DEL plans to invest heavily in:


- Digital inspection tools
- Data dashboards and case management systems
- A dedicated training academy for inspectors

ES Board Drives Catalytic

**National Labour Migration Policy:**  
The NLMP was approved by Cabinet on the 28th May 2025. The Cabinet also approved Employment Services Amendment Bill for submission to Parliament.  
The policy is now providing guidance on how DEL should manage Labour Migration to and from South Africa, it is guiding pilots that are underway and guidelines that are being developed.  
The ESAB once passed will provide the legislative basis for quotas, Bilateral Labour Agreements, extended powers of inspectors and fines in case of non-compliance.

Labour Market Policies

**National Employment Policy (NEP)**  
Policy has been drafted in line with ILO Convention 112, the Constitution of our country, it formed part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Administration Medium Term Strategic Framework. It was consulted extensively with the Economic, Infrastructure and Employment Departments, and is currently in the final process to secure approval from Clusters and Cabinet to be released for public comments.  
The NEP provides 9 intervention pillars that are critical and interdependent to grow employment levels in South Africa. Some of the Pillars are outside the mandate of DEL whilst others require strong partnerships.  
  
National Dialogue held with relevant participants.  
Approved by Cluster for consultation.  
Public Consultations will commence once soon.



**9 Key Pillars of the NEP**

1. A demand-led pro employment macro-economic policy
2. An employment centred trade and industrial policy framework that facilitates labour intensive investment
3. Relevant skills and educational framework
4. Accessible framework for active labour market policies that provide workseeker support, placement and viable pathways
5. A support ecosystem that promotes sustainable enterprise development, self-employment and positive regulation of the informal economy
6. Rapid extension of social protection to hitherto uncovered workers to improve employment outcomes and mitigate shocks
7. Labour market migration frameworks that optimise productivity and employment gains of cross-border mobility
8. An aligned stakeholder coordination framework that harmonizes actions at multiple levels
9. Robust and well-coordinated labour market information systems framework for continuous improvement

## Migration, Regulation, and Labour Market Integrity

Labour migration has emerged as both an economic opportunity and a political flashpoint. South Africa hosts over 4 million migrants, with an estimated 2 million undocumented individuals.

- The government's response includes:
- A National Labour Migration Policy guiding cross-border labour flows.
- The Employment Services Amendment Bill, enabling quotas, stricter enforcement, and bilateral agreements.
- Enhanced workplace inspections with Home Affairs and law enforcement.
- At the same time, international labour mobility is being explored through pilot projects with countries like Ireland, Belgium, and France, creating pathways for South African professionals abroad.

## Public Employment as Economic Infrastructure

A notable shift is the reframing of Public Employment Programmes (PEPs). Once seen

PES Drives Catalytic

**Framework for Public Employment Programmes**

- The Development of the Framework was to support the National Employment Policy and to help facilitate a more integrated approach to Public Employment programs, with a view to improve impact and maximize limited resources, through the prevention of duplications.
- The Framework built on the studies commissioned by the Branch, done by the Nelson Mandela University and the Human Sciences Research Council.
- The Framework was developed by the University of Cape Town, supported by the ILO.

Labour Market Policies

- The aim is to create a national strategic framework for the planning and implementation of PEPs, building on what's been learnt from previous studies and examples of PEPs.
- The framework is important because, PEPs serve multifaceted roles in modern policy frameworks. While traditionally anchored in social protection and active labour market policies (ALMP), contemporary PEPs are increasingly also developed to deal with macroeconomic, environmental, community and even peacebuilding objectives.
- The Framework will be consulted with relevant social partners after social and regulatory impact assessments certification is completed.

primarily as social safety nets, they are now positioned as multi-functional economic tools, supporting everything from community development to environmental resilience.

A new national framework aims to:

- Integrate programmes across government.
- Eliminate duplication.
- Maximise impact with limited resources.
- Align short-term jobs with long-term economic demand.

## The Road to 2030: Targets and Trade-offs

The Medium-Term Development Plan sets a bold target: 2 million work opportunities by 2030, split between PES and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

Progress is underway, but uneven. Some targets are being exceeded, while others lag, highlighting the complexity of execution.

The real test will be whether the system can:

- Scale interventions rapidly.
- Maintain coordination across institutions.
- Balance enforcement with growth.
- Convert short-term opportunities into sustainable employment.

## A Defining Moment for Labour Policy

What emerges from the DEL presentation is not just a policy update but a redefinition of the state's role in the labour market.

This is a pivot toward:

- Active labour market governance.
- Data-driven decision-making.
- Partnership-led delivery models.
- Integrated economic planning.

**Turning point, shifting South Africa from a cycle of high unemployment to a dynamic, inclusive job-creation economy.**

At the centre of this response is the National Employment Policy (NEP), which the Department positions as a unifying blueprint designed to achieve full and productive employment through the coordinated alignment of economic, social, and sectoral policies.

Rather than relying on fragmented programmes, the NEP introduces a comprehensive, economy-wide approach that integrates industrial development, skills training, and labour market interventions into a single, coherent framework. This shift reflects a deeper recognition that employment outcomes must be designed into the structure of the economy itself, rather than treated as a by-product of growth.

A critical focus of this reform agenda is youth unemployment, which remains one of the most persistent and pressing challenges facing the country. In response, DEL has scaled up targeted interventions aimed at expanding opportunities for young people, including the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI), which is expected to generate over 200,000 placements, the Youth Employment Service (YES) programme driven by private-sector collaboration, and the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI), which reduces the cost of hiring young work-seekers

These initiatives are intended to address the stark reality that a significant proportion of young South Africans remain excluded from employment, education, or training, highlighting the need for both immediate interventions and longer-term pathways into the labour market.

Another defining feature of the current policy shift is the planned expansion of labour market

enforcement through the recruitment of 10,000 additional labour inspectors.

This move represents a major institutional reform aimed at strengthening compliance with labour legislation, improving monitoring across workplaces, and enhancing protection for vulnerable workers. However, the Department has also acknowledged that this expansion introduces a key policy tension.

While effective enforcement is essential to ensure fairness and protect workers' rights, it must be carefully balanced against the need to sustain and encourage job creation. As such, the reform agenda places strong emphasis on ensuring that regulatory measures do not inadvertently constrain economic growth or deter investment, but rather contribute to a more stable and equitable labour market.

Within this broader framework, the Medium-Term Development Plan sets a clear and ambitious target of creating two million work opportunities by 2030, with delivery responsibilities shared between Public Employment Services and the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

This target reflects both the scale of the challenge and the level of coordination required across institutions to achieve meaningful impact. It also signals a shift toward measurable outcomes, with greater emphasis on aligning budgets, programmes, and policy decisions to employment objectives.

From a policy analysis perspective, the Department's approach represents an increasingly structured and integrated response to SONA commitments. The NEP is positioned as the central instrument for operationalising government priorities, providing a framework that guides decision-making and promotes a demand-led, employment-centred growth path.

Its nine interdependent pillars encompass macroeconomic alignment, industrial policy coordination, labour market system strengthening, and the expansion of social protection, reflecting a holistic approach to employment creation. Within this context, youth employment programmes have been

expanded in line with national priorities, and partnerships with the private sector have been strengthened to enhance the reach and effectiveness of interventions.

At the same time, enforcement mechanisms

embodied in the NEP, represents a deliberate move away from silo-based programmes toward coordinated, multi-stakeholder solutions that influence decision-making at all levels of the economy. This approach acknowledges that job creation must be embedded within economic

systems, supported by aligned policies, institutional capacity, and strategic partnerships. At the same time, it recognises the complexity of balancing competing priorities, particularly in relation to enforcement and growth, and highlights the importance of careful policy calibration.

Ultimately, while the targets set are necessary, the success of this agenda will depend on implementation. Targets alone cannot create employment; rather, it is the effectiveness

of systems, institutions, and collaboration that will determine whether meaningful and sustainable job creation is achieved.

Align policy across sectors, build institutional capacity, engage the private sector, and utilise data-driven approaches to guide decision-making, and the current moment has the potential to mark a turning point. In such a scenario, SONA 2026 may not simply be remembered for its commitments, but for initiating a fundamental reset of South Africa's labour market and laying the foundation for a more inclusive and dynamic economy.

The Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour unfolded against a deeply symbolic and political backdrop, as government deliberately anchored its labour market interventions within the commemoration of Youth Month and the 50th anniversary of the June 16 uprising. Deputy Minister Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala framed the challenge of unemployment not merely as an economic issue, but as a continuation of South Africa's historical struggle, noting that "this milestone serves as a powerful reminder of those historical sacrifices and provides a critical opportunity to reflect on the ongoing transition from the struggle for political freedom to the current pursuit of economic and social empowerment for all South Africans." In this

#### 4.7. PURPOSE OF THE ESAB

The Employment Services Amendment Bill, 2025 ("the Bill"), amends the Employment Services Act, 2014 (Act No. 4 of 2014) ("the Act").

It repeals the current Sections 08 & 09 and introduces a new Chapter that:

- Facilitate the employment of foreign nationals within South Africa and regulate the operation of private employment services.
  - Provides for the improved enforcement of the Act and other laws regulating work by foreign nationals by providing labour inspectors with powers to deal with immigration matters in collaboration with DHA.
  - Empowers the Minister to make regulations to use public employment services or private employment agencies to assist employers to recruit suitable workers who are South African citizens or permanent residents.
  - Empowers the Minister to set quotas in respect of the employment of foreign nationals in any economic sector or occupational category.
- The Bill has been finalized with the State Law Advisors and is being processed for tabling in Parliament.
- DEL continues to interact with the DHA to ensure alignment between the ESAB and the proposed changes in the Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees White Paper

are being reinforced, with improved capacity expected to increase compliance, protect workers, and recover unpaid wages. Migration and labour compliance measures also play an important role, with the Department confirming a stronger approach to regulating the employment of foreign nationals, supported by policy instruments such as the National Labour Migration Policy and the Employment Services Amendment Bill

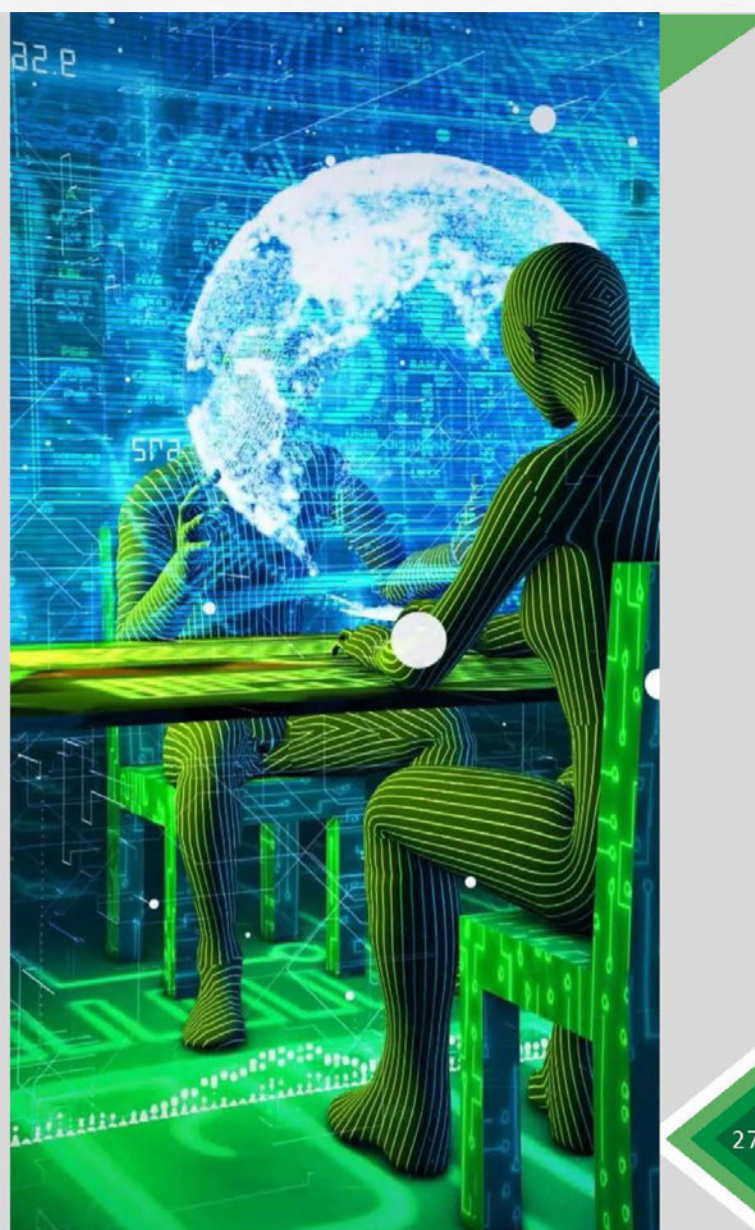
Despite the comprehensiveness of this framework, several implementation risks remain. These include the challenges associated with scaling inspectorate capacity, coordinating actions across multiple institutions, and maintaining a balance between regulatory enforcement and economic growth. Addressing these risks will require sustained collaboration between government, business, and social partners, as well as ongoing monitoring and adjustment of policies to ensure effectiveness.

From a broader thought leadership perspective, what emerges from this reform agenda is a recognition that South Africa's unemployment crisis is fundamentally structural in nature and cannot be addressed through isolated or short-term interventions alone.

The shift toward a systems-based approach,

#### 4.5. CURRENT MIGRATION STATUS SUMMARY

- National Labour Migration Policies are being introduced worldwide due to increased cross-border movement for education, health, business, and employment opportunities.
- South Africa adopted its Labour Migration policy on May 28, 2025, becoming the sixth SADC countries ( Namibia, Zimbabwe, Kingdom of Lesotho, Seychelles, and eSwatini) to do so.
- Stats SA reports over 4 million migrants live in the country, mostly from Southern Africa, with over 1 million South Africans abroad with little or no government involvement.
- Undocumented migrants are estimated at +2 million, though unverified, with groups like Dudula and Action SA using this to gain support.



At the same time, the Department was explicit that employment creation cannot be achieved by government alone. In a pointed call for shared responsibility, Deputy Minister Nemadzinga-Tshabalala reiterated that “employment is not government’s duty alone, it is a social compact.” This message reflects a broader strategic shift, placing responsibility on the private sector, social partners, and other government

departments to contribute meaningfully to employment outcomes. The emphasis on coordination was further underscored by the fact that many of the interventions outlined, from SME financing to public employment programmes, cut across multiple departments and require integrated implementation.

Policy reform emerged as a central pillar of the Department’s response. The National Labour Migration Policy, adopted in 2025, was presented as providing structured guidance on managing labour flows, while the forthcoming Employment Services Amendment Bill was described as “our legislative ‘teeth,’” intended to strengthen enforcement through mechanisms such as sectoral quotas and enhanced inspector powers. These reforms signal a shift from policy development to enforcement and regulatory strengthening, particularly in areas such as labour standards and migration management.

The Department also highlighted its commitment to inclusive growth, with specific interventions targeting historically marginalised groups. Notably, government aims to ensure that 7% of public service employment is comprised of persons with disabilities by 2030, supported by a corresponding 7% preferential procurement target. According to the Deputy Minister, partnerships already in place have begun to yield results, with over 1,000 opportunities created for persons with disabilities, demonstrating an effort to integrate equity objectives into broader employment strategies.

framing, employment creation becomes the central test of democratic progress, particularly for young people.

At the core of the engagement was a reaffirmation that unemployment remains, in the words echoed from the State of the Nation Address, a “matter of national concern.” The Department positioned itself as operating within a constitutional mandate that extends beyond job creation alone to include the regulation of the labour market, promotion of labour standards, and provision of social protection. Deputy Minister Nemadzinga-Tshabalala emphasised that this mandate is pursued through policies and programmes developed in consultation with social partners, aimed at improving economic efficiency, creating decent work, and protecting vulnerable workers.

Importantly, the session highlighted that government is not starting from a point of inaction, but rather from a base of significant intervention at scale. Figures presented during the engagement pointed to 2.5 million opportunities created through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, as well as over 200,000 youth placed in work experience programmes. Reinforcing the effectiveness of these interventions, the Deputy Minister stated that such programmes are “not abstract; it is concrete proof that public employment programmes work, and work well.” Additional systems such as the SAYouth.mobi platform and the National Pathway Management Network were highlighted as evidence of a growing labour market infrastructure designed to connect young people to opportunities at scale.

Despite these progress indicators, the engagement revealed significant tensions that define the current employment landscape. Members of Parliament raised concerns about the sustainability of public employment programmes, particularly the risk that participants cycle through temporary opportunities without transitioning into permanent work. In response, the Department acknowledged these challenges and pointed to ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening exit pathways, enhancing skills development, and improving programme coordination. These responses suggest a system that is aware of its limitations and actively attempting to address them within existing constraints.

Another key point of discussion was the gap between political commitments and fiscal realities. The announcement of 10,000 additional labour inspectors, for example, reflects strong political intent, but implementation remains dependent on phased funding and future budget allocations. This underscores a broader tension between ambition and capacity, where the scale of interventions must be matched by available resources and institutional capability.

Ultimately, the engagement presented a nuanced picture of a government actively attempting to respond to one of the country's most persistent challenges. On the one hand, there is clear evidence of scale, policy direction, and institutional effort. On the other, structural constraints, ranging from low economic growth and skills mismatches to the realities of a changing labour market, continue to shape outcomes. As Deputy Minister Nemaizinga-Tshabalala and officials emphasised, the task ahead is not simply to create opportunities, but to ensure that these translate into sustainable employment and meaningful economic participation.

In this context, the central question emerging from the session is not whether government is acting, but whether the current mix of policies, programmes, and partnerships can deliver lasting transformation in the labour market. The answer will depend on whether the system can successfully bridge the gap between large-scale interventions and long-term employment outcomes, particularly for the country's youth, whose aspirations continue to define the urgency of the challenge.

*Brought to you by the Department's Corporate Communication.*

"The Year of Putting Young South Africans to Work, in Honor of 1976 youth and to commemorate youth uprising Golden Jubilee"

#YAZINI #DEL  
#WORKINGFORYOU





## PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR (EMPLOYMENT GROWTH INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

*Title: A National Priority*

- Job creation is a national priority
- Target: 6 million jobs
- DEL tasked to deliver 2 million opportunities by 2030

**Key message:**

*Government is shifting from short-term fixes to long-term systems reform*

**#YAZINI**



Department of  
Employment and Labour



@deptoflabour



employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATION  
THAT WORKS FOR ALL





**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**Title: National Employment Policy (NEP)-**

**NEP aims to:**

- Drive demand-led job creation
- Align economic + labour policies
- Deliver inclusive growth & decent work

**Tagline:**

*A whole-of-economy approach to employment*

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**9 KEY PILLARS OF JOB CREATION**

**Title: What Will Drive Jobs?**

- Pro-employment economic policy
- Labour-intensive industries
- Skills & education alignment
- Job-seeker support systems
- SMME & informal sector support
- Social protection expansion
- Labour migration management
- Stakeholder coordination
- Labour market data systems

**Key message:**

Jobs require system-wide coordination, not isolated programmes

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOCUS**

**Title: Putting Youth to Work**

**Key programmes:**

- PYEI: 200,000+ opportunities
- YES: Business-led placements
- ETI: Reduces hiring costs

**Reality:**

Youth remain the most affected by unemployment

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JOBS**

**Title: Public Employment Services (PES)**

- Largest unemployment database
- Counselling + job matching services
- National Pathway Management Network
- Links youth from education to employment

**Key message:**

From job searching to career pathways

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**JOB CREATION TARGETS**

**Title:** *Progress to 2030*

**Goal:** ▶ 2 million work opportunities

**Breakdown:** ▶ 1 million via PES

- 1 million via UIF
- Progress (Q3 2026):
- PES: 82,507 jobs
- Pathways Network: 60,536 placements

**Key message:**

Progress is happening, but scale must increase

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**STRONGER LABOUR ENFORCEMENT**

**Title:** *10,000 New Inspectors*

- Massive expansion of labour inspectorate
- Improved compliance monitoring
- Stronger worker protection

**Currently:**

• 2,300 inspectors → 300,000 workplaces/year

**Future:**

• 10,000 inspectors → 1.6 million workplaces/year

**Key message:**

Moving from reactive → proactive enforcement

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**THE BALANCING ACT**

**Title:** *Jobs vs Compliance*

- Government must:
- Protect workers
- Enforce labour laws
- Avoid discouraging job creation

**Key message:**

Policy success depends on balance

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour



**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING  
ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS  
OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR  
(EMPLOYMENT GROWTH  
INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)**

**MIGRATION & LABOUR MARKET**

**Title:** *Managing Labour Migration*

- +4 million migrants in SA
- New Labour Migration Policy
- Proposed employment quotas
- Stronger enforcement against illegal employment

**Key message:**

Migration must support productivity AND fairness

#YAZINI

Department of Employment and Labour | @deptoflabour | employmentandlabour





## PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR (EMPLOYMENT GROWTH INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)

### WHAT MAKES THIS DIFFERENT

#### Title: *From Programmes to Systems*

- Shift from fragmented programmes
- Focus on an integrated national system
- Strong coordination between:
  - Government
  - Business
  - Labour
  - Communities

#### Key message:

This is a systemic employment reset

**#YAZINI**



Department of  
Employment and Labour



@deptoflabour



employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATION  
THAT WORKS FOR ALL





## PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE BRIEFING ON ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SONA 2026 FOR DEL SECTOR (EMPLOYMENT GROWTH INTERVENTIONS, INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY ALIGNMENT, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENT)

### **Title:** *The Road Ahead*

- Targets are bold
- Policies are in place
- Partnerships are growing
- 2 million opportunities by 2030
- Youth unemployment isn't a statistic, it's a national emergency.
- 10,000 inspectors = stronger, fairer workplaces.



**#YAZINI**



Department of  
Employment and Labour



@deptoflabour



employmentandlabour



**employment & labour**

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A **NATION** THAT **WORKS** FOR ALL





# employment & labour

Department:  
Employment and Labour  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



National Economic  
Development and  
Labour Council



**ONE DEPARTMENT  
COMMUNICATING IN ONE VOICE**

*Physical Address:*

*Laboria House: 215 Francis Baard Street, PRETORIA*

*Postal Address:*

*Private Bag X117, PRETORIA, 0001*