



# labour

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Department:  
Labour  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGS ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT FOR  
THE**

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON LABOUR**

**Venue: Parliament, Cape Town**

**Dates: 14 November 2006**

**Chairperson: Ms Rebecca Kasienyane, MP**

## **Introduction**

As the country celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the historic 16 June 1976 student uprising, young people are still faced by various

challenges and more importantly, youth unemployment despite the interventions made by Government since the advent of democracy. Youth unemployment and underemployment challenges in South Africa are part and parcel of the broader challenges of unemployment, underemployment and poverty facing the developing world. Developing countries are characterized by low economic growth, lack of investment and high indebtedness. These challenges have negative implications for employment creation and poverty alleviation in general.

Issues of youth development and unemployment are of concern to all of us. Influenced by these concerns, the Portfolio Committee on Labour convened the public hearings on youth unemployment. The three-day public hearings and the subsequent two days visit to KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape, were an attempt by the Committee to hear and elicit views from the public with more emphasis and bias on the young people, on the policy framework, current interventions, their challenges and proposed interventions. As a Department<sup>1</sup>, we participated actively in the public hearings and both visits to the provinces.

The following report is an attempt to summarise the submissions made during the public hearings. It also attempts to respond to some of the submissions, especially those relevant to the Department and its statutory bodies. The report incorporates where possible initiatives and inputs received from other government departments and conclude with some key recommendations. There

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<sup>1</sup> The delegation from the Department was led by Mr. Sam Morotoba (Acting DDG: ESDS and HRD) and Mr. Sabata Nakanyane (Executive Manager: Research, Policy and Planning). The delegation included: Benedict Mogadime; Ms Valeine Lategan; Ms Serurubele Kgaswane; Mr Linda Mngoma; Ms Dolly Chiloane; Mr Hannes Hoon; Ms Lindiwe Gwebu-Gqada; Ms Tsholofelo Mokotedi; Mr Shaheen Buckus and Ms. Nomsa Gumbi.



DAY ONE: 30 MAY 2006

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<b>SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH COUNCIL - WESTERN CAPE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ That the Western Cape Policy Review Summit supports the notion of and imperative for an integrated Youth Development strategy to ensure greater accountability for youth programmes and uniformity across all three spheres of government for sustainable youth development</li> <li>✦ The Western Cape Youth Commission should build stronger working relationship with Provincial Development Council and Wesgro</li> <li>✦ Lobby business and higher education to co-operate closely in developing industry relevant skills</li> <li>✦ Engage partners on issues of free education</li> <li>✦ Lobby partners to make higher education more accessible and affordable for youth</li> <li>✦ Lobby business to create more employment opportunities for young people.</li> <li>✦ Promote co-operatives as a vehicle for Black Economic Empowerment</li> <li>✦ Lobby all spheres of government for preferential Procurement opportunities for young people</li> <li>✦ Lobby for more skills development at high school level</li> <li>✦ Conduct research on industry skills needs especially scarce skills</li> </ul>	<p>The Department agrees that there is a need for integration of youth development strategies. This would ensure unified action and massification of our intervention.</p> <p>The Department supports the promotion of co-operatives, especially the worker co-operatives. It is our understanding that worker co-operatives are central to employment creation and poverty alleviation. The study commissioned in 2003/04 indicated that worker co-operatives need to be supported both in terms finances and human resource. DoL is already supporting this initiative through the National Skills Fund (NSF), the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and though the</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ Promote opportunities in agri-business amongst youth</li> <li>↓ Lobby for accelerated implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning system</li> <li>↓ Instil in youth the value of education in changing conditions in society and not only in self enrichment.</li> <li>↓ Drive implementation of National Youth Service programmes</li> <li>↓ Ensure implementation of Expanded Public work programme</li> <li>↓ Drivers of government programmes to use conferences of this nature to explain to youth</li> <li>↓ Lobby for business to invest resources in local youth development</li> </ul>	<p>various SETA interventions.</p> <p>The Department of Labour received and evaluated Sector skills plans from 23 SETAs and is currently in a process of consolidating a scarce skills list. Further research will also be conducted annually to ensure that updates of scarce and critical skills needed to ensure growth are available.</p>	
<p><b>QUADPARA ASSOCIATION SOUTH AFRICA</b></p>	<p><b>OF</b></p> <p>↓ The lack of relevant information, especially regarding workplace and training needs of the mobility-impaired has resulted in haphazard planning of programmes that ensure full integration of individuals with mobility-impairment into the workplace. Many programmes have almost no impact or cannot be measured. It is even debatable whether individuals with mobility-impairment exercise, or even understand, their right to be active members of the South African workforce. For too long they have kept silent, resulting in gross discrimination and violation</p>	<p>The Department of Labour acknowledges the baseline research project conducted by Quadriplegic Association of South Africa and Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority. The Department as part of the research monitoring and evaluation agenda for 2006-2007 will be conducting</p>	



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	<p>of their human rights.</p> <p>↓ The Quadriplegic Association of South Africa, Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority Baseline Research project, conducted among 300 South African individuals with mobility-impairment, has resulted in identifying more suitable interventions. The research was designed to determine, (in terms of the current employment status of individuals with mobility-impairment in South Africa), the needs, perceptions, challenges/issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure full integration of the mobility-impaired into the workplace. An attempt was made to document the physiological and social effects in context of a more suitable intervention as this would help in the developing of other interventions that would also reduce social damage. Important information was gathered on the workplace and training needs of the mobility-impaired sector, which forms crucial base information for Work Skills Training Programmes and Employment-Equity programme designers.</p> <p>↓ Factors and mechanisms were identified that could increase the integration and reduce the workplace discrimination of the mobility-impaired in the South African Workforce.</p>	<p>research focusing on the progress on the implementation and impact of the Employment equity Act. A key area to be covered will be employment equity and disability.</p> <p>The Department is discussing with the Thabo Mbeki Development Trust for People with Disabilities to implement and conduct a research on the skills audit of people with disabilities.</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Another important lesson learnt was that it is possible to reduce the effects of a number of factors that are contributing to the current employment status of the mobility-impaired.</li> <li>✦ There will be a great deal of advantages for the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority as a result of the research. With the Department and Ministry of Labour placing prominence and focus on policies of equal opportunities through initiatives such as Technical Assistance Guidelines on the employment of people with disabilities, the research was conducted at an opportune time. With the challenges for employers, flowing from such government initiatives, and with the insight as a result of the research, ETDP SETA is in a better position to provide advice to its members with this regard.</li> <li>✦ The insights gained from the research should be formulated into a more suitable intervention model for further consideration and possible implementation, by the relevant role players, authorities and African programme leaders. Follow-up and comparative research should be done without delay. The research method established a model of it's own to do continued impact evaluation.</li> <li>✦ This publication is the first of a series of</li> </ul>		

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	<p>publications based on the QASA ETDP SETA Baseline Research Project, and is a summary of all the most important aspects. It is aimed to be a detailed introduction and outline of this unique project, and paves the way for an in-depth and vast follow-up.</p> <p>↓ The challenge now facing South African organisations is how they aim incorporating the Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities and the QASA ETDP SETA Research findings into their employment equity programme.</p>		
<p><b>RURAL EDUCATION ACCESS PROGRAMME</b></p>	<p>↓ Youth unemployment is a threat to the stability of the country. Lack of opportunity or support may drive young people to criminal activities. While there are no easy answers to the youth unemployment problem we appreciate Parliament's initiative to seek stakeholder input. Government needs to proactively involve stakeholders in searching for, and implementing solutions.</p> <p>↓ A multi-sectoral approach is needed to deal with the challenge of youth unemployment, underpinned by drive and passion. We believe partnerships with non-government organisations and business are vital and in our domain we have much evidence to demonstrate the importance of tertiary education and the support of disadvantaged</p>	<p>The DoL interventions aimed at alleviating youth unemployment include learnerships, apprenticeship, skills programmes and bussries that are offered through the 23 SETAs and NSF funded projects. These include organisations such as NASFAS and NRF that were also contracted by the NSF to disburse bursaries for undergraduates and disabled people.</p>	



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	<p>youth with education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Our partnership with NSFAS is a fruitful one bringing benefit to some 400 youth (female &amp; male) from rural areas. This initiative needs to be sustained so young people can receive just the right support required, and grow so many more disadvantaged young South Africans can benefit. Such a programme might be of relevance to the Further Education and Training sector currently receiving attention.</li> <li>✦ REAP has a range of corporate sponsors which provide very valuable support. Partnerships with South African development agencies such as the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and/or the National Development Agency, or similar, and the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund could greatly enhance the scope and ability of REAP to contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment in South Africa.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>FREE MARKET FOUNDATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Issue to every unemployed person who has been unemployed for 6 months or more, on application, a Special Exemption (SPEX) Certificate valid for a minimum period of 2 years, exempting the jobless person from the labour laws.</li> <li>✦ Allow the SPEX Certificate holder to work for any small firm with 200 or fewer employees</li> </ul>	<p>The Department does not support this proposal because of the following reasons:</p> <p>a) The right to fair labour practice is entrenched in the South African constitution. It</p>	

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	<p>on whatever basis or conditions they agree upon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⬇ The SPEX Certificate holder and the employer must enter into a basic, simple written employment contract and government must not set minimum conditions for such contracts</li> <li>⬇ This proposal is submitted in the hope that it can be utilised to improve the lives and alleviate the poverty of the millions of people who want to work but cannot, for reasons they do not understand and that are beyond their control.</li> <li>⬇ The Special Exemption (SPEX) Certificates described in this submission are the result of a great deal of thought and numerous discussions with unemployed people. The proposal recognises the realities of the current labour dispensation and accepts that labour unions have a right to protect their members with every instrument available to them, including the statutes that are biased in their favour, even if this has unfortunate consequences for the unemployed. That is their job. Levelling the playing field so as to provide the unemployed, especially the young unemployed, with a fairer dispensation is the responsibility of Parliament.</li> </ul>	<p>will be unconstitutional to exclude the workers from basic protection as provided in the law. In addition, it would leave these workers vulnerable and exposed to the harshest forms of exploitation and injustices. This proposal will create incredible security problems amongst these workers as they would be subject to dismissal at any time.</p> <p>b) To exclude these workers legislation such as the skills development will deny them access to training necessary for skills acquisition which is in turn crucial for better job opportunities and upward mobility. In addition to exclude these workers from the unemployment insurance would leave them in precarious and destitute in the interim period before they acquire a new job.</p> <p>c). The proposal has the</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⬇ Special exemption (SPEX) certificates for the young unemployed would reduce unemployment considerably without reducing job security for existing workers. They would also provide a major boost to the economy.</li> <li>⬇ Young people with jobs are young people with hope for the future, with self-respect and independence. Young people without jobs, desperately looking for and not finding jobs, are crushed and stunted souls, their beings disintegrating at the very time when they should be growing into proud and confident citizens of our great country.</li> <li>⬇ Mass unemployment will destroy the fabric of South African society if it is allowed to continue. A new dispensation must be created and implemented as soon as possible to save our nation from the negative results of the shattering of the hopes and dreams of our young people.</li> <li>⬇ Government and Parliament have the power to sweep away the deterrents that are preventing our young people from getting jobs. The sooner those powers are used the better it will be for our youth.</li> </ul>	<p>potential of creating tensions with unionized workers in situations of industrial action as these workers should be viewed as undermining collective solidarity action.</p> <p>d) The proposal will perpetuate and reinforce the trajectory towards a segmented labour market between a core of permanently employed and legally protected workforce and a periphery made up of low wage low skill and rightless workers. Ultimately the proposal has the potential of not halving poverty as per the Millennium Development Goals.</p>	

DAY TWO: 02 JUNE 2006

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DISABLED PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Improve on gathering sufficient &amp; quality of data on disability;</li> <li>✦ Improve willingness of employers to comply;</li> <li>✦ Establish link between skills development and EE on disability at workplace level;</li> <li>✦ Increase momentum for Public Service to reach 2% target by the end of 2005;</li> <li>✦ Introduction of innovative recruitment strategies;</li> <li>✦ Change negative perceptions of employers on disability; and</li> <li>✦ Induce ownership, commitment &amp; collective response</li> <li>✦ Sensitivity training of employers and disabled people about their rights</li> </ul>	<p>Work is another way to link the skills development and Employment Equity at NEDLAC with all the stakeholders. The process will culminate in utilisation of common definitions and this would also include issues relating to people with disabilities.</p>	
CIVIL SOCIETY PRISON REFORM INITIATIVE - COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The emphasis should be placed firstly on preventing that young people end up in prison. If this cannot be avoided the emphasis should fall on preventing that young people return to prison. This means rendering effective programmes to this particular category of prisoners. Extensive research has demonstrated what works and what does not, and the following highlight some of the salient findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilities should provide an appropriate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The Department fully support employment creation initiatives to prevent a situation that will result in young people loitering and with very little to do hence the youth programmes such as learnerships etc.</p>	



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	<p>institution environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The known predictors of crime and re-offending should be targeted</li> <li>▪ Programmes should be cognitive behavioural in nature</li> <li>▪ Target high risk offenders</li> <li>▪ Contain positive programme attributes, eg.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ focus on skills applicable to the job market;</li> <li>○ matching offenders' needs with programme objectives;</li> <li>○ programme participation is timed to be close to release date so that skills are up to date and relevant;</li> <li>○ programming lasts several months;</li> <li>○ the programme deals with each offender's needs and is well integrated into other prison programmes and services;</li> <li>○ prison programmes are followed by post-release treatment and services;</li> <li>○ the programme is based on effective programme design, implementation and monitoring, and</li> <li>○ researchers are involved in the programme as evaluators.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>✦ Employment is not the magic wand for the successful reintegration of prisoners. Employment should be seen as a component of successful functioning in society, similar to living in family and respecting other citizens.</p>	<p>For those who unfortunately due to various circumstances find themselves in prisons, the DoL funds Correctional Services training initiatives aimed at rehabilitating offenders under the National Skills Fund. Training providers in various provinces, are contracted by DoL Provincial offices to provide various training programmes in prisons. There are specific guidelines that and a Memoranda of Understanding concluded with the dept of Correctional Services. A new MoU is in a process of being finalise and will amongst others extend training initiatives to cover those offenders on parole. DoL and DoCS are also considering the Cuban model for rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders in the society. Attention will be given to aspects such as the certification issued to</p>	