



NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LABOUR COUNCIL

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Attention News Editors/Business and Labour reporters

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Work in progress finding a social compact

Johannesburg, South Africa: The National Economic Development and Labour Council's (Nedlac) role should evolve to become apex of social compacting - supporting and collaborating with other sectors, provinces and local compacts, Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour said at the 27th Annual National Summit held in Johannesburg on September 9, 2022.

“The social compact called for by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) is still a work in progress. It has not been easy. But we can take comfort from the fact that parties are engaging and have committed to finding each other. I would appeal to all social partners to continue to engage, to find areas of collaboration, to build on these and to commit to the process,” said Minister Nxesi in the opening address.

Nedlac must be at the forefront of growing the practice of social compacting as a way of working. “We are witnessing this already starting to take place,” he added.

The Minister paid tribute to the role played by Nedlac including in facilitating an “all-of-society response” to the Covid-19 pandemic that supported businesses, workers and their families through a difficult time.

The Nedlac annual summit provides a platform for the Nedlac social partners, organised business, labour, community and government to reflect on the performance of Nedlac and engage about the future direction and vision of the institution. In this regard, the event focussed the impact of the changing global balance of forces on the South African economy, poverty and unemployment and the changing world of work.

Summit speakers, including Dr Yacoob Abba Omar, Director of Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) and Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, assistant director-



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general director for International Labour Organisation (Africa) reaffirmed that the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digitalisation, climate change and the shift to remote work is having a profound effect on workplaces and workers, both in the formal and informal sectors.

Reporting on Nedlac's performance, the Nedlac executive director Lisa Seftel she said the organisation was no longer a place where draft bills come to die. "We have become more efficient and effective in inputting into policy and legislation, reducing times on policy legislation."

She said social dialogues were a new key performance area for the organization where information could be shared and discussed without having to reach agreement.

The Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) aimed at creating a social partnership around a just transition will become a project of Nedlac for a period of about two years and the institution may have a new constitution by 2025 as social partners continue to discuss and analyse if it is "fit for purpose", Seftel announced.

As social partners closed out the National Rapid Response Task Team on Covid, Cas Coovadia, Chief Executive Officer of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) said that Nedlac was very successful in bringing a broad range of interests together in order to facilitate the response to the pandemic and a number of compacts were reached through collaboration.

Bheki Ntshalintshali, Overall Convenor of Labour said: "We take responsibility for being part of Nedlac family to come up with solutions. Our approach must shift from an adversarial way to one which is solution orientated."

Thulani Tshefuta, Community Constituency Convenor said social compacting was about rising above sectional interests to commit to national interests. He argued that social relief as well as economic growth and job creation must be key pillars of new social compact.

In terms of the way ahead for Nedlac Omar reflected on the importance of taking global changes into account.



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These included the state of democracy in the world, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the changing future of work, rising inequality and poverty as well as steep increase in food and fuel prices, and the spread of inflation around the world.

Jane Barrett, director, Organisation and Representation, Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) believed that fifty percent of workers in South Africa - as many as seven million - were informal workers including own account workers.

She said that they deserved decent work and called for self-employed workers to be included in policy wide processes and collective bargaining in the same way as formal sector workers.

Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana and Minister of Small Business Development Stella Tembisa Ndabeni-Abraham also attended the summit, together with a number of guests including veteran business leader Raymond Parsons.

Ends



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Executive Director of Nedlac Lisa Seftel reporting back on Nedlac's 2021/22 financial year & reflections on its performance at the 27th Nedlac Annual National Summit, at Gallagher Estate.



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Minister of Employment and Labour, Thulas Nxesi delivering his welcoming address to social partners, guests, at the 27th Nedlac Annual National Summit at Gallagher Estate.