

Western Cape's job-boost initiative

The South African Department of Employment and Labour embarked on a groundbreaking Labour Activation Programme for the Western Cape at the Northlink College Campus Hall, in Bellville, on April 17.

This initiative aims to stimulate employment growth and economic resilience across the nation. Despite facing challenges, the programme underscores a strong commitment to collaboration and empowerment at both the provincial and national levels. The opportunities will run between 12 and 36 months.

Minister Thulas Nxesi said the inauguration is a component of a nationwide initiative aimed at generating over 700 000 job opportunities across the country. A sum of R23.8 billion has been earmarked for its execution by the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

"The job prospects will arise from various sectors, including agriculture, hospitality, education, telecommunication, insurance, safety and security, transport, customer services and manufacturing.

"These opportunities will materialise through partnerships with private enterprises, SETAs, TVET colleges and non-governmental organisations, among others. The inception of the Labour Activation Programme stemmed from the economic downturn of 2008," the minister said.

He added that the initiative will minimise job losses through collaborative efforts with partners at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC).

Nxesi noted that the government had made a conscious choice to expand skills development and job creation efforts to address the ongoing challenges of high unemployment rates and slow economic growth.

"Our government utilises the Labour Activation Programme to pool resources across departments, entities, and partnerships with the private sector to meaningfully contribute towards the alleviation of poverty and unemployment in the country.

"The department has introduced a comprehensive assurance model to ensure that projects adhere to service level agreements and to prevent funds allocated for job creation from being misappropriated for personal gain.

"The UIF has a monitoring framework accountable to its board, which, along with board members, will conduct quarterly visits to these projects. Furthermore, these projects will be included in the Director-General's monthly strategic reporting," he added.

Minister Nxesi further added that these projects are not an electioneering stunt or linked to the Thujá Capital matter.

"I announced this initiative to create over 700,000 jobs in parliament earlier last year. Some people have been asking why they are being implemented on the eve of elections. We are starting this programme at the beginning of the financial year because government programmes are always aligned to the financial year.

"The government's financial year begins in April. The Ministry of Employment and Labour has adopted a district development model and reached out to all premiers, urging provincial governments to join forces on labour activation programmes.

“The aim is to integrate provincial work seeker databases with the ESSA system. Regrettably, despite extending an invitation to the Western Cape government two weeks ago, the only response received was an auto-reply from the office of the premier.

“My team has collaborated closely with provincial governments and municipalities nationwide to prepare for these launches. It’s disappointing that we have had to proceed without the Western Cape’s participation, despite extending an invitation. Nonetheless, this initiative is national, and we remain committed to implementing it across all provinces, including the Western Cape,” Nxesi said.

Source: Nobukhosi Tshabalala – IOL

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