

Employment and Labour Minister, Meth identifies tangible transformation of the labour market as a consequence of economic growth as a priority

Newly-appointed Employment and Labour Minister, Nomakhosazana Meth said the Department of Employment and Labour was faced with a mammoth task of ensuring that, “we move in earnest continuing to usher in not only hope to our citizens, but substantive positive change in their lives”.

Speaking in Pretoria today Meth said South Africa is still struggling with the stubborn triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

“The scourge of unemployment remains a huge hurdle that the country is facing. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for Quarter 1 of 2024, indicates that the official unemployment rate is standing at 32,9% while the expanded unemployment rate is at 41,9%. The picture becomes dire when it comes to the youth unemployment rate with youth aged 15 – 24 years standing at 59,7% and youth aged 25 – 34 years standing at 40,7%. These statistics should remind us that the stakes are still high and we must hasten to strengthen the implementation of interventions to dent the unemployment rate,” she said.

Minister Meth was speaking during a meet-and-greet Ministerial Committee meeting with the Department's Acting Director General Onke Mjo, various Departmental Deputy Director-Generals of various branches such as Administration, Inspection and Enforcement Services (IES), Labour Policy & Industrial Relations (LP&IR), Public Employment Services (PES), and provincial Chief Directors.

The meeting was attended by heads of Departmental Funds including the Compensation Fund and Unemployment Insurance Fund. It was also graced by heads of entities such as the Supported Employment Enterprises (SEE), Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), Productivity SA, and National Economic and Labour Council (Nedlac).

Sharing the platform with Minister Meth were also newly-appointed Deputy Ministers of Employment and Labour - Ntuthuko 'Jomo' Sibiya and Phumzile Mgcina.

Meth said substantive results can be achieved through an intensive and collaborative mechanism, “that will propel all of us to realise DEL's objectives”.

She said in carrying its mandate the Department will be guided by the following set of six priorities for the 7th Administration as follows:

Priority 1: Put South Africa to work

Priority 2: Build our industries for an inclusive economy

Priority 3: Tackle the high cost of living

Priority 4: Invest in people

Priority 5: Defend democracy and advance freedom

Priority 6: Better Africa and the World

“These priorities must find expression in the work of the Department of Employment and Labour family,” Meth said.

In summary, she said the priority is to create and sustain 2,5 million work opportunities delivering public goods and services in communities; implement a cross-cutting industrial strategy that drives growth and creates opportunity for youth and other unemployed people; tackle the war on poverty by providing comprehensive social security and basic services through the Unemployment Insurance Fund and Compensation Fund and continue enforcement of compliance with the National Minimum Wage across all applicable industries in South Africa.

She also said through investing in people the Department of Employment and Labour as the custodian of employment law has a responsibility to ensure workplaces that are free of traumatic events and a deterioration in the quality of life of many workers; managing compliance with employment law and Immigration Act; and lastly, strengthen relations with stakeholders internationally and at regional level.

"Ours in the 7th administration is to ensure that we shift gears and embrace the principles brought about by the Government of National Unity (GNU). I require active and impactful participation in the District Development Model as that will continue to expand our reach as the Department of Employment and Labour. Our role at the International Labour Organization (ILO) cannot be emphasised enough as it is a vehicle in building a better Africa and the World," Meth said.

Source: <https://www.labour.gov.za/employment-and-labour-minister-meth-identifies-tangible-transformation-of-the-labour-market-as-a-consequence-of-economic-g>

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