



Sector summit review

At the Presidential Jobs Summit in October 1998, the Nedlac parties agreed that 'in some sectors or clusters of industry, particularly those with high potential to create or lose jobs, sector strategic processes should be encouraged. These should facilitate the development of industrial strategies, designed to expand output and create or save jobs. A key consideration will be to avoid retrenchments while improving productivity.'

Four sector summits have been held.

❑ **Agriculture**

The first summit was the Minister's Indaba on Job Creation in the Agricultural Sector, on 14 and 15 October 1999. The national and provincial departments of Agriculture represented government; the National African Farmers Union and Agri South Africa represented business, whilst labour was represented by SAAPAWU and FAWU. Experts and representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also attended the summit.

❑ **Mining**

The Mining Sector Summit took place from 24 to 26 February 2000. The main participants were NUM, the Chamber of Mines of South Africa and the departments of Minerals and Energy, Trade and Industry, Labour and Local Government.

However, other actors within the sector were invited to participate in

both the prior negotiations and the summit.

❑ **Clothing and textile**

The Clothing and Textiles Sector Summit took place on 29 August 2000. SACTWU, the Clothing Federation, the Textiles Federation and the departments of Labour and Trade and Industry were the main actors.

❑ **Public Service**

The Public Service Jobs Summit took place from 29 to 31 January 2001. The Department of Public Service and Administration represented government as employer. Labour, or employees, were represented by COSATU, FEDUSA, the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), South African Police Union (SAPU), SADTU, Democratic Nurses Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA), POPCRU, and the National Union of Public Servants and Allied Workers Union (NUPSAW).

Reviewing the summits

It is Nedlac's role to monitor the implementation of the Jobs Summit agreements. Therefore, Nedlac recently conducted a quick review of the summits held thus far.

The review included the sector summits agreements and eight interviews with key participants, four of which were from employers, two from employees and



two from the organising secretariats. The review looked at the role players, some of the common themes, difficulties experienced and lessons learned.

Leading up to the summits

In the case of the public service, clothing and textiles and mining summits, social partners set up structures to manage the negotiations leading to the summits. The groundwork was laid and substantive discussions were held.

In contrast, the Minister's Indaba in the agricultural sector was solely organised by the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs. No pre-summit negotiations were held. Some participants therefore questioned the status of this summit because social partners did not give input into the agenda.

The review showed that where the social partners held pre-summit negotiations, the agreements were more detailed, both on how to achieve identified outcomes in content.

Major themes

Apart from the Indaba in the agricultural sector, the social partners concluded the other sector summits with formal agreements.

However, the Public Service Sector Summit agreement focused primarily on issues relating to industrial relations and human resource development, not a sectoral strategy.

Specific themes covered in the agreements included labour market policies aimed at job creation and retention; productivity improvement; competitiveness; SMME development; human resource development; HIV/AIDS; minimising the adverse effects of restructuring; the Social Plan; redeployment of personnel; and cooperative processes for restructuring.

Problems and lessons

The review found that in some summits, there were too many committees or forums. This resulted in a lack of coordination, duplication of efforts, and delays.

Problems associated with facilitators also existed. It was felt that future summits should clearly define to whom facilitators are accountable.

Continuity of attendance in the pre-summit negotiations was seen to be important. It was felt that social partners should dedicate specific personnel to future sector summits.

In almost all the summits, objectives tended to be too ambitious.

In some summits employers sent in human resource personnel rather than policy personnel. As a result these officials were unable to address some concerns of employee representatives.

Another problem was the lack of detailed implementable plans in the sector summit agreements.

In some summits, no organisations were charged with the monitoring and evaluation of the agreements period. Almost all the respondents expressed concern about the slow pace of following-up the summits' agreements.

Funding was another issue raised. It was therefore proposed that clarity needed to exist from the beginning as to who would fund future summits.

In order to avoid last minute arrangements, it was felt that summit dates should be set far enough in advance to allow for proper planning.

Sector summit guidelines

Nedlac has a task team that is meeting to draw up guidelines for future sector summits. It is also looking at which sectors should be prioritised in terms of holding future sector summits. ★