



Nedlac moves to implement GDS agreements

At Nedlac's Annual Summit on 27 September, the focus was on the implementation of the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) agreements. Nedlac looks at how this is to be achieved with its new executive director Herbert Mkhize at its helm.

All the parties expressed their commitment at the summit to carrying out what they have promised to do. What is needed now, is a strategy on how to monitor what the parties are doing and a tool to measure the impact this is having on the stated objectives.

This is the job given to a two-a-side task team at Nedlac. This task team is drawing up a project plan which will outline the indicators that will be measured. These include the number of jobs that are created or saved, the extent of empowerment through skills updates and cooperative development as well as an indication of the quality of jobs created. The measure will also report on investment, equity and local action, which were the other main themes of the GDS.

The task team has agreed that monthly reports will be drawn up showing those areas where there has been progress, but a more comprehensive report will be tabled quarterly at Nedlac's executive council

meetings. Once a year, Nedlac will present an overview of the year's work as part of its Annual Report.

Already there has been progress reported on some of the agreements. For example, there was an agreement that the constituencies would mount a joint campaign to increase public awareness before the submission of Employment Equity Plans in October. This has been done.

On learnerships, the agreement stated that a jointly signed letter would be sent to all employers on the SA Revenue Service database, to promote business taking on learners. This too has been carried out.

Government has announced a programme of public infrastructure investment. Transnet also announced a major planned programme of capital investment in all aspects of transport infrastructure.

The agreement states that constituencies will work together to promote equity in general and broad-based black economic empowerment –

to this end parliament has since passed the broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Bill. Business and government have been working on charters in several sectors, including finance and information and communication technology.

Some issues were already on the table, but have received renewed impetus from their being part of the GDS agreements. One is the issue of cooperatives: Nedlac is in the process of drafting a report on the Cooperatives Development Bill.

The agreement to hold sector summits was contained in the Presidential Jobs Summit agreement in 1998. The resolve to strengthen the sector-based approach was confirmed in the GDS, and Nedlac will continue to coordinate the sector summits as they come on board. We are currently busy with the metals and engineering, construction and chemicals sectors, with possible summits in the services and agriculture and agro-processing sectors.



What a threesome! Nedlac's new executive director Herbert Mkhize (centre) with his predecessors Jayendra Naidoo (left) and Philip Dexter (right).

Many of the commitments contained in the GDS agreement are things the constituencies will get on with, do by themselves, and report progress in doing them. For example, the South African new vehicle manufacturing industry has committed to investing more than R15bn, over the next five years, into production. This is easy to measure.

Labour has committed to ensuring that national office-bearers and/or national organisers of the relevant unions represent unions on SETA boards. Again, a simple list of board members will tell whether labour has fulfilled this commitment.

However, there are also areas where further dialogue is needed between the parties to agree on specific action.

These issues will be taken forward in Nedlac's four existing chambers, and progress reports will come out of the chambers.

A communication strategy agreed by the four parties will ensure the information about what is being

achieved, and the impact that it is having, is disseminated as widely as possible.

New executive director for Nedlac

Since the previous edition of the *Bulletin*, Nedlac's new executive director, Herbert Mkhize, has taken up office. Herbert is best known for his many years in the labour movement but he has experience in all the Nedlac constituencies. After growing up in Umbumbu, about 25km inland from the Durban International Airport, he got a job as a radiographer at King Edward VIII hospital in Durban. This short spell in the public service came to an early end when he got involved in trade union politics and was forced out of the hospital. He then went into the retail sector, working in marketing, and was tasked with introducing the Spar franchise into the townships. Although he was eventually marketing manager, he never lost touch with the union, and was an active member 'after-hours'. His spell as a community organiser was when he worked with the National

Peace Secretariat in the pre-election years, teaching organising skills. After 1994, when several union leaders were elected to parliament, he was called back into the union as a full-time official, and was deputy general-secretary of Saccawu.

More business experience followed with a short spell at Adcorp Holdings, where he was tasked with setting up a black-owned and managed recruitment company, followed by nearly four years at Old Mutual, where he drove the transformation agenda. Herbert has plenty of experience in Nedlac structures. He was a management committee and executive council delegate, and served as the labour convenor in the Trade and Industry Chamber. He was a member of the Labour Commission task team in 1996, was part of the government delegation to the first WTO ministerial meeting in Singapore, and was also part of the Nedlac delegation to investigate the skills development framework in Germany.

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