

NEDLAC CONNECT

NEDLAC NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2022

National Economic Development
and Labour Council



Introduction

Celebrating our heritage

We pay homage to Heritage Month, celebrated annually in September to mark our nation's diverse culture and heritage; enabling us to foster greater social cohesion, nation building, and a shared national identity.

The celebration of Heritage Month has created a conducive environment for everyone to embrace and celebrate what was inherited or bequeathed to us by our forebears.

In this third edition of Nedlac Connect, which unpacks some highlights of key achievements from the Nedlac 27th Annual National Summit, we also report on our own Heritage Day activities celebrated at our Rosebank offices.

We further provide a summary of some of the presentations and speeches delivered at the summit, namely:

- 1 Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour:
Nedlac must be at the apex of social compacting
- 2 Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa, ILO:
Social dialogue reinvigorated during the pandemic
- 3 Dr Marion Bordcherds, Executive Manager: health and awareness, for Transnet:
Covid amplified SA's mental health gap
- 4 Matthew Parks Cosatu Parliamentary coordinator:
Pros and cons of remote working
- 5 Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, Chief Executive Officer for Tourism Business Council of South Africa: *Tourism recovery rate faster than expected post Covid*

We also provide a summary of a closeout report for the Covid 19 webinars hosted by Nedlac in July and August, supported by Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (Mistra) and the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH).

We would like to thank our social partners for their ongoing support and commitment to the various Nedlac structures.

You can also keep in touch with us on our digital platforms.

Have a great read!



Key Achievements

In this section we focus on some of the presentations and speeches delivered at Nedlac's Annual Summit, titled "Social partners responding to a changing world", held on September 8, 2022, to report back and reflect on the past financial year.

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THE 27TH NEDLAC ANNUAL NATIONAL SUMMIT



Nedlac must be at the apex of social compacting

Nedlac must be at the forefront of social compacting, Minister of Employment and Labour Thulas Nxesi said in his keynote address at the 27th Annual National Summit.

Nxesi said President Cyril Ramaphosa had called for a social compact in his State of the Nation address (SONA) earlier this year but it was still a work in progress.

“Over time, we see the role of Nedlac evolving as being the apex of social compacting – supporting and collaborating with other sectors, provinces or local social compacts. In fact, this is already happening,” he said.



Minister of Employment and Labour Thulas Nxesi at the Nedlac Annual Summit

He paid tribute to Nedlac’s role in facilitating an “all-of-society response” to the Covid-19 pandemic, which supported businesses, workers and their families through a difficult time and established health and safety protocols to keep the workplace safe

Additionally, he said, Nedlac needed to be proactive in taking up and leading on challenges such as a just transition, sustainability, digitisation and the changing world of work.

“As we emerged from the worst of the pandemic and sought to rebuild, Nedlac also united social partners with government to develop the Economic

Reconstruction and Recovery Programme. This has since developed around a series of work streams, especially linked to energy, transport and logistics, as well as SMMEs.”

Regarding the current global economic and political challenges like the war in Ukraine, food shortages, the international energy crisis, the rising cost of living, inflation and interest rates, he said South Africa was experiencing the same trends.

However, the persistently high unemployment levels were the government’s main priority.

He reiterated his support for the International Labour Organization

(ILO) Global Commission on the Future of Work report. This calls for “a human-centred agenda” by placing people and their jobs at the centre of economic and social policy and business practice.

The report encourages a focus on developing the human capabilities needed to thrive in a carbon-neutral, digital age economy.



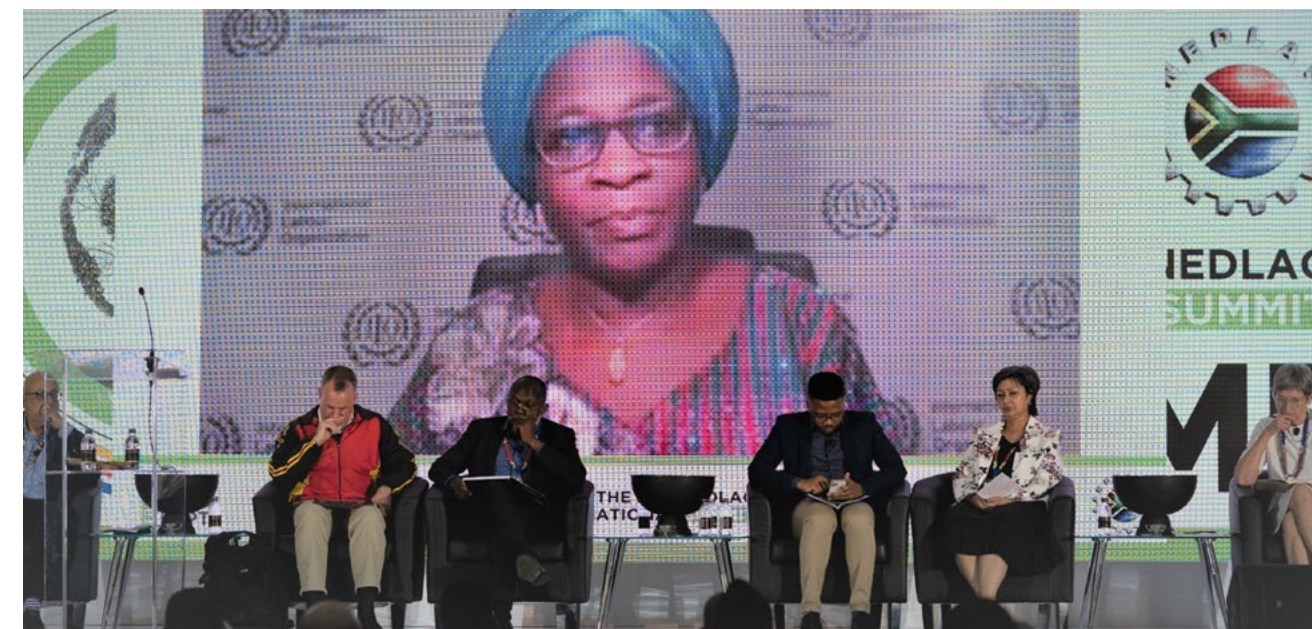
Go here to read the full speech: <https://nedlac.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Nedlac-summit-07122021-key-note.pdf>

Social dialogue reinvigorated during pandemic

Social dialogue in the occupational health and safety sector was revived during the pandemic, a key International Labour Organisation (ILO) study into the changing world of work across Africa has revealed.

ILO regional director Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon said the study was conducted across 15 African countries and included interviews with academics and top managers, to understand how African enterprises adapted in response to Covid-19.

The study focused on four closely related areas: the working space; workplace relations and labour law; skills development, knowledge sharing and productivity; and human resources management.



ILO regional director Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon

One of the findings was that while national and sectoral dialogue had been common, with trade unions representing their members and contributing to numerous agreements, some sectors had fared better than others.

Enterprises with a substantial in-person component to their work, such as manufacturers or hotels and restaurants, were among the most likely to say that labour relations had worsened.

The study also found that gender inequality at work had worsened both globally and in Africa due to the pandemic, with an uneven burden of unpaid care work borne by women. This was made worse by school closures and caring for sick families.

From a continental perspective, Samuel-Olonjuwon said that in Africa, the pandemic struck when most countries were recovering from the economic crisis, arising from the fall in commodity prices that took place around 2014.

According to the ILO World Employment and Social Outlook 2021, besides the loss of four million jobs and an additional 13 million forgone jobs, the socio-economic shock of the pandemic further worsened decent work deficits and increased the vulnerability of those in the informal economy.

This, she said, had exacerbated the exclusion of youth, migrants and people with disabilities from labour market opportunities.

In general, the effect of the pandemic on businesses – especially micro and small-sized – was “dramatic”, with many struggling to remain afloat due to higher costs, government restrictions, and changing consumer behaviour.

Other findings showed digital, communication, innovation and teamwork skills were now top priorities for enterprises.

This is a synopsis from the International Labour Organisation assistant director-general and regional director for Africa, Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon’s presentation on “How the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world of work in Africa”.



For the full presentation go to:

<https://nedlac.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Cynthia-Samuel-Olonjuwon-How-the-Covid19-pandemic-has-changed-the-world-of-work-in-Africa.pdf>

Covid amplified SA's mental health gap

Mental health has been catapulted to centre stage as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, says Dr Marion Borchers, executive manager: health and awareness, for Transnet.

Regarding the legislative landscape around mental health, she said there are several laws governing this: the Mental Health Care Act No. 17 of 2002, the Code of Good Practice on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993, among others. But these focused more on the physical aspects as opposed to the mental health aspects.



Dr Marion Borchers, executive manager: health and awareness, for Transnet.

When the Covid-19 lockdowns started, everyone was more concerned about people's physical rather than their mental health, she said.

Yet her studies have found that just 27% of people with mental disorders receive treatment; only 50% of hospitals in South Africa have psychiatrists – and 30% do not even have a psychologist. More recently South Africa was at the bottom of a global list of mental health services and offerings.

Increasingly, she said, the younger generation is feeling the effects. With only 5% of the country's health budget being allocated to mental health, it is obvious that the government is not treating this issue with the importance or urgency it deserves.

A recent Human Science Research Council study showed that Covid-19 had amplified the mental health gap, with 33% of people saying they are depressed, 45% are fearful, and 29% reporting that they are lonely.

Health visits decreased dramatically during the hard lockdowns and gender-based violence increased.

Covid, she said, had changed the nation's psyche. "We all know someone or have someone in our immediate families whom we have lost. We are all feeling more anxious, have experienced trauma and suffered from the isolation of lockdowns."

What is needed, Borchers added, is a change in leadership that is more empathic to the needs of the workers when it comes to remote working. More compassion is needed for those juggling family and work, suffering from always being on duty, and burning out. As a result, leaders or managers also needed to be trained in this aspect.

She said remote working had given rise to cyberbullying and online victimisation and that safety protocols were vital to protect workers from this.

The provision of psychologically safe workplaces was critical, as workers needed more access to counselling and debriefing services.

This is a synopsis of the Mental Health presentation by the executive manager, health and awareness for Transnet Dr Marion Borchers: Mental Health.



Go here for the full presentation: <https://nedlac.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Dr-Marian-Borchers-Mental-Health.pdf>

Pros and cons of remote working

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated changes to the work arena and escalated the benefits of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR), said Matthew Parks, Congress of South African Trade Union parliamentary coordinator.

Remote work became essential as the economy went into lockdown in March 2020 and while this new way of working brought advantages, it also carried risks and had some negative aspects.

On the one hand, call centre workers, for instance, could continue to operate, working from home while earning an income, and business owners could continue to pay their employees.

Universities and well-resourced schools went online, and those in the IT sector reaped the rewards from increased demand for data, fibre, laptops and iPads.

He said at-home workers saved time by not having to commute and their exposure to the virus was reduced.

However, the mushrooming of the 4IR threatened jobs in the construction, mining, transport, manufacturing, and marketing industries, among many others.

Statistics showed that as a result of 4IR, 56% of the workers who risk losing their jobs are women, and an overall 35% of jobs are at risk due to automation brought about by this new way of working.

Low-skilled workers remained at risk, while 16% of workers had no alternative work opportunities.

Unions needed to develop strategies around the concept of remote working: to reach out to organise, adapt and develop strategies to protect the rights of remote workers, Parks said.

Additionally, remote working reduced or completely eliminated the benefits of job security, annual increases, and paid and other forms of leave. In some cases, workers were simply told they were now “self-employed”.

“Workers’ rights have been compromised and the gaps in the labour laws that do not include remote

working need to be filled. Collective bargaining needs to be respected and protected by employers and not abandoned under the guise of self-employed workers,” he said.

“Employers must provide workers with the necessary tools and support, investing in skills of workers – not just the white collar or middle-class workers. They must avoid leaving blue-collar workers behind and reduce the risk of their jobs being lost to automation.

“We have two options. Do nothing – and the poor and even middle class will pay the price. Or we can plan and guide the transition, exploit its opportunities, invest in workers, create transition paths so that all of society will reap the benefits.”

This is a synopsis of Matthew Parks’ presentation on Remote Work in a panel discussion:

“Redefining the world of work post Covid and proposed policy responses in South Africa.”



Go here for the full presentation:

<https://nedlac.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Matthew-Parks-Redefining-the-world-of-work-Remote-Work.pdf>



**Matthew Parks,
Congress of South
African Trade Union
parliamentary
coordinator.**

Tourism recovery rate faster than expected post Covid

The South African tourism sector is recovering faster than what was projected and is on track to meet projections to create two million jobs by 2030, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, Chief Executive Officer for Tourism Business Council of South Africa said.

This, even though Covid-19 had devastated the industry – tourism was the first sector to close down and one of the last few to re-open, said Tshivhengwa.



Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, Chief Executive Officer for Tourism Business Council of South Africa

“In 2021 we saw 20 000 tourism-related jobs created showing how robust the industry is. We are on track that by 2030 we will be able to exceed our projections and create two million jobs”, he added.

While the World Travel and Tourism Council projects the recovery growth rate to be around 7.6%, he said, he believed that more can be done and encouraged everyone to travel as much as possible because domestic tourism is the backbone of the industry.

“Besides, conferencing and spectator sporting events, government consumption of travel is critical. It amounts to billions and is spread across related experiences like catering, car hire, and rentals as well as hotels and accommodation,” he said. “Yet despite this positive state of affairs, there are still gaps. We need the airports to be busier, we need more aircrafts in the

skies, we need to unburden the associated bottlenecks, and we need more cars on the road and more buses transporting people. Because with a faster recovery rate comes a faster employment rate”, he said.

He recalled a phone call during the pandemic from one of the largest car rental companies that needed space to park their fleet to accommodate cars that were normally on the roads. They quickly found one, sold off their cars and today are struggling to buy enough cars because their fleet is increasing.

He encouraged people to “get out of zoom and into the room” referring to in-person conferencing and the holding of events such as the Nedlac Annual National Summit.

On the international tourism front, he said, the American and European visitors

were back but more needed to be done to attract greater numbers of travellers from places like India and China.

“Targets of 95 000 are too small. We need to reach one million – then you will see jobs on the ground, more small businesses,” he said.

He said certain areas of our country remain underutilised and policies needed to be fixed to allow international travel to be made easier.

This synopsis is from the CEO of Tourism Business Council of South Africa, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa presentation.



The full presentation can be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX_n-YQN-1w&t=13666s

Nedlac closes out its work of the Covid19 Rapid Response Task Team

Nedlac recently hosted a Nedlac Rapid Response Task Team (NRRTT) workshop to wind down and evaluate the Covid19 programme of action which started in March 2020.

The workshop took place after a series of three webinars that looked at the lessons learnt on social contracting and social partnership arising from the pandemic, as well as a launch event for the Covid19 workplace health and safety management programme.

Nedlac social partners have for the past two years of the pandemic, lobbied, negotiated, provided feedback, implemented, partnered, and exercised oversight with a high degree of consensus while the Covid19 virus has evolved and the scientific response has developed and shifted.

It was therefore fitting to evaluate this work and determine lessons learnt and further unpack proposals arising from the experiences of the NRRTT.

The workshop looked at the following areas:

- Monitoring & information sharing
- Public health/Non-pharmaceutical interventions
- Social distancing
- Hospitality, tourism, and events
- Vaccination rollout
- Management of Covid in the workplace/ workplace interventions
- Relief (grants, TERS, tax relief, loan guarantee scheme, food relief)
- Communication and mobilisation
- Institutional arrangements

The workshop acknowledged the gains that were made through partnerships including with industries in sectors such as liquor and events that previously had not been active in Nedlac. Other success factors in the Nedlac response included:

- Nedlac's ability to meet frequently and rapidly pulling all the necessary personnel to the NRRTT;



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- Vaccine mobilisation and advocacy including through the work of the National Communications Partnership (NCP); as well as facilitating the rolling out of relief to those most affected by Covid19.

Although the NRRTT was being phased out, recommendations on how some areas could continue and be enhanced or supported, as well as how in future pandemics/epidemics that need a rapid response could be approached better in the future.

A detailed report of the Workshop and the previous series of webinars will be prepared.

Nedlac Celebrates Heritage Day

Nedlac joined in the festivities of the Heritage Day celebration where staff presented different traditional dishes to share.

September 24th is recognised as Heritage Day in South Africa, a day to celebrate the diverse cultures that have allowed us to be called the “rainbow nation”.

South Africans mark the day by wearing their bright, beautiful traditional attire and indulging in different cultural cuisine.

Food is one of the best ways that South Africans express, celebrate, and enjoy their diverse cultures. So Nedlac staff could not think of a better way to celebrate Heritage Day than with some proudly South African dishes.

Nedlac’s Heritage day celebrations were filled with laughs, eating, and learning about traditional cuisine and preparation as Nedlac staff brought their culture on a plate to our offices in Rosebank.

Some of the meals shared were samp, morogo, potato kugel, merapo which can be described as sweet potato but is prepared traditionally to be eaten as breakfast with tea.

In addition, staff got insight on a traditional Ghanaian Meal called Kontomire consisting of spinach, smoked dried fish, garlic, ginger, tomatoes, onions, and eggs cooked in palm oil which was paired with Nsima, what we would call pap in south Africa but its slightly softer.



Staffer Ruth Mofokeng shows off the traditional samp dish which is a staple diet in many households.



Celebrating the tapestry of our cultures and traditions with food samples from all over South Africa, and the African continent.

Nedlac staffers Ruth Mofokeng, Joyce Tongwane, Busisiwe Milisi-Mngese, Fiona Nchabeleng, Vuyisa Tafa, Nthabiseng Koopedi, Priscilla Mashabane, Moipone Molete, Patricia Phogole, Prudence Zwane, Thuli Radebe, Bongani Mahlalela, Basetsana Mokgare, Nozipho Ngema join together in potluck enjoying the culinary treats of our rainbow nation.

Nedlac in the Media

While SA suffers multiple crises,
the Nedlac summit offers few
answers



DAILY MAVERICK

Everyone should play nice before
a general strike, says Nedlac in
the new code



BUSINESS
INSIDER
SOUTH AFRICA

'Big win' as cabinet approves
tougher rules on smoking



BusinessDay

Gender based legislation to
be tabled in parliament



Bargaining council representation
down, despite the increase in new
unions, says Nxesi



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Upcoming events 13 - 28 October 2022

14 • 10 • 2022
GOVERNANCE
HREC meeting

18 • 10 • 2022
ERRP (FREIGHT AND PUBLIC
TRANSPORT WORKSTREAM)
Site Visit - Port of Durban

19 • 10 • 2022
ERRP (FREIGHT AND PUBLIC
TRANSPORT WORKSTREAM)
National Rail Policy (NRP) Task Team
Meeting

19 • 10 • 2022
TRADE AND INDUSTRY CHAMBER
TIC Government Incentives Task Team

21 • 10 • 2022
GOVERNANCE
MANCO

27 • 10 • 2022
TRADE AND INDUSTRY CHAMBER
TIC Chamber meeting

28 • 10 • 2022
GOVERNANCE
NEDLAC Exco Engagement
Session (MTBPS)

ABOUT US

The National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) is the vehicle by which Government, labour, business and community organisations seek to cooperate, through problem-solving and negotiation, on economic, labour and development issues and related challenges facing the country.

USEFUL LINKS

- ▶ [Nedlac Act](#)
- ▶ [Nedlac Constitution](#)

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SHARE YOUR VIEWS.
WE WOULD LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU.

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