



Press Release

Attention: News Editors/Business and Labour Reporters

SOCIAL PARTNERS COMMIT TO CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

September 08, 2024, Sandton, Gauteng: The National Economic Development and Labour Council's (Nedlac) social partners recommitted themselves to social dialogue as South Africa enters a new decade of democracy, delegates at its Annual Summit heard on Friday, 6th September 2024.

In her opening remarks Minister of Employment and Labour Nomakhosazana Meth said using the consultative muscle of Nedlac, she believes that "we can maximise on the opportunities presented to us and achieve much more as a country".

"As we journey through the 21st century, Nedlac's role becomes increasingly vital in fostering sustainable economic growth, ensuring equitable labour practices, and promoting social justice," the Minister said.

Deputy President Mashatile, in a recorded message to the summit, congratulated Nedlac on its 30-year record, stressing it was the cornerstone of social dialogue and thanking social partners for working together to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the energy, freight and logistics crises.

Reporting on Nedlac's performance for 2023/24, the Executive Director, Lisa Seftel, said 2024 was a year characterised by both continuity and change. The period saw Nedlac celebrate and reflect on 30 years of democracy and prepare for the transition to the seventh administration.

In the 2023/2024 year, Nedlac achieved a clean audit with 92% of the organisation's KPIs achieved for the first time. It conducted a survey with stakeholders and staff,

resulting in a 78% satisfaction level among stakeholders and an 84% satisfaction level among staff.

Going forward, Seftel said the country was in a state of transition, not only politically but also to new sources of economic growth and energy, which brought associated risks and opportunities.

“In a transition, there needs to be an appropriate balance of measures to enable growth and to cushion workers, businesses and communities to ensure social stability,” she said.

More than 300 social partner representatives from industry, labour, government, and community sectors and high-level government officials attended the summit. Representatives from similar social dialogue institutions from Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, and Senegal also attended.

As part of contributing to celebrating 30 years of democracy and freedom, the Nedlac social partners produced a report titled *30 Years of Democracy and Planning for the Future* report which considered the achievements and lessons of the past three decades.

The report highlighted five distinct priority areas on which social partners would wish to collaborate with the government, including advancing structural reform, enabling employment creation and public employment schemes, addressing hunger and poverty, supporting labour market transitions, and increasing the responsiveness and capacity of government.

The social partners stressed the need to reform and modernise the UIF and skills systems.

“Lessons from 30 years of democracy show us that where social partners share similar concerns on critical areas with government, there is a solid basis for partnerships,” Seftel said.

Responding to Seftel’s address on Nedlac’s performance, Solly Phetoe, general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), said Nedlac

symbolised the value of a social compact in which all parties contribute towards a common objective.

The summit was also an occasion to honour former Ministers and overall convenors including Ebrahim Patel, Professor Raymond Parsons, and Bheki Ntshalintshali.

Parsons said social partners will need to be relentlessly optimistic about the prospects of changing South Africa but remain brutally realistic about the socio-economic challenges that remain.

“The focus must be on how effective social dialogue can help to identify necessary common ground to act - and actively secure tangible differences in outcomes,” he said.

Former labour convenor Bheki Ntshalintshali listed five examples of achievements by Nedlac such as the preparation for the growth and development summit; SA’s response to the global financial crises’ the difficult negotiations in achieving the national minimum wage; the rapid response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic recovery plan.

Former government overall convenor Les Kettledas commended Nedlac for the significant amount of socio-economic bills that had passed through the Nedlac structures over the years.,

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Enquiries: Farhana Ismail (PR Specialist)

0827876987 and on info@fbicommunications.com

About Nedlac

Nedlac is an institution of social dialogue in South Africa whose mandate is to promote the goals of economic growth, participation in economic decision-making and social equity. Nedlac was established through the Nedlac Act. The Act requires that each year, Nedlac hosts an Annual Summit where the leadership of Nedlac social partners

from organised business, community, government, and organised labour gather to engage on issues of national interest.