

CALL TO CREATE JOBS

17 September 2012



CREATE JOBS: MEC Sisi Ntombela and Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant made their plea at the jobs summit.
Picture: Maryna van Wyk

With a 38% unemployment rate in the Free State, MEC for social development Sisi Ntombela made an urgent plea to the private sector, especially the farming community, to create jobs for the unemployed.

Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant also urged employers to go the extra mile to not only give employment opportunities but also bursaries and internships for youth.

Speaking at the Free State Job Fairs and Summit at the Vista University in Bloemfontein on Friday, Ntombela said it was urgent to get the agricultural sector involved to relieve poverty in the Free State as it was the bread bin of South Africa.

She was joined by Oliphant who added the summit took place in a week when government announced the slow rate of progress by companies in reaching targets for employment equity.

However, according to the province, it has shown the best performance in terms of race and gender equity.

“This is encouraging but we first have to get people into jobs. We first have to restore hope to thousands of children who, by virtue that their parents get new jobs, will lead an improved life.

“We need to ensure their educational needs will be taken care of as a result of the employment of their parents,” she said.

Oliphant stated the problem of unemployment and joblessness was a serious threat to the stability that was achieved after 1994.

This makes it even more urgent for the government to mitigate this developing disaster. The minister said one of the means to achieve the goals of job creation was to amend critical areas of legislation like the Labour Relations and Basic Conditions of Employment.

“These two bills are now before Parliament. The Public Employment Services Bill and Employment Equity Amendment Bill (equal work for equal pay) have now been concluded at Nedlac level and will also soon be presented to the executive before being brought before Parliament,” she said.

Oliphant said the bills were aimed at promoting sound and responsive legislation and policies to attain labour market flexibility for competitiveness of enterprises which was balanced with the promotion of decent employment.

“As government, our role is to create an enabling environment not only for business to thrive and make money, but for the creation of employment with the private sector.

“But we also recognise that our role extends wider than just policy.

“As a result, we have directed that our entities invest money in a socially responsible way and the Unemployment Insurance fund and the Compensation Fund have been at the forefront of doing exactly this.

“I appeal to the business sector to partner with us and go the extra mile in granting opportunities for employment and bursaries and internships so that we can begin to deal with the problem of youth unemployment,” she said.

Oliphant introduced an online database of the Department of Labour that will help employers and potential employees find work without having to pay for the privilege which was in the spirit of the new Public Employment Services Bill.

She encouraged the business sector to register their vacancies on the department’s online database to make the matching of jobs with skills easier. The Free State Jobs Fairs and Summit was the fifth of such meetings with events having taken place in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Limpopo.

[Source: www.thenewage.co.za]