

Employment and Labour revamps Labour Activation Programme (LAP)

The Department of Employment and Labour is revamping its Labour Activation Programme (LAP) to deepen its impact in job creation initiatives and help integrate the unemployed into the labour market.



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Speaking during his opening address at the departmental LAP's three-day workshop on Tuesday, the Director-General, Thobile Lamati, said the goal of the revamp is to shorten the response time and make impact immediate.

The workshop, held at Saint George Hotel in Irene, is being attended by senior departmental officials from various branches such as the Public Employment Services and those of its entities such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Compensation Fund and Productivity SA.

The objective of the LAP is to enhance employability, enable entrepreneurship and preserve jobs.

Lamati said the workshop needs to ask the question "what type of LAP do we want to see?".

He said South Africa's broad unemployment rate currently sitting at 42% was concerning and too high by any standard.

Challenges and interventions

The Director-General added that the economy is faced with structural challenges in regard to skills mismatch and it is not growing fast to absorb the "growing army of the unemployed".

"Faced with this reality like any country, South Africa has adopted active labour market policy interventions. Active labour market policies are our shield. This means that we need to stimulate the demand and supply. LAP is part of our active labour market intervention policies to deal with unemployment," he said.

Lamati said the job of the department is to work with other stakeholders who are involved in job creation to help the unemployed into employment and business opportunities.

"Over the next few days, we will look at the structure, monitor the impact of our interventions in responding to the needs of the unemployed. Labour activation has since its inception become an important cog of our unemployment interventions and a game-changer to work seekers in general," Lamati said.

Some of the models that will be considered include - the flexicurity, mutual obligation and active inclusion for all.

"Through this proposed LAP revamp we want a high degree of efficiency - no matter the model. The focus is not institutional arrangement nor the structure. Our focus should be how best we make the programme highly efficient. The structure is not an overriding factor. We also need to protect existing jobs," he said.

Some of the LAP programmes that have been undertaken by the department includes the Training of the Unemployed (TOU), Enterprise Development (ED) Training Layoffs Scheme (TLS) and Turnaround Solutions (TAS).

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