

African Ministers commit to accelerating employment creation and development through Public Employment Programmes (PEPs)

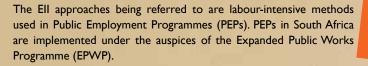
Article by Michael Mokoena

Picture by 17th International Labour Organisation (ILO) Regional Seminar Secretariat



In an effort to expand the employment opportunities for the poor, fight poverty and contribute to the development of African States, the Minister of Public Works Mr Nkosinathi Nhleko together with his counterparts from various countries on the Continent have committed themselves to investing massively in Public Employment Programmes (PEPs).

In a Ministerial Declaration that was adopted at the close of the 17th International Labour Organization (ILO) Regional Seminar on 17 November 2017 in Ethiopia, Cabinet Ministers and government leaders from the African States that were represented at the event recognised the importance of PEPs and their diversification in terms of implementation in multiple sectors. "We have noted that despite the significant economic growth in many African countries, the pressure on natural resources, labour market, insufficient infrastructure and socio-economic facilities, youth unemployment, weak coverage of social protection and the in-flux of migrants continue to be major concerns for African countries. These challenges call for urgent and concerted measures to help ensure social cohesion, water and food provision as well as income security. We also note that Employment- Intensive Investment (EII) approaches address most of the root causes for sustainability and development," the government leaders declared.



The government leaders accepted that in the spirit of "leaving no one behind" stronger action must be taken at local level to strengthen the decentralization processes in the implementation of PEPs.

"Decentralization and the sustainable development agenda offer conditions to generate more opportunities for decent employment, explore or optimize the use of local resources and expertise as well as strengthening the skills of local businesses," the Ministers present asserted.

They also recognised that efforts were required to efficiently monitor and assess the impact of EII programmes and the need to identify and agree on measurable indicators to achieve and report on the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The AU Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action an end to poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Commitments:

The Cabinet Ministers and Government leaders at the event committed amongst other things to:

- Realign PEPs with SDGs and the AU agenda 2063 as well as develop a sustainable funding mechanism through national investment budgets, private sector and civil society funding, complemented by the contribution of development partners.
- Institutionalize and strengthen the EII approach through high level national inter-sectoral coordination structures and implement integrated multi-sectoral employment programmes, consistent with national development and sectoral priorities that generate employment, income security, create and maintain quality assets and facilitate the achievement of the SDGs.
- Strengthen the capacity of local actors and institutions and ownership of employment programmes through vocational and managerial skills training, as well as the enhancement of the participation of local communities in project delivery, including social audits by the beneficiaries.
- Improve the collection and processing of relevant data to analyse the employment impact of investment strategies and programmes, policy and technology options, as well as to ascertain the level of achievement of the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063.



The Seminar in brief

The ILO 17th Regional Seminar of Labour-Based Practitioners was held under the theme: "Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The Employment–intensive Investment Approach". The delegates discussed amongst a range of issues, the role and contribution of PEPs in achieving AU Agenda 2063 and SDG outcomes, with a focus on building national capacities for employment creation, expanding employment based social protection safety net, including preservation and restoration of natural resources to address climate change and its effects.

Ministers and representatives who were part of the seminar were from diverse fields that included Transport and Public Works; Development and International Cooperation; Economy and Planning; Investments and International Cooperation; Roads and Highways; and Local Development in various African States including Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Nepal, Tunisia, Uganda and of course South Africa.

During his presentation Minister Nhleko emphasised the significance of training and enterprise development as a roadmap for EPWP participants to enter into the formal sector economy either as employees or as entrepreneurs.

"Training across all sectors remains critical for EPWP participants, as well as for Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and cooperatives. Various models exist for small business development. However, key is to understand that participants are required to have the drive to start and grow their businesses," the Minister said.

To emphasise the importance of the EPWP, Minister Nhleko quoted the Statistics South Africa 2015 Quarterly Household Labour Survey, which showed that of those who had participated in an EPWP-type programme in the previous 12 months:

- 12,4% were now in permanent work
- 4,8% had set up an own business
- 47,8% had found temporary work

A further 14% EPWP participants were in further training.

Minister Nhleko was accompanied to the seminar by senior departmental officials including the Deputy Director General (DDG) for the EPWP Mr Stanley Henderson, the Chief Director for the EPWP Infrastructure Sector, Mr Ignatius Ariyo and the Director for the EPWP Evaluation Research, Ms Kgomotso Zantsi. All made valuable contributions in the discussions and chairing session at the event.



DDG Henderson thanks the Government of Ghana for visiting South Africa to learn about the EPWP

Article by Michael Mokoena Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane

ΗΔΡΡΥ



The Deputy Director General (DDG) Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in the Department of Public Works Mr Stanley Henderson has thanked the Government of Ghana for deploying its senior officials and engineers to South Africa on a study tour of the EPWP. The delegation from Ghana spent the whole week (from 06 to 10 November 2017) touring EPWP projects in the country with the aim of studying best practices in labour intensive methods of construction.

The study tour was led by Deputy Director Planning in the Ghana's Department of Feeder Roads Dr Kwasi Osafo Ampadu and Project Leader from Japan International Corporation (JICA) Mr Hiroaki Takahashi. JICA is a Japanese entity that is working with the Ghana Government to fund road construction projects in Ghana. The team visited EPWP road construction project in Soshanguve outside Pretoria and another project in Stellenbosch in the Western Cape. The study tour was financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

DDG Henderson said the Ghanaian's study tour of EPWP projects strengthened relations between African countries in the ongoing work of improving the lives of the people in the Continent.

"The study visit has been helpful to both countries (South Africa and Ghana) because we have been able to share the best practices in the creation of work opportunities for our people through the use of labour intensive methods of construction. We are humbled that the Government of Ghana selected the EPWP as a case study to develop their own model of labour based road construction," DDG Henderson said.

He pointed out that EPWP created 779 251 work opportunities for the people of South Africa in 2016/2017 financial year. "As we speak, the EPWP's Contractor Development Programme called Vuk'uphile is

currently training 330 emerging contractors in the country. These contractors are being trained on labour intensive construction. With the work that we are doing through EPWP, we are certain that the delegates from Ghana are going back home with a better understanding of how we have ramp-up work creation through the EPWP and that they will use some of the work that we do in the Programme to enrich their own models of implementing projects using labour intensive techniques," DDG Henderson said.

Commenting at the closing meeting of the study tour, Dr Osafo Ampadu said that touring EPWP projects has taught them a lot about labour intensive construction.

"We have seen EPWP construction in action. For instance, in Tshwane (Soshanguye) we saw the actual mixing of concrete product directly by labour – instead of machines – and we were impressed. We were also impressed by the production rate of labour, where about 30 people are able to produce about 40 tonnes of concrete in a day" "At the Western Cape projects, we observed the asphalt laying process being done through labour intensive method. Indeed we are taking all the lessons learned and acquired from this study back home to work on enriching our model of labour intensive construction method," Dr Osafo Ampadu added.

Mr Takahashi said the study tour has been useful because it had given them innovative ideas on labour-based construction methods. The study tour was facilitated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the organisation's Technical Advisor based in the office of the EPWP, Mr Gamelihle Sibanda, who was pleased with the success of the study tour.



Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa commends EPWP contribution in the socio-economic upliftment of communities

Article by Michael Mokoena Pictures by Faith Nonyana and Khanyisa Moagi

HAPPY



The Deputy President of

the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa

has commended the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants for being at the forefront of social development in their communities. Addressing EPWP participants and members of the community in Thaba Nchu, Free State on 13 October 2017, Deputy President Ramaphosa said that the community work done by women and men in the EPWP had contributed in improving the lives of the people in South Africa.

"Zooming into the work done by the EPWP participants in the Free State and in Thaba Nchu Township in particular, we have seen young women and men being at the forefront of bringing road infrastructure into the community through the Thaba Nchu Public Transport Route. Participants in that project perform the construction of a road that will improve the community's access to daily basic services and also contribute to the economic development and advancement of the community. That road is solid and it will be used by trucks that are delivering products into the community, buses that ferry community members to and from work and other heavy duty vehicles," Deputy President said.

The road that the Deputy President was referring to, will also connect Thaba Nchu and the town of Excelsior within the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

Deputy President Ramaphosa addressed participants and members of the community after having toured a number of EPWP projects in

the area. Accompanied by various Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers and senior government officials from various national, provincial and local government, Deputy President Ramaphosa also visited Itekeng Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Thaba Nchu Ratlou Complex Renovation project as well as various schools in the area.

"The involvement of EPWP participants in the renovation of the Ratlou Complex will see more government departments moving in to occupy that building. Some of the departments expected to move in, include Department of Basic Education, Thusong Centre, a local clinic as well as other government entities. This in essence means that the government – through programmes such as the EPWP – continue to bring government services and assets to the people," Deputy President Ramaphosa said.

The Deputy President commended the good social work that is done by the participants at the Itekeng Disabled and Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVC's) centre of feeding and looking after over 300 poor people in the area. "This particular project is the 'Hub of Serving the People' because the participants at the project provide daily meals to 350 people. Many of community members who get food from the project are children who come from poor families, some of whom are at Grade R. The participants cook nutritious meals mostly made of vegetables that are picked from the centre's food garden. Once the children have eaten, the participants walk them to their respective schools in the area," the Deputy President said.

HAPPY



The Minister of Labour, Mildred Oliphant emphasised that all EPWP projects must adhere to all labour relations matters, including the EPWP Ministerial Determination and Code of Good Practice.

Closing his speech, Deputy President Ramaphosa thanked the government of the Free State under the leadership of Premier Sekgobelo Elias Ace Magashule for placing EPWP at the heart of socio-economic development of communities in the province.

The Deputy President's visit to EPWP project was part of the work of the Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC), of monitoring the progress in the implementation of EPWP across South Africa. Deputy President Ramaphosa led the PEP-IMC site visit in his official capacity as the Chairperson of the Committee.

The Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr Jeremy Cronin thanked the Deputy President for always visiting EPWP projects and ensuring that the government continues to create the much needed EPWP work opportunities for the poor and the unemployed.







EPWP beneficiary training contributes in the production of quality garden produce for the people Emfuleni Municipality

Article by Michael Mokoena Pictures by Michael Mokoena

ΗΔΡΡΥ



Communities in the Emfuleni Local Municipality in Gauteng are benefiting from affordable fresh vegetables that are produced daily from gardens that are supported by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). One of the food gardens in the area that is supported by the government through the EPWP is the Phaphamang Environmental Organisation – a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) that is funded by the Department of Public Works (DPW) through the Independent Development Trust (IDT). The NPO does a range of activities including producing food such as tomatoes, beetroot, spinach and carrots. The produce is sold to various communities in the Sebokeng, Evaton and Vereeniging area.

The EPWP Beneficiary Training unit within DPW recently provided 20 participants at the NPO with training in Plant Production. According to the Chairperson of the NPO, Mr Pheko Mofokeng, the training - which is a skills programme – has been instrumental in ensuring that the NPO produces quality vegetables.

"The training has provided participants with the technical knowledge of producing good quality vegetables. The participants now know the type of the soil we are working with and which vegetables can be produced with this kind of soil. They have a better understanding of the process of planting, nurturing and picking the vegetable that we are producing. In essence training has been vital in ensuring that we provide our people with good, healthy quality food," Mr Mofokeng said.

He added that they are selling their vegetable produce to local supermarkets such as Pick n Pay, various tuck shops, as well as to vegetable vendors in the area. "We also donate some of our produce to local schools, health care facilities such as clinics and soup kitchens in the area," Mr Mofokeng said.

A participant in the project - Ms Lindiwe Grace Mathanda - said that training has been vital in assisting her to understand the agri-business."When I started to for this in this project I did not know the basic principles of agri-business or even good agricultural practices. I could not even tell apart the types of soil we have but today all that has changed. I now know a lot about how to grow good quality vegetables and I even know the types of bacteria that can harm your produce"

The Assistant Director Beneficiary Training in Gauteng, Ms Julia Mulima explained that the training was funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training through its National Skills Fund (NSF).

"The IDT, which is the implementing agent of the project (Phaphamang Environmental Organisation) identified the need for us to provide participants with training. The participants were given 10 days theoretical training on plant production then they moved into practical training where they will spend 23 days in total. Currently they are busy with soil preparation," Ms Mulima explained.

She added the department was getting value for money on the training that it provided to the participants. "Our regular monitoring of the participants has showed us that there has been real impact of the training. For instance the participants are able explain and demonstrate what they have been taught during training, some are even telling us that they are implementing what they have learned in their gardens at their homes," she Ms Mulima said.

Deputy Director for EPWP Beneficiary Training in Gauteng Mr Tshifhiwa Nkhumeleni stated that projects such as Phaphamang Environmental Organisation are a shining example of the government's work of turning participants into entrepreneurs.

"The growth of this project and its work with the companies such as Pick n Pay proves that we are doing something right in our work of turning participants into business owners. Today the project has a number of food gardens operating in various areas within the municipality," said Mr Nkhumeleni.

The Assistant Director for EPWP Training in Gauteng Mr Vincent Ramashau was also part of the project visit.

Phaphamang Environmental Organization in brief

The NPO is involved in a range of community based activities including rehabilitation of illegal dumping and greening of those areas, creating parks in the areas and maintaining them, recycling of material and planting of trees.

The NPO currently employs over 200 community members who are paid a monthly stipend by the IDT.According to Mr Mofokeng, the NPO is reporting its work opportunities in the EPWP Reporting System. The NPO also has food gardens at some schools in the area. In terms of partnerships, it is working with the local municipality of Emfuleni, the Department of Agriculture, National Development Agency, National Youth Development Agency and other government entities.

Wage increase for EPWP participants

Article by Lesego Moretlwe Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane

ΗΔΡΡΥ



The Department of Public Works through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), has announced that the minimum wage for all EPWP participants (beneficiaries) would increase from R83.59 to R88.00 per day or per task (performed) with effect from the 1st of November 2017. This wage increase is in line with the current inflation rate as aligned by Ministerial Determination on the EPWP and will surely contribute to the welfare of EPWP participants households.

"As the EPWP continue to play a significant role in uplifting the lives of participants and communities through the creation of work opportunities and providing much needed services under the EPWP sectors such as Infrastructure, Non State, Environment & Culture sector as well as the Social sectors, its impact is noticeable through the assets created and skills provided to our communities and participants".

"The wage increase will significantly boost the socio-economic conditions of the EPWP participants, and I urge all the implementing bodies of the EPWP to timeously adhere to the implementation of an approved prescribed minimum wage increase as of 01 November 2017," the EPWP Deputy Director General (DDG) Mr Stanley Henderson said.

The implementation of the adjusted minimum wage is applicable to all the participants of the EPWP across all sectors however many public bodies implementing the EPWP projects pay wages that are much higher than the prescribed minimum wage of which it is a significant move towards achieving better socio economic status of the participants and communities.





The EPWP is a government initiative aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment through the provision of training and short term to medium term labour intensive work opportunities to the poor and unemployed South Africans.

The EPWP Participants work in different projects like Early Childhood Development Centres, Home Community Based Care, Extra School Support Programmes, Working on fire, Working for Water, Roads Maintenance Projects, etc.

Through various skills and training that the participants receive from EPWP, the participants stand a better chance to enter a formal job market or become entrepreneurs.



KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works hosts EPWP Focus Week

Article by Michael Mokoena Pictures by Sphiwe Maphumulo

ΗΔΡΡΥ



In a bid to create awareness about the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and monitor the roll-out of the Programme by municipalities in the province, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works (KZNDPW) embarked on a week-long visit from 26 to 29 September 2017) to EPWP projects in all the province's regions.

Dubbed the KwaZulu-Natal EPWP Focus Week, the event was led by the Head of the Department (HOD) of KZNDPW Mr Thulani Mdadane who was accompanied by a team of senior departmental officials to all four regions to not only visit EPWP projects, but also engage with members of the public about the Programme.

The aim of the focus week was to improve EPWP awareness and understanding by all relevant Public Bodies and civil society, improve effective implementation and reporting by public bodies and also to expand on strategies for job creation in the Province. The weeklong programme sought to:

- Advocate EPWP impact and what should be expected from the Programme.
- Create an understanding of EPWP requirements toward creating decent Work Opportunities
- Foster good governance in the implementation of EPWP
- Learn and share Best Practices in job creation and exit strategy

The regions visited are uMgungundlovu, King Cetshwayo, Harry Gwala and eThekwini. Mr Mdadane's team met with various municipal officials including local and district mayors, chief whips and senior officials of municipalities as well as EPWP participants.

At the Harry Gwala Region, Mr Mdadane and the Mayor of Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality Mr Zamo Nxumalo led a cleaning campaign of the streets of the town of Ixopo. Mr Mdadane and Mayor Nxumalo also engaged with community members in the town on the impact of the EPWP in the improvement of socioeconomic conditions of communities.



During formal meetings with municipal officials, Mr Mdadane raised a number issues, including the need for municipalities to report all EPWP work opportunities that they created.

"As municipalities we urge you to report all EPWP work opportunities created though the EPWP Incentive Grant as well as through the Municipal Infrastructure Grants (MIG). We need you to collect data and report all work opportunities not only to achieve our provincial work opportunity targets, but also to provide proof for the opportunities created," he explained.

Others issues highlighted by Mr Mdadane included the importance of registering participants for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) as well as for Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (Coida).

Closing the focus week, Mr Mdadane stated that the department would continue to work with all municipalities to implement the EPWP.

Mayor Nxumalo said that the Programme has contributed in the socioeconomic improvement of the lives of the people in the municipality. "The EPWP remains the hope of our people. There are many families who today can put food on the table because of the EPWP. We will continue to support the Programme as municipalities," he added.

The Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality is one of the best performing municipality in the Harry Gwala Region in terms of EPWP targets. By September 2017, the municipality (Ubuhlebezwe) had created 197 work opportunities against the target of 286 for the 2017/18 financial year.

In the King Cetshwayo District, the Chief Whip at the district municipality (King Cetshwayo District Municipality) Mr Thamsanqa Gcabashe said that it was vital for public bodies to use the ward based government war-rooms during the recruitment of participants into projects.

"The ward based government war-rooms will not only ensure that our people know when there's a recruitment of participants in their area (wards) but they (war-rooms) will ensure that our people participate in the determination of the type of community work that must be undertaken through the EPWP," Mr Gcabashe added.

Director for EPWP Training Ms Pooe addressed APLC

Article by Michael Mokoena Pictures by Michael Mokoena

HAPPY

The Director for Training Support in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) branch Ms Tsholofelo Pooe recently addressed a high-level gathering of former African Heads of State on the importance of training function of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The three day African Presidential Leadership Centre (APLC) Business Conference was held in October 2017 at Melrose Arch in Johannesburg and its aim was to facilitate discussions between captains of industry and public sector leadership on the positive impact of scaling up Private and Public Partnership (PPP) programme as a solution to address Africa's educational and skills development challenges in the 21st century.

Ms Pooe spoke about how the government through the EPWP is working hard to provide EPWP participants who are poor, unskilled and semi-skilled with skills that would assist them to enter into formal employment.

"The EPWP is creating work opportunities in four Sectors, namely Infrastructure, Non-State, Environment and Culture, as well as Social sector. Training of participants is done in all of these sectors with the aim to provide participants with not only skills to gain permanent employment in the formal sector, but also with the intention to empower them to become entrepreneurs," Ms Pooe explained.

Keeping with the theme of the conference, Ms Pooe stated that it was vital for the government to work with the private sector to create the much needed opportunities for young people and women.





"Currently the government through the EPWP is working with various private sector organisations to train participants and provide work opportunities to our people. Government alone cannot create the much needed work, we need to work together with you - the private sector – to create work for our people," she said.



She added that platforms such as this conference were important in bringing the government and the private sector together.

The prestigious conference was attended by amongst others, the former President of Nigeria, Honourable Goodluck Jonathan and the former Prime Minister of Tanzania, Honourable Frederick Sumeya.

NSS Sector provides training to participants in Swartruggens

Article by Emmanuel Jiyane and Mosima Ndlan Pictures by Emmanuel livane

HAPPY



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) spearheaded by the Non State Sector (NSS) NPO Programme, in partnership with various stakeholders, including the Mahikeng Local Municipality, the Department of Higher Education (DHET) through the National Skills Fund (NSF) Programme and the Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA) provided training to about 45 participants during the 2016/17 Financial year. The participants celebrated their success during the graduation ceremony that was held at North West, in Swartruggens, Borolelo community hall on 07 July 2017.

The participants acquired an NQF Level 2 certificate in Thogomelo Psychosocial Support for Community Care Giver. This programme is led by the Department of Social Development with the objectives of providing Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Care-Givers with training and child protection interventions that are cost-effective, sustainable, and relevant to the South African context. The Thogomelo programme is facilitated by the South African training standards generating body – the HWSETA.

In his opening remarks, Mr Ndivhuwo Mulaudzi, Director: Non-State Sector indicated that the Non State Sector was introduced during the EPWP Phase two in 2009 with the objective of partnering with the civil society to create work opportunities and draw a significant number of poor and unemployed South Africans into the Programme. He thanked the participants for the good work that they do for vulnerable people such as preparing food for them before drinking their medication. In his closing remarks he quoted an unknown author "Every job is a selfportrait of a person who does it, it also reflects the person who's doing the job"

Testimonials

Since she lost her husband in 2014, 44 years old Mmaolifilwe Annah Kotane from Pella, outside Mahikeng has battled to make ends meet.



She said after her husband's death, her life became challenging. "It's difficult when you are used to being supported and suddenly you have to work. When my husband died, I had to find a way to make a living to support my three children." She was relieved when she joined the Thogomelo project at the Itekeng Community Non-Profit Organization and Angels of Tomorrow Non-Profit Organization.

She said that what she learned from the programme has also assisted her in her own life. "The life skills and psychosocial skills I have learned from the programme have contributed in my healing process. I am also happy that today I can provide for my children," Ms Koatane said.

For 29 year old Letlhogonolo Mokgantshangi, being part of the programme has given him passion to help the needy and the vulnerable. "I am intending to use the skills I have learned to help young people in my community, especially those who have a problem with substance abuse," he said.



Dear ERNP Family

Wishing you a blessed festive season
May the joy of the season fill your hearts with goodwill and cheer.
May the chimes of Christmas glory add up more shine and spread smiles across todayand in the
New Year.
And may we never forget the reason why
we celebrate Christmas!
Thank You

Stanley W. Henderson Deputy Director-General: EPWP