

Briefs



Trade & Industry Chamber

Industrial strategy

Government tabled its Industrial Strategy document earlier this year. A task team has been set up to enable labour and business to critique Government's document, after which DTI will respond. Parliament is to hold hearings on the document next year.

Sector summits

This Nedlac task team is tasked with co-ordinating the initiative that came out of the Presidential Jobs Summit to hold sector summits. Draft guidelines on holding Sector Summits have been drawn up by Labour. These are currently being discussed.

Plastic Bag Regulations

In response to the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs tabling regulations regarding the proposed thickness of plastic bags, Nedlac

initiated a research project into the impact of phasing out the thin plastic bags and introducing thicker bags. A study on this has recently been completed.

Fund for Research into Industrial Development, Growth and Equity (Fridge)

See page 7 for details about Fridge.

- Studies completed recently include
- Socio-economic impact of the plastic bag regulations;
 - Proudly South African follow up project;
 - Impact assessment of the SA-EU Trade Agreement, and
 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Current studies are:

- Sectoral studies in relation to the proposed SA - Mercosur agreement
- Ostrich leather industry
- Stainless steel studies (e-commerce & blanks, pressings and component parts)

- Eco-labelling
- Asbestos



Development Chamber

Integrated Rural Development Strategy

A presentation by the Department of Provincial & Local Government is scheduled for later this month.

Higher Education

Nedlac was invited by SAQA to deliver presentations on the focus study of the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) with the aim of streamlining its implementation. The Ministry of Education notified Nedlac that a working group has been established to make recommendations to the Minister on the National Plan for Higher Education. Nedlac was advised to engage with the Working Group.

Exco briefed on budget

The Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, briefed Nedlac leadership at the Executive Council meeting. He said the budget was being tabled on 20 February 2002, with the medium term budget policy statement being tabled on 30 October 2001. He welcomed the opportunity to interact with senior leadership, but said that the quality of interaction would be improved if constituencies entered the process at an earlier stage.

The Minister gave a fairly detailed presentation on the budget, which was welcomed by the constituencies. They were able to raise areas of concern with the Treasury. Community's



GS of Cosatu, Zwelinzima Vavi with Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel

biggest concern related to under-spending by Government departments. The Minister conceded that social delivery was a problem, but that this was more a problem of governance than a budgetary issue. Business proposed that a mechanism be introduced of evaluating the consequences of legislation before it was tabled in Parliament, such as the United Kingdom's regulatory impact assessment, which checks unintended consequences. Labour raised the issue of the arms deal package, which had been included in the budget without prior policy discussion with the public, and re-iterated its concern that there was no process at Nedlac for consistent discussion of the budget.