



OVERVIEW OF NEDLAC

The formation of Nedlac

On 18 February 1995, the National Economic Development and Labour Council was launched to bring together government, business, labour and community interests, to, through negotiation, reach consensus on all labour legislation, and all significant social and economic legislation.

Nedlac's origins lie in the struggle against apartheid, against unilateral government decision-making, and in the calls from all sectors of society for decisions to be made in a more inclusive and transparent manner. It emerges out of a recognition of the importance of seeking consensus on major economic, social and development policies to ensure their success. Nedlac draws on international experience of social dialogue, as well as on the experience of its predecessors, the National Economic Forum and the National Manpower Commission. But it also has unique features aimed at meeting the particular needs of the South African situation: it includes not only the traditional social partners – government, business and labour – but also organisations which represent community interests in our country.

Objectives

The Nedlac Act, passed in 1994 with unanimous support from all political parties, says Nedlac shall:

- Strive to promote the goals of **economic growth, participation in economic decision-making and social equity**.
- Seek to **reach consensus and conclude agreements** pertaining to social and economic policy.
- Consider **all proposed labour legislation** relating to labour-market policy before it is introduced in Parliament.
- Consider **all significant changes to social and economic policy** before it is implemented or introduced in Parliament
- Encourage and promote the formulation of **co-ordinated policy on social and economic matters**.

Nedlac promotes the goals of growth, participation and equity.

To meet these objectives, the constituencies are involved in:

- **Negotiations** that aim to deliver formal, consensus-based agreements
- **Consultations** that aim at developing policy
- **Information-sharing** sessions
- **Research** that guides the formulation and implementation of social and economic policy
- **Dispute resolution** in terms of section 77 of the LRA

Composition of Nedlac

The Nedlac Act defines Nedlac as consisting of:

- Members who represent organised business
- Members who represent organised labour
- Members who represent organised community and development interests
- Members who represent the State

Nedlac consists
of organised
business,
labour,
community and
government

Organised business is represented by Business South Africa (BSA) and the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (Nafcoc). Business South Africa represents the interests of 19 employer federations including, amongst others, the Chamber of Mines, the AHI, the South African Chamber of Business and Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services.

The Women's National Coalition (WNC), the Disabled People of South Africa (DPSA), the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco), the South African Youth Council (SAYC) and most recently, the National Co-operatives Association of South Africa (NCASA) represent organised community and development interests.

The interests of organised labour are represented by the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (Cosatu), the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa), and the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu).

The Government delegation in Nedlac is drawn from several ministries and departments, including Labour, Trade and Industry, Finance and Public Works. Representatives of other government ministries and departments participate in Nedlac structures on an *ad hoc* basis. These have included the Departments of Health; Education; Home Affairs; Justice; Foreign Affairs; Welfare; Housing; Provincial and Local Government; Transport; Communications; Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Minerals and Energy and the Office of the President.

Nedlac Operations

Nedlac's work programme is determined by constituencies tabling issues that they wish to negotiate or discuss. Once constituencies have agreed to add an issue to the work programme it is referred to the appropriate chamber for negotiation or consultation.

Once the Management Committee has endorsed a chamber's work programme, the chamber has to develop mechanisms to deal with the substantive details of each issue on their work programme. This often results in the establishment of a technical subcommittee.

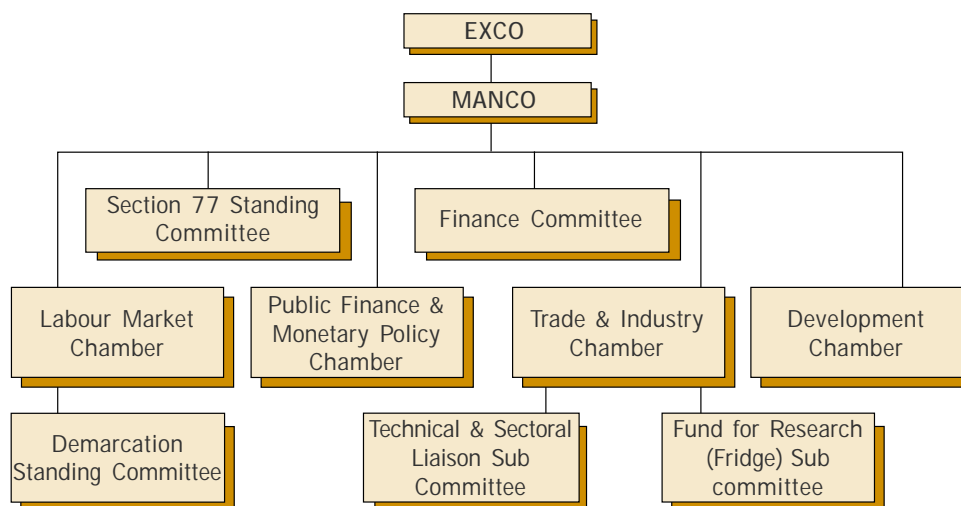
Nedlac's reports are submitted to Parliament.

Subcommittees or working groups report to the chambers, which finalise or recommend changes to the agreement reached in the working group. Before an agreement is considered to be a Nedlac agreement it has to be ratified by the Management Committee and then the Executive Council. In some instances, these bodies may request the chamber or the working group to further consider an issue.

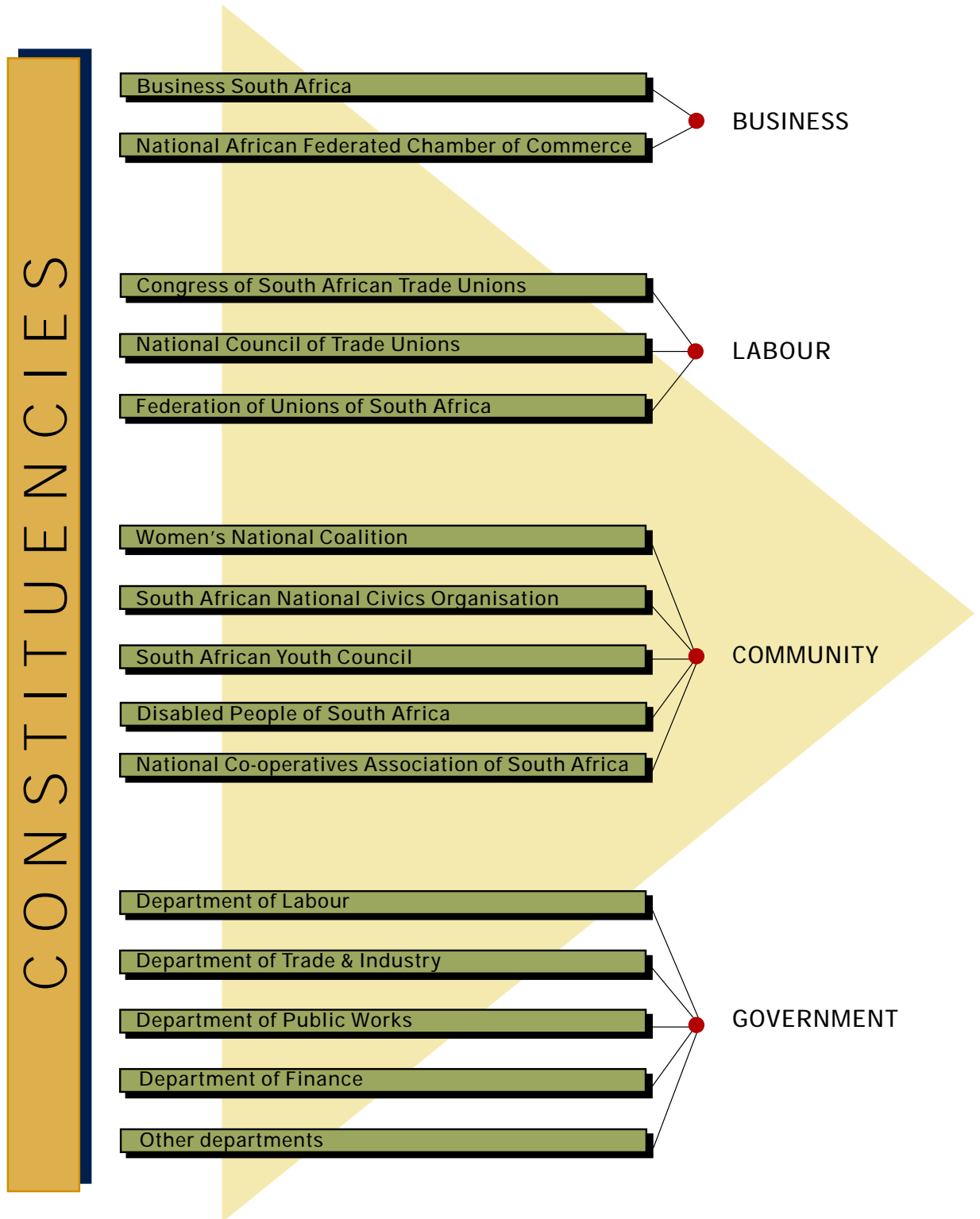
Following the ratification of a Nedlac agreement, Nedlac sends a report to the appropriate Minister for tabling in Parliament or for implementation. A Nedlac report records the process that was followed in Nedlac and the areas of agreement and disagreement between the parties (all Nedlac reports are available on Nedlac's website: <http://www.nedlac.org.za>).

In addition to this formal process, Nedlac provides an environment for informal meetings and engagements that serve to strengthen relationships and understanding between constituencies.

STRUCTURE OF NEDLAC WITH SUBCOMMITTEES



Nedlac organisational structure





Nedlac Secretariat as at 31st March 2002

Phillip Dexter	(Executive Director)
Natalie Robbs	(General Manager)
Vika Mpisane	(Programme Manager)
Amiena Arendse	(Administration: Office of the Executive Director)
Doris Tshabalala	(General Assistant)
Jennifer Wilson	(Communications co-ordinator)
Barbara Adair	(Research co-ordinator)
Shaun Govender	(Finance Officer)
Itumeleng Masege	(Co-ordinator: Trade and Industry Chamber)
Siphiwe Mabaso	(Co-ordinator: Labour Market Chamber)
Anusha Makka	(Co-ordinator: Public Finance and Monetary Policy Chamber)
Refilwe Mosuwe	(Assistant Co-ordinator: Development Chamber)
Tsholo Lelaka	(Administration)
Ruth Matotong	(Administration)
Sibongile Shikwambane	(Receptionist)

Nedlac's current staff



(Insert) Thami Maseko -
Research intern

(Back row) Lance Burger, Vika Mpisane, Oupa Machado, Siphiwe Mabaso, Phillip Dexter, Ruth Matotong, Doris Tshabalala, Shaun Govender.

(Front row) Brenda Chauke, Preya Keshav, Refilwe Mosuwe, Sibongile Shikwambane, Amiena Arendse, Jennifer Wilson, Mahlogonolo Manyeki

Absent: Tsholo Lelaka and Isaac Machaba