

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Nedlac interacted with several international social dialogue institutions.

The Executive Director participated in the ILO-MLC study tour to Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Meetings were also held with SERV, the Flemish socio-economic council, SER, the Netherlands socio-economic council and the French socio-economic council. The purpose of these discussions was to explore the possibility of collaboration between these bodies and Nedlac on potential joint projects.

Nedlac constituency representatives participated in the ILO Annual General meetings in Geneva in July 2001.

The Executive Director attended the International Association of Socio-Economic Councils and Similar Institutions board meeting in Paris. A number of issues were discussed, including the role that Nedlac will be asked to play in the activities of the African section of IASEC.

The overall business convenor for Nedlac, Professor Raymond Parsons, represented Nedlac at the bi-annual meeting of the Council in the Hague, Netherlands in July 2001.

The Executive Director attended a Unido sponsored seminar in Maputo hosted by Unido and the Mozambique government on social dialogue in Mozambique.

RESEARCH

Socio-Economic Trends Bulletin

As a result of certain delays, the publication of the bulletin, a succinct document setting out the main socio-economic development trends, did not take place in the year under review. The first edition is planned for the second quarter of 2002.

Roundtables

The roundtable discussions have been ongoing in Nedlac since 1999, the idea behind them being that the social partners will be able to engage on an informal basis on issues that are of particular relevance in South Africa at this time. At the roundtable discussions the social partners are exposed to academic and other research and then given an opportunity to engage on the topic.

Two roundtables were held in the year under review. The first was on the State of South African Education, held in April 2001. Mr. Thami Mseleku, Director-General,

Department of Education, Mr. John Pampallis, Director, Centre for Education Policy Development and Ms Shireen Motala, Director, Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand gave presentations.

A roundtable discussion on "An Industrial Strategy Policy for South Africa" was held on 28 March 2002. Andries Bezuidenhout and Eddie Webster of the Sociology of Work Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand (SWOP) prepared a research paper. The paper included an overview of the concept of industrial strategy as well as some case studies from both the developed and developing worlds. The social partners then also presented inputs on the issue.

Productivity

The Nedlac research department together with the National Productivity Institute (NPI) completed a report on productivity, economic efficiency and equity. This report will be used as a basis for further discussions in the Labour Market Chamber on the development of a Productivity Accord for South Africa.

The paper has been published as a Nedlac occasional paper and is available to all social partners.

An occasional paper on Productivity was produced.

Daylight Saving

A research report on Daylight Saving was produced and will be used in the Trade and Industry Chamber. On the basis of the report this matter will be taken forward by the Chamber.

HIV/AIDS

The importance of HIV/AIDS in South Africa cannot be under estimated, particularly in relation to the business and labour constituencies. However HIV/AIDS does not only have an impact in the workplace, it also affects the unemployed and rural poor.

A report has been compiled setting out all information relating to HIV/AIDS accords and best practices both local and international in the workplace. Further research is being conducted into what services are available for rural and unemployed persons. This report is for further discussion in the Development Chamber.

Bargaining Councils

A report on the efficacy of the bargaining council structures was compiled for the Labour Market Chamber. The report covers the following areas in which bargaining councils are relevant: dispute resolution, social security benefits, technology and infrastructure, enforcement of collective agreements and the demarcation of bargaining councils.

As the CCMA was engaged in similar research it was decided to combine efforts and produce the report as a Nedlac/CCMA document. The report was tabled in the Labour Market Chamber for further discussion.

World Conference on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

The World Conference on Sustainable development is being held in Johannesburg in 2002. Nedlac is involved in preparing for the conference in that all social partners are involved in the process and will be affected by its outcome. A research matrix setting out similarities and differences between the government's input to the conference, the Secretary General of the United Nations Report and the New African Partnership for African Development, Nepad, was being prepared.

Social Dialogue

Social Dialogue is the basis for the existence of Nedlac. However the constituencies are unaware, in the main, of the institutions of social dialogue that exist in Africa. A report, with the assistance of the ILO, is being compiled setting out case studies on best practices generally, as well as the institutions for social dialogue that exist in Africa.

Capacity building

Funding was received from the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity for Policy Analysis and Management. A capacity building workshop on Policy Analysis and Social Security took place on 3rd – 4th May 2001.

Black Economic Empowerment

The secretariat facilitated input from the constituencies on the Black Economic Empowerment Commission final report.

Conclusion

Research is an ongoing and integral part of Nedlac's work. The issues above constitute some of the major research reports that Nedlac has compiled. The smaller research areas where no formal reports have been compiled and where questions have just been addressed have not been described here.

The research work of Nedlac is generally based upon secondary sources. This is because Nedlac does not have the capacity to undertake large research projects that involve extensive primary research. Where this has become necessary the work is generally contracted out to specialised research units where the work can be done both cost effectively and efficiently.

The secretariat facilitated input from the constituencies on the Black Economic Empowerment Commission final report