



Joint Processes

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (GDS)

The Growth and Development Summit (GDS) took place on 7 June 2003 under the auspices of NEDLAC and with involvement by the NEDLAC constituencies of government, labour, business and the community.

The GDS was a result of an announcement by President Thabo Mbeki, in 2002, that he intended to host a GDS so that constituencies could work together to address the investment, employment and poverty challenges facing South Africa.

The Nedlac social partners, resolved to embark collectively on additional measures that would ensure that we defeat the problem of unemployment. Accordingly, the President convened the GDS to address the urgent challenges facing the economy and to build an enduring partnership that would help build a prosperous South Africa.

The GDS in the main was set out to achieve three broad objectives and these are:

- To build an enduring partnership between government, business, labour and community organisations in our country;
- To address urgent growth and development challenges; and
- To encourage all of our citizens to participate fully in the process of growth and development of our country.

At the GDS, the social partners announced their common vision to make South Africa:

- a. The leading emerging market and destination of first choice for investors whilst retaining and expanding social equity and fair labour standards.
- b. A productive economy with high levels of service, a highly skilled workforce and modern systems of work organisation and management.
- c. A society in which there are economic opportunities for all, poverty is eradicated, income inequalities are reduced and basic services are available to all.
- d. A society in which our people, our most precious resource, are given the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential.
- e. A society that promotes the values of social equity, fairness and human dignity in the global economy.

In pursuit of this vision, the constituencies identified the following national priorities for collaborative action:

- a. Promoting and mobilising investment and creating decent work for all
- b. Ensuring economic empowerment for all, especially for black people, workers, people with disabilities, women and youth
- c. Eradicating poverty and addressing the legacy of under-development
- d. Strategically engaging globalisation to the best advantage of the country



The social partners also agreed upon the following themes for the GDS:

- a.** More jobs, better jobs, decent work for all;
- b.** Addressing the investment challenge;
- c.** Advancing equity, developing skills, creating economic opportunities for all and extending services; and
- d.** Local action and implementation.

The implementation of the GDS agreements is underpinned by the following principles:

- a.** Building sustainable partnerships that delivers on the key challenges facing the country on the social and economic front.
- b.** Using the GDS agreements as one of the many interventions that are required to halve unemployment by 2014.
- c.** The GDS is premised on doing what is doable rather than to do everything. The GDS is about targeting carefully selected areas, which are capable of delivering on a greater scale.
- d.** The GDS is not a panacea for all economic growth and development ills but an important intervention towards addressing these challenges. The impact of some of these efforts will therefore not be immediate but medium to long term.
- e.** The implementation of the GDS agreements is not an event, but a set of multiple processes aimed at defining concrete steps and interventions at various levels.
- f.** The GDS is about making a difference and it is about real delivery on the commitments.

A proper review of the progress on GDS implementation will only be possible after the first anniversary which will be in June 2004. As has been alluded to, implementation of the GDS agreements has not been even on all fronts. The audit process will be undertaken by the NEDLAC Executive Council highlighting areas that require more focused attention in the future. The audit process has been accorded priority status on NEDLAC's work programme.

The approach to implementation emphasises quality and sustainability of outcomes rather than mere quantity. What progress has been made has been top class in terms of quality and sustainability.