Employment equity report 'disappointing and superficial'

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The 14th report of the Commission for Employment Equity is a disappointing and superficial document that will do little to promote the real development of South Africa's human resources, the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry said on Tuesday (15 April)

Cape Chamber of Commerce President Janine Myburgh says the employment equity report is sloppy, irrelevant and out-of-date. Image: Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The chamber said the report was sloppy and had not been properly checked.

The report, released last week, showed, among other things, that less than 20% of South Africa's top management positions were occupied by blacks. Whites dominated top management at 62.7%, while Indians made up 8.3%, coloureds 5.1% and foreign nationals 4.1%.

The Black Management Forum said that transformation in the workplace had been too slow since the dawn of democracy. South Africa introduced employment equity legislation to address racial exclusion in the labour market under apartheid.

Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Janine Myburgh said that the intention and spirit of employment equity is not simply to look at racial quotas of top-paying jobs. "It also has to look at how we can develop our human resources as a nation," she said

"We want to see employment equity in the workplace and in management but to achieve this we need to foster and develop the talents of our people," Myburgh said.

Sloppy report

The chamber believes the commission is looking at the wrong things. "What we should really be looking at is the future and how to develop the next generation of managers," she added.

Myburgh said the report itself was sloppily compiled: "This was illustrated in the 'highlights', which contained two versions of the same paragraph and another paragraph that was repeated."

"The commission chose to compare figures for the number of managers by race group and genders with out-of-date figures taken 2003," she said.

"If it had made the comparison with last year's figures, a completely different picture would have emerged and 2013 would have been seen as the year when things went backwards," she said.

"In virtually all categories the figures for 2013 were worse than those for 2012, but there is no explanation for this significant difference. Instead the new report simply ignores the findings of its own previous report," Myburgh said.

She said one explanation for the poor quality of the report was the inappropriate qualifications of the commissioners.

"Business was clearly under-represented and the commission was dominated by trade unionists, social workers and politicians. Both community representatives, for instance, were high-profile members of the South African Communist Party.

"When you look at the commissioners and their backgrounds it becomes clear that business was either not heard or understood. This is supposed to be a report about what is happening in business but there is no commissioner with a background in human resource management or managing a business," she added.