

Job equity 'no threat to minorities'

Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant reassured critics of the controversial draft regulations on employment equity that proposed guidelines for quotas would not prejudice coloureds and Indians.



The amendments to the Employment Equity Act will not prejudice Indians or coloureds says Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant.
Image: GOS

The draft regulations that will guide the implementation of the Employment Equity Act recommend the use of national demographics in determining the make-up of management.

They propose that companies with 150 or more employees should use the national demographic profile to determine targets for top, senior and professional employees, and critics say this would prejudice racial groups that have higher representation in certain provinces.

Addressing the second Employment Equity and Transformation Indaba in Johannesburg, Oliphant said regional and national demographics would be used in the regulations.

Transformation included coloured and Indian people, she said. "Those those saying that they would be prejudiced are telling a blue (sic) lie and even in an election period, lies should not and cannot be acceptable," she added

The Department of Labour has received written comment and public criticism from unions, the African National Congress in the Western Cape, and the Democratic Alliance (DA). The DA has threatened to take the matter to the Constitutional Court.

The employment equity regulations are before the National Economic Development and Labour Council, which is consolidating public comment.

Oliphant, who ultimately has a final say on the regulations, said the final product will be a result of a consultative process that reflects the views of a cross-section of South Africa's population.

She also released the Commission for Employment Equity's 14th annual report, which examines the pace of transformation in the workplace. The report showed that despite increases in the employment of formerly disadvantaged racial groups, women and people with disabilities, progress towards employment equity remained slow.

African representation in top management rose to 19.3% last year, compared with 18.5% in 2011 and 14.9% in 2003. White representation fell from 76.3% in 2003 to 62.7% last year.

The report showed African representation increased 93.3%, that of women rose 113.4% and of the disabled 74%.

Commission chairman Loyiso Mbabane said despite marginal improvements overall, employment and jobs growth had not kept pace with gains in designated groups' representation.

Business Unity SA acting chief executive Cas Coovadia said that despite the slow pace of transformation in the country, he was convinced that after 20 years of democracy, the cause could not simply be racism.

Source: Business Day via I-Net Bridge

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