

## Minister intervenes in Numsa strike

Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant has announced that she will meet with the National Union of Metalworkers SA (Numsa) and the metal and engineering industry in a bid to ensure the strike does not drag out for longer.



(Image: GCIS)

The minister said she wanted to find out why both sides failed to reach an agreement after indications, last week, pointed to a possibility that the two parties were closer to a settlement on wages, while they could not find a common ground relating to job growth and security.

Minister Oliphant made the announcement in Pretoria during a media briefing this week following her Budget Vote speech in Parliament.

"After this [briefing] we will meet with Numsa and the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa (Seifsa) precisely because we have intervened and when they were going back to report to their members, everybody was saying there is a possibility of the strike ending.

"Therefore I have to meet with them so that they can explain what has happened or what went wrong and look at the possibility of really coming to the table to finalise this particular issue because as a country we can't really afford a prolonged strike because as we speak, the steel and engineering sector is a key critical sector when it comes to the infrastructure of the country," she said.

Numsa members, who have been on strike since July 1, downed tools demanding a 15% wage hike, but on Friday [11 July 2014], the union had decreased its demand to 10% increase annually over three years.

Employers indicated that Numsa's demands were not affordable and the National Employers' Association SA stuck to its offer of eight percent across the board, while Seifsa offered Numsa a 10% wage increase 2014, nine and a half percent in 2015 and nine percent in 2016.

The Minister said this was a critical sector to the economy and it could not afford for it to be dragged out.

"If you look at the supply of steel particularly when it comes to the motor industry, I think it will be affected negatively so that is why we have to intervene so that this can come to an end," she said.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>