

# National Minimum Wage session goes to Bloem

Workers and union representatives in the Free State have been briefed on the fundamentals of the National Minimum Wage (NMW).



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The department on Friday held a briefing session on the introduction of the NMW and amendments to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and the Labour Relations Act (LRA).

The sessions in Bloemfontein and Welkom are part of a series of briefing sessions targeting all sectors of the economy.

Steven Rathai, the Director for Employment Standards at the department, said the country is faced with the high levels of inequality, unemployment and poverty. As such, the introduction of the NMW is important to cover all workers.

Rathai said the NMW Bill will be reviewed annually for adjustment. He said factors for consideration in the review will include the impact on the economy, inflation, cost of living, wage levels, productivity and the ability of businesses to carry on successfully.

The highlighted key amendments in the BCEA will include:

- Referral of disputes to the CCMA about non-compliance to BCEA, NMW, UIA and the Unemployment Insurance Contribution Act (UICA).
- Extending the power of inspectors to issue a compliance order for NMW, UIA, UICA breaches and allowing employers who dispute the compliance order to refer the matter to the CCMA for arbitration.
- The BCEA will now also permit inspectors to enforce compliance with the NMW in sectors with collective agreements, including bargaining councils.

Rathai said the sectoral determinations will remain in force in the transitional phase.

The briefing session also highlighted key amendments to the Labour Relations Act, which come from a process of engagement through the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) on the state of the labour relations environment and in particular, to address violent and protracted strikes.

The LRA amendments go together with the Code of Good Practice: Collective Bargaining, Industrial Action and Picketing and an Accord on Collective Bargaining and Industrial Action.

## **National briefing session**

The amendments in the LRA are expected to come into law this year, while the National Minimum Wage is set for implementation from 1 May 2018.

The agreed national minimum wage at NEDLAC is pegged at R20 an hour for major sectors, with the exception of sectors such as farm workers, domestic workers and Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers.

The worker engagement/briefing sessions started on 9 November 2017 in Johannesburg.

Briefing sessions have been held in Pretoria, Cape Town, George, Pietermaritzburg, Richards Bay, Durban, Tzaneen, Polokwane, Mbombela, Emalahleni, Klerksdorp and Rustenburg.

The next briefing sessions are lined up as follows: Umtata (7 February), East London (8 February), Port Elizabeth (9 February), Upington (15 February), and culminating in Kimberley on (16 February).

The briefing sessions on NMW and amendments to labour laws are held from 10am-1pm.

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