

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRADE

06 MAY 2026



On Wednesday, 06 May 2026, The Department of Employment and Labour appeared before the Select committee on Economic Development and Trade to present the strategic plan and the Annual Performance Plan (APP) for 2026/2027 financial year.

Deputy Minister (DM) of Employment and Labour Jomo Sibiya in his opening remarks highlighted the importance of accountability and public participation in governance, emphasising that **“democracy is only meaningful when citizens feel represented and heard.”**

Deputy Minister positioned the Department’s 2026/2027 Annual Performance Plan (APP) within a shifting global economic landscape marked by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and uneven recovery across major economies.

Deputy Minister Sibiya highlighted the extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as a strategic development that safeguards jobs in export-driven sectors like automotive manufacturing and agro-processing, while boosting investor confidence.

On the domestic front, Deputy Minister Sibiya pointed to reforms aimed at improving the ease of doing business, particularly for small and medium enterprises. The proposed Business Licensing Bill, he said, is intended to reduce red tape and lower barriers to entry, while maintaining labour standards.

“Compliance must become simpler and more accessible without compromising worker protections,” he said.

The Deputy Minister warned that rapid changes in the global labour market, driven by automation, artificial intelligence and digital platforms, require a proactive policy response. He said the Department is working to modernise labour regulations, expand social protections and prepare workers for evolving skills demands.

“The central question is whether economic recovery translates into jobs,” said Deputy Minister Sibiya, adding that the Department is repositioning itself to ensure that reforms lead to tangible employment outcomes.

Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya reaffirmed government’s commitment to decent work and inclusive growth, especially during Workers’ Month.



Employment and Labour Deputy Minister

Jomo Sibiya, MP

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“LABOUR RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH WITHOUT INCLUSION IS UNSUSTAINABLE. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO FIX WHAT IS FAILING AND IMPROVE HOW WE SERVE THE PEOPLE.”

Deputy Minister Jomo Sibiya

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CORPORATE SERVICES

Presenting on the Administration programme, Deputy Director-General (DDG) Bahumi Matebesi highlighted the Department’s digital transformation agenda as a central priority. The Department aims to implement 90% of its digital transformation plan in the current financial year, rising to full implementation over the medium term. This will be accompanied by the rollout of a “cybersecurity strategy aligned to international standards.”

The DDG Matebesi said the Department is also targeting a reduction in vacancy rates to 10% while strengthening internal accountability, including finalising 80% of misconduct cases within 90 days. Additional measures include ensuring full compliance with the payment of invoices within 30 days and advancing gender representation, with a target of 50% of senior management positions to be occupied by women.

Institutional reform remains a key focus, with the Department pushing ahead with the reconfiguration of its entities, including the unbundling of the Unemployment Insurance Fund and Compensation Fund. The process is expected to reach 90% implementation in 2026/27.

Further targets include improving procurement from designated groups, with 30% of goods and services to be sourced from women-owned businesses, 20% from youth-owned enterprises and 3% from businesses owned by persons with disabilities. The Department also plans to scale up communication initiatives to improve public awareness of its services.

INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

In the Inspection and Enforcement Services branch, Chief Inspector Milly Ruiters outlined plans to intensify compliance monitoring across the labour market. The Department aims to conduct more than 313,000 workplace inspections during the financial year, representing a 5% increase from the previous year.

Ruiters said enforcement will be strengthened through a target to issue notices to 97% of non-compliant employers within 14 days, while 70% of cases are expected to be resolved, referred to the CCMA or escalated for prosecution within set timeframes. The Department will also host advocacy sessions to improve awareness of labour laws.

She noted that two major priority projects have been introduced: the National Labour Inspection Programme, which includes plans to expand inspector capacity, and the modernisation and digitisation of inspection systems to improve efficiency and reach.

APP 2026/27 – Inspection & Enforcement Services: DDG: IES

Outcomes	Outputs	Output Indicators	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Reduced poverty and improved livelihoods	Workers protected through inspection and enforcement of employment law	1. Number of employers /workplaces/users inspected per year to determine compliance with employment law	313 009	313 009	313 009

Output Indicators	Annual Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Number of employers /workplaces/users inspected per year to determine compliance with employment law	313 009	77 250	156 503	234 754	313 009



PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Deputy Director-General (DDG) Sam Morotoba, focused on connecting job seekers with opportunities at scale. The DDG said that the Department plans to register one million work seekers in 2026/27, supported by a growing database used for job matching and labour market analysis.

The DDG Morotoba said the Department aims to list 125,000 employment and learning opportunities and place 75,000 individuals into jobs or training. In addition, 280,000 work seekers will receive employment counselling to improve readiness and access to opportunities.

He emphasised that placements depend on employer decisions and labour market conditions, noting that the Department facilitates matching rather than direct job creation. The programme will also include job fairs in each province and efforts to strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders.

Policy development is another key area, with plans to finalise the National Employment Policy following Cabinet approval and public consultations. The Department is also advancing a National Labour Migration Policy and amendments to employment services legislation to better manage labour mobility and align with broader government objectives.

DDG Morotoba added that the Department is working on a framework to coordinate more than 100 public employment programmes across government, aimed at improving their impact and alignment with national development goals.

LABOUR POLICY & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Acting Deputy Director-General Siphon Ndebele, emphasised the role of legislation in promoting equity, fairness and social justice in the workplace. The Department will continue to oversee the annual review of the national minimum wage, which affects millions of workers, and publish employment equity reports to track transformation in the labour market.

Acting DDG Ndebele said the Department remains active in international labour forums, where it advocates for fair labour standards and seeks to prevent a “race to the bottom” in working conditions across countries. He also highlighted efforts to strengthen collective bargaining systems, including the timely registration of labour organisations and agreements, to promote stability and prevent workplace disputes.

Acting DDG Ndebele said the Department will also expand collaboration with research institutions and stakeholders to ensure that policy responses are evidence-based and aligned with evolving economic conditions.

The Acting DDG concluded with an overview of the Department’s budget, including additional funding aimed at supporting the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative and partnerships with agencies working to address youth unemployment. Officials told the committee that the overall strategy is to ensure that labour market interventions are better coordinated, more responsive and capable of delivering measurable improvements in employment and livelihoods.

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