
OPENING REMARKS BY...
THE MINISTER OF LABOUR, MEMBATHISI MDLADLANA
AT THE 12th NEDLAC ANNUAL SUMMIT
01 SEPTEMBER 2007
EMPERORS PALACE, KEMPTON PARK, GAUTENG

Programme Director,
Deputy President of the Republic, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Minister of Trade and Industry, Mandisi Mpahlwa,
Other Government Ministers present,
President of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Patrice Motsepe,
Secretary General of COSATU, Zwelinzima Vavi,
Chairperson of JIPSA, Gwede Mantashe,
NEDLAC Executive Director, Herbert Mkhize,
Senior Government Officials,
Leaders from all the NEDLAC constituencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to get this opportunity to open this occasion of the 12th NEDLAC annual summit. I therefore would like to formally welcome you to this very important Summit.

This summit marks an important time in the calendar of NEDLAC. This is the time when we pause and reflect on the challenges and successes of social dialogue in South Africa and charting a way forward. NEDLAC has been and continues to be praised by our colleagues in the entire continent. These praises are a sign of the successes we have achieved since 1995. Here at home we are aware of the challenges facing our social dialogue institution, and we have earnestly agreed to deal with them head on.

When we converged for the same summit last year, we set ourselves an agenda to address key issues in this financial year, some of which touch on the very concept of social dialogue. We must ask ourselves whether we can now look back with confidence and smile, as an indication of the progress we made or whether we need to bury our heads under the sand in disappointment.

You would recall that we have made as practice, sessions where all the social partners come together to reflect on the progress we are making with regards to the Growth and Development Summit agreement. On the basis of the last report there is something to celebrate, without being complacent. This should further inspire us. However, as we are celebrating let us bear in mind that our task is not complete.

As we are gathered here today, it is important to note that NEDLAC remains the most important and effective mechanism of addressing the challenges of sustainable development, if we are to work in concert as social partners. This requires that we put aside our differences and interests, and focus on the task ahead of us.

Thank you.