

Solutions for youth unemployment needed says Presidency

The Minister for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, Collins Chabane, says finding solutions to youth unemployment are important to South Africa.



Collins Chabane says meaningful steps must be taken to reduce unemployment among youths.
Image: The Presidency

Speaking at the opening of the Presidential Youth Indaba on Jobs and Skills Chabane said that South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world with about 3.6m youth between the ages of 15 and 29 having no work.

"Finding solutions to youth unemployment is of utmost importance. If we want to increase the absorption and retention of young people into the economy, we need to prioritise pragmatic, demand-focused and solutions-driven interventions," said the minister.

He was delivering the opening remarks on behalf of Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe.

Chabane said structural constraints need to be addressed as there was a big pool of poorly educated black youths who were not employed. The minister acknowledged that the majority of the youth is trapped in temporary, informal or casual work with limited prospects for advancement.

However, several initiatives had proven to be a success such as that of the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator which is beginning to receive attention as one of the country's most effective youth employment facilitators.

Decent jobs

Harambee was formed in 2010 to find young people, who are disadvantaged but employable, find jobs because they don't have the money, skills or social know-how. It has placed over 1,000 candidates in full-time jobs to date.

The South African economy was divided into two with the first economy being a modern vehicle providing decent work and the second economy comprising of vulnerable work.

"The second economy is characterised by glaring forms of decent work deficits, which give rise to livelihood risks and vulnerability. This fact has prompted government to affirm the place of transformative social protection in responding to structural poverty and unemployment," Chabane said.

"South Africa must and will accelerate its efforts to put youth unemployment on the centre stage of policy and programmes," said the minister.

He noted that the indaba came at a time when the country had just about recovered from the financial meltdown of the past few years and at a time when debate on decent work among others is intensifying.

Of South Africa's population, 12.1% now hold a post-graduate qualification, up from 7.1% in 1996. Those, who have completed at least secondary school, as a percentage of the population have increased from 23.4% in 1996 to 40.5% in 2011.

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