

Siyasebenza

we are working

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Farewell

until we meet again

DELEGATES REFLECT ON SITE VISITS

Delegates at the 12th Regional Seminar on Labour Intensive Practices clearly appreciated the opportunity to comment and raise questions during a lively and interactive session that reflected on Wednesday's project site visits.

It would seem that the inclement weather failed to dampen the enthusiasm of delegates who visited projects in areas south, north and the west of Durban. Of the three visits, the trip to Port Shepstone elicited the greatest enthusiasm among delegates who were moved to applause.

The Northern Route visit prompted most interest with all questions and comments reserved for the construction of the P240 Road, while interest in the mushroom-growing project, coffin-making venture and the VIDP toilets were more or less equally shared by delegates on the western excursion.

It was clear that the selection of emerging contractors, training and their skills levels were of great interest to delegates from other African countries. In this respect, the experience gained in the construction of the P240 Road near Mtunzini and the P68/2 Road towards Highflats seemed of great relevance and the pioneering work through the Vukazakhe programme clearly was admired.

Not that delegates held back on criticism, as did a road engineer who queried the alignment of the P240, prompting the response that the design flaw would be rectified. Other comments and queries were submitted in the same constructive criticism frame. These pertained to questions about the sustainability of projects, such as the mushroom-growing initiative and the coffin-making scheme.

The responses to these specific queries might have varied, but they were couched in a palpable sense of honesty. Delegates heard for instance that the mushroom project was very much a pilot and that there were teething problems and some seriously challenging concerns, not least finding a market for the produce.

The interaction also explored the "work for food" paradigm that, to a degree, can be regarded as a cornerstone of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

It emerged, for instance, that the high youth component (25%) of people employed in EPWP meant that money would not necessarily make its way to a household, and rather might be spent on consumerist activities.

Similarly, the role of women features dominantly in the EPWP model with 60% of all workers of the female gender. The reason for this gender bias is charmingly simple and effective in that in a rural context, women tend to be the breadwinners.

Still on the topic of food security, delegates with experience in community gardens posed the question why not more was done in terms of composting as a natural fertiliser.

Sustainability as an economic imperative too was explored in depth. Most, if not all projects, elicited a question about its long-term viability and the expected degree of self-sustainability.

Delegates heard that funding for the mushroom project was budgeted for seven years, and that the coffin-making enterprise was not motivated as a SMME venture, but as a means to re-use waste wood.

The recycling theme surprisingly was rather muted, but can reasonably be expected to assume greater importance as the EPWP mindset is entrenched among decision-makers.



Ms Florence Mugendi, Kenyan Delegate

"I think the seminar was well-balanced and worthwhile. I was particularly impressed to see women involved in South Africa's projects. However, my main concern is sanitation on the sites."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

A friendly reminder to all delegates who still need to effect payment to confirm final arrangements in this regard with the Registration Desk.

For delegates who did not receive hard copies of the papers presented, kindly ensure that your details are passed on to the Registration Desk, in order for these to be posted to you soonest.

All Seminar papers and presentations will be posted on the ILO website, www.12thiloseminar.com soonest. Copies of our daily newsletter, *Siyasebenza* can also be obtained from this website.

RETRACTION

In the Tuesday issue of *Siyasebenza* (10 October 2007), it was incorrectly reported that India allocates at least 3% of its GDP to addressing unemployment and poverty. This should in fact have read 0.3%. *Siyasebenza* apologises for this "gremlin".

On speaking to Dr Santosh Mehrotra, one of the presenters of the Employment Guarantee Programmes after the panel discussion, he stated that "the norm for countries of the magnitude of South Africa and India is generally in the region of 0.3% of GDP allocated to labour-intensive programmes."



Public Works
Labour



KWAZULU NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Engineers against poverty

INCORPORATING LABOUR-BASED METHODS INTO LARGE PROJECTS

Conference delegates welcomed panelists' insights into many of the factors inhibiting beneficial social impacts in current public procurement approaches to large-scale employment.

Challenges relating to how best to incorporate labour-based methods into large projects are intensified by, for example, inflexible procurement strategies, and the exclusion of social objectives in project appraisals and design, among others.

In a joint presentation, four speakers representing a range of organisations examined approaches to public procurement within a broad global context, as well as from a South African perspective, via the eThekweni case study.

Social scientist and development specialist Jill Wells, representing the London-based non-governmental organization (NGO), Engineers Against Poverty (EAP) - an international development NGO working with the engineering industry to help eliminate global poverty - referred to a study conducted by EAP and the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in the UK, which looked at modifying infrastructure procurement to enhance social development. The study focused on two areas of social opportunity: the performance of the asset (product) and the benefit to the community through the provision of job opportunities during construction.

Two questions were posed: how do existing procurement procedures inhibit

the achievement of beneficial social impacts, and how can procurement procedures be improved and used to increase the contribution of the project to social development objectives?

The study brought to light a long list of inhibiting factors that ultimately disadvantage participation of local firms and contractors, and allow corruption at every stage. "Often consultants are appointed from developed countries who have very little local knowledge of the developing world or the local context," added Wells.

The study concluded that early decisions around design and planning have the most impact, and that factoring in operations and maintenance can also result in enhanced local content. Greater flexibility in procurement is therefore required.

Following this research, a South African model for the delivery of large-scale employment-intensive works (using a programme management approach) was developed by Ron Watermeyer, Steve van Huyssteen and Dave Larkin. This large contractor model was devised in response to concerns expressed by Cabinet relating to the limited impact of many of the EPWP projects.

The idea was to set up a generic model that would overcome current bottlenecks in the project cycle associated with the traditional approach to construction works. This would enable allocated multi-year budget spending; thus ensuring the construction

of quality buildings and infrastructure in response to prioritised needs, simultaneously enhancing national and regional social and economic objectives.

"For us, the burning question is, how do you translate 'unknowns' into 'knowns' within a procurement system so that the work can be priced?" asked Watermeyer. The only knowns at the outset of a project are the allocated medium-term budget, a list of short-term priorities, and a general breakdown of the budget for prioritised projects during the early stages of the programme.

The programme management approach comprises a process in accordance with which an employer appoints a programme manager, a design team and a large contractor to construct the works, then hand it over to the client, and deliver on the socio-economic agenda. Via the large contractor, suppliers, service providers and subcontractors are engaged.

The eThekweni Municipality (referring to its Water and Sanitation pilot project) provided a client's perspective in implementing the large-scale contractor model. "The strength of the model, in our experience, lies in the procuring of a programme of works over a period of time, well developed and documented processes, a rapid start to the programme, which has taken just over five months, and great flexibility in social and economic deliverables," concluded Dave Larkin.



Mr Ron Watermeyer and Mr Dave Larkin



Mr Steve van Huyssteen and Ms Jill Wells

Moving Public Works programmes into new areas

Providing delegates with a detailed progress report on the province's waste management programme called Siyazenzela: Ms Pheladi Kadiaka, EPWP coordinator in KwaZulu-Natal, yesterday said the programme allowed for more work opportunities than hiring one company to dispose of waste.

Launched in April this year, Siyazenzela is a waste management programme adopted from a similar project in Curitiba, Brazil where waste management is used as a source of livelihood.

Kadiaka explained that the programme comprises two components. The first relates to households which collect waste and get food hampers in return; whereas the second involves collecting waste and identifying recyclable material, which is then sold to companies.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the project is in its pilot phase and is implemented in four municipalities selected on the basis of high unemployment levels and limited service delivery in terms of waste management. The Hibiscus Coast project has proven to be particularly successful in this regard.

Research conducted, said Kadiaka, indicated that of the 14 000 people in the four pilot areas, 41% are not economically active, 45% household heads are unemployed; while 23% of the households earn less than R1 000 per

month - hence the need to empower them.

The garbage collected by the households should weigh a minimum of five kg for the beneficiary to receive a food hamper. The beneficiaries also receive a monthly redeemable voucher for R250 for groceries.

Mr Jacques Jansen van Rensburg of Munitech (Pty) Ltd touched on the use of community-based waste collection as a waste management tool and elaborated on a study undertaken in South Africa to document the success of waste collection using community-based entities. (The research focused on five provinces.)

"Waste management services include collection of domestic waste from households, street cleaning, litter picking, removal of building debris, garden waste, animal carcasses, as well as recycling of domestic waste," he explained.

The study further showed that the programmes were generally well-structured; legally compliant and that there was strong management, administrative and supervisory structures. Those participating in the programme were also strongly mentored to avoid being penalised for poor performance. Van Rensburg added that proper and accurate planning was critical in ensuring the success of the waste collection programme.

Ms Jean Msiza, Social Development Manager (EPWP) spoke about the Programme's Social Sector and explained that the aim of the sector is to strengthen social cohesion, foster coordination and integration within the sector, improve and accelerate service delivery, as well as enhance sustainable livelihoods.

The Home Community-based Care (HCBC) programme has 60 000 volunteers offering health and social services to the sick, orphans and child-headed households. The Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme caters for children up to four years, as well as those in pre-school and aims to improve care and learning. 300 000 children are currently benefiting from this programme and 54 000 practitioners have been registered.

"Safety volunteers, school nutrition and school sports coaching also fall under this sector. A study conducted also indicated that the social sector has the potential to create 400 000 job opportunities through other programmes," said Msiza.

Some of the challenges faced by this sector are the limited number of ECD practitioners and HCBC volunteers being trained, thereafter being attracted by higher remuneration in the private sector; limited accredited training; minimum stipends; interdepartmental coordination and information management.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES and PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION

A dominant theme among presentations delivered and comments made during this week's seminar was the issue of engaging communities and promoting social unity. It's little wonder that when the panel discussion of the same topic was opened on Thursday, there was big audience present to listen and engage the participants.

Robert Gueli posed the question of whether labour-intensive methods in construction could be used as a way to catalyse job creation in post-conflict societies. The question is relevant because the lack of meaningful employment is widely considered to be key causes of African conflict. "As a political scientist, I'm not here to say how this can be done, but rather why it must be," he said.

Previously, Gueli said, the stance was that restoring infrastructure after war was impossible and unnecessary. "If you agree that infrastructure cannot stop conflict, you must admit that neither can the military. It's the civilians and development, that can make the difference."

He explained that the main component of development work is 'DDR' - disarming, demobilising and

reintegrating former fighters into civilian life. But, he said, it's often difficult for these ex-fighters to get jobs as law-abiding citizens because all they know is fighting. They also find it hard to accept low paying jobs and would rather resort to looting. "We have to help them get skills and provide an economic alternative to living off the gun so they can put food on the table."

Another paradox he noted in post-conflict countries was that these regions have significant levels of infrastructure destruction and they are areas where violent conflict is more likely to re-emerge.

Gueli said that most African countries, including South Africa, don't have credible plans to back their commitment to rebuild or rejuvenate Africa. He said, "There's an urgent need in Africa to master the art of socio-economic reconstruction. I think we in Africa must invest in our own technology to solve our own problems."

Sduduzo Simelane and Zinhle Madlala presented a paper on the Mthonjaneni scheme, which is an initiative to create jobs through maintenance of community infrastructure in the Sisonke

District Municipality (SDM), KwaZulu-Natal.

"Public works programmes introduced since (democracy began in South Africa) have provided hundreds of thousands people with short periods of employment, but at the same time creating unprecedented rural infrastructure," he said, SDM developed an initiative to create employment opportunities through revitalising and maintaining existing projects.

Known as Mthonjaneni (a weir), the programme entails taking stock of the state of existing community water infrastructure, developing plans and mobilising resources communities to continuously monitor the wellbeing of these assets.

The project started last year offering its 19 participants, who are called water monitors, two-year contracts. Now it employs 91 people and these contractors get a salary of R2 500. Participants are selected through a consultative process between traditional leaders and local councillors. AIDS orphans and women-headed households are given preference in the selection process.

Alex Campbell of AnyWay Solid

Environmental Solutions discussed the Rural Community Development Plan (RCDP) they developed which incorporates road building and low-cost housing construction projects. The project is based in Simunye, which is southwest of Johannesburg.

In addition to offering employment, the RCDP is designed to teach marketable skills to those engaged in the process. While the science behind these products is complex, Campbell said, the technology transferred within the programme is readily learned by previously unskilled labourers. The programme trains teams of workers in three distinct disciplines, namely block making, roads construction and housing construction. This project shows how the private sector can promote rural development.

Nite Tanzam, an independent consultant, delivered a study on Labour-Based Methods: A Key Area For Mainstreaming Gender In The Road Infrastructure Sector. The study was based on Kenya's Road's 2000 concept. This project is the government's strategy for maintenance of rural roads. The strategy provides that all roads are to be

maintained through labour-based methods.

Some of the themes explored included the potential for labour-based works in promoting gender equality, the gendered impacts of adopting labour-based methods and the challenges of promoting gender quality in labour-based approaches.

Tanzam and her colleagues conducted their studies in Kenya and Uganda. They found that female contractors identified a number of constraints, namely training costs, access to credit and lack of knowledge of contracting systems also to proved to be major challenges.

"They believe that without affirmative action for women, especially in contracting, it would be difficult for them to get work," she said.

Due to concerns that promoting women's participation under contracting may be difficult because contractors are primarily interested in profit margins rather than equity, she suggested that motivating contractors to employ women through incentives could benefit the women.



Ms Nite Tanzam



Mr Alex Campbell

SMME CONTRACTOR DEVELOPMENT FOR JOB CREATION

Jubilee Zharare yesterday delivered a paper on a study commissioned by the EPWP Unit through the Business Trust Support Programme. The objective of the study was to review the Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme, an emerging contractor learnership programme established in 2004 under the EPWP, particularly with reference to the funding model of the learnership programme. The study was undertaken in five provinces by sampling 202 of 1500 learners already on the programme.

The study findings concluded that the programme was reaching its intended targets, contributing immensely to the development of emerging contractors and that funds invested justified the jobs created on the programme.

The discussion that followed mainly focused on the costs associated with the model, which resulted in an extensive debate on mentoring issues related to the selection and assessment

process. It was agreed that the assessment of mentors is currently the greatest weakness of the programme.

Exit strategies were also raised and it was evident that planning for exit strategies should occur prior to the start of a particular programme, or whilst the programme is being implemented.

A paper delivered by Emeka Egbeonu on SMME contractor development for job creation highlighted the difficulties experienced by small/medium contractors in circumventing the lack of preparatory factors. These include previous construction-related experience and other tertiary qualifications required by the industry. Research conducted considered the correlation between qualifications and success, as well as experience and success through considering the experiences of 53 contractors.

Recommendations flowing from the

research pertained to the development of an extensive training programme which covers the technical and business aspects of construction contracts.

However, the participants felt that more emphasis should be placed on on-site training. It was further recommended that the training requirements at the various CIDB grading levels should be assessed and that these should dictate the length of the training programme.

The Namibian model, according to Rudiger Polzin (Roads Authority, Namibia) is based on the revision of contract documents, which include the standardisation of specifications pertaining to labour-based construction work, tender documents and schedule of quantities.

Specification of quantities are drawn up in different sections and the SME contractor only prices those items which are labour-intensive. All plant items are therefore blocked out.

cont. on page 4



The Search FOR SUCCESSFUL LABOUR

Expect the search for successful labour-based methodologies to gather pace as the agencies responsible for road construction in South Africa deepen their search for appropriate technologies.

This truism was one of the themes during the discussion on labour-friendly design and specifications, one of the four parallel sessions after lunch.

The session focussed on three relatively challenging technical presentations. However, and in keeping with the nature of the discussion, the content of each of the three presentations by Messrs I. Cassiem, J. Hattingh and K. Mukura was made accessible to a diverse audience.

Arguably the most challenging aspect was the cost factor with particular reference to wages paid to labourers. It was felt that a straight comparison between the cost of labour and a machine was fallacious in that the discussion would necessarily ignore the essence of a labour-based philosophy – that of job creation and the need for socio-economic beneficiation in a bid to mitigate the impact of poverty.

In this context, the construction of rural roads, as opposed to high-tech highways designed to carry high traffic volumes, represented the execution of appropriate technology.

Notwithstanding the synthesis of “man and machine” in the construction of rural roads, several interventionist aids have been developed to improve road-building and, in the process, empower the people entrusted with this function.

One such initiative is the CIDB project that contains a wealth of information on the training of emerging contractors.

Informed by best practices in sub-Saharan Africa, the project makes no false claims as to its applicability. Essentially a simple “how to” manual in CD format, it states clearly that it does not meet the criteria for CETA or EPWP accreditation.

Similarly, it specifically excludes any application as far as bulk works, the development of borrow pits, and the procession of materials in borrow pits are concerned.

It is however, aimed at empowering local labour to become small contractors with skills and limited managerial capacity.

Its strongest element though is its philosophy of making work meaningful for labourers and, as such, imbues a high premium on skills development.

Its measure is that the quality of work by emerging contractors must be better or at least equal to what is being executed by machine

construction.

The resource comprises five separate manuals, each dealing with the characteristics of the unique elements of road building. It covers the fundamentals of road building, planning and contracting, gravel roads, bitumen roads and concrete roads.

Addressing the practical implementation of the philosophy of increased job creation, Johan Hattingh pointed out that the single biggest challenge to the EPWP was the apparent absence of accountability.

In a typical scenario, a road-building team is made up of a workforce, SMME contractor, training provider, engineer, and a project manager that, in the greater scheme of things, collectively strive towards the EPWP goals of providing infrastructure, SMME empowerment and job creation.

These goals are pursued within the boundaries of budget, time and quality, a tough task at the best of times, but the problem is that there simply is not sufficient remedy for a client.

The only way to redress this vacuum is to introduce accountability through a so-called “team balancing principles” paradigm.

Equally important is for labour-intensive projects not to be ring-fenced, to define optimum labour costs, introduce penalty and bonuses, to re-engineer processes, and to address delivery.

The challenges of road building in Africa are no better illustrated than by the fact that 80% of roads are unpaved, and that the continent is losing more roads than it is building.

Despite unfavourable views on labour-based methodologies, there are success stories in some countries.

At issue is quality assurance, a collective willingness to use appropriate construction materials, and the implementation of life-cycle costing principles with reference to future maintenance, budget, and project appraisal.

“It stands to reason that good quality materials will produce a better road that lasts longer and is more cost-effective,” said Kenneth Mukura.

of Namibia, Polzin said.

Training of SME contractors involves attendance at a one-week training course on SME contractor development. Contents of the course relate to establishing cost prices, tendering rates, etc. All persons wanting to participate in the programme should have completed the course and be in possession of a certificate. To date, 57 contractors have been trained.

Delegates showed immense interest in the revision of contract documents and were particularly eager to obtain further details regarding the mentor models applied in Namibia.



Mr Kenneth Mukura



Mr Ismail Cassiem



Mr Johan Hattingh

SMME Contractor Development ...cont.

On the other hand, plant contractors price those items that are equipment-based and all labour items are blocked out. Ultimately SME contractors and plant contractors submit a joint tender offer. If they are successful, they enter into a partnership contract, which defines their relationship.

SME contractors secure management support and training during the execution of the contract and the costs of training are carried by the main contractor. Six SME contractors are currently undertaking work in the northern parts

MADAGASCAR

TURNING THE TIDE ON POVERTY

With almost two-thirds of its population living in acute poverty, the island country of Madagascar on Africa's east coast is at pains to improve the quality of life of its citizens.

Mamy Ratolojanahary, Director of Total Planning in the Ministry of Economy, Finances and the Budget in Madagascar, painted the picture of his country's socio-economic landscape. Added to the extensive poverty in the country, he said, they also had to contend with the lack of employment opportunities.

Determined to win the battle against poverty and unemployment, national government has in place the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP). "The intention is to help our people make a leap forward with economic growth in a significant way," he explained. The government has in use new approaches to prioritise employment in infrastructure investments through government programmes and the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF). "It is also very important to note that Madagascar enjoys the support of a number of friendly countries, partners and funders," Ratolojanahary said.

A priority for Madagascar is that the quality of employment that is generated by public infrastructural investments is beefed up significantly. "Labour-intensive approaches have been implemented since the late 90s in our country, thanks to donors and funders," he said. By 1995, it was only the Presidency and the Ministry of Public Works that were the main drivers of labour-intensive approaches. Since 2000, other departments have also got on board.

Through the labour-intensive approach, a strong relationship between state and the private sector in addressing economy growth and poverty reduction in Madagascar has proved to be very important. Through public investments, Ratolojanahary said, the state is able to show its solidarity with the poor. He added that government determines on an annual basis, through its budget process, the rate of employment that must be met by public investment.

For him, the challenges they face in implementing labour-based methods must be met head-on. "In the minds of the public, labour-intensive construction is often associated with poor quality work that's not sustainable. We therefore have to relook the way in which we conduct business."

In analysing the various techniques of executing labour-intensive employment opportunities, the Madagascar government bases its methods on information from projects which companies tender for, as well as various other projects around the country. This approach assists in projecting labour costs and resources. It also helps to establish whether a product or service should be produced locally, or be imported.

He said that in 1995 they had to limit these projections to road rehabilitation programmes, but programmes have now been expanded to include public buildings such as schools and hospitals, as well as irrigation systems and the like.

"No matter what type of infrastructural project you have, the labour-based approach is better than the technological approach," he said. Madagascar's technique is to encourage all designers to include the former in their planning. "You can't reach growth without creating jobs. From now on, as soon as the budget is voted, the government should impress on all concerned parties to include labour-intensive approaches in their programmes. You have to insist on quantification, alignment and flexibility," he added.

Ratolojanahary argued that government should always opt for the labour-based option, although this approach does not seem to bode well with all of those involved in these processes. Within Madagascar's Public Works Department, he said, it does become a challenge to convince the engineers, who are more technologically-prone, to place more emphasis on labour-intensive approaches in their planning.

The Great Wall of China, he said, was built not just to block off the enemy, but to create jobs for the Chinese people. "It's this magnificent man-made structure that can be observed by the satellites - not highly advanced technological inventions," he concluded to much applause.

ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY

The Employment and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) information sharing session yesterday afternoon addressed issues of critical importance.

Ms Jubilee Zharare from the ECI Africa Organisation stated that the objective of the programme was to create enterprises through contractor learnerships to create additional work opportunities linked to training and to enhance the ability of workers to earn an income, either through labour-intensive or entrepreneurial activity.

She suggested that the recruitment and selection of participants played a particularly important role in achieving these objectives. "Training needs to be relevant and appropriate and mentors need to understand and deliver the type of services required to prepare learners for the industry," she added.

Several challenges remain, including the provision of an effective service by mentors, i.e. to determine the optimal ratio in respect of the mentor/contract firm relationship; how to cover mentors' unbilled costs; the monitoring of mentor firms to reduce incidences of fraud and ensure delivery; and matching mentors' relevant skills to projects.

Mr Emeka Egeonu, a PHD student (Wits University) elaborated on the importance of learnerships and other opportunities provided by the Vuk'uphile ('get up and do it for yourself') programme. He continued by stating that SMEs contribute immensely to the economy of many countries and despite the limited capital at their disposal, create more job opportunities than large companies.

South African banking giant, ABISA, also contributed to the project by investing an estimated R175 million in the project as part of its social responsibility programme. About 77% of the participants have already benefited from the project in terms of loans accessed from the bank.

According to a member of the panel, ineffective management and incompetence remain challenges. However, approximately 16 957 jobs have been created by this programme.

The need to provide relevant mentors in order for the programme to be effective and produce results has been identified as a major requirement by the South African EPWP.

Despite skepticism about the viability of the EPWP in South Africa, measures are in place to successfully achieve the projected target of creating 1 million job opportunities by 2009. Successful exit strategies form part of the aforementioned.

Mr R.W Polzin, a senior engineer from Namibia elaborated on the Namibian experience, noting that women indeed proved to be more focused than men in these programmes.

Ms Marietta Mcha from Tanzania's Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development said she appreciated the involvement of engineers and developers in the planning and implementation phases, as they brought valuable insights to the upgrading of infrastructure, while simultaneously creating job opportunities and transfer of skills.

THE RIGHT TO A JOB

If there's one thing macro-economist Rania Antonopoulos believes in, it is the "right to a job".

She is not talking about herself of course, but to the growing phenomenon of jobless growth that, in the South African context, translates to a booming economy against a background of unacceptably high unemployment.

Antonopoulos is a founder member of a global network of economists, academics, policy advisors, institutions, advocates and members of government, who are committed to the realisation of the right to a job.

"We believe that job creation is a strong and contributing factor to a just, equitable and humane economic development path. We also believe that having access to decent work must become the highest economic and social priority; and that constraints of financial resources should not be an a priori justification for not fulfilling this responsibility," she said.

Of less concern are the historic reasons for unemployment, and rather a strong focus on the plight of entire groups of citizens condemned to forced idleness and social exclusion.

Controversially, certainly among neo-classical economists, Antonopoulos and her network believes the primary responsibility for guaranteeing a job rests with the state.

To drive home her point, Antonopoulos refers interested people to a website with a name that is a mouthful - www.economistsforfullemployment.org.

"We are joining forces with all who foster public dialogue and seek to promote employment guarantee programmes around the world. Together, we can provide coherent, viable policy alternatives that lead to inclusive and just outcomes for all," she said.

To this end, the movement set out a number of key elements:

- The establishment of an international virtual community of people and institutions;
- To promote public dialogue fora and build towards a worldwide campaign that places job creation and employment guarantee policies at the top of the policy agenda;
- Leverage and influence the policies and programmes of development agencies and financial institutions for improved employment outcomes;
- Build communities of learning and foster public awareness on existing country level experiences; and
- Engage in teaching and policy oriented research that explores development, poverty and macro-

economic issues linked to the design and implementation of the right to a job and full employment policies

Speaking to the 12th Regional Seminar on Labour Intensive Practices, Antonopoulos said the gathering helped to synthesize some of the principles and philosophies of the "right to work" ethic.

"The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is very much a manifestation of this philosophy and it was very good meeting with people who share the same concerns," she said.

Antonopoulos was also highly complimentary of what she called the "thinking" around the issue in South Africa.

"There's a long way to go, but I'm very impressed with the thinking around these issues," she said.

Much as the issue is about the right to dignity, it equally relates to the power of economics, specifically the multiplier effect.

"The impact of such an exercise is directly proportional to the input, but I reckon by making a concerted effort to employ the unemployed, the South African economy will post additional growth of between 1,7% and 2,5%," she said.



FEEDBACK

FROM DELEGATES *12th ILO Seminar comments*



Mr Emeka Egbeonu, Doctoral Research Student at the University of Witwatersrand

"This is the first seminar that I have attended. What concerns me, is that we are still experiencing escalating poverty, despite all the interventions in developing countries."



Mr Tsutomu Arakawa, Ministry of Works and Transport in Uganda

"I think the visit to the projects was fabulous and informative. The projects are performed in a specialized fashion which is ideal for labour-intensive methods. I will definitely take some of the ideas back to Uganda."



Mr Nchaupe Malebye, Deputy Director-General, Department of Public Works, South Africa

"The seminar has really contributed to increased awareness regarding skills development initiatives going forward".

Special thanks to all the exhibitors who provided invaluable information to delegates throughout the week:

- South African Department of Public Works
- International Labour Organisation
- KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport
- Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works
- Mpumalanga Department of Roads and Transport
- Independent Development Trust
- Council for the Built Environment
- Agrément South Africa

Cocktail function

A farewell cocktail function was held at the ICC last night and judging by the smiles our photographer elicited, was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Memorable Moments



THE WEEK IN COLOUR

