the dtic
Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 3264

Mr M P Msezane (MK) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

What measurable impact has been made by his department in the past year in the broader efforts of fighting youth unemployment in the Republic? NW3392E

REPLY:

The Youth Employment Service (YES) employment programme is an initiative by the private sector in partnership with Government, which was launched in 2018. Its primary objective is to improve the employment outlook for young work seekers by offering work opportunities and therefore inclusion in the SA economy.

The YES participant companies train the youth through a minimum of a structured year-long work experience, and in return are awarded B-BBEE points. This they do by matching young people and firms, and in matching firms looking for black-owned businesses to support, by utilising cutting-edge digital technology and strategic partnerships.

The Department monitors quarterly progress made by the YES initiative. During the 2025/26 financial year, YES created 40242 job opportunities for youth.

The Social Employment Fund (SEF) created 54 325 work opportunities across all nine Provinces, exceeding its target of 50 000 opportunities. Of the total participants, 64% were youth, demonstrating the programme's significant contribution towards supporting young people who are unemployed. In addition to providing income support, the programme enhances participants' employability through work experience, skills development, and pathways to further opportunities. Evidence from Strategic Implementing Partners (SIP) indicates that former SEF participants have progressed into internships, training programmes, and other livelihood opportunities. For example, 36 former participants were absorbed into a 12-month GreenWorks internship programme, while a further 20 former participants entered the Just Energy Transition (JET) Green Pathways programme.

During the 2025/26 financial year, **the dtic**'s Global Business Service Incentive created over 3 800 new digital jobs. Of total jobs funded through the incentive, over 80% supports youth employment by providing accessible entry-level opportunities and equipping youth with digital and technical skills as well as enabling first-time job seekers to participate in the formal economy. Through incentivising this industry, which deals with globally traded services, Government aims to improve the long-term employability and career progression for youth.

Furthermore, the National Empowerment Fund's (NEF's) interventions made a significant and measurable contribution to the National effort to combat youth unemployment through expanded access to finance, SMEs development and job creation. In the past year, the NEF funded 121 SMEs that are owned and managed by South African youth, broadening opportunities for entrepreneurs and employment creation across priority sectors of the economy. These investments resulted in the creation and maintenance of 2 274 jobs predominantly in townships and rural areas where majority of youth seek employment opportunities. Furthermore, the NEF also placed 502 trainees through its skills development program across priority sectors and supported 27 students with bursaries during 2025/26 as part of the efforts to eradicate youth unemployment.

In addition, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) further contributed to employment creation and youth participation through its funding and programme interventions. IDC-approved funding supported the creation and preservation of 15 732 jobs across the economy.

To advance youth participation, the IDC approved approximately R1.1 billion in funding to youth-owned enterprises and R0.5 billion to youth-empowered businesses, increasing to committed funding of approximately R1.3 billion and R0.6 billion respectively, including leveraged finance through partnerships.

Sectoral investments in manufacturing, agriculture, mining and services further supported employment, particularly in labour-intensive industries, with over 1 400 jobs in clothing and textiles and close to 1 000 in machinery and equipment manufacturing.

Through targeted programmes and partnerships, the IDC supported an additional 11 387 jobs and provided approximately R175 million to youth-owned enterprises. The Corporation also continues to enable youth employment through SME development, enterprise incubation and value chain participation.

Collectively, these interventions reflect the IDC's contribution to job creation and preservation, expanded funding to youth-focused enterprises and increased youth participation in industrial value chains.

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