

TO : ALL MEDIA
ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/NEWS WIRES
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NEDLAC COMMITTED TO SOONEST MIGRATION TO LOCKDOWN LEVEL 3

Constituencies of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) are working sectorally and collectively to achieve the country's earliest possible migration to Level 3 of the national lockdown.

Government, labour, business and the community sector are undertaking detailed work to ensure that lives will be saved and livelihoods will be protected as the economy is progressively unlocked and society adapts to the reality of economic activity with COVID-19 as an ever-present danger.

President Ramaphosa co-chaired a virtual meeting today, Friday, 15 May 2020, of the NEDLAC constituencies to assess preparations for the step-down from Level 4 of the national lockdown.

Today's meeting was the first in a series of consultations led by the President between government and social partners as well as more specific sectors of civil society, on the migration from Level 4 to Level 3 of the lockdown.

Social partners expressed their support for the risk-adjusted approach South Africa has taken to the reopening of the economy, as well as for the original restrictions put in place to give the country time to prepare the health system for the management of COVID-19 infections.

Constituencies reported today on their respective preparations for the step-down to Level 3 of the national lockdown, which will more than double the current number of people who have returned to work as part of the Level 4 easing of the economy.

NEDLAC also received calls that social and food support be intensified in vulnerable communities; that all businesses comply with COVID-19 safety measures, and that greater funding and other support be extended to community-based organisations. More than 1,5 million people are employed by 150 of the community-based organisations that are registered in the country.

Business and labour will engage bilaterally to address the challenges giving rise to workers' concern about their return to the workplace.

Social partners are agreed on the need for the strengthening and sustainability of prevention measures at workplaces, on public transport and in public places, as elements of a long-term way of life in the midst of COVID-19.

NEDLAC views Level 3 as an opportunity for expanding local production and greater

consumption of South African-made goods by consumers, as part of reversing the economic losses suffered during the national lockdown, and as part of the country's long-term approach to industrialisation and employment.

As part of supporting the health system, NEDLAC wants to see significant production in South Africa of many of the resources – including personal protection equipment, masks, ventilators and thermometers – required on the frontline of the fight against COVID-19.

President Ramaphosa expressed his appreciation to the social partners for their commitment to making the progression to Level 3 a reality.

The President reiterated that the progression to Level 3 must be accompanied by the crucial, non-negotiable and practical interventions in the country's coronavirus prevention toolbox.

These include lockdown, to achieve extreme social distancing; social distancing; hand hygiene practices involving regular washing of hands with water and soap or sanitiser; the wearing of cloth masks in public places, frequent cleaning of the work environment and other public spaces; symptom screening; testing, isolation, quarantine and contact tracing; the etiquette of coughing into one's elbow or a tissue, and the use of personal protection equipment by all health workers.

NEDLAC will continue consulting on preparations for Level 3.

The President is optimistic that the work done by NEDLAC and government's continued consultation with other formations and sectors could deliver an advance to Level 3 before the end of May 2020.

These consultations continue tomorrow, Saturday 16 May 2020, with a meeting of the President's Coordinating Council which brings together the National Executive, Premiers and the South African Local Government Association.

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