

SA needs a real work ethic says Qubeka

SA's alarmingly low productivity levels and work ethic must become the topic of an urgent national conversation, says the Black Business Council.



BLACK BUSINESS COUNCIL

Its chief executive, Xolani Qubeka, says the council will host a conference on the country's work ethic on 31 July to address "the sense of entitlement" among unemployed South Africans.

"Jobless youth need to take responsibility for themselves and their position. My generation did simple things like plant vegetables in our gardens, which gave us a livelihood. Attitudes have changed. We don't see this anymore," he said.

Qubeka says people perceive government's role to be that of a provider of jobs and opportunities. "They don't say how they will do things for themselves, as well as for their country. This needs to change if we are to increase the pace of growth, while addressing growing social problems like youth unemployment."

There is widespread concern about high wage increases without a similar increase in productivity. Without a more commensurate link between the two, National Employers Association of SA's chief executive Gerhard Papenfus has warned that, in the long term, it will lead to job cuts.

Pay and productivity

The link between pay and productivity in SA is worse than in most other countries, according to the World Economic Forum's latest global competitiveness index. On this measure, SA is ranked 134th out of 144 countries, which has implications for SA's global competitiveness. The index ranks co-operation between labour and employers in SA as the lowest in its index.

The SA Reserve Bank has expressed concern that above-inflation wage increases not accompanied by higher productivity could cause a spike in the inflation rate. The Bank's most recent quarterly bulletin states that labour productivity growth in the formal, non-agriculture sector of the economy decelerated from 1,4% in the third quarter of 2012 to 1,2% in the fourth quarter, compared with a rate of about 5% in early 2010.

Qubeka also called on employers to make the workplace more conducive to productive employment. Low morale, particularly in sectors like mining, has deteriorated sharply, with knock-on effects on productivity.

Qubeka, who grew up in Orlando West, says he was forced to work when many of his friends began their university education. "This set the tone for a successful career in business," he says.

Source: Financial Mail via I-Net Bridge

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