

Gauteng job numbers paint a bleak picture

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SOUTH Africa's plan to create 11 million jobs by 2030 may be hampered by a lacklustre performance on this front by its economic hub, Gauteng.

Job numbers revealed by Premier Nomvula Mokonyane in her state of the province address yesterday suggest that President Jacob Zuma may have to look elsewhere to deliver on his ambitious employment drive.

Mokonyane yesterday announced that Gauteng's economy generated 22 000 direct permanent jobs and 44 000 direct temporary jobs in the 2012/2013 financial year.

The province's job creation initiative is heavily reliant on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which was able to deliver 151 000 "work opportunities".

The outlook is not much more rosy for next year.

"In 2013/2014 we intend to create 196 000 EPWP work opportunities at both provincial and municipal levels.

"In addition, 51 000 temporary and permanent jobs will be created," Mokonyane said.

The jobs situation is equally bleak in other provinces.

Free State premier Ace Magashule announced last week that "the provincial EPWP has created 157 396 work opportunities" since the 2009/2010 financial year and that 48 124 similar opportunities were earmarked for this

financial year.

In North West, 21 196 job opportunities were created to date through the EPWP.

Limpopo announced the creation of 1 000 jobs in the construction of De Beers' Venetia Underground Mine.

By contrast, the Western Cape economy generated 38 000 jobs with a further 10 000 off-shore jobs envisioned in the next three years through the business process outsourcing sector.

Two weeks ago, when he delivered the State of the Nation Address to Parliament, Zuma seemed to suggest that the targeted 11 million jobs to be created by 2030 would be permanent.

But Zuma's words may also suggest that most of the jobs to be created will actually arise from the state's massive multi-trillion rand infrastructure spend.

Said Zuma to Parliament recently: "By the end of March this year, starting from 2009, government will have spent about R860-billion on infrastructure."

The president dished up a surprise to MPs when he revised upwards the previous jobs target of five million jobs by 2020.

Zuma said interventions included in the National Development Plan – which received support from the ANC's Mangaung elective conference – would enable the country to create the desired jobs.

However, the country's economy would need to grow in excess of 5% to possibly create that many jobs. – molatlhwao@sowetan.co.za