

Construction sector charter nearing completion — Nhleko

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Public Works Minister Nathi Nhleko is gearing to introduce "radical economic transformation" in construction by revamping the construction sector code to align it with this purpose.

The construction sector charter was in the process of

being finalised and was awaiting Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies's approval and that of the cabinet, said Nhleko. He said he was eager for the process to be completed soon.

Should Nhleko have his way, benchmarks would be set for businesses that tender to the department in a bid to transform the construction sector. The

department would do this by incorporating these in the new construction sector code.

Nhleko said the ministry, through the Construction Industry Development Board, was putting together a transformation co-ordinating committee made up of industry participants to also look into the possibility of developing a policy document to

tackle the developmental challenges of construction.

The chief beneficiaries of the department's drive to transform construction would be small, medium and microenterprises.

Department director-general Mziwonke Dlabantu said: "We need to protect subcontractors from the abuses they may face from major contractors,

which include late payment or even nonpayment."

The department is to host a transformation indaba next Tuesday to discuss these issues.

South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Alan Mukoki said the department had not consulted the chamber, but he would be eager to contribute to the transforma-

tion discussion as "the sustainability of the economy rests on how inclusive it can become".

Mukoki said: "They have not consulted with us yet and we are not aware of what they intend to do. It's a contested area, as you would appreciate.

"We are here to look after the interest of our members. The long-term interest cannot be

secured in an era where black business does not exist."

History showed that government-led transformation initiatives in the private sector were fraught with contestation, but it was time business showed initiative in proposing transformative mechanisms that made a social impact, Mukoki said.

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