

More than 20 000 jobs created

Minister says partnership with IDC made 29 000 posts, saved 6 000

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MORE than 20 000 jobs have been created in the past four years by the Industrial Development Corporation, Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant said.

Oliphant was speaking yesterday in Parliament when she delivered her department's R3.2bn budget vote.

She said the partnership between the department and the IDC ensured that 29 000 jobs were created and 6 000 were saved.

"We will continue to partner with the IDC as we have again ring-fenced R5bn for labour intensive investment projects going forward.

"We have partnered with our sister departments such as higher education and training and public works on the expanded public works programme exit plans," she said.

Oliphant said they would continue working around the clock in ensuring that the five-year plan that started in 2014 was implemented.

She said that one of the objectives they set for themselves was to establish a minimum wage which was still in the pipeline.

She took a swipe at those opposing the R20 an hour minimum wage.

"The current debate on the minimum wage has helps to expose those who, when it suits them, claim to be on the side of the workers, but when they must walk the talk they show their true colours.

"To complete this work, Parliament is considering the first ever national minimum wage bill to be introduced in the country.

"When it is finalised, we can gladly stand back and rightfully proclaim that

the mission has been accomplished," she said.

Oliphant said there was a great need for her department to strengthen monitoring of the health and safety standards in all workplaces.

She said they would enforce laws where marginalised workers such as retail, construction and farmers rights were upheld.

"Inspection and enforcement services registered high levels of success on the inspections and follow-ups, however, the focus going forward will be directing more energy in the efforts to improve enforcement," she said.

Oliphant called on organised labour to work with her department in addressing the challenges in the workplace with the focus of averting strikes that result in job losses.

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GOOD JOB: Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant says more than 20 000 jobs were created in the past four years. PICTURE: GCIS