



Saftu members march in Joburg earlier this year.

Photo by Jabu Kumalo

'Slave wage' increased

By JABU KUMALO

THE expanded public works programme wage rate, with effect from 1 November, has increased from R88 to R92,31 a day.

According to the department, all public bodies are required to ensure the wages are adjusted to comply with the requirements.

The revised minimum wage refers to a rate a day and per task performed across all sectors in government.

Workers should work for 40 hours a week, depending on the type of work done.

The size of the task is governed by daily average productivity.

Stanley Henderson, deputy director-general for the programme, said: "The increased minimum wage is compulsory for all public bodies implementing the programme.

"There will be no excuse that will validate the payment

of participants below the minimum wage and not adhering to the adjusted minimum wage as determined by the programme.

"The programme is a critical government initiative which makes a contribution towards a safety net to millions of South Africans who have socio-economic challenges and have the responsibility to provide for themselves and their families.

"Parliament officially passed the National Minimum Wage Bill in May this year," he said.

When the bill was passed, Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant said it was aimed at improving the lives of the lowest paid workers and would address inequality challenges.

But Saftu and other unions at the time condemned the R20-an-hour minimum wage.

They called it a slave wage which was aimed at keeping the poor even poorer.