

Minimum Wage Act compliance is non-negotiable

By **Lemias Mashile**

On behalf of the portfolio committee on labour and in my capacity as chairperson, I would like to encourage all workers and organised labour to be vigilant and ensure that employers comply with the National Minimum Wage Act, as promulgated in November 2018.

The act became operational from January 1, setting the hourly wage at R20 for workers who are not covered by the country's dual wage-setting system.

The minimum wages for sectors that are organised into bargaining councils are determined through collective bargaining systems.

The national minimum wage represents a marked increase in income for the country's more than six million labour force, who were previously earning less than R20 an hour.

Farmworkers, domestic workers and workers employed in an expanded public works programme are entitled to an hourly rate of R18, R15 and R11 respectively.

The national minimum wage commission will come up with a proposal for these categories to increase these salaries within two years.

Parliament, through the portfolio committee on labour, understands that the South African labour market is characterised by high levels of inequality, unemployment and poverty.

Statistics South Africa has also reported that at the end of the third quarter of 2018, out of a labour force of 22.6 million in SA, 16.4 million or

72.5% were employed.

Therefore, I would like to encourage the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, labour unions and the courts to be ready to intervene when non-compliance with the National Minimum Wage Act is reported.

At the same time, the committee will continue to conduct oversight on effective implementation of the Act.

■ Mashile is the chair of the portfolio committee on labour in parliament