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Title: JOB CREATION IN SA SHOWS PROMISE

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THE survey which came out on Tuesday shows a glimmer of hope. Positivity, even if very small, is good for sentiment and certainly drives entrepreneurs to consider further employment opportunities.

Happily the unemployment rate declined by one percentage point, largely driven by employment in construction and agriculture. Both the departments of Public works and Infrastructure and Agriculture need to be praised with the enormous amount of work they are doing to try and assist the growth of employment in the third quarter of 2025.

It is a great feat to note that construction created new employment for 130 000 new individuals. This is a more than 10% increase in employment. Both these departments have reflected good governance and let's trust that those governance issues will spill over to other ministries in South Africa.

The above being said, the national unemployment rate is still stubbornly the worst in the world and we read every day in the *Cape Argus* of further closures of big companies and mass retrenchments. Some of these

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retrenchments could have been avoided if service delivery was present. We regularly hear how these large employers complain about the unavailability of electricity and the enormous cost.

We also hear how transport is failing them. It is unbelievable to constantly record how our ports and harbours

have been non-functional and how staff spend anything up to one third of their salary on just getting to work and back.

We still note that the national government is pouring money into "job opportunities" at an enormous cost per job. The government should be creating the impetus for job creation by the private sector by improving its services across the board.

Again, the Western Cape evidences a significant lead in job creation. We see 70 000 new jobs created in the Western Cape in this period. This represents a quarter of all the new jobs in South Africa.

I have been trumpeting the fact that we have to rely on the small business sector to create jobs. The trade union movement has lamented the fact that large business is still sitting on enormous cash piles without investing in themselves. We also know that large businesses are evidencing jobless growth almost across the board.

I had the misfortune of participating in a radio station debate about job creation with a representative of a trade union umbrella body who seemed to

be stuck in political philosophy of the 1950s

There seems to be a strong belief in centralised job creation and the need for more severe and direct regulations on the business community. For over 20 years these regulations have stifled small business by pushing for centralised policies and forcing small businesses to compete with the big business community. This is certainly not conducive to entrepreneurship and investment.

We have a beautiful country with everything going for it. Our infrastructure, although not maintained, is there to be used and our natural resources are plentiful. We have a young population with both energy and talent. We have rich soil and plentiful resources to mine.

Nothing should be standing in our way for the private sector to deliver full employment. Let's put pressure on the authorities to deregulate as much as possible without compromising health and safety.

Bagraim is a veteran labour lawyer and Democratic Alliance MP.