

ISSUE 10 DECEMBER 2010

Achieve

LEADERS IN CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

merSETA

Strengthens the Fight

AGAINST HIV/AIDS

Ministerial statement on new SETA landscape



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Vision

Leaders in closing the skills gap.

Mission

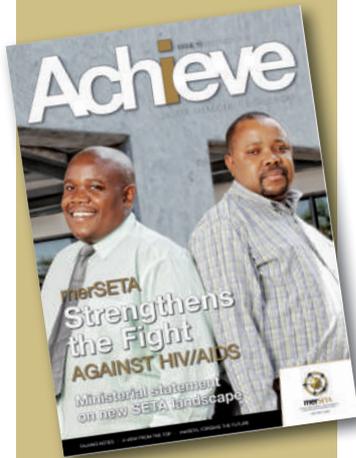
To facilitate sustainable development of skills, transformation and accelerate growth in manufacturing, engineering and related services.



merSETA

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AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

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ON THE COVER

Takalani Murathi and
Harry Geldenhuys



PG. 10

merSETA strengthens the fight
against HIV/AIDS



PG. 14

Up close and personal with
Valerie Ndou



PG. 28

A solution to job losses

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TalkingNotes

The month of December is very significant; South Africa and the world at large commemorate World Aids Day; it also marks our ongoing support for the partnership against AIDS campaign; and, it is the start of the festive season with holidays, car trips and joyous celebration.

ON 1ST DECEMBER, we join hands as people of South Africa and of the world against the pandemic that scourges our lives and the very fabric of our existence. I quote Irish poet Patrick Pearce:

“A fool that in all his days hath never done a prudent thing... I have squandered the splendid years that the Lord God gave to my youth in attempting impossible things, deeming them alone worth the toil. Was it folly or grace?”

This is a question that needs us to ponder our role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Much is expected of young people and it is critical they shape the future of our beloved country. It is my responsibility and it is your responsibility to look after ourselves at all times.

This is a month that calls for unity in support of those affected and infected by the scourge of HIV/Aids. We have shown the world that with determination and the will to succeed, we can do more and exceed expectations. It is in this spirit that I urge all South Africans to rally behind the infected and the affected.

Taking a glance at what we have packaged for you this quarter; we traverse our road under the theme, SEASON OF HOPE. Our lead story for this quarter is the HIV/Aids Project, whose project manager, Romiela Pillay, discusses the objectives and milestones of the project.

We find hope in the Training Layoff Scheme that was established to assist companies affected by economic or financial distress due to the recent global economic meltdown. Project Manager, Vicky Panday, gives us an insight into the project.

We get up Close and Personal with the newly-appointed Manager: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, Valer

Ndou. She unpacks the role of her Unit and what could be expected of it.

We close our Regional chapter by focusing on Gauteng North & North West and Gauteng South respectively. We also announce the winner of the Young Welder Competition. Also look out for all our events of the quarter.

In parting, I wish you and your families well during this festive season. It has been a taxing year and as a country, let's take a bow and recharge.

Till next year.

Be blessed!



Sibongiseni
Zinjiva Ka-Mnguni
Editor



A view FROM THE TOP

Now that Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande has cleared the path for SETAs, it is imperative that we put our shoulders to the wheel. Much needs to be done, including reconstituting several SETAs, appointing new Boards after their expiry on March 31 2011 and ensuring that new constitutions are in line with legislation.

ON THE MERSETA SIDE, the Fuel Retailers Association will now go over to the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA).

The new SETA landscape may not be without controversy, given resistance in some quarters, but one thing is certain – the Ministry of Higher Education and Training is adamant that SETAs play a vital role in the landscape and in addressing the skills challenges facing our country.

Our work in the wake of the announcement includes stakeholder involvement in finalising the new National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III, strengthening the SETA Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) as well as aligning these to much tighter Service Level Agreements and reporting mechanisms.

We also have our work cut out in assisting, where necessary, the establishment of the Quality Council for Trade and Occupations (QCTO) which will improve occupational qualifications against which learnerships and apprenticeships programmes are developed. As Minister Nzimande has pointed out, the process will also ensure that the new QCTO will be the main accreditor of training providers so that SETAs concentrate on their role as facilitators of education and training in the workplace.

The announcement has come at a time when we can pat ourselves on the back. The merSETA has achieved its 10th year of clean audits, and our stakeholders can cheer in the knowledge that the organisation is aptly placed to continue its sterling work.

The road ahead has been clearly signposted. The merSETA has been relicensed for the next five years, beginning 1st April 2011 and the most anxious moments are behind us.

We now need to lock hands and continue the path of creating a bright future for our youth and those wishing to pursue entrepreneurship.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr Raymond Patel
CEO
merSETA



Gauteng North & North West

IGNITE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

Our journey of reporting on the progress made by the regional offices recently took us to Gauteng North & North West.

THE GAUTENG North & North West Regional Office prides itself on its success, given that it comprises 5 000 member companies, with small companies representing the lion's share of about 95%. Situated north of Pretoria in the central hub of the Automotive Supplier Park, this office has made tremendous strides in assisting member companies in the Pretoria and North West region.

Like all merSETA regional offices, this office is responsible for workplace approvals, registration of learnerships and apprenticeship contracts, guidance and advice on different learning areas, implementation of these learning areas, skills and needs analysis, planning and completion of workplace skills plans and reports, accreditation as well as increasing the capacity of training committees, shop stewards and skills development facilitators.

Gauteng North & North West Client Relations Manager (CRM) Mr Harry Geldenhuys says progress in reaching the NSDS targets shows the success in promoting learnerships.

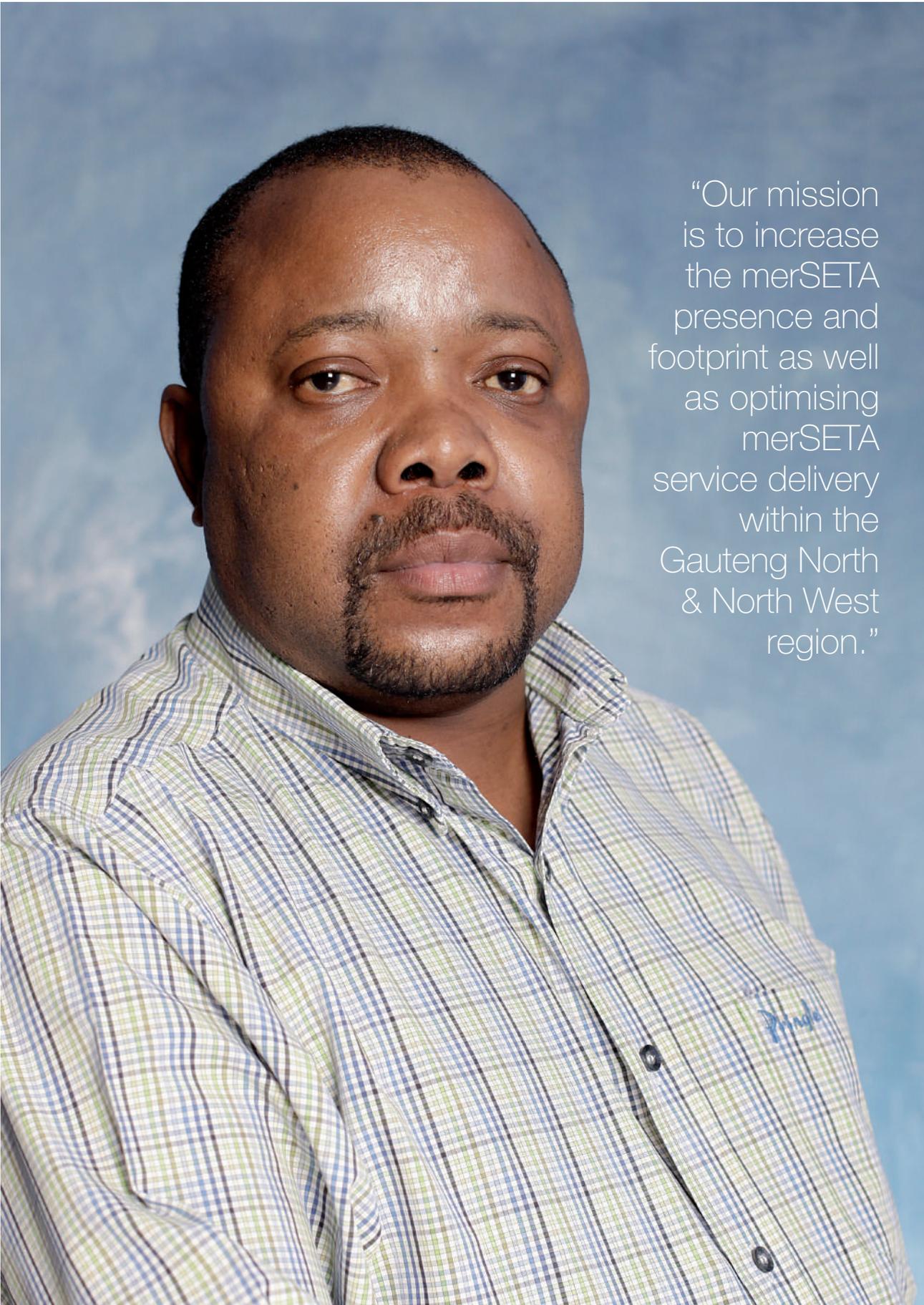
With the National Skills Development Strategy II (NSDS II) coming to an end in March next year, the Regional Office has made significant strides in implementing and supporting the (SSP) Sector Skills Plans in line with addressing NSDS II targets.

Harry is quick to point out that the regional office has implemented the Sector Skills Plan by:

- Starting learnerships;
- Approving workplace skills plans from employers; and
- Giving funds to employers, trainers and workers.

“Our mission is to increase the merSETA presence and footprint as well as optimising merSETA service delivery within the Gauteng North & North West region.”

Of concern to the regional office is the diverse nature and geographic spread of stakeholder representation within the region.

A portrait of Harry Geldenhuys, a man with a goatee, wearing a blue and green checkered shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

“Our mission is to increase the merSETA presence and footprint as well as optimising merSETA service delivery within the Gauteng North & North West region.”

Gauteng North & North West Client Relations Manager (CRM): Harry Geldenhuys

“We were also able to identify those companies that are no longer training people, as well as new firms, and focused on getting them on board with the implementation of training programmes. We had to deal with those clients that required intensive support in order for them to participate in the merSETA strategies.”

“It does become a challenge to service all stakeholders, especially in the North West where access to merSETA offices is somewhat a matter of concern. We strive to make it a priority that stakeholders are well served.”

Harry says the office has managed to encourage those companies implementing low numbers of learnerships to increase their intake to absorb unemployed people.

“We were also able to identify those companies that are no longer training people, as well as new firms, and focused on getting them on board with the implementation of training programmes. We had to deal with those clients that required intensive support in order for them to participate in the merSETA strategies,” elaborates Harry.

The regional office was also instrumental in interventions to accelerate training and skills development.

This has seen an increase in the registration of learner contracts and agreements. Harry attributes this achievement to the receptive relationship that has been cultivated, particularly with small and medium enterprises.

Apart from the normal merSETA apprenticeships, learnerships and skills programmes, the office encourages companies to implement merSETA projects such as the Voucher Implementation Project (VIP), the Accelerated Artisan Training Programme (AATP), New Venture Creation Project, Retrenchee Assistance Programme (RAP) Trainee Layoff Scheme (TLS) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) projects.

Through the partnerships forged with the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC), Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges, Provincial Government and private service providers, the regional office has been able to launch numerous skills development and training projects.

With the unemployment rate standing at 38.1% in North West, Harry says the region, together with the Office of Premier in North West through the Provincial Strategy Growth and Development (PGDS), has initiated a number of skills development and training projects to fight unemployment and skills shortages.

“These projects are aimed at addressing skills shortages within various sectors in the province, such as Agro-Processing, Public Works and the automotive sector which we supported jointly with the AIDC,” explains Harry.

Excited about the challenges and the future of SETAs, Harry is of the opinion that the new NSDS III will play a significant role in ensuring that SETAs and industry speak the same language.

He sees the establishment of the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) as a positive step.

The OFO is a skills classification system which lists all the occupations in the South African economy. “The importance of the OFO is that it sets a base for linking these occupations to skills development,” says Harry.



Back row: Rethabile Pakkies (Client Liaison Co-ordinator); Eva Hlongwane (General Office Worker); Zodwa Mothobi (Client Liaison Co-ordinator); Lucy Sebothoma (Receptionist); and Tsheko Letsoalo (Client Liaison Officer). Front row: Harry Geldenhuys (Client Relations Manager); Zanelile Mahlangu (Client Liaison Officer); Ncumisa Khumalo (Snr Client Liaison Co-ordinator); Mfundo Yawa (Client Liaison Co-ordinator).

SETAs will reflect labour market needs using the OFO. The Department of Higher Education and Training uses the OFO as the basis for the Employment Services South Africa (ESSA) system to, among others, develop the National Scarce Skills List.

In a day and age where service delivery and visibility of an organisation has become the cornerstone of reaching out to clients, the regional office is pleased with the positive response, constant words of gratitude and the stamp of approval from stakeholders.

“We always do our best to maintain sound relationship with labour, employer organisations and government departments.”

The merSETA has achieved its 10th consecutive year of clean audits. Harry says the formula for such a milestone is the quality of management under the stewardship of Dr Raymond Patel.

With the announcement that the SETA landscape will change from April 1 next year, it is essential that merSETA stays the course and demonstrates that it is worthy of being Leaders in Closing the Skills Gap. **A**

“We always do our best to maintain sound relationship with labour, employer organisations and government departments.”

merSETA STRENGTHENS THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS

The 2007 UNAIDS report estimated that 5 700 000 South Africans are living with HIV/AIDS, or just under 12% of South Africa's population of 48 million. Of serious concern is that South Africa may have more people infected by the virus than this report indicates, *writes Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni.*

THIS CONCERN has sparked a commitment by government and non-governmental organisations to up the fight against the pandemic.

December 1 is World Aids Day. It commemorates those who have fallen victim to the virus. World governments are united in saying we need to do more to fight the pandemic.

As an affected employer, merSETA has a campaign to highlight the importance of commemorating World Aids Day in remembrance of the departed souls.

merSETA Project Manager Romiela Pillay says it is significant to commemorate World Aids Day as it provides the opportunity to create and increase awareness that HIV/AIDS is affecting our lives.

For 2010, the theme is "Universal Access and Human Rights". There is a need to work towards universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention and care, and recognise these as fundamental human rights.

A report from the Medical Research Council of South Africa suggests that between 2000 and 2010, about four to seven million South Africans will die from Aids.

As part of its interventions, the merSETA is running an HIV/AIDS Project aimed at minimising the negative social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS within the working environment in SMEs across the sector.

Romiela says the project enables SMEs to integrate HIV/AIDS interventions into their operations and to adopt a long-term perspective.

The project has thus far achieved the milestone of completing capacity building training with merSETA Client Liaison Officers.

The project has also reached its target of recruiting 100 companies to participate in the programme.

Current interventions include:

- An HIV and Aids Business Impact Assessment;
- An HIV and Aids Workplace policy;
- A Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey;
- An internal HIV and AIDS training strategy;
- An audit of HR policies and procedures for compliance with best practice; and
- Implementing key interventions as prescribed by the Code of Best Practice.



HIV/AIDS Project Manager: Romiela Pillay

A total of 42 Client Liaison Officers and 100 Small and Medium sized companies with a combined workforce of 11 154 employees has been reached through the project.

Romiela commented that the response of companies to the interventions made by merSETA has been overwhelming. “Many have indicated that this project has provided the tools required to take a more strategic view on HIV/AIDS and thus any action would have a beneficial outcome as it is more purpose driven.”

The same sentiment was echoed by Colleen Goosen from Macsteel: “The course content was relevant and useful, and definitely in context. The focus was on practical issues that can be implemented in the workplace by most people. One does not have to be an HIV/AIDS technical expert. I think this is important, as it makes the task of implementation more achievable.

“What I found helpful personally was the input – it is necessary to submit plans to people who have vast experience and who can also be objective and realistic. In my experience, companies tend to want to do what is ‘nice’ and ‘feels good’ instead of doing what is necessary, good practice and what is effective. HIV is often an emotional issue in organisations.”

“Many have indicated that this project has provided the tools required to take a more strategic view on HIV/AIDS and thus any action would have a beneficial outcome as it is more purpose driven.”

The impact of HIV/AIDS from the economic point of view in the manufacturing and engineering sector is huge as the sector currently makes up 16% of the South African economy.

“There is a need for a lot more workplaces to be reached before we can determine where we stand. Companies are becoming more strategic with regard to the interventions they are implementing -- and the consequent results are almost immediate, especially with regards to education and awareness campaigns. The impact on the incidence of infection has, however, not yet been determined.”

According to a research study commissioned by the merSETA earlier this year, HIV/Aids poses a serious threat to business and in particular the manufacturing and engineering sector in South Africa. It is expected that HIV/Aids will reverse the progress in economic development through workforce mortality and morbidity, with specific reference to absenteeism, decreased productivity, rising production costs and higher employee turnover and thus loss of income to companies.

According to the research, HIV/Aids disproportionately affects the economically active group of the South African population, with macro-economic modeling indicating that its impact will result in a decline in the labour force. Coupled with this, the reduction in highly skilled labour resources might not be replaceable in the short run.

A less experienced and particularly young workforce might in turn result in a decline in labour productivity. The effect of Aids is, however, not only on the affected individuals as others might also have to drop out from work to take care of those with Aids.

Research evidence suggests that few companies have investigated the potential internal and external impact

that HIV and Aids might have on their companies and are often unable to point out current and specific impacts of the epidemic on their operating costs and revenue.

A 2005 South African Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (SABCOHA) survey suggests that the mining sector followed by the manufacturing, transport and storage sectors are the worst affected. In comparison to medium and large companies, small companies (less than 100 employees) have reported less noticeable HIV and Aids related impacts but are also less likely to have implemented HIV and Aids interventions.

The costs related to employee turnover, training and recruitment has been severe for the manufacturing sectors as about 23% to 26% of the manufacturing companies surveyed by SABCOHA indicated that they would probably appoint more employees (work shadowing) to compensate for the negative impact of HIV and Aids on labour productivity, absenteeism and mortality.

In the light of the survey Romiela is of the opinion that South Africa is far from winning the battle against the HIV/Aids in the workplace.



Client Liaison Officer Kgotso Monaisa and Romiela Pillay.

“There is a need for a lot more workplaces to be reached before we can determine where we stand. Companies are becoming more strategic with regard to the interventions they are implementing -- and the consequent results are almost immediate, especially with regards to education and awareness campaigns. The impact on the incidence of infection has, however, not yet been determined.”

In dealing with the well-being of employees and for a caring employer, it is crucial to have strategies and policies in place.

“It is absolutely essential as it is the backbone of any plan that is rolled out. It eventually becomes the tool that guides the company and more specifically it helps the companies to operate according to best practice,” Romiela added.

Asked about the HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) campaign that was launched in April this year, Romiela supports the project unreservedly.

“I believe that people who know their status can then embark on treatment before it is too late. Also, I would like to believe that people who know their status would not

deliberately infect others and would take the necessary preventative measures.

“On the other hand, it is good and well to roll out such a campaign, but it is important to have services and structures in place to deal with all that happens after testing, such as ensuring that there is access to treatment, as well as ensuring that there are support groups to help people deal with their status.”

Romiela supports the National Strategic Plan (NSP), a multi-sectoral response to South Africa's Aids epidemic. She was forthright on advice to people who do not know their status.

“Get tested – know your status – get treatment as soon as you need it. Seek help in coping and dealing with the virus.” **A**

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH VALERIE NDOU

By Achieve Correspondent

Achieve caught up with the newly-appointed Manager: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms Valerie Ndou. She spoke to us about her role and what can be expected from the new unit.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU to merSETA?
It's a known fact that merSETA is the best SETA and I have been tracking the developments and initiatives of the SETAs since I left the organisation in 2007. merSETA has really maintained an impressive image and it struck me as an organisation that is high on innovation and excellence, which aligns with my personal priorities.

This is your second stint at merSETA. What is your impression about the organisation so far?

I can already see why merSETA received an award in the "Best Employer" category! My on-boarding experience was remarkable – I was welcomed back to the merSETA family well before my start date and all the tools of the trade were organised by the time I arrived, which meant that I could settle in and start working almost immediately.

How much has changed since you began at merSETA?

A lot! The organisation seems to have really enhanced its profile and established its image as the benchmarking SETA. This is seen through the newly established links with international skills councils and institutions which

have really helped make merSETA a thought leader in the national education and training arena. There is also a new circle of bright, talented people within the various divisions, with whom I look forward to interacting and testing ideas.

What skills and approaches are you bringing to merSETA and what role are you going to be playing?

Having been exposed to a corporate working environment, I find I am much more determined to see value for money in the organisation. There are many hardworking employees in our industry who are contributing towards the skills levy that the merSETA receives. I believe it is the responsibility of each and every merSETA staff member to ensure there is a return on this investment, in the form of true skills development value-add to the sector.

My role lies in ensuring that merSETA has a reliable system of measuring and reporting on its performance, as well as ensuring that the necessary evidence exists for reported successes. This involves working closely with the operations and projects teams (who have been really supportive) so that all reported information is a true reflection of the merSETA's skills development investment into the sector.

A portrait of Valerie Ndou, a Black woman with her hair styled in braids, wearing a light blue blazer over a black top and a long necklace of grey and white beads. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus red and pink gradient.

“I can already see why merSETA received an award in the ‘Best Employer’ category! My on-boarding experience was remarkable.”

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Manager Valerie Ndou

“It seems to me that the target of NSDS III is to probe deeper into the skills development situation in our country, by asking questions about the impact that skills development initiatives are having.”

What challenges do you foresee in your new position?

Developing a system that is able to satisfy the performance information needs of our stakeholders and holding suppliers of performance data accountable for accuracy of information supplied to the unit.

What is your mandate from management?

To develop, implement and manage a system that will be used to monitor, evaluate and report on merSETA's performance (to its stakeholders).

What strategy or plan do you have in terms of meeting the mandate you have been given?

I plan to research, develop and test a suitable system and agree on data reporting standards with operations and projects, who are the main suppliers of performance data.

How important is monitoring and evaluation at merSETA?

Monitoring and evaluation is critical as a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system has been established and all SETAs are required to input and monitor performance towards achieving the medium term strategic framework priorities. The merSETA has taken this responsibility seriously enough to create a unit specifically for this purpose.

What do you make of the NSDS III and what role will monitoring and evaluation play in moving forward?

It seems to me that the target of NSDS III is to probe deeper into the skills development situation in our country, by asking questions about the impact that skills development initiatives are having. This includes issues such as the effects on poverty, the accessibility of learning to previously disadvantaged groups as well as the provision of learning that leads to decent work. NSDSIII moves beyond the hard numbers-based focus of NSDS

II toward determining the effect of skills development programmes on the quality of people's lives.

This will require a monitoring and evaluation system that marries quantitative successes with qualitative evidence. To summarise the words of President Jacob Zuma, 'we need to know where (and how) our people live....'. I believe it is time for the MerSETA to really measure and understand the impact of our skills development efforts. Our monitoring and evaluation system should be able to pick up trends, which should be investigated in order to improve service delivery. This investigation cannot be achieved without the operations, who are at the coal face of service delivery.

What legacy would you like to leave one day at merSETA?

Any system is useless without the full commitment of all role-players. I would like to help build a culture of responsible and accountable data reporting within the merSETA. **A**

“I plan to research, develop and test a suitable system and agree on data reporting standards with operations and projects.”

From left: Senior management, CEO and the Chairperson of the board; Delegates attending the AGM.



merSETA, FORGING THE FUTURE

By Achieve Correspondent

The merSETA has achieved its 10th consecutive year of clean audits, it was revealed at the national annual general meeting held in Kempton Park, Johannesburg. Regional AGMs took place in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Mpumalanga to spread the good news.

SPEAKING AT THE AGM, merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel attributed the success to the staff and management for their dedication and hard work in ensuring that merSETA reached its potential.

Dr Patel went on to say the merSETA performed beyond expectations in the financial year 2009/2010, fulfilling its pursuit of forging the future in post-school education.

Among the successes the merSETA recorded in the year under review included the ISO 9001 Certification in recognition of the great strides made in the formalisation and management of business processes.

The merSETA also maintained its green status with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) on the upload of Provider, Assessors and Learner Information on the National Learners Record Database (NLRD).

After the creation of an Operations Division through the amalgamation of the Client Services Division and LETQA in 2008/2009, tremendous strides were made the year under review in consolidating efficiency. The merSETA now has a presence in all provinces through its seven regional offices.

"It's an honour for me as a CEO to lead this dynamic group of innovative people. I thank the Governing Board, senior management and staff for their efforts, guidance and commitment in the year," concluded Dr Patel.

Delivering the keynote address, NUMSA President Mr Cedric Gina said merSETA must defend its capacity and design as a SETA of choice in South Africa.

"Can we fail to ensure that we strengthen all other institutions that we are related to and work with, in pursuit of the skills revolution in forging the future?" asked Mr Gina.

He commented that as a labour movement, Numsa would support progressive contributions made by merSETA in designing the path to competitiveness through the skills revolution. "We will stop at nothing at condemning what we will think is not progressive as the labour movement."

He further challenged the merSETA to renew its focus on the revival of further education and training institutions. "We need a revolution. All factories in our country must become learning centres not just for the industry but for the whole economy," Mr Gina added. **A**

GAUTENG SOUTH - IN THE FOREFRONT OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Achieve continues to keep its strategy of keeping stakeholders informed about our regional activities. This time, we focus on the Gauteng South Regional Office, *writes Sibongiseni Zinjiva Ka-Mnguni.*

WITH GAUTENG the economic hub of South Africa, merSETA's Gauteng South Regional Office services more than 12000 companies and Client Relations Manager Mr Takalani Murathi is clear about the strategic intent of the office.

"I am convinced that we are now operating at about 70% of our potential and we are continually striving to reach 100%. Only when we reach and maintain this level of performance, will I be satisfied that we are delivering on our mandate," he says.

Asked about strategic partnerships with stakeholders and the region's efforts to address the skills deficit, Takalani is upbeat about current activities and plans for the future.

"Besides the training that we advise and support companies to undertake, we have established a partnership with the Gauteng Department of Economic Development where we trained 230 unemployed learners

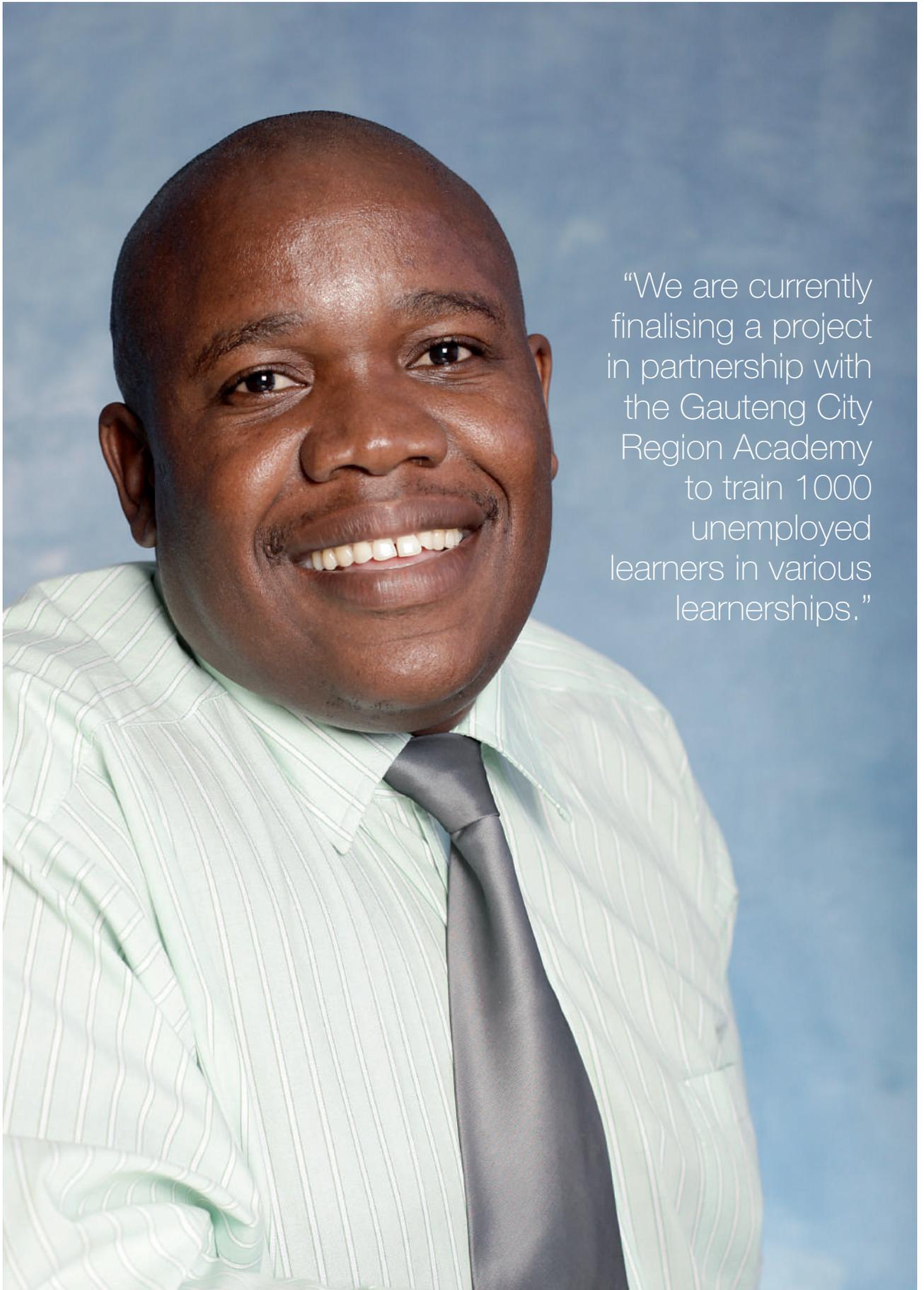
on the National Certificate: Air-Conditioning, Refrigeration and Ventilation.

"We are currently finalising a project in partnership with the Gauteng City Region Academy to train 1000 unemployed learners in various learnerships."

The office has also established a Higher Education and Training (HET) committee that meets representatives of HET institutions to discuss matters of mutual interest.

"We are actively working to strengthen these relationships and are constantly on the lookout for further opportunities to partner with other stakeholders in the region in an effort to strengthen Gauteng's status as the engine of South Africa's economy," says Takalani.

"There have been many interventions that we believe have made a qualitative difference to learners in the region. The Regional Office currently has a partnership with the Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) Training Academy where learners with disabilities are currently undergoing



“We are currently finalising a project in partnership with the Gauteng City Region Academy to train 1000 unemployed learners in various learnerships.”

Client Relations Manager Takalani Murathi



First row from left: Sophia Mathole (Intern), Angeline Chuse (Client Liaison Coordinator), Takalani Murathi (Client Relations Manager), Alina Moloi (Filing Admin Clerk), Ntombi Motha (Client Liaison Coordinator); Second row: Peter Moloi (Client Liaison Officer), Nthabiseng Maati (Client Liaison Coordinator), Boitsoko Moikanyane (Client Liaison Officer), Doctor Mudau (Client Liaison Coordinator), Ntombi Phampha (Client Liaison Coordinator); Third row: Victor Monyane (Client Liaison Officer), Molly Rabaloi (Client Liaison Coordinator), Kgotso Monaisa (Client Liaison Officer), Elizabeth Malebo (Senior Client Liaison Coordinator), Malesela Bopape (Client Liaison Officer); Back row: Ishmael Shisinga (Client Liaison Officer), Winston Adams (Client Liaison Officer), Kaemba Kakompe (Client Liaison Officer), Nhlanhla Magwaza (Client Liaison Officer), Joshua Joubert (Client Liaison Officer) and Thabo Jyly (Client Liaison Officer).

training. Thirteen of these learners have already graduated.”

The office also participates in a number of Career Exhibitions, including Sci Bono, The Star’s Workplace, Johannesburg International Motor Show, Ekurhuleni Municipality, Automechanika and the SABC Career Fair.

Although the Regional Office met its annual targets, the economically challenging times brought on by the

worldwide recession has had an adverse effect on company training budgets.

At regional level, the office does not have the power to finalise all processes involving training grants as certain decisions and action in the workflow process take place at a higher level. This can have adverse effects on client relations. If deadlines are missed, this has a domino effect with the end result being client unhappiness and a strained relationship with the Regional Office.

“To avoid this, we constantly follow up with our support units and keep the clients constantly updated,” says Takalani.

“Without blowing our own horn, the ongoing efforts of the Gauteng South Regional Office have been very successful. Every event we have hosted, whether a breakfast session, management road show or consultation with stakeholders, boasts a full house.

“This is strong evidence of the success of our efforts, the awareness that the office has created and the confidence that our stakeholders now have in the office in particular and the merSETA in general.

“Reaching the milestones that the merSETA has reached, for me it simply is the beginning of a journey -- a journey that we can successfully walk together as a team, pulling together, sweating together and going the extra mile, to ensure our clients get the support they need.”

The ongoing efforts of the Regional Office have led to an astounding growth in the number of companies they currently interface with. With 12068 companies on the office database, 12 Client Liaison Officers (CLOs) each have the responsibility to service about 1000 companies.

When questioned on the changing SETA landscape and how this might affect the operations of the Gauteng South Regional Office, Takalani commented that the only constant in life is change.

“One just feels that a better understanding of how SETAs operate would have resulted in the better performing SETAs, like the merSETA, being retained in their current form. Common sense dictates that we should avoid trying to fix what isn't broken. Lessons will be learned, teething problems will be overcome and correctly structured SETAs will continue to play a major role in the skills development initiatives of this country.”

Gender equity has become an important aspect of training in today's economic environment and the Regional Office has taken the decision to be at the forefront of making gender equality a reality. It advises employers on Employment Equity and the impact of employing and training women in previously male-dominated industries.

These efforts are beginning to bear fruit, with a vast number of member companies now having female apprentices and artisans.

Takalani is committed to a path that will increase the visibility of the Regional Office and believes that stakeholder awareness can only be fostered through face-to-face interaction.

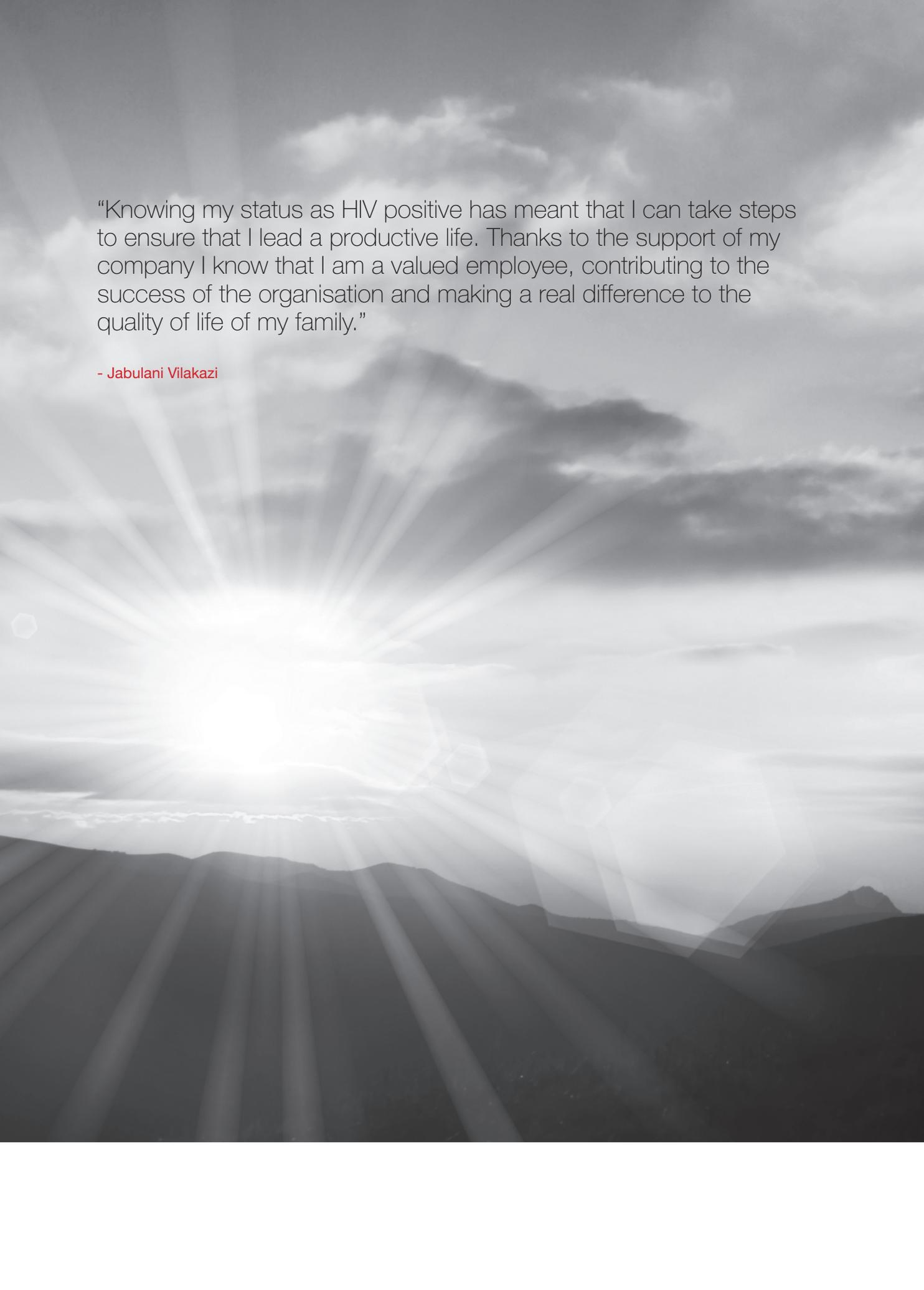
“Reaching the milestones that the merSETA has reached, for me it simply is the beginning of a journey - a journey that we can successfully walk together as a team, pulling together, sweating together and going the extra mile, to ensure our clients get the support they need.”

“When one looks at the vision of the National Industrial Policy Framework (NIPF) for the country's industrialisation trajectory, we see that we need to ensure the long-term intensification of South Africa's industrialisation process and movement towards a knowledge-based economy, the promotion of a more labour-absorbing industrialisation path with a particular emphasis on tradeable labour-absorbing goods and services and economic linkages and the promotion of a broader-based industrialisation path.”

“This is a path that should be characterised by greater levels of participation of historically disadvantaged people and marginalised regions in the mainstream of the industrial economy. Taking these factors into account, one has to agree that we do need the alignment,” he says.

Takalani remarked that merSETA is an employer of choice that is under great management and strives to exceed its stakeholders' expectations at all times.

“Partnerships with prominent stakeholders in the sector and in government will ensure that merSETA contributes towards the dream of a 'better life for all',” Takalani concludes. **A**



“Knowing my status as HIV positive has meant that I can take steps to ensure that I lead a productive life. Thanks to the support of my company I know that I am a valued employee, contributing to the success of the organisation and making a real difference to the quality of life of my family.”

- Jabulani Vilakazi

HIV/AIDS - KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

HIV and AIDS are a fact of life in South Africa. Your organisation can benefit from having a clearly defined HIV/AIDS policy that will provide the management and employees with the knowledge, skills and tools that will help to both prevent the spread of the disease and help those infected lead productive and fulfilled lives.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE merSETA HIV/AIDS PROJECT ON:
(011) 551 5202, OR EMAIL rpillay@merseta.org.za.



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MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON NEW SETA LANDSCAPE

Early in November, Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande announced the final SETA landscape, effective from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2016. In terms of this new landscape, the Fuel Retailers Association will move from the merSETA to the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA).

Achieve carries the full statement by Minister Nzimande.

THE PURPOSE is to announce the new Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) landscape through the relicensing of the SETAs for the 2011-2016 five year period.

BACKGROUND

On 29 April 2010, I announced the SETA landscape and NSDS III as proposed by the DHET at a media briefing. At that meeting I was accompanied by the Chairperson and EXCO of the National Skills Authority (NSA).

I released the publication of the proposed Sector Education and Training Authorities landscape 2011 to 2016 in Government Gazette No.33149 of 30 April 2010 for a period of 60 days from date of publication inviting the public and relevant stakeholders to comment on the proposed landscape. The National Skills Authority, which is the advisory body to the Minister on all matters relating to skills development subsequently held extensive consultations (between 14 and 18 June 2010) with all stakeholders, and from this process advised me on the new SETA landscape. This advice was based on the NSA analysis of all the information gathered from its public hearings and other interactions.

The final SETA landscape to be announced today is also based on the application of the criteria provided for in the Skills Development Act, 1998, and other broader considerations informed by the imperative of creating a post-school system aimed at addressing the skills needs of our country, for both the youth and adult sectors of our population.

The approach adopted in the finalisation of this new SETA landscape was that of ensuring the broad coverage of skills development in all key sectors of our economy, and by ensuring that each SETA is located as close as possible to its relevant economic sector. Whilst appreciating the necessity to transform the SETAs as primary instruments to facilitate skills development in our economy, at the same time we did not want to introduce changes that would disrupt the closeness of each SETA to its relevant economic sector. Our considerations were also informed by the New Growth Path recently adopted by government, as well as the imperatives of the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2 (IPAP 2).

I however wish to state that much as I was very sympathetic to the many arguments for creating fewer SETAs, it was my view that this is a goal that we have to work towards over the next five years whilst concentrating on a closer match between SETAs and the various economic sectors which they have to serve and without hastily disrupting this synergy.

THE NEW SETA LANDSCAPE

Based on Section 9 (1) and (2) of the Skills Development Act, 1998, after consultation with the National Skills Authority and read with Government Notice No. R.1082 of 7 September 1999 as amended, I announce the establishment of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) by Government Gazette as indicated in schedule 1 from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2016 with a jurisdiction as follows:

18 SETAs remain the same or have minimal sic code transfers as follows;



Minister of Higher Education & Training: Dr Blade Nzimande

“I however wish to state that much as I was very sympathetic to the many arguments for creating fewer SETAs, it was my view that this is a goal that we have to work towards over the next five years.”

The following 12 SETA's are to be reestablished with no change:

- Financial and Accounting Services SETA (FASSET),
- Banking Sector Education & Training Authority (BANKSETA),
- Chemical Industries Education & Training Authority (CHIETA),
- Education Training, & Development Practices SETA (ETDP),
- Food & Beverages Manufacturing Industry (FOODBEV),
- Health & Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA),
- Insurance Sector Education & Training Authority (INSETA),
- Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA),
- Agriculture Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA),
- Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA),
- Services Sector Education and Training Authority (SERVICES),
- Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA),

The following 6 SETAs are to be reestablished with the following sic code transfers:

The Construction Education & Training Authority (CETA) and the Energy and Water SETA (EWSETA) involving the transfer of electrical contracting subsector from ESETA to CETA. The Local Government, Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) and the Safety and Security Education and Training Authority (SASSETA); involving the Transfer

of Metro Police and Traffic Enforcement sic codes to SASSETA from LGSETA.

- The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA); and the Manufacturing, Engineering & Related Services Education and Training Authority (MERSETA), involving the Transfer of the Petrol Retail subsector to W&RSETA from MERSETA.

2 SETAs are affected by insignificant changes based on receiving sub sectors from MAPPP:

- The Media, Information and Communication Technologies SETA (MICTS) involving the Advertising, Media will be transferred from MAPPP-SETA to ISETT SETA in order to address the full spectrum of ICT under one SETA
- The Tourism, Arts & Culture, Hospitality and Sports Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) involving the transfer of the Creative Industries and Heritage from MAPPP-SETA to THETA to align with IPAP 2 vision to leverage the full value chain of arts and culture as a major thrust behind tourism; and also to improve a focus on Sports skills development.

3 SETAs are affected by significant changes:

- The C TFL SETA, FIETA and the MAPPP SETA will be removed from the SETA landscape. They will be replaced by the new amalgamation of Printing, Packaging; and
- Publishing sub-sectors of MAPPP; and C TFL SETA, and FIETA to form the new Fibre Processing and Manufacturing SETA;
- The PSETA is re-established for a year pending an

inter ministerial task team process that Minister Baloyi and I have initiated to investigate the viability and operational model of the PSETA. To pave the way for this work to be properly concluded; I establish the PSETA for one year until the issues pertaining to governance and funding are addressed by this team.

The basis for these changes are to enhance sector focus, ensure viability of all the SETAs, consolidate learning (supply) pipeline planning, and align to government / industrial growth strategies.

The NSA and DHET will, during November 2010 to March 2011, undertake a process of implementing the landscape. This will involve:

- consulting with affected stakeholders on the implementation, transfer of sub-sectors, sic codes and amalgamations as required by the legislation
- finalising a new constitutions for each SETA based on their new demarcations
- Appointing the necessary personnel to lead the establishment new SETAs

It is critical to note that the landscape does not address the issues related to the performance of SETAs. This issue - the functioning of the SETAs- is a source of great concern to me and this government. Much needs to be done to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Re-establishing the SETAs as I have done today signals that we acknowledge that these institutions must play an important role in the post- school landscape and in addressing the skills challenges facing our country.

The relicensing of most of the SETAs does not mean that it is going to be business as usual. The DHET is going to be undertaking extensive work in the coming period to address the many challenges facing the SETAs. These will include the following:

- refocusing SETA activities through the new National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III, which is being finalized by the department and will be announced by the end of November this year as the framework within which all SETAs will have to operate
- initiating a process to strengthen the SETA Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) and aligning these to much tighter Service Level Agreements and reporting mechanisms;
- establish the Quality Council for Trade and Occupations (QCTO) to improve occupational qualifications against which learnerships and apprenticeships programmes are developed, as well as ensuring that the QCTO accredits quality

service provision in order to ensure that SETAs do not become both judges and facilitators of training programmes. In short we must build the capacity of the QCTO to be the main accreditor of training providers so that SETAs concentrate on their role as facilitators of education and training in the workplace

- finalise a model Constitution of SETAs as best practice guideline to improve accountability and performance of SETA boards and governance;
- improve oversight and support from the department; etc.

To achieve the above and other related tasks I will soon be appointing a Ministerial Task Team that will focus on improving SETA performance as well as ensuring that the necessary capacity is built by the SETAs to achieve the objectives that the DHET have set for these institutions.

This Ministerial Task Team will also ensure that work that has been done by, amongst others, the Human Sciences Research Council focussing on impact of the work of SETA's; research reports commissioned under the Presidency (like the Singidzi report) and NEDLAC, are all fully taken into account for the overall improvement of SETA performance. These reports highlight the key challenges facing SETAs and provide extensive recommendations which have up to date not fully considered or implemented.

Part of the work of the Ministerial Task Team on the improvement of SETA performance will also have to address the following additional challenges:

- Diffused focus and multiple objectives
- Uneven governance, management, administration, financial management & inefficiencies, planning and service delivery across the SETAs
- Difficulties in addressing cross-sectoral skills development and training requirements
- Uneven performance across the SETAs
- Negative public perceptions, including clarity on role of SETAs
- Developing mechanisms to ensure that all forms of corruption are eliminated from the SETA system
- The effective alignment of all SETAs to the public university and college system, as will be further elaborated in NSDS III

We call upon all stakeholders in the SETA system to support us in all our efforts to ensure that the SETAs are strengthened as one of the critical pillars in the much needed skills revolution in our country. A

A SOLUTION TO JOB LOSSES

By Achieve Correspondent

An exciting project aimed at reducing the impact of job losses is finding favour with organisations across South Africa. Achieve spoke to Project Manager: Training Layoff Scheme (TLS), Mr Vicky Panday.

THE TRAINING Layoff Scheme (TLS) has been set up by Government to assist companies experiencing economic or financial distress due to the recent global economic meltdown. The funding partners are the National Skills Fund (NSF) and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

As explained by Mr Panday: “The TLS project is yet another way that merSETA is making a real difference to the lives of ordinary employees and with the cooperation of business and other stakeholders, we can and will change the face of the South African economic landscape.”

The key elements of the scheme have been agreed to by the social partners and include:

- A temporary suspension of work used for training;
- Retention of the employment contract;
- Training to be flexible, but linked to the skills needs of the employer;
- A training allowance paid to the worker; and,
- Employer carries the cost of a basic package of social benefits.

Mr Panday says the training layoff scheme is based on the principle that it is available to vulnerable workers and employers affected by the economic recession.

In order to ensure its successful implementation, the scheme relies on the collective efforts of the following entities:

- Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) – responsible for facilitating, overseeing or verifying all training layoff consultations and agreements. The CCMA ensures training layoff agreements comply with the general rules and procedures of the scheme;
- SETAs are responsible for facilitating the provision of training, funding training costs, applying to the NSF for training allowances and disbursing funds to employers;
- The NSF (with financial support of the UIF) is responsible for processing applications for training allowances and, in certain cases, training costs;
- Employers, trade unions and bargaining councils all play an active role in the training layoff scheme;
- The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is responsible for oversight and monitoring of the Training Layoff Scheme (TLS), including the distribution of an implementation guide;
- The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is responsible for ensuring distressed sector support is coordinated with the training layoff scheme; and,
- The Economic Development Department (EDD) is responsible for assessing the economic and developmental impact of the training layoff scheme.

Employers gain by reducing payroll costs for a period to ensure employers remain economically viable and have an opportunity to strengthen operations. These conditions allow employers to be in a position to reabsorb workers once it is in a position to do so. Employers also have an opportunity to build the skills of their workers at little cost to themselves.



Project Manager, Training Layoff Scheme: Vicky Panday and Project Coordinator: Carol Moletsane.

“Workers under threat of retrenchment should consider a training layoff scheme as a serious alternative to retrenchment, rather than opting for a severance package. Workers gain further skills through a training programme and their access to the basic social benefit package is maintained at no cost to them. In addition, they retain their contract of employment for longer. They also have access to a learner allowance of up to R6239 per month for the duration of the layoff period”, points out Mr Panday.

merSETA remains the leading SETA driving this initiative with 10 member companies actively participating in the scheme, benefitting 4349 workers who would otherwise have been retrenched.

Asked about the criterion used to access funding, Mr Panday says training layoffs are available to any employer whose business is under threat of closure due to the recession, but where the business may be sustainable through short-term relief.

He added that employers applying for the training layoff scheme are required to be compliant with their statutory obligations. The scheme is also open to small employers who are exempted from the skills levy.

Where an employer is considering retrenchment for operational reasons, the process outlined in section 189 of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) would need to be followed. Consultation with those who may be affected is required.

“The training layoff must be discussed with the affected workers and appropriate training programmes agreed on. If assistance is required in arriving at a training layoff scheme, an employer may request the appointment of a facilitator from the CCMA in terms of s.189A or s.150(1). A Skills Development Facilitator may be engaged or the relevant SETA may be contacted for assistance in identifying appropriate training and/or training providers,” adds Mr Panday.

The employer consults on the training allowance to be paid to workers who enter the training layoff scheme. Once training allowance funds are received, allowances should be paid weekly via the payroll system.

The employer must continue to pay the social benefit contributions, including the contributions usually deducted from worker pay, unless agreement is reached on an alternative basic social benefit package.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

The project is well underway and progress is monitored closely by the Client Liaison Officers. Of the 10 companies currently participating, one company in the Eastern Cape has successfully completed the project with a few more nearing completion.

On the sustainability of the project, it depends on increasing the interest and participation of companies. Further to this, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) Special Employment

Task Team has proposed changes to the scheme to be approved by the NEDLAC MANCO.

Due to feedback received from workers that the allowance is too low and to incentivise participation in the scheme, the limit of the allowance was raised from 50% of the salary to 75% of the salary with the retention of a cap. This would mean the current maximum monthly allowance payable (R6,239) would increase to R9,358 per month.

The upper income limit to participation is suspended. While suspending the income limit to participation, the monthly allowance of R9,358 is set as the maximum that can be paid to any participant in a training layoff.

Mr Panday also said that the period of the training layoff has increased to a maximum of 12 months with a review at six months.

The CCMA Training Layoff Advisory Committee was advised to adopt a simpler approach based on a combination of measures that should include the following:

- The business must be intending to retrench employees;
- The business and employees must be in distress. This will be objectively measured through a combination of indicators that could include: a reduction in working time of 10% or more; a reduction in turnover of 10% or more; a reduction in production and a reduction in orders. The financial information required to evaluate distress will be limited to the latest available financial statements (preferably audited) and/or bank statements for the last six months and the management accounts;
- Short-term financial relief obtained through a reduction in payroll costs should assist in alleviating the distress;
- The key change in the revised approach is that the committee will not apply any time references to applicants, that is, to link the distress to the global economic crisis. The emphasis should shift to ensuring that employers and employees are able to retain and grow employment during a period of recovery;
- The financial information required is also further simplified; and,
- An administrative fee will be paid to the CCMA from the National Skills Fund.

“The training layoff must be discussed with the affected workers and appropriate training programmes agreed on. If assistance is required in arriving at a training layoff scheme, an employer may request the appointment of a facilitator from the CCMA in terms of s.189A or s.150(1).”

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME:

Commenting on the challenges facing the project, Mr Panday says the initial uptake has been low due to the seemingly lengthy and bureaucratic application processes. However, these processes have since been streamlined and simplified, resulting in quicker application turnaround times. This has in turn resulted in more companies coming on board but there is still a need to market the project better and invite more companies to participate.

“merSETA is at the forefront of rolling out innovative projects aimed at reducing the impact of the challenging global economic climate on both employees and the business sector,” he says proudly.

“It is hoped that projects like the TLS will be aggressively rolled out -- their success will make a qualitative difference to the lives of South African employees as well as contributing to solving the skills shortage in the country,” adds Mr Panday. **A**

Chris scoops the YOUNG WELDER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

By Independent Correspondent

Eastern Cape Midlands FET College Welder in training Chris van Zijl has won the Young Welder of the Year 2010 competition and will represent South Africa at the 41st World Skills Competition in London from 5 – 9 October 2011.

HE ALSO WON the Carbon Steel Category by achieving the most marks on the pressure vessel. He was the only competitor whose vessel was able to withstand the required pressure test.

West Coast FET College's Houston Isaacs, who came second in the pressure vessel section and won both the Stainless Steel and Aluminium categories, was the overall runner-up.

The competition, held in October this year, is run biennially by the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW) at their headquarters in Johannesburg.

SAIW training manager Etienne Nell, says the standard was exceptionally high this year compared to previous competitions. "We made some changes to the entry conditions which resulted in a record number of entries from almost all regions in the country."

"After a careful selection process, 17 competitors, including two young women, took part in the finals. I am pleased to say that we witnessed the highest quality of welding in the history of the competition," Nell says.

The chairperson of the judging panel, Eskom's Morris Maroga, concurred. "I was very pleased by the excellent overall standard, which, I believe, augurs well for the future of South African welding. I encourage our youth to take advantage of the wonderful career opportunities that welding offers," he said.

The competitors had to show mastery in four welding processes – shielded metal arc welding (SMAW), gas tungsten arc welding (GTAW), gas metal arc welding (GMAW) and flux-cored arc welding (FCAW) – on carbon steel, stainless steel and aluminium.

The fact that both the winner and runner-up came from FETs, as in many previous years, is significant, says Nell, because these FET institutions are accredited by the SAIW as authorised training bodies and use internationally approved training methods.

Van Zijl said he was delighted about winning. "I grew up on a farm and helped my father weld from when I was very young. He taught me to do everything in life to the best of my ability and I am extremely proud to be the top young welder in the country," he said.



“I grew up on a farm and helped my father weld from when I was very young. He taught me to do everything in life to the best of my ability and I am extremely proud to be the top young welder in the country.”



Top of page: Chris van Zijl from the Eastcape Midlands FET College won the Carbon Steel category and was the overall winner of the 2010 Young Welder of the Year Competition. Above: 17 finalists in the 2010 Young Welder of the Year competition.

The sponsors of the 2010 competition were: Abicor Binzel, Afrox, Aluminium Federation of Southern Africa, Air Products South Africa, Arcelor Mittal, Bohler welding, ESAB, Goscor Arc Welding Solutions, Hulamin, Lincoln Electric Company, Macsteel VRN Steel, Sassda, S.A. Welding and Welding Alloys South Africa. The main prize sponsor was merSETA. **A**

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Career guidance crusade

GAINS MOMENTUM

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

The merSETA joined a career guidance campaign which took place in the Xiholo Village, outside Tzaneen recently. Gwabeni High School in Limpopo hosted the exhibition, which saw scores of learners attending.



Learners attending the exhibition.

THE PURPOSE of the exhibition was to expose learners to different possible career options, bursaries, learnerships, apprenticeships as well as study opportunities offered by different institutions.

The exhibition was the first of its kind in the area and the event organiser was all smiles when asked about its success.

“This career exhibition will go down as one of the most memorable events in the village. It will be remembered as the exhibition that helped to bring about hope. Indeed,

the exhibition was a huge success as it was able to assist learners in making well-informed decisions regarding their career aspirations,” said Slindile Nkiwane.

George Bernard Shaw once said: “What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.”

We trust learners will heed the call to make informed decisions about their careers.

The merSETA wishes them well in their journey to close the skills gap. **A**



merSETA and UJ



score on joint undertaking

By Achieve Correspondent

Scores of Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services industry students at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) will be the major beneficiaries of a R2,5 million Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA) sponsorship to boost small and medium enterprises.

THIS WORKPLACE experiential training initiative, with the aim of closing the skills gap, was signed by merSETA and the UJ at the Madibeng Building, Kingsway Campus, Johannesburg.

The cash boost will ensure the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment a “trickle-down” dividend from the initial R 2, 5-million investment that will enable the university to place 100 students in member companies in the mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering and industrial engineering disciplines. The students will be placed to complete their experiential training.

“As UJ are passionate about nurturing talent and innovation, our partnership with the merSETA will ensure that we increase up-skilled artisans with business acumen. This initiative will not only see the university provide extensive support and training to entrepreneurs in small to medium enterprises, but also place a service obligation on them when they complete their studies,” says Prof Tshilidzi Marwala, UJ’s Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment.

merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel says the agreement is a culmination of intensive focus on key skills needed for Gauteng.

“We went through a rigorous process of developing a structure that empowers the training front and youth seeking careers in the sectors,” says Dr Patel, adding that “contributing to the education of students in this

sector is an investment in the future of South Africa while empowering and retaining staff is also a key consideration for staff motivation and skills retention within the sector”.

“Education and training is an ever-evolving scenario -- one in which merSETA will continue to thrive as the economic landscape shifts in favour of an impending upswing.” **A**



merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel

AUTHENTIC SUCCESS

By Independent Correspondent

VWSA, in partnership with the merSETA, makes a meaningful contribution to the lives of young adults living with disabilities.

THE FIRST LEARNERSHIP in End User Computing for 60 people with disabilities was launched at the end of 2008 and has grown in consecutive years. Plans are in place to increase the intake of disabled learners to 75 people in 2011.

Apart from gaining valuable and portable IT qualifications that assist people with disabilities, the learners also gain valuable work experience in the VW and Audi dealer network. The practical component of the learnership has created an enriching experience in the motor industry for the learners.

The achievement of a Certificate in End User Computing, as well as their work experience in the VW and Audi dealer network, has also opened doors at other companies, especially in the banking and retail sectors. Desire Jade Gallon, who graduated top of her class, was offered fulltime employment at Standard Bank.

The management and staff in the VWSA Dealer Network have also benefited by gaining better insight into working with people with disabilities and the majority of the learners have impressed the dealer management and

staff with their willingness to learn, their hard work and commitment to obtaining their qualification. The role of committed mentors in the dealer network has contributed to the success of this project.

Seven learners with disabilities are currently working at the Volkswagen Group Dealer Academy in Midrand and they have been a tremendous asset in assisting with the administration of VWSA's merSETA projects, as well as updating learner records on the VWSA Learning Management System.

Two learners from the 2009 project gained full time employment in the VWSA dealer network. Luambo Mugeru is employed as a receptionist at McDuling Motors in Booysen and Mmatswene Milton Lekoloane is working in the parts department at Lindsay Saker Alberton.

When asked what difference the VWSA Learnership has made, Luambo responded: "I am very proud to be one of the learners who graduated from the VW Learnership. It gave me my life back. Today I am working at McDuling Motors VW as a receptionist and it feels good. The year before last I was just a young disabled woman doing nothing at home. Thanks to the McDuling Motors family



Learners with disabilities graduate after VWSA/merSETA training.

for giving me a chance to live a normal life. Because of them today, I have life, dreams and a future.”

When asked to comment on his appointment at Lindsay Saker Alberton, Milton had the following to say: “I am so excited to get the job. VW has helped by teaching me well.”

As employees of the VW and Audi dealer network, Luambo and Milton will continue to benefit from the training and development offered by the VWSA Dealer Academy. Luambo recently attended a communication skills programme.

The 2009 Learnership was project managed by Amor Malan from the NGO Shangri-La and the 2010 Learnership is being project managed by Progression.

Under normal circumstances, learning can pose a challenge. It is in this light that the Volkswagen Group South Africa commends all stakeholders in this ongoing project for overcoming the extraordinary -- and for embracing all challenges. **A**

“The year before last I was just a young disabled woman doing nothing at home. Thanks to the McDuling Motors family for giving me a chance to live a normal life. Because of them today, I have life, dreams and a future.”



leaders in closing the skills gap.

The merSETA is one of the 23 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998. The 23 SETAs broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services.

The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA: Metal and engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components, New Tyre and Plastic.



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

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*facilitating sustainable
development of skills,
transformation and
accelerating growth in
manufacturing, engineering
and related services.*



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