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DA SHADOW MINISTER OF LABOUR
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From the horse's mouth: Why we need labour brokers

Release: immediate

In response to a series of parliamentary questions posed by the Democratic Alliance (DA), nine government departments have admitted to making use of labour brokers, at a cost of R 123 million. This is no surprise, but the reasons given supply overwhelming evidence as to the necessity of labour brokers. The figures also show that they are necessary for the efficient running of government – which poses further questions as to why certain government departments flatly deny making use of their services.

One of the reasons given is that **“Temporary Employment Services are used for short term project related work or replacing employees absent for extended periods such as maternity leave and sick leave.”** This would imply that departments that supposedly do not use labour brokers also do not employ women, or simply leave the vacancy open during maternity leave – or they are lying.

The number of individuals placed by labour brokers in government departments, their percentage of total staff compliment and the amount of money spent on them is provided below:

Use of labour brokers in 2008/09 financial year			
Department	Number of individuals placed	Staff percentage	Amount spent
Justice and Constitutional Development	264	1.6	R 89,329,692
National Treasury	80	8.4	R 11,715,154
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	62	2.28	R 10,575,000
Public Service and Administration	28	7.2	R 8,295,104
Social Development	55	8	R 1,765,231
Health	8	0.58	R 1,062,444
Communication	10	9	R 636,357
Transport	3	0.45	R 419,752
Total			R 123,798,734

The Department of Trade and Industry has yet to release their data.

Some of the reasons given for making use of labour brokers are:

- **The National Treasury:**
“Employs temporary staff in business areas when there are projects that need to be finalised with clear set timelines for completion.”
- **Department of Trade and Industry:**
“Temporary Employment Services are used for short term project related work or replacing employees absent for extended periods such as maternity leave and sick leave.”
- **Department of Social Development:**
“The services of temporary staff (temps) are used ... due to temporary high work volumes experienced in various units. It is cost effective and time saving to use temporary employment services due to the short periods of employment.”
- **Department of Public Service and Administration:**
“To bridge the gap when a vacancy exists and the department is engaged in the process of recruitment in terms of the legislative framework.”

- **Department of Justice and Constitutional Development:**

“In most cases, temporary officials are held against vacant posts pending their filling. In some cases, and in respect of specialised services, contracted officials are employed for a limited period to work on a specific project.”

A myriad of arguments have already been made as to why labour brokers are required – the fact that maternity leave creates the need for short term employees is just another one. The ANC and Cosatu need to think twice on their calls to ban labour brokers – doing so would create a huge disincentive to employ women, since an employer would not be able to fill that position during the time at which she is by law entitled to maternity leave. In fact, banning labour brokers would effectively scrap most of the progress made in gender equality. Is this the message that the ANC and Cosatu want to send out – that they are against the empowerment of women in the workplace?

The DA has already released a policy proposal on industry self-regulation for labour brokers together with the Congress of the People (COPE). It is evident that much is at stake; the DA will be posing further parliamentary questions on gender equity and vacancy policy in the workplace to those departments who have denied making use of labour brokers – chief among them to the Minister of Labour, Membatise Mdadlana, who has vowed to ban labour brokers on more than one occasion.

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