



## Labour brokers blamed again

By Carien du Plessis

AS public hearings about labour brokering got off to a slightly chaotic start in Welkom late yesterday, the National Union of Mineworkers called for the ANC to use its majority in Parliament to push for laws to ban the practice.

Announcing today's start of mass action by trade unions against labour brokers, Numsa general secretary Irvin Jim told journalists that labour brokers turned people into "modern-day slaves".

Labour brokers are responsible for matching people with jobs, but Jim said this often meant that employers shifted their responsibility for looking after workers to the broker, who in turn did not care about the workers but rather about profits.

### **Jim blamed labour brokers for the deepening inequalities**

It was also difficult for trade unions to organise those who worked for labour brokers, he said.

Jim blamed labour brokers for the deepening inequalities between rich and poor and white and black.

"In a society with high levels of inequalities, it is a crisis to allow this system to flourish," he said.

Numsa president Cedric Gcina said the union's definition of labour brokers included established employment agencies such as Kelly Girl, Adcorp and TES Connect.

Labour federation Cosatu, in a statement yesterday, called for support for the mass action planned by trade unions, saying labour brokers were largely to blame for the "casualisation" of labour.

Although Parliament's portfolio committee on labour, chaired by ANC MP Lumka Yengeni, gave Cosatu a sympathetic ear in recent public hearings on the issue, President Jacob Zuma has said that the party supported the regulation, rather than an outright ban, of labour brokers.

Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana has also suggested better regulation as the better option.

Cope and the DA last week came out in united support for improved regulation of the labour broker industry.

However, Jim responded by saying that they "would gladly throw us back into the dark old days when black and African workers were not allowed to form trade unions".

DA MP Ian Ollis said that the public hearings on labour brokers in the Free State were not properly advertised and had started off in disarray.

He said initial submissions were all made by Cosatu members who "appeared to be reading from faxes" from head office rather than workers relating their experiences".

- This article was originally published on page 2 of [The Mercury](#) on October

06, 2009



*Published on the Web by IOL on 2009-10-06 04:31:00*

---

© Independent Online 2005. All rights reserved. IOL publishes this article in good faith but is not liable for any loss or damage caused by reliance on the information it contains.