

More regulation of labour broking thrashed out

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The department of Labour and the labour-broking industry are thrashing out proposals at Nedlac to better regulate the industry.

This is according to Mzobanzi Jikazana, a spokesman for the Department of Labour.

But while the department is impatient for action, labour brokers say that more laws are unnecessary.

The talks under way at the government, labour and business negotiating chamber preceded hearings on labour brokers in Parliament yesterday. These hearings continue today.

Jikazana said yesterday that the discussions, based on proposals tabled in 2004, had to be expedited because "the minister has become impatient. There is an element of urgency."

Cosatu spokesman Patrick Craven said labour brokers should be outlawed. "It's a form of human trafficking and a way for companies to avoid paying benefits," Craven said.

John Botha, the chief operating officer at the Confederation of Associations in the Private Employment Sector, representing temporary employment service providers, said there was sufficient legislation as each labour law had specific clauses on brokers. He instead pointed out institutional incapacity.

Natalie Fraser, the executive of operations at the Association of Personnel Service Organisations, said that additional regulations would mean policing labour brokers that were already policed, but would have no effect on the "bakkie brigade that flies below the radar".

The Department of Labour proposals being discussed at Nedlac include greater liability of the client company in respect of dismissals, a more rigorous registration process for labour brokers and equality between permanent and temporary staff in the workplace.

Botha said the industry had in 2006 proposed the establishment of a statutory body in which business, the government and labour would be represented, and that would monitor and govern the labour broking industry.

Botha said such a body should have the legal power to close down labour brokers that did not comply with the law.

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