

Cabinet approves minimum wage bill

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Cape Town - Cabinet approved the National Minimum Wage Bill during its fortnightly meeting on November 1. The draft legislation will now be referred to Parliament for further deliberation, after which President Jacob Zuma will be required to officially sign it into law.

In February this year representatives of government, business, the community sector and two of the three labour federations represented at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) signed the national minimum wage agreement. According to this, workers will receive a minimum of R20 per hour which translates into a monthly wage of about R3 500 for a 40-hour week, and about R3 900 for those who work 45 hours a week.

The minimum wage agreement was overseen by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

In addition to the National Minimum Wage Bill, Cabinet also approved the Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Bill and a Labour Relations Amendment Bill. The three pieces of draft legislation will be published in the Government Gazette on Friday November 10.

Cabinet said in a statement that the National Minimum Wage Bill is due to come into effect on May 1 2018. There are a few exceptions to the national minimum wage:

- the minimum wage for farm workers will be 90% of R20 per hour (R18 per hour);

- the minimum wage for domestic workers will be 75% of R20 per hour (R15 per hour); and

- the minimum wage for workers on an expanded public works programme is R11 per hour.

"The Nedlac social partners have agreed that the farm, forestry and domestic sectors will be brought up to 100% of the national minimum wage within two years pending research by the National Minimum Wage Commission," Cabinet said.

Laws to resolve violent strikes

Proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act aim to strengthen collective bargaining and introduce an advisory arbitration measure to resolve strikes that are intractable, violent or may cause a local or national crisis.

The Labour Relations Act amendments will be accompanied by a Code of Good Practice on Collective Bargaining, Industrial Action and Picketing.

The code is intended to provide practical guidance on collective bargaining, the resolution of disputes of mutual interest and the resort to industrial action.

Cabinet noted that Nedlac social partners have reached agreement on an Accord on Collective Bargaining and Industrial Action. In this, all social partners commit to take the steps needed to prevent violence, intimidation and damage to property and to improve capacity to resolve disputes peacefully and expeditiously.

"All trade unions and employers will be encouraged to sign the Accord on Collective Bargaining and Industrial Action."