

Interfaces/Koppelvlakke

Manpower — Government planning and legislation

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It is hardly necessary to stress that manpower is one of the most precious assets of any nation and that the level of economic activity and the material standards of living in a country are very largely determined by the quality and the quantity of the available supply of manpower and the growth of this resource.

Workers are, however, not merely tools or agents for the production of goods and services; they are above all human beings with basic needs and desires which they should be enabled to satisfy. These needs relate to such matters as income, housing, recreation and security.

From the sixties onwards most of the developed countries appear to have rediscovered the important contribution which manpower policies could make towards national economic well-being. As a result of this, most of them have introduced so-called 'active manpower policies' which are designed to influence the aggregate supply of workers in a quantitative and qualitative sense in a variety of ways. These policies centred around three main objectives, namely the development of human resources with a view to promoting economic growth; the improvement of the employment position of marginal groups, and the improvement of the trade-off between inflation and unemployment.

The 'active manpower policies' generally resulted in important legislative adjustments and changes; the re-organization of existing labour market institutions; the establishment of new institutions; and the introduction of a variety of programs particularly in the field of training and placement. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Industrial Training Act was adopted in 1964 and later replaced by the Employment and Training Act of 1973 whilst the Manpower Services Commission was set up in 1974. In the United States, the total manpower policy concept was redesigned in 1973 under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

In South Africa by contrast, the first major steps in the direction of a total review of manpower policies were only taken in 1977, when two commissions of inquiry into labour matters were appointed, namely the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation (Wiehahn Commission) and the Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower (Riekert Commission).

The Wiehahn Commission was required to make recommendations in regard to legislation administered by the Department of Labour (now the Department of Manpower Utilisation) and the Department of Mines (now the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs) whereas the Riekert Commission was required to deal with all other legislation, regulations and administrative practices in so far as they related to any economic aspect of the utilisation of manpower.

It is the reports of these two Commissions and the related White Papers, which have laid the foundations of a revised labour dispensation for the future to which should now be returned. In this regard, it is necessary to deal briefly with the three pillars of the revised labour order for the future, namely the policy framework; the legislative framework; and the institutional framework before turning to some important issues requiring priority attention.

Policy framework

The South African Government's manpower goals or objectives for the future, which were set out in the White Paper on Part 1 of the Wiehahn Report and in the White Paper on the Riekert Report, were summarized and explicitly restated in the White Paper on Part 2 of the Wiehahn Report in the following words:

'The Government's general aim in regard to manpower is that the country's workers, irrespective of race, colour or sex, must be *developed, utilized and conserved* to the optimum. The development of manpower implies the continual upgrading to the highest possible level of the working ability of the total work force with due regard to individual talent and interest and the present and future needs of the South African economy. The optimum utilisation of manpower implies not only the provision of sufficient job opportunities, but also effective vocational guidance and, in general, increasing productivity by making the best use of the workers that are available at any given moment. The conservation of the country's manpower embraces broadly the maintenance of industrial peace, the protection of the mental and physical health and welfare of every worker and the retention of trained workers'.

The Government also made it very clear that these goals were to be 'pursued within the broad framework of a free market system but with due regard to other national objectives, the special circumstances in South Africa and events and developments which make it necessary for the Government to influence the system'.

In the foregoing regard, the Government explicitly expressed its resolve to maintain and increase individual economic freedom; to promote individual economic responsibility in accordance with the principle of self-governance; to maintain safety, order and stability in the field of manpower; and to remove unjustifiable measures and regulations which obstruct the effective functioning of the common economic system.

Other important elements of the policy framework enunciated in the White Paper under discussion are the following: freedom of association as a basis for trade union membership; trade union autonomy in respect of membership and office bearers; the joint use of existing facilities for industrial training subject to suitable ar-

rangements to avoid friction; and, geographical freedom of movement of workers of all population groups subject to the availability of satisfactory housing, job opportunities and the non-availability of local workseekers.

It is important that employers and employees take careful note of the policy framework outlined above and that they respond positively to the challenge of self-governance without waiting on the Government to encourage or persuade them to do so. It is, however, equally important that employers and employees alike should take note of the relevant labour laws and operate within the provisions of these laws.

Legislative framework

The labour legislation of the future will differ substantially from the labour legislation of the sixties and seventies as a result of the various recommendations of the Riekert and Wiehahn Commissions which have been accepted by the Government.

These recommendations relate to such matters as: the consolidation of existing labour legislation; the repeal of all outdated or unnecessary provisions; the removal of over-lapping or conflicting provisions; and the avoidance of provisions that could be regarded as discriminatory. More specifically, the Riekert Commission recommended a consolidated Employment and Training Act for all population groups, whilst the Wiehahn Commission recommended a single Industrial Relations Act.

The task of consolidating labour legislation has been entrusted to a standing Technical Committee in regard to Labour Legislation which was appointed by the Minister of Manpower Utilisation in November 1979, whilst another technical committee is consolidating the legislation of the Department of Manpower Utilisation which indirectly relates to the utilisation of manpower.

The consolidated and modernized legislative framework which will eventually result from the recommendations of the Wiehahn and the Riekert Commissions can confidently be expected to contribute towards the more efficient utilization, development and conservation of the country's manpower in the years and in the decades which lie ahead and thereby to the attainment of our national goals. Moreover, it is certain that legislation will be scrutinized and revised on an ongoing basis in accordance with the needs of the time.

Institutional reforms

Several important changes in the institutional framework are being brought about as a result of recommendations which were made by the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions. These changes relate to:

- the re-organization and renaming of the Department of Labour which is now known as the Department of Manpower Utilisation;
- the establishment of a National Manpower Commission with effect from 1 November 1979;
- the establishment of 7 Standing Committees of the National Manpower Commission on 16 November 1979 to deal with specific matters;
- the establishment of a restructured Industrial Court with effect from 1 December 1979;
- the transfer of the industrial training functions in

respect of Blacks from the Department of Education and Training to the Department of Manpower Utilisation with effect from 1 June 1980;

- the transfer of employment services in respect of Blacks from the Department of Co-operation and Development to the Department of Manpower Utilisation (the necessary enabling legislation was passed during the 1980 Parliamentary Session, and the necessary administrative and financial arrangements are now receiving attention); and
- the broadening of the scope of responsibility and designation of the National Apprenticeship Board to enable the Board to serve as a National Training Board.

Important issues

The National Manpower Commission which was established on 1 November 1979, identified three areas for priority attention at its first meeting which was held on 16 November 1979, namely education and training, industrial relations and employment creation. In each of these fields important progress has been made.

In the field of training, the following developments can be noted:

- the completion of a study on top level manpower which has been considered by the National Manpower Commission;
- the approval of 103 applications for the indenturing of Black apprentices up to the end of August 1980;
- the establishment of a scheme for the training of adult Asian artisans on 1 April 1980;
- the planning of two further adult artisan training centres;
- great interest in the establishment of private in-service training schemes. (At the end of August 1980, a total of 112 private schemes and 35 private centres were registered in terms of the In-service Training Act, 1979);
- tax concessions in respect of apprenticeship training;
- an upsurge in the number of workers receiving training at public in-service training centres. In fact, these centres are now in urgent need of expansion — a matter which is receiving attention; and
- study visits to several overseas countries by senior officials of the Department of Manpower Utilisation and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the National Manpower Commission in connection with training.

In so far as industrial relations is concerned, it needs to be mentioned that the Wiehahn Commission has still to report on the remaining aspects of the Industrial Conciliation Act. Other developments worthy of mention are the following:

- the registration of 8 Black trade unions up to the end of August 1980;
- the approval of 26 applications from existing registered trade unions for permission to recruit members on a multi-national basis; and
- studies and research projects being undertaken by the Standing Committee on industrial relations of

the National Manpower Commission in regard to a number of industrial relations issues emanating from Part 1 of the Wiehahn Commissions's Report.

In so far as employment is concerned, the National Manpower Commission established a Standing Committee on employment creation at its very first meeting, and directed the committee to study the problem and to submit recommendations to the National Manpower Commission. In order to assist the Standing Committee in its task, the Bureau for Economic Policy and Analysis of the University of Pretoria was requested to conduct an investigation into the problem in its macro and especially its micro-context. The study was completed in August 1980, and the National Manpower Commission has already submitted specific recommendations to the relevant authorities.

In conclusion it should be reiterated that all manpower issues are receiving a great deal of attention in official circles and that a good deal of progress has been made in different fields. Much remains to be done by all parties involved, namely the Government, employers/employers' organizations and employees/employee organizations. It is for this reason that the Manpower 2000 project was initiated by the Minister of Manpower Utilisation and that informal regional committees have been established in all the larger urban areas in South Africa. These Committees can, it is believed play a very valuable role in regard to manpower matters at local and regional levels, particularly in so far as manpower planning is concerned. In this way, they could well become permanent and important bodies on the local manpower scene, providing information on development possibilities, unemployment, training needs, industrial relations problems etc and becoming actively involved in various action programmes. Employers and workers should be urged to support these committees and to involve themselves actively in the work of these committees.

Development of manpower and training facilities

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Common standards — evaluation of manpower development

A prerequisite to the management of manpower development is a clear understanding of the business we are in and the business we want to be in.

Common standards that apply to our performance appraisal of manpower development are, inter alia, as follows:

- Adequate forecasting of manpower requirements,
- Setting of realistic manpower objectives,
- Planning in line with set objectives,
- Careful selecting of manpower,
- Educating and training of manpower — off and on-the-job,
- Coaching and counselling of manpower,
- Formulating and implementation of succession plans,
- Reselecting, retraining and on-going development to, and ahead of, need,
- Communication and co-ordination of training requirements with others i.e. 'pooling'.

Measurement against standards

The question then to be asked of ourselves is where do we stand when measured against such standards both now and in the context of our future plans?

Namely:

- Do we forecast our coming/future requirements?
- Do we set realistic objectives?
- Do we plan our manpower requirements realistically?
- Do we select and re-select our manpower carefully?
- Do we educate and train our manpower — off and on-the-job?
- Do we coach, counsel and further develop our people?
- Do we formulate and implement succession plans?
- Do we communicate and co-ordinate our training plans with others having similar requirements?

i.e. how do we shape up as professionals?

Formulation of company action plans

Based on the foregoing comparison of our performance against standard, whatever the field(s) of manpower training, and based on the premise 'THAT THE BEST HELP IS SELF HELP', it is essential that we set our priorities, formulate our own action plans and com-