

Cabinet establishes IMC on employment of foreign nationals

President Cyril Ramaphosa says Cabinet has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on the Employment of Foreign Nationals.



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Fielding questions in the National Assembly on Thursday, the President said the IMC will deal with the migration of foreign nationals for employment.

“To ensure a coherent and sustainable solution to these challenges, Cabinet has recently established an IMC on the Employment of Foreign Nationals.

“Convened by the Minister of Employment and Labour and co-chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs, this IMC will deal with the migration of foreign nationals for employment and related opportunities.

“The IMC will provide guidance on matters such as existing labour supply agreements, trade relations and transportation agreements. It will also address criminality and related security matters across our borders,” President Ramaphosa said.

African Transformation Movement (ATM) MP, Thandiswa Marawu, had asked the President what steps would be taken, in view of the many job losses in the formal employment market and the youth unemployment rate at just over 60%, to ensure that trading in the informal economy is reserved only for South Africans.

She had also asked the President if he intended to instruct the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Employment and Labour to review all work permits given to non-South Africans.

Addressing the National Assembly, the President said the unemployment crisis has been dramatically deepened by the economic effects of the global Coronavirus pandemic.

“We are therefore called upon to use every means at our disposal to rebuild our economy, protect existing jobs and create new jobs.

“This means, among other things, that we need to look at issues of migration, employment and economic activity.

“As we do so, we should avoid the populist temptation to blame our unemployment crisis on foreign nationals working in our country, either legally or illegally,” he said.

President Ramaphosa said by the same measure, there is a need to understand and respond to the frustrations of many South Africans at the violation of immigration laws and other regulations by companies that employ foreign nationals illegally.

“The IMC will also review decisions on special dispensation work permits, amendments to our Immigration Act and Employment Services Act and Labour Migration Management.

“The committee will also need to ensure that our approach to the employment of foreign nationals provides the scarce and critical skills that we need to grow our economy,” he said.

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