

SOCIAL DIALOGUE, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR MARKET STABILITY IN SADC: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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SADC is faced with major challenges in the new millennium not least of which are the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its strong correlation with poverty and underdevelopment, high levels of unemployment and poor economic growth.

These challenges can only be confronted through systematic and co-ordinated strategies mounted at the national and regional level.

This presentation will focus on the strategic importance of labour market stability as a key component of economic and social development. It will highlight work being undertaken in a growing number of SADC countries towards creating the right enabling legal frameworks and conflict management systems.

It will review initiatives undertaken by the SADC Employment and Labour sector to create a policy framework which lends harmony to strategic choices made at the national level.

It will illustrate how social dialogue has been used to develop a consensus on labour market and labour relations policy options.

It will also raise questions about whether social dialogue can be employed in SADC to develop pacts on growth and development, and whether the preconditions for effective pacting exist in SADC.

LABOUR RELATIONS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SUBREGION WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON DISPUTE SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS

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RESUME: CHARLES DAVID NUPEN

Charles Nupen was born on 19th June 1950.

He attended Durban High School and Natal University where he qualified in law (BA LLB) in the mid seventies.

While at university, he served as President of the National Union of South African Students (1973 / 1974).

He practised law initially in Cape Town, and in 1980 he joined the Legal Resource Centre, a public interest law practice in Johannesburg where he worked under Arthur Chaskalson, current President of the Constitutional Court.

In 1987 he was appointed director of the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa, a position he held for seven years.

During this time he mediated and arbitrated several hundred disputes in all sectors of the South African economy, and grew the institution into a national private conflict management agency.

In the early 1990's, during a time of heightened political conflict, he established and chaired the Soweto Peace Committee.

In 1994 he was appointed as a commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission which oversaw South Africa's first national democratic elections.

In 1995 he chaired the National Bargaining Forum in the Automotive Industry.

In 1996, at the request of then Labour Minister Tito Mboweni, he project managed the establishment of the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration, South Africa's first national public dispute settlement agency. The institution, developed within twelve months, comprised at start up, 400 full time staff (100 professionals) and 250 part time professionals, trained and deployed to ten offices throughout the country. He was asked to serve as the CCMA's executive director during its first year of operation.

Since 1998 he has spent the majority of his time project managing for the International Labour Organisation and he runs a consultancy offering conflict management and strategic planning services.

He currently serves as Chief Technical Adviser to an ILO project in the SADC region.

He sits on the board of the Africa Resources Trust, an environmental agency which promotes community based natural resource management, and the board of the Shoma Education Foundation which is dedicated to IT driven skills upgrading for teachers in rural areas.

He lives in Illovo, Johannesburg. He is married to Drene, and has three children, Lili, Jessica and James.