

**Ministry**

**Employment & Labour**

**Republic of South Africa**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 900 [NW1081E]**

**900. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Employment and Labour:**

With reference to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the increase of automation, more use for robotic components and an urgent need to upskill those whose jobs are in danger of becoming redundant, coupled with the many opportunities for the Republic to benefit from the changes 4IR will bring, what are the details of the plans that have been put in place by his department to ensure that the Republic benefits from the changes in the labour force? NW1081E

**REPLY:**

Automation is an enabler of innovation and not the other way round, it is important to understand that fact. After we have understood that, we must then grasp other facts that, economies are stimulated and driven by innovation. If we speak about change, change should not be for the sake of change but it should be adapted to the needs of the economy and its population. There is a notion that has become a cliché that speaks about change because somewhere someone is talking about change rather than change dictated by our own environment.

Albeit, we must agree that education and training institutions are central in driving skills that are needed by the changing economy. That is why my Department and the Department of Higher Education are always in constant collaboration on critical skills that are needed by the economy. As result, there is a critical skills list that speaks to the demand of our economy. This assists us in better responding to the needs of the labour market.

In responding to the 4th Industrial Revolution, the Honourable member will know that the President has established a commission amongst the others the Commission is to assist the government in taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital industrial revolution. The Commission will further identify relevant policies, strategies and action plans that will position South Africa as a competitive global player.

The work of the Commission will be tabled at NEDLAC for further discussion on how to come up with policies that will respond to the changes in the labour market as well as how to upskill, reskill and produce future skills that will be needed by the economy.

As a country that is grappling with unemployment, we must ensure that change does not exclude our people in the world of work but enhance their productivity, mobility and speaks to the needs of the population.

END