

IN MARCH 2006, the South African government decided to establish a short-term skills intervention initiative within the office of the Deputy President.

The rationale for this decision was government's recognition that education and skills development are key to driving socio-economic growth in order to substantially reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The government recognised that while long-term improvement in Human Resource Development (HRD) takes time, an urgent need existed to address priority skills areas immediately, grow the economy and improve labour absorption.

The government also pointed out that, in order to be successful, this would require a collaborative effort on behalf of government and all its social partners.

In support of these aims, a Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) was established under the leadership of the then Deputy President as a high-level task team to accelerate human resources and skills development in priority skills areas to support the national growth initiative.

JIPSA did not duplicate existing structures but rather set priorities, identified and resolved systems blockages and constraints, and monitored and reported on progress. It also sought to align the training and skills development efforts of the public and private sectors without undermining the development and implementation of longer-term HRD strategies.

The distinguishing feature of JIPSA was that it represented a specific joint venture by government, business and labour to make a critical difference to skills provision over the short and medium terms, in direct response to identified skills needs in the economy and to promote labour absorption.

JIPSA focused the attention of key government departments and bodies – such as the Sector Education and Training Authorities and public education and training providers – on the achievement of core national objectives. It called upon business leadership to ensure that the private sector played an active and energetic role in the provision of priority skills, and it called upon organised labour to throw its weight behind a shared priority skills agenda.

Fast-tracking priority skills

JIPSA, in short, was a joint initiative of government, business and labour to fast-track the provision of priority skills required to support accelerated and shared growth in South Africa.

JIPSA did not duplicate the roles of existing government departments, statutory bodies and institutions, but sought to establish mutually agreed priorities, improve communication and the flow of information between the relevant bodies, identify and address problems and bottlenecks, and monitor and report on progress against agreed targets.

JIPSA also provided information and practical experience that informed the establishment of the Human Resource Development Council of South Africa in March 2010, which is



ENGINEERING THE FUTURE: The origins of government's skills development policies lie in its recognition more than a decade ago that, while long-term improvement in Human Resource Development takes time, an urgent need existed to address priority skills areas immediately.

A quick guide to the Human Resource Development Council

a much longer-term strategy that aims to meet the country's social and economic development needs.

The aims of the Human Resource Development Council

The Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDCSA) aims to develop institutional synergies for an integrated Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa (HRDSA) that will stimulate a culture of training and lifelong learning at individual, organisational and national

levels of employability.

Our goals also include increasing productivity and the human resource development needed to successfully transform ours into a knowledge economy.

Objectives

The HRDCSA is explicitly intended to contribute to the attainment of the following national goals:

- To urgently and substantively reduce the scourges of poverty, inequality and unemployment in South Africa;
- To promote justice and social cohesion through im-

proved equity in the provision and outcomes of education and skills development programmes; and

- To substantively improve national economic growth and development through the improved competitiveness of the South African economy.

Governance structure

Plenary is led by the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, with two deputy chairpersons. The chair of the Technical Working Group serves as the first deputy chairperson and was appointed by the Deputy President at the

inaugural meeting of the Plenary of Council.

The second deputy chairperson was selected through a process whereby Council members submitted names to the Secretariat for consideration by the Deputy President within 30 days of the inaugural meeting of the Plenary of Council. The Deputy President announced the appointment of the second deputy chair at the plenary meeting of the Council following its inaugural meeting.

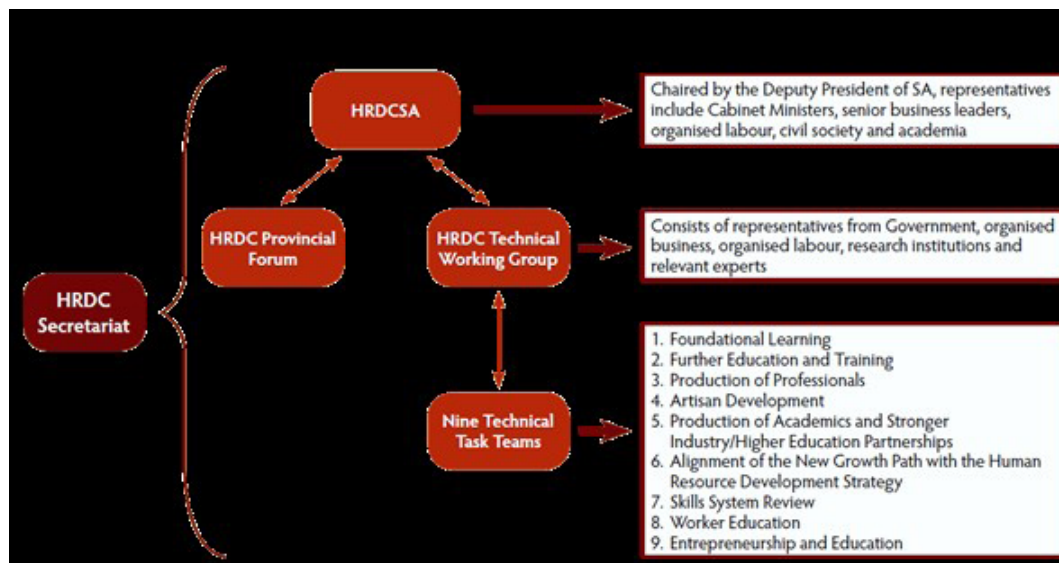
Government, civil society sectors, organised business, professional bodies, higher education institutions, research communities, co-opted members and organised labour are represented in the HRDC.

The multi-tiered structure of the HRDC comprises:

- The Plenary;
- The Technical Working Group (TWG);
- The Technical Task Teams (TTTs);
- HRD Provincial Coordinating Forum; and
- The Secretariat.

The HRDC's formal relationships with Provincial Human Resource Development Councils shall be decided by the Plenary in consultation with such councils.

Source: Human Resource Development Council of South Africa's website. See more at: <http://www.hrdcsa.org.za>



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