

Directors opening and welcome Think Tank

To Mark CCMA 15 Anniversary

I am extremely honoured to be standing here to welcome you all to this event. It is experimental, and we hope ground breaking in its design and content.

It is a very significant moment and I would like to spend a short while explaining to you why we decided to facilitate this event to mark 15 years of the CCMA's existence.

The CCMA has become a well known and well respected institution and we see that it is very important that it plays its role, or an expanded role, to our social partners. It must lead the way in facilitating processes in which organized business and labour (and perhaps too the state) can shape their contribution to the Labour market. We also believed that it was imperative to not let the 15 year event pass without reflection and appropriate comment given the current economic climate, the drive to create jobs and its concomitant impact on the Labour Market.

Hence we have used a theme of lest we forget there is much to be done....if we wish to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and democratization of the workplace as the act enjoins us to do, we also need to facilitate debate, and address concerns.

A think tank as set out in the invitation is a place where social, economic and other policy is developed, and new and different ideas are generated.

It is our intention to capture all the input that we get today, and produce a document setting out everyone's views. We have pointedly asked our speakers not to be guarded, but to give us their true views. We have also tried to ensure they represent a balanced view.

It is significant that while preparing for this my brother, who lives in the USA, telephoned me for advice. His boss had, via email, sent his PA of several years standing an email firing her. She had packed up and left before he got to his place of work in the morning. I am so glad that in South Africa we have recourse in relation to arbitrary behavior by anyone in the workplace, and that the CCMA exists to support labour and business in ensuring fair conduct in our society. We have our challenges, but the corner stone of our democracy is the right to complain, the CCMA represents a fragment of those rights.

I hope after today we will have captured wisdom from everyone in the room and have some new and innovative ideas for the CCMA to operate, as well as some input on the Labour Market at large.

Thanks you for joining us. And I invite you to keep an open mind, and ensure that you enjoy the challenges from our speakers.