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Address by MEC Mahlakeng Mahlakeng during the handing over of certificates of 60 EPWP/NYS beneficiaries of Ngaka Modiri Molema District held at Barolong Boo Ratshidi Hall on Friday, November 13, 2009.....

Date: Friday, November 13, 2009

- Programme Director: Mme Tihalefang Mathibe
- The Reverend: Pastor C D Reetseng
- Head of Department: Nic van Staden
- Senior Managers of the department present here today
- Distinguished Guests: Our EPWP/NYS Beneficiaries
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning and thank you for extending an invitation to my office. I am indeed pleased to be here.

Programme Director allow me to use this podium to extend my deepest condolences to the families, relatives and friend of two of our colleagues who pass on this week.

They were: Mrs Lydia Meisie Mothale who was an Admin Clerk in the Roads Directorate and one of our cleaning staff, Mrs Esther Kutlo Bosilong.

Both will be buried in Mmabatho and Mogogoe cemeteries tomorrow.

May their souls rest in peace.

This is the fourth and the last of the EPWP/NYS graduation ceremony I am attending in the past two months. This group of 67 beneficiaries we bestow honours today, form part of the total of 587 who would have received certificates by in all our four districts.

For the first time, I am informed there four people with disabilities formed part of this group.

I have had the opportunity to say congratulations to your counterparts in Bojanala, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati districts already.

Ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests, my message to our EPWP/NYS beneficiaries during my crusade has been consistent. The programmes EPWP and NYS which you have gone through, seek to address critical areas in our society. It is an initiative by government, to empower you with the skills which can enable you to become an entrepreneur.

The accredited certificate you will be issued with put you in good standing to compete

equally in the job market. If you put those skills to better use, you would be able to sustain a livelihood and that alone can keep poverty and joblessness at a minimum.

We never introduced EPWP to create permanent employment. It is government initiative to arm people with skills that can assist beneficiaries to explore opportunities to earn a decent living. That explains why you were trained in trades such as paving; painting; carpentry, bricklaying, plastering plumbing including tiling for example.

In case you have not heard this. We are gradually beginning to realizing the impact we are making, though limited.

But we can still do more. For example, in Dr Kenneth Kaunda, one of your counterparts is sub-contracted by a Housing Construction Company in that area.

In Bojanala, some of the beneficiaries with a passion for carpentry have started a business in coffin making and have established a mini furnisher mini factory in the Rustenburg area.

I mention these examples, to illustrate that there is indeed light at the end of the tunnel, provided you keep trying hard enough.

What I would prefer to see happen, is that my department should be seen to be monitoring and supporting such initiatives and companies formed by yourselves, without flaunting the rules.

We have to try harder to put your skills to test, with contracts for small projects so that you too can grow.

Our graduates here today acquired skills at:

Itirele Day Care and Mokogobistad doing painting, carpentry, bricklaying and plastering. There were 31 men; 29 women; 56 youth and four adults.

Seven beneficiaries will also receive short skills certificates on furniture production

Ladies and gentlemen.

May I also mention that my departments will up-scale the number of beneficiaries during the next phase of the programme called, EPWP Phase 2.

Phase 2 of EPWP is earmarked by government as one of the flagship programmes to create sustainable livelihood for households, especially in rural areas.

We are not doing well and I am not at all happy with our poor performance in getting Phase 2 of EPWP rolling. We need to move at great speed with the implementation and stop once and for all debates why we are unable to implement.

We hope to roll out this programme especially on our entire roads project including the

roads in your villages in this district. We hope in doing so we can make maximum impact as a contribution to rural development.

Together we can do more

In conclusion: Programme Director:

Let us put hands together in congratulating these beneficiaries for their commitment and dedication, pray and give all the support so that their to the dreams can be realized. I wish you the best of the best for the future.

Before I step down from the podium, Programme Director:

It is common knowledge by now that the Premier of the Province has made important pronouncements this week especially a directive in respect of the management our finances, the function which is to be relocated to the Department of Finance.

I welcome that move which must be supported. There is nothing to fear. You need not panic if indeed your have been honest truthful and transparent with tax payers monies. I've gladly welcome the Premier's decision because, as you are all aware, as far back as September this year, we fired the first warning shots in putting the Chief Director Roads on precautionary suspension with immediate effect.

The developments about us which you have seen on television sets, read about in newspapers and heard over the radio, partly vindicates our proactive actions. That includes also, the investigation by PricewaterhouseCoopers which I am pleased to inform this gathering that I expect to receive a detailed forensic report from them in the next few days.

As I promised during the advent of the investigation, the PricewaterhouseCoopers report will be made public. Circumstances permitting, I should be in a position to also make an announcement about the report's findings, recommendations and the way forward sooner that most expect. You have a right to know the contents and what we as government are doing about it.

I thank you.

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