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Public Works, Roads and Transport
North West Provincial Government
Republic of South Africa

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Address by MEC Mahlakeng Mahlakeng during the launch today (Wed, June 30, 2010) of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) driven North West Road Maintenance Programme held in Magokgwane Village near Mafikeng.

Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2010

- Programme Director:
- Kgosi Gobusamang Shole
- Kgosi Garebabope Malefo
- Executive Mayor of Ngaka Modiri Molema Districts: Mme Pinky Mokoto
- Councillors present
- Acting Head of Department: Mme Pandora Hlakanye
- Senior Managers of the department present here today.

Special greetings to all of you.

It is indeed a great pleasure and very fulfilling, to come face- to-face with sections of our rural communities as government and indeed under the banner of the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport in our province.

I say fulfilling because, we are not a department seen to be interacting with communities, only if there is a crisis brewing or show our faces when it is time to put down the fires.

We have come to you, to implement what we promised to do and what you heard we will do, as our contribution to our rural communities, to improve the lives of the people we ought to answer to.

The rural community of Magokgwane, is the first in the province to get the taste of the menu the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport will dish-out to a number of rural communities in four districts of the province.

Therefore, this village, its people, its traditional leadership and community structures, represent a launch-pad of an unprecedented noble idea, so unique yet so practical and easy to implement, provided we pull together in one direction.

You just have to roll up the sleeves.

Put shoulder to the wheel and get your hands dirty. In so doing, you will be assisting Government to help you in turn, the tide against poverty and joblessness in this area.

We have, as the department, made a commitment that, in all the projects that we have planned to implement this financial year- whether big or small, labour intensive method will form part of each and every project.

But over and above that, this will partly explain why we are here today.

Job creation for sustainable livelihoods is one of the priorities of the Government I represent, and the department I lead.

I have made a commitment, when I delivered my policy speech in May, that:

For the current financial year, we have targeted to create at least more than 8 000 jobs in the rural communities of province, which is largely rural, through the Road Maintenance Programme.

Today is the beginning of that journey and the good news is:

The community of Magokgwane, Tsetse, and Ramatlabama lead that journey to reach that target of 8 000 or more job opportunities.

We are not in a habit of planning and planning and doing more planning. We are an implementing agent. We are therefore implementing what we promised to do.

Unfortunately, this noble idea, which all of you have to embrace and make it part of you, does not require lazy people.

That is why we also called this programme: ``Itirele”.

You have to roll-up your sleeves, do it yourselves, and be seen to be working in order to earn something for your contributions.

In fact, I am informed that beneficiaries will earn at least R520 for working eight days in a month, which translates into two days of work per week.

For now we have budgeted approximately R60m for this happen and for this to succeed and we will succeed.

For this project and others to be rolled out in other districts, beneficiaries will as a collective from villages, perform road maintenance on sections of the roads of between 500m and 1km stretch.

The duties will include:

- Regular maintenance of the drainage system on a particular road.

- Felling over grown trees branches which obstruct a clear view of the road ahead.
- Clearing verges of the road off litter and weeds.
- Where possible, do minor road surface repairs and fix potholes.

Programme Director

This is fascinating concept. We could have hired a contractor from outside this village to these tasks which you can do yourselves and even do them better because you are residents of this village.

But we are saying, the people of this village can do the job and can even do it better. We have and will ensure that we provide the necessary tools as well as safety equipment for all the beneficiaries to champion this noble cause.

Itirele, is more than just a poverty relief programme. It creates meaningful work, a sense of ownership and collective approach and a sense of belonging and doing things together to achieve more.

For today's launch, most of the beneficiaries may have been drawn largely from the youth section of the community here. The month of June is "Youth Month" and therefore it is very befitting a contribution my department is doing to the youth of this village.

But as we move into top gear in other districts, the criteria for beneficiaries will be biased heavily towards the poorest of the poor households, especially those headed by women in our rural areas.

Let the work begin in earnest.

I thank you.