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

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Address by MEC Mahlakeng Mahlakeng, during the official hand-over today (Mon, May 24), to Fifa Local Organising Committee (LOC), of the two completed road projects in Bojanala District, which are key to the successful hosting by the province, of the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup fixtures to be played at the Royal Bafokeng Sports Palace.

Date: Monday, May 24, 2010

- Programme Director and Acting Head of Department: **Mme Motlapele Ntshabele.**
- Honourable Premier of the North West Province: **Mme Maureen Modiselle.**
- His Majesty and King of Bafokeng Royal Nation: **Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi.**
- Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Roads and Transport.
- The Executive Mayor of Bojanala Platinum District: **Ntate Raymond Motsepe.**
- The Mayor of Rustenburg Local Municipality: **Mme J Dibetso-Nyathi.**
- Representatives from the Fifa Local Organising Committee (LOC).
- Senior and Middle Managers of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport present today
- All Stakeholders from across the spectrum.
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Special greetings to you all, on a very important day in the calendar of events, for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport and of course, for the province of the North West.

- Honourable Premier, when we took office after the regime change, and began to settle in our respective offices at about the same time last year, the challenges to fulfil our mandates were enormous.
- For the reconfigured Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, it was indeed an uphill battle.
- It was a battle that required courageous men and women, to lead from the frontline and marshal the foot-soldiers in the right direction.
- It has not been an easy 12-month cruise for the department, and like in any combat situation, where instant solutions are required to correct the wrongs of the past;

- We ended with a list of casualties along the way.
- But I can assure you, Honourable Premier, and all of you gathered here today that, we are now in control of the situation and have taken the bull by the horns.
- Today's event, which has brought us together in celebration, is just but one of several of many testimonies yet to come, to demonstrate that we have indeed turned the corner.
- And are indeed moving forward, as a unit, to fast-track delivery on what we promised our people.
- I am indeed humbled, that as government of the North West Province, we will not be singled out as a weak-link, in a chain that has to ensure that South Africa delivers to the world, a very successful 2010 Fifa World Cup.
- The speedy completion, and hand-over of two of the road projects we will hand-over officially to Fifa Local Organising Committee shortly, deserves praise, particularly when viewed against the background of events we had to navigate through, as government to this end.
- One of the two projects- the Sun-City to Phokeng Road- is, a Fifa Protocol Route. It is therefore a road of international importance.
- The importance of this particular road, and that of the Western-Bypass from the N4, cannot be overemphasised during the advent and the duration of the Soccer World Cup tournament: Especially for this province; the Royal Bafokeng Nation; the City of Rustenburg and indeed whole country.
- That also explains, the invaluable partnership we had, right from the beginning, with the Royal Bafokeng Nation who contributed immensely towards these two projects.
- Against this important background, with regards to the said road projects, allow me Programme Director, to address the status of the contractor on one of the projects, which is Moseme Construction.
- This is one of the road construction companies, fingered by PriceWaterHouseCoopers, in a forensic report following an investigation, this particular reputable forensic auditing firm, conducted in our roads directorate from August last year.
- Moseme Construction, according to that report, is among other road construction companies, who benefited from the irregular awarding of road tenders, including the project they have just delivered today.
- As a matter of fact, our suspended Chief Director for roads, Mr Eddie Thebe, has been found guilty on eight of the 10 charges of gross misconduct, including that, of the irregular awarding of road tenders to Moseme Construction and others.

- It is NOT!! Mahlakeng Mahlakeng, who made that finding.
- It was a finding by PriceWaterHouse Coopers, and that finding, was corroborated by the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee, after Mr Thebe was given an opportunity, to put his side of the story to a litany of serious charges of gross misconduct.
- I have welcomed and accepted the findings by PriceWaterHouseCoopers and the pronounced guilty verdict of Mr Eddie Thebe by the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee.
- In spite of developments around the matter involving Mr Thebe, and the pending disciplinary case against suspended former head of department, Nic van Staden and Chief Financial Officer, Kwekwu Odame-Takyi:
- The pressure to complete and hand-over to Fifa, their protocol route on time; necessitated bilateral talks between the department and Moseme Construction.
- We engaged Moseme Construction, and offered them an option to continue work and finish the road project on a without prejudice basis to any pending or possible future legal dispute on the contract.
- Put simply: Programme Director;
- Whatever investigation currently underway, and or arising also from the irregular awarding of road tenders by officials of the department, which may or may not implicate Moseme Construction, will continue unhindered. That was one of the conditions.
- I am very grateful, that the contractor went beyond accepting our offer, but went as far as making a commitment to government, that the project would be completed on time, by working around the clock to meet that target.
- I also want to thank Moseme Construction, for living up to their commitment to complete this particular project on time.
- Also, for cooperating fully with us, rather than declaring war against government, like others, who made everybody aware that they were taking us to court, only to come back silently and unnoticed, to talk to us very politely.

In conclusion

- Honourable Premier: I hope we have delivered to the best of our ability, a road infrastructure in this part of the province which is now a base for the Fifa family.

- A road infrastructure that will ensure a hassle-free Soccer World Cup spectacle for the visiting nations, their players, spectators and of course, residents of Bojanala who use these two road projects on a daily basis.

- I am also pleased to announce that, the 71km gravel road to and from Derdepoort towards Molatedi, is now suitable for traffic. My officials inspected that road three days ago.

- My profound appreciation also, for your patience and understanding of the challenges my department has been swimming through, in the past 12-months.

- We have not drowned. We are survivors, and we will continue to ride the crest of the wave.

- That so, because we too can feel it!!!

- It is here!!!!

I thank you

Issued by Communication Directorate

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