

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, Mr. H. D. YAWA, MPL AT
THE SOUTHERN REGION EPWP CERTIFICATION AWARD
FUNCTION, HELD ON THURSDAY 15 MARCH 2007 AT THE
MADIBA BANQUET HALL IN POTCHEFSTROOM.**

Programme Director

Rev DJ Tshaboko

The Mayor of Ventersdorp, Clr C Lephoi

Councillors

Head of Department- Mr. O. Mongale

Senior Management of the Department

The Regional Director-Ms Monnapula-Mazabane

Members of the Regional Management Team

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we are here in the Southern Region to celebrate our milestone in the skills revolution and the determination of our people to be part of the partnership to create jobs, fight poverty and build a better life for all. We are here as government to give practical meaning to our pledge to intensify the struggle against poverty.

Our challenge as a country and people is to achieve the objectives that we have set ourselves to fight poverty and halve unemployment

by 2014. The Freedom Charter adopted at the Congress of the People in 1955 guides our objectives.

The Freedom Charter constitutes the programme of the people of South Africa for the creation of a truly democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous country. It guides us about the broad outcomes that government must pursue to achieve the strategic goal we have set ourselves to eradicate poverty, unemployment and illiteracy through skills development. The historic campus articulates a social, economic and moral vision of the society our people wanted.

The giant of our liberation struggle, the late Oliver Reginald Tambo in 1980 said the following on the Charter: "The Freedom Charter contains the fundamental perspective of the vast majority of the people of South Africa of the kind of liberation that all of us are fighting for. Hence it is not merely the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress and its allies. Rather it is the Charter of the people of South Africa for liberation ... Because it came from the people, it remains still a people's Charter, the one basic political statement of our goals to which all genuinely democratic and patriotic forces of South Africa adhere."

Fifty-two years later and thirteen years into the Second Decade of Freedom and Democracy, the words of Comrade Tambo are still relevant. As the ANC government and government of the people, there is nothing that we do or implement outside the Freedom Charter.

As government we have set ourselves clear targets leading up to 2014, when we will be celebrating our Second Decade of Freedom. Some of the targets and objectives making up vision are as follows:

- Reduce unemployment by half through new jobs, skills development, assistance to small businesses, opportunities for self-employment and sustainable community livelihoods.
- Reduce poverty by half through economic development, comprehensive social security, land reform and improved household and community assets.
- Provide the skills required by the economy, build capacity and provide resources across society to encourage self-employment with an education system that is geared for productive work, good citizenship and a caring society.
- Ensure that all South Africans, including especially the poor and those at risk - children, youth, women, the aged, and people with disabilities - are fully able to exercise their constitutional rights and enjoy the full dignity of freedom.
- Compassionate government service to the people; national, provincial and local public representatives who are accessible; and citizens who know their rights and insist on fair treatment and efficient service.
- Significantly reduce the number of serious and priority crimes as well as cases awaiting trial, with a society that actively challenges crime and corruption, and with programmes that also address the social roots of criminality.

- Position South Africa strategically as an effective force in global relations, with vibrant and balanced trade and other relations with countries of the South and the North, and in an Africa that is growing, prospering and benefiting all Africans, especially the poor.

The implementation of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy signifies the importance we attach to our contribution to the realisation of Vision 2014 .Our pledge to intensify the struggle against poverty is informed by the sense of urgency that we deem necessary to accelerate our advance towards meeting the goal of a better life for all our people.

As government we have introduced various programmes in ensuring that we meet the objectives of vision 2014 and one of those programmes is the Expanded Public Works Programme. The programme is aimed at closing the gap between the first and the second economy .It is targeted at unemployed and unskilled majority of our people who are denied economic participation and development as a result of apartheid legacy of exclusion and marginalisation.

The Expanded Public Works Programme is aimed at

- creating temporary work opportunities and income for at least one million unemployed people.
- providing needed public goods and services, labour-intensively, at acceptable standards, through mainly public

sector resources and public and private sector implementation capacity.

- Increasing the potential of participants to earn a future income by providing work experience, training and information related to local work opportunities, further education and training, and small, medium and micro enterprise SMME development.

The overall objective of the EPWP is to create additional work opportunities, coupled with training, for a minimum of one million unemployed people throughout our country over a five-year period. 40% of the targeted beneficiaries are women, 30% are youth and 2%.

We are convinced that programme is on track to achieve its target because by the end of its second year, some 7 800 projects had been implemented Nationally at an overall cost of almost R5.7 billion. This has resulted in more than 435 300 gross work opportunities and an overall wage bill in excess of R1.46 billion. The equivalent network opportunities – estimated to be more than 383 700 – is already well ahead of the 340 000 gross work opportunities targeted by the EPWP. Women constituted 46% of the beneficiaries, Youth 39% and the disabled 1%. More than 2100 learnerships have also been instituted, mostly through infrastructure development in the construction sector

Provincially we have managed to create 40 000 job opportunities for the unemployed since the launch of the programme. As part of our skill revolution we have managed to train 14000 beneficiaries in

bricklaying, plastering, carpentry, electrical Construction, plumbing, welding, tiling, paving and landscaping. The empowerment included training in lifeskills such as HIV and AIDS Awareness, Managing Personal Finances, Career Guidance and Occupational Health and Safety.

The 110 beneficiaries graduating today were involved in the construction and renovation of:

- Ventersdorp Roads Camps 1,2,and 5
- Ventersdorp Roads District Offices
- Landscaping at Public Works Regional Offices – Potchefstroom

As a department we have spent R872, 722 towards training of 469 beneficiaries in this financial year and we are confident that the beneficiaries have acquired skills that have empowered them to enter the construction sector as entrepreneurs and skilled labourers. We hope that the skills you have acquired would be put to good use for the benefit of the community, your cooperatives and in your future business ventures as entrepreneurs.

I wish to congratulate the beneficiaries for their tireless commitment to the programme. With the skills gained you will be able to join the labour market as skilled workers and take advantage of various

opportunities that government has made available to contribute to the country's economy.

We call on the private sector to tap into this skilled workforce as projects that the beneficiaries were involved in attest to their capacity to deliver quality infrastructure.

We appreciate the commitment of the service providers we had engaged to conduct training for the beneficiaries. Ours is truly a partnership for the skills revolution, a partnership for empowerment, growth and development.

In conclusion, let us once more congratulate the beneficiaries for seizing the opportunity that government made available for them to acquire skills and participating development in your community. With the skills gained you will be able to participate, share and contribute in your country's economy. As you begin to practice all the skills gained, I urge you as cadres for development to show other community members the positive gains of being part of EPWP. Encourage them to work with their councillors to intensify the struggle against poverty in a partnership to build a better life for all.

Ke a leboga.

