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Department of Public Works  
North West Provincial Government  
Republic of South Africa

Modiri Molema Road  
DPW Provincial Head Office  
Mmabatho, 2735  
Private Bag X 2037, Mmabatho, 2735  
Tel.: +27 (18) 387 2002  
Fax.: +27 (18) 387 2868

**Address by MEC Jerry Thibedi, delivered at the graduation ceremony of 160 EPWP and NYS beneficiaries in Ngaka Modiri Molema District, held at Barolong-Boo-Ratshidi Community Hall, Mafikeng,**

***Date:*** Thursday, July 24, 2008

- Programme Director (s):
- Kgosi Ya Barolong Boo Ratshidi: Motlotlegi Kgosi Jeff Montshioa
- Dikgosana le Bagolwane ba ntlo ya segosi
- Head of Department: Rre Obakeng Mongale
- Chairperson: Standing Committee on Transport, Roads, Community Safety and Public Works:  
Honourable Moeti Moiloa.
- Honourable Members of the Committee present
- Senior Managers of the Department Public Works present here
- Our honoured guests EPWP and NYS Beneficiaries
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to convey my warmest greetings to all of you.

A very special salute to our special guests – the 160 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and National Youth Service Programme (NYS) beneficiaries who have gathered here today.

It is indeed a very special day. It is your day.

Programme Director:

These are our men and women, young and old who have in the past year put shoulder to the wheel toward building our province at the:

- Library And Archives Building
- In-service Training Building
- Geo-Science Building
- Molopo Public Works District Office
- Molopo Education District Office and Lehurutshe Public Works District Office.

It is indeed a day to celebrate and say thank you to these men and women of Ngaka Modiri Molema District for the significant contribution they have made.

This group, made up of 80 EPWP beneficiaries and another 80 for NYS, will be awarded certificates. I can assure you that the copies of those certificates are not fake.

They are genuine copies, accredited by the Construction Education Training Authority (CETA). CETA is an authentic and credible institution recognized by Government and the private sector.

Those certificates confirm that indeed you as an individual and as collective have been part of the flagship programme aimed at alleviating poverty, halving employment and changing for the better the lives of our people.

It is confirmation, that you too, have acquired skills- no matter how little- and you are a marketable person capable of adding value to our economy in the relevant field.

Programme Director:

EPWP was launched in May 2004.

The objective was to attract and recruit the unemployed -like our beneficiaries here today- into productive work over a period of five years.

The national target is to create up to one million short term job opportunities by 2009. This we do by fusing in classroom and on-site training for beneficiaries.

As a caring government, beneficiaries received a R1 000 monthly stipend to keep the wolf at bay during life span of the projects.

NYS on the other hand, which was launched in April 2007, seeks to involve our youth- who are the future of this country- in public infrastructure maintenance projects encompassed by the EPWP.

EPWP and NYS, Programme Director, remain instant interventions by Government aimed at improving the lives of our people.

We also want to unleash the potential of beneficiaries in various fields.

Personally, I feel honoured to be part of this occasion.

This is testimony that my department has changed for the better the lives of 991 EPWP and NYS beneficiaries in total, who would have been out on the streets had it not been for our intervention.

As most of you might be aware, EPWP has entered its final year of implementation. The question is: What role have we played and what have we achieved?

The 80 EPWP beneficiaries gathered here participated in four projects initiated by my department in this district.

They were made up of 32 males and 48 females, of which 70 were young people.

All of them received 35-day training in landscape maintenance (Level One) and practical in-service training at project sites.

The remainder (80) NYS beneficiaries took part in two projects acquiring critical skills which included:

- Carpentry
- Painting,
- Tiling,
- Plastering and paving.

The duration of this training programme lasted between 35 to 45 days and was supplemented by practical on-site training.

Thirty nine (39) males, 41 females including a person with disability benefited from this programme.

Programme Director:

Just like in any other project, the implementation of EPWP and NYS posed various challenges which in my view can be addressed before they snowball into problem.

I am informed that some of our beneficiaries were not satisfied with the treatment meted out by some contractors on site.

Included in this are claims that stipends for beneficiaries were deposited late while some did not have adequate protective clothing.

A combination of all these, especially if not attended to promptly have a potential to cause unnecessary disruptions.

The onus therefore is on us as a department to monitor activities taking place at all our EPWP/NYS projects.

The best form of monitoring, I believe, is to be there in person.

To interact physically with the beneficiaries and contractors, rather than relying on a written report or a phone call.

We will endeavour to address whatever challenges you encountered through proper monitoring and evaluation, which will assist us to deal with and find solutions to challenges as they emerge.

In spite of the challenges, the programme has been a resounding success. There have been great spin-offs coming out of these programmes which I hope to share with your colleagues in their respective regions in the coming weeks.

Circumstances permitting, I have planned to attend gathering similar to this one in Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Bojanala and Dr Segomotsi Ruth Mompoti Districts in the coming weeks.

**In conclusion:**

The National Department of Public Works is currently working on proposals for the implementation of the second phase of EPWP/NYS the programme. The details would be announced once finality on the matter has been reached.

To this end, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the recipients of the certificates today and wish them well in their future endeavors.

Last but not least may the best team win tonight. I hope the best team, which all of you support, will today be in their traditional colours.

I Thank you

Issued by Communication Directorate  
Contact Person: **Matshube Mfoloe**  
Contact Number: (018) 387 2447 / 0823054594  
E-mail: [mmfoloe@nwpg.gov.za](mailto:mmfoloe@nwpg.gov.za)

