

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, Mr. H. D. YAWA, MPL AT
THE BOJANALA EPWP CERTIFICATION AWARD FUNCTION,
HELD ON THURSDAY 08 MARCH 2007 AT THE RUSTENBURG
CIVIC CENTRE.**

Programme Director

Batlotlegi Dikgosi tsa Rona

Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councillors

Head of Department- Mr. O. Mongale

Senior Management of the Department

The Regional Director-Mr Albert De Witte

Members of the Regional Management Team

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

For the past thirteen year the ANC government has insisted on the central importance of the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment in terms of creating the caring and humane society towards which the majority of our people aspire.

President Thabo Mbeki on the occasion of the Presidential Inauguration on Freedom Day 27 April 2004 said, "Endemic and widespread poverty continues to disfigure the face of our country. It will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as this situation persists. For this

reason the struggle to eradicate poverty has been and will continue to be a central part of the national effort to build the new South Africa.

None of the great social problems we have to solve is capable of resolution outside the context of the creation of jobs and the alleviation and eradication of poverty. This relates to everything, from the improvement of the health of our people, to reducing the levels of crime, raising the levels of literacy and numeracy, and opening the doors of learning and culture to all."

Following this, in his State of the Nation Address to the First Joint Sitting of the Third Democratic Parliament on 21 May 2004, the President further said: "At the core of our response to all our challenges is the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment, which rests on three pillars. These are:

- encouraging the growth and development of the First Economy, increasing its possibility to create jobs;
- implementing our programme to address the challenges of the Second Economy; and,
- building a social security net to meet the objective of poverty alleviation."

The ANC in its 95th Anniversary January 8th Statement has declared 2007 as "The Year to Intensify the struggle against Poverty as we advance in unity towards 2012".

Today we are here in the Provincial host city for the 2010 Soccer World Cup to celebrate our milestone in the skills revolution and the determination of our people to be part 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 fight poverty and to halve unemployment by 2014.

As a department, we are convinced that to achieve ASGISA's goal of halving unemployment and poverty by 2014, we will have to work more closely with structures and organisations representing youth, women and people with disabilities. The National Youth Service Programme announced by the President last month during his State of the Nation Address presents us with yet another opportunity to accelerate skill training among the unemployed youth.

We have already set in motion a process to recruit at least 500 youth for participation in the National Youth Service through EPWP and would be working in partnership with municipalities, the Provincial Youth Commission, youth structures and organisations towards reaching the target we have set ourselves. We expect to finalise the implementation plan by next Wednesday after consultation with the Provincial Youth Commission.

Our vision as government is that by 2014 South Africa should have a restructured and adaptive economy characterised by growth,

employment and equity, built on the full potentials of all persons, communities and geographic areas.

We wish to congratulate the 63 beneficiaries who are to be awarded certificates for accredited training received through the programme for having seized the opportunity that government provided them to acquire skills while participating in infrastructure and community development. We are encouraged by your determination to succeed. As cadres for development, you have used your time creatively and are part of the national effort for a partnership for a better life for all.

As part of our skill revolution, the beneficiaries received training in bricklaying, plastering, carpentry, electrical Construction, plumbing, welding, tiling, paving and landscaping. They were also empowered with lifeskills such as HIV and AIDS Awareness, Managing Personal Finances, Career Guidance and Occupational Health and Safety.

The quality of workmanship at Project sites bears testimony of the effectiveness of the training the beneficiaries have received and that the R872, 722,00 we spend on training of 469 beneficiaries throughout the province was money well spend. 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.

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.

Working with our municipalities and other government departments, we are developing an exit strategy that would ensure participation of beneficiaries who have acquired skills through the EPWP beyond training and project implementation. We call on the private sector to tap into this skilled workforce as projects that they have delivered attest to their capacity to deliver quality infrastructure.

The inclusion of Rustenburg, Moses Kotane and Madibeng Local Municipalities in the first batch of seven municipalities to benefit from the EPWP Technical Support Programme that my department is to render to municipalities should advance the struggle against poverty and unemployment in these areas.

As part of our strategy to improve performance in the implementation of EPWP, the technical support programme includes assistance in identification of suitable projects for implementation, project design and contract documentation, streamlining and adaptation of municipal

policies and procedures towards EPWP and setting of targets for training and job creation.

In conclusion, let us once more congratulate the beneficiaries for tirelessly committing to the programme. 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 to become EPWP activists. As cadres for development, show other community members the positive gains of being part of the programme. Encourage them to consult their councillors and find out how they can become part of the programme.

Ke a leboga.