

SPEECH BY MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HON H.D.YAWA, MPL AT THE  
EPWP BENEFICIARIES CERTIFICATES AWARDING FUNCTION, HELD  
AT THE BAROLONG BOO-RATSHIDI HALL IN MAFIKENG - 4 APRIL  
2006

Programme Director

Head of the Department-Dr. L.K. Sebegu

Management of the Department

Members of the Regional Management Team

Distinguished guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Since 1994, the ANC led government has led the way to provide an integrated, holistic approach to major social and economic questions, including their provision of infrastructure. One of the major tasks when we took government was to conduct a massive survey of infrastructure needs in the face of obvious backlogs that we inherited.

The survey covered social and physical infrastructure, its state of maintenance, and an assessment of future needs and addressed questions of implementation agencies and the role of different spheres of action. We found that there was an infrastructure backlog of about R170 billion in our country, across all areas of activity.

In launching the Expanded Public Works on the 18 May 2004, President Thabo Mbeki described it as “a comprehensive intergovernmental and people-centred programme that seeks to fulfill the overwhelming trust and confidence the masses of our people have placed in government that we should work together, in partnership, to create a better life for all.”

Therefore, the programme is an important and far-reaching intervention that seeks to address the causes and consequences of poverty by providing work opportunities and skills to particularly those who are marginalised from the mainstream of our economy.

An important element of the programme is a large-scale expansion of the use of labour -intensive construction methods to build, upgrade and maintain the social and economic infrastructure in all the underdeveloped rural and urban areas of our country and province that do not have such infrastructure.

In implementing 207 Expanded Public Works Programme Projects throughout the Province, 13590 job and training opportunities were created. In the Central Region we were able to create 3092 job and training opportunities through 34 EPWP projects.

The certificates awarded earlier to you bear testimony that the core objectives of the programme were also realised.

As government we invested more than R600 000 in the training of 64 youth and 34 Women. The skills and practical training that you acquired during the renovation of public infrastructure in Lehurutshe, Ditsobotla, Montshioa and Mmabatho has increased the pool of much needed skilled workers in the construction sector.

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 you as women and youth. 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.

As President Mbeki, said in his State of the Nation Address: we shall ensure that the focus on youth development is intensified in all spheres of government.

I wish to congratulate all the beneficiaries for using time creatively and for being part of a new Age of hope. A new age of shared destiny and shared growth.

I also wish to congratulate the Management Team of the Central Region, recipients of the Best Performing Regions Awards for the 2005/06 financial year, stakeholders involved in the projects and the training providers for the progress that has been made in

putting together a viable set of EPWP projects and joining the provincial and national effort to create jobs and fight poverty.

We are encouraged by the determination of the beneficiaries to succeed. Your determination and partnership Indeed makes a statement that all of us as individuals and collectively can make a difference and should contribute to give new content to our Age of Hope. Through your contribution and collective effort we can make poverty history.

As we commemorate Solomon Mahlangu and Chris Hani on Thursday and next Monday respectively, we salute the selfless sacrifices of these revolutionaries and gallant fighters of our people. Their contribution made it possible for us to be what we are today - a free people with an opportunity to truly reconstruct our country in the interests of all its citizens. In their memory we commit ourselves to work tirelessly to make poverty history.

Ke a leboga.