

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HON H.D.YAWA, MPL AT THE
EPWP BENEFICIARIES CERTIFICATES AWARDING FUNCTION, HELD
AT THE WITRAND HOSPITAL HALL IN POTCHEFSTROOM - 23
MARCH 2006**

Programme Director

Representative of the Potchefstroom Local Municipality, Honourable
Councillor Eddie Modiakgotla

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

Management of the Department

Leadership of the Organised Business Sector

Members of the Regional Management Team

Distinguished guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

This auspicious occasion reminds me of what the icon of our
liberation struggle and our former President, Honourable Dr. Nelson
Mandela once said, "We must use time creatively, and forever
realise that the time is always ripe to do the right".

Today we are here to recognise and applaud the determination and
achievements of the 304 beneficiaries who truly share Nelson
Mandela's assertion that the time is always ripe to do the right.

The Expanded Public Works Programme launched by President Thabo Mbeki on 18 May 2004, is one of the many government initiatives aimed at creating work opportunities and improving the skills levels of our people. Its core objectives are job creation, skills development and improved social services.

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. The programme is aimed at workers and the unemployed, particularly those who are marginalised from the mainstream of our economy.

In implementing 57 Expanded Public Works Programme Projects in the Southern Region, 2687 job and training opportunities were created. The certificates awarded earlier to the beneficiaries bear testimony that the core objectives of the programme were also realised.

As government we invested more than R1, 2 million over a period of six months in the training of the 213 youth and 80 Women. The skills and practical training that they acquired during the renovation of public infrastructure in the Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom area has increased the pool of much needed skilled workers in the construction sector.

According to our EPWP third quarterly report, we have managed to create Provincially 13590 job and training opportunities and implemented 207 Projects thus far.

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 women and the youth. On women we will focus on human resource training: ensuring they have access to finance across the board; fast tracking them out of the 2nd economy; ensure their significant participation beyond SMMEs and to improve their access to basic services; increase their participation in expanded public works programme.

As Government, We have also committed ourselves to target unemployed graduates for jobs or learnerships, which will also be part of the Second Economy outside ASGISA. 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 wish to congratulate the Regional Management Team of the department, stakeholders involved 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. All of us as individuals and collectively can make a difference and should contribute to give new content to our Age of Hope. Through our collective effort we can make poverty history. The time is always ripe to do right.

In Conclusion I wish to echo the President's words that, it is up to all of us, through our national effort, to do all the things that will ensure that the mountains and the hills of our country break forth into singing before all our people, and the trees of the field clap their hands to applaud the people's season of joy.

Ke a leboga.