

**SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HON H.D.YAWA AT  
THE SOCIAL EVENING OF PUBLIC WORKS COMMUNICATORS  
FORUM, 11 AUGUST 2005 AT MANYANE GAME LODGE,  
MAFIKENG**

Programme Director

The Chief Director Communications and Marketing -Mr Lucky  
Mochalibane

Members of the Executive Management

Representative of the Regional Office of the National Department  
of Public Works

Public Works Communicators

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Members of the Fourth Estate, the Media

Communications is the cornerstone of participatory democracy  
and a strategic tool for service delivery.

Having spent the day reflecting on communication strategies, we  
hope that Public Works communicators are aware that a  
communications strategy or policy is not a panacea for all  
government communications challenges or delivery weaknesses.  
The principle that must underpin government communications is  
that actual and visible service delivery is the most effective form  
of communication.

In many instances, negative perceptions about government delivery in general and about the Department of Public Works in particular persist despite visible evidence to the contrary. The challenge for Public Works Communicators therefore is to help close the gap between perception and reality.

However I should hasten to say that a communication strategy on government delivery would not achieve much if what people experience on the ground is non-delivery.

In addition a communications strategy on Batho Pele will ring hollow if what citizens are confronted with on a daily basis is rude, corrupt, unfriendly and incompetent public servants as well as demands for bribes. Through their practical actions, these public servants are telling the public, in the most effective and powerful way, how this government operates and what its values are.

I wish to reiterate that visible delivery and good policies make the task of government communicators easier. The opposite is also true. Ineffective communication may distort and even undermine good policies and effective government Programmes.

As Public Works Communicators we need to ask you as to whether we are doing enough to support community media as it has demonstrated interest in developmental information. We should see our support of community media, as part of the overall objective of advancing the goal of media diversity in our country.

Another question that we need to ask ourselves is whether as Public Works Communicators you are responding with the necessary speed and accuracy to legitimate public requests for information?

I am informed that members of the Forum were welcomed this morning by the Head of the Department, Dr L.K.Sebego therefore my task this evening as host is to introduce the forum to our Provincial stakeholders.

We hope that the Forum will find reasons to once again afford us another opportunity to host it. We unreservedly support your objective to change public perception about the public works brand.

Ke a leboga.