



the dpw

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PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER, THOKO DIDIZA CALLS ON YOUTH TO REBUILD THE COUNTRY...

Date: Friday, April 18, 2008

MAFIKENG: The country's youth has been called to sustain the gains of our liberation and live up to the patriotic motto: "...*what can I do for my country to develop it to its fullest potential?*"

The call was made yesterday (April 18, 2008) by Public Works Minister, Thoko Didiza, in Vryburg (North West) during the provincial launch of the National Youth Service (NYS) in Building Maintenance attended by among others, Premier Edna Molewa and provincial Public Works MEC Jerry Thibedi.

NYS seeks to involve young people who have passed Matric as well as graduates in public infrastructure maintenance projects encompassed by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

In the process, the beneficiaries acquire a range of vital skills which include brick-laying, carpentry, plumbing and electrical work. It is hoped that skills on offer would equip beneficiaries - who received stipends during training - to become marketable with an option to start their own businesses.

Didiza said the challenges within the public and private sector partnerships in construction had to be addressed in order to develop the much needed capacity and skills within the industry.

Comparing the roles played by the youth during apartheid years and the current generation, Didiza said the greatest challenge of the youth today was to help rebuild the country, the task she described as "tough".

"To rebuild is tougher than to destroy," she said.

Didiza said one of the challenges faced in the public and private partnerships was that the demographic profile of registered built environment professionals was a long way from reflecting the demographics of the country.

“As the economy begins to boom with upward trends predicted well beyond 2010, there are increasing demands for professional services, and the pool of skills represented by built environment professions should increase accordingly,” she said.

Didiza said current trends, with specific reference to the built-professions, indicated that the skills base in the sector was declining, with very few new entrants compared to the large numbers who continue to leave the profession.

“That is why it is vitally important to continuously and urgently replenish the human resources in the built environment with young, enthusiastic and determined young people,” she said.

She said the launch was a first step on the long road to satisfying South Africa’s great need for artisans and providing young people with opportunities to get started as employed people and entrepreneurs.

Molewa encouraged the NYS beneficiaries to excel in their programmes, which she said would contribute in alleviating poverty and joblessness.

She said the province had set aside about R1 billion, a greater portion of which would be injected into the NYS programme particularly within the area of housing delivery.

Thibedi said the NYS programme should represent a “transition from youth to adulthood”.

“With this programme, we want produce out of you, responsible citizens who’ll plough back in to the community in order to help grow our economy,” he said.

Thibedi urged the youth to exploit the opportunities availed by government in order for them to change their own socio-economic status for the better.

ENDS

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