

President Zuma launches a massive plan to create 6 million work opportunities

President Jacob Zuma says there is no doubt that Public Employment Programmes contribute enormously to the economy and the South African people. He was speaking in Keiskammahoek in the Eastern Cape, on 3 October 2014 where he launched the third phase of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which promises to create six million work opportunities in the next 5 years. The government first introduced the EPWP programme in 2004 in its attempt to address the high level of unemployment in the country.

“The EPWP Phase 3 will continue to benefit poor, unemployed and vulnerable sectors of the community which includes youth, women and people with disabilities. This programme will be taken to all corners of our country. We are determined to reach as many people as possible, and to achieve the goal of six million work opportunities,” said the President.

He told thousands of community members, who gathered at a site of the EPWP’s Siyakholwa Project that the government will reach its 6 million work opportunity target because of the success of the EPWP in the past 10 years. The president said more than 6 million work opportunities have been created by the EPWP, over the past 10 years.

On the morning of the EPWP Phase 3 launch, President Zuma and other dignitaries visited the exhibition stalls where implementing bodies of the Programme showcased the EPWP services to the public and proceeded to observe the Working on Fire demonstration by fire fighters on fire extinguishing process which forms part of the broader Integrated Fire Management.

Other political heads led by Public Works Minister T W Nxesi, his deputy Mr Jeremy Cronin and Minister Edna Molewa of Environmental Affairs visited three EPWP projects in that area, namely, Amahlathi Water and Sanitation Project, Mzomtsha Senior Secondary School (handing of Eco Furniture) as well as Masonwabisane Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD).

President Zuma said that the third phase of EPWP programme would focus on the quality of the services that are provided and the new assets that would be built through the programme in the next five years. These assets include schools, clinics and multi-purpose centres.

“Thousands of schools (children) around South Africa are receiving meals from food grown in EPWP food gardens, and with food prepared by EPWP workers. Through EPWP programmes, hundreds of thousands of home-based care visits have been made,” added President Zuma.

The political heads sealed the launch by signing a pledge wherein they committed themselves to working together to achieve the 6 million work opportunities target by 2019.