

President Zuma says EPWP contributes in the development of women

President Jacob Zuma says the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has contributed immensely in the development of women in the country.

He was speaking during the National Women's Day celebration held in Umlazi south of Durban in Kwazulu-Natal.

"Many women are in the building sphere through the intervention of the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community Works Programmes," said President Zuma.

He also urged young women to take up work opportunities that were previously reserved for their male counterparts.

"As a country, we have made important strides in our efforts to improve the lives of women since the dawn of democracy, but a lot still needs to be done," remarked President Zuma.

The President also alluded to the fact that the ANC-led government has appointed more female ministers and deputy ministers to cabinet as well as more women into other important positions through the public service.

He said the country has made much progress in response to the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goal number 3 which speaks to the appointment of more women into leadership positions. President Zuma said 41% of South African women were in leadership positions.

"We have women building dams, roads and other infrastructure through the programmes such as the Community Works Programme and the Expanded Public Works Programme," said President Zuma.

The President also urged women to use the new Employment Equity Act as it gives them the right not to be paid less than their male counterparts while doing the same work.

"If women are still carrying buckets of water fetched from the river and are still cooking with fire wood because they don't have electricity, our work is not yet done," said the President.

President Zuma also pleaded with fathers in the country to take care of their children without the interference of government, and must do so voluntarily. He also encouraged women to report fathers who do not pay maintenance for their children; saying the Justice Department has improved its systems to help mothers to get maintenance money quicker than before.

Meanwhile, the Department of Public Works delivered, to the event, the Torch of Peace which has been moving from one department to another, confirming the shared responsibility to ensure an environment in which all citizens can enjoy their rights to safety and security, as enshrined in the South African Constitution. The Torch of Peace has been safely guarded by the Department since the 57th anniversary of the Women's Day celebration last year.