

Minister Nxesi addresses Senior Managers

By Nolwazi Ndhlovu

The Minister of Public Works, Honourable T W Nxesi, MP has met with the DPW executive to speak about the matters of common interest. During the meeting held at the departmental headquarters, in Pretoria on 2 March 2018, the Minister and his supporting staff, expressed the following:

1. Fraud and Corruption

- The Minister said, “We now have a president committed to fighting corruption and state capture. His leadership and example have clearly inspired elements in the security cluster to rise to the occasion – most obviously, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the Hawks.
- On the economic front we have witnessed a strengthening of the Rand, together with increased business confidence – ultimately this translates into investment and jobs.
- We are seeing renewed hope amongst our people – and a new-found determination to reclaim our country and drive the project for real socio-economic transformation to benefit all the people.
- The mandate from the President to ministers – and public servants – is very clear: Intensify the war against fraud and corruption and capture by criminal syndicates – at every level and in every sphere of the state and private sector.”

2. Stimulate economic activity and create jobs

- “In the specific case of DPW, for us is to manage state assets to create value, to reduce costs, to generate income and to greatly improve service to our clients – largely government departments.
- Let us be very clear about this: to deliver on our mandate requires that we fully operationalise the Property Management Trading Entity (PMTE) to optimally leverage state assets. The days of conceptualising and work shopping different models are over. We are now called upon to implement. National Treasury will only recognise PMTE as a trading entity when we start operating as a trading entity. My suggestion would be – subject to further engagement – that the launch date coincides with the new financial year (01 April 2018).
- We have a short window of opportunity – by the elections in 15 months’ time - Public Works has to achieve the following:
 - ⇒ To decisively and measurably up its game in combatting corruption and collusion;
 - ⇒ To show significant progress on the creation of jobs and work opportunities. Deputy Minister (DM) you will need to work with EPWP on this – and also to finalise the Cab Memo we had started at the beginning of 2017.

⇒ Crucially, we need to breathe life into the PMTE – so that it actually operates to manage state assets in order to create value, generate income, support empowerment and job creation – and critically to free up assets that we are not using for land reform and to contribute to state coffers. Assets that are not utilised or leased out are not assets – they are liabilities. [By the way, we already have a successful pilot – with the work done on Small Harbours – now attracting investment interest, creating jobs and generating income from leases. We need to finalise this with National Treasury – and then extend the model to the rest of PMTE.]

3. White Paper

- “Finally, on the DPW side I want to see in place the long-delayed revised White Paper as the basis for a draft Public Works Bill – by the end of 2018.
- It is doable. We already have a firm foundation to build on:
 - ⇒ The Strategic Plan and a draft APP for 2018/19
 - ⇒ Previous policy statements and papers
 - ⇒ A structure for PMTE which was approved by Cabinet
 - ⇒ The 7 Year Plan to Rebuild Public Works and all subsequent work done.

4. DPW and the PMTE.

- “The building bricks are there. The tools are to hand. What I need is a team that is capable of taking all the plans and work done, rapidly developing an action plan – and then implementing. Let me repeat that. I am not interested in concepts. I am not interested in long presentations purporting to explain why it cannot happen. We need to see implementation. Let us see this as a ‘new beginning’ – to quote President Ramaphosa.”