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ACCELERATING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GOVERNMENT-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

By Thokozani Ngema

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Minister, Honourable Sihle Zikalala (MP), addressed the 15th BRICS Summit Infrastructure Working Group on 19 August 2023 at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand, Gauteng. He focused on South Africa's role in the BRICS alliance and its dedication to infrastructure development. BRICS is an acronym for the world's leading emerging market economies namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. South Africa is hosting the 15th BRICS summit from 22 to 24 August.

Minister Zikalala's address revealed how South Africa's commitment to infrastructure-led growth symbolised a unified stride towards economic revival, synergising both public and private sectors to create jobs, enhance regional connectivity and foster a thriving South Africa that is open for business. President Cyril Ramaphosa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, with infrastructure as the "flywheel" of growth, was highlighted. The Minister also emphasized that South Africa's infrastructure acceleration approach would be shared with the BRICS members.

He spoke on the Integrated Renewable Energy and Resource Efficiency Programme (IREREP). This project aims to introduce 3,740 MW of renewable energy capacity, contributing up to R1.3 trillion to the GDP and creating around 503,000 jobs. The Redevelopment of the Six Ports of Entry of South Africa is another project that Minister Zikalala mentioned. With an estimated cost of R9.1 billion, this project aims to facilitate the efficient movement of goods, reduce delays, improve regional trade, and enhance border security.

Closing his address, Minister Zikalala reaffirmed that South Africa was open for business and he invited all to join the country's journey in turning the land into a construction site.

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Issued by Chief Directorate: Communications & Marketing

21 August 2023