

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

BY: LESEGO MORETLWE

The Minister of Public Works Honourable Thulas Nxesi MP hosted the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Non-State Sector (NSS) Summit with government departments, business, labour and civil society organisations on 13 April 2012 at Birchwood hotel in Boksburg, Gauteng. The summit was held under the theme: ***“Working together to create work opportunities through the EPWP: Non-State Sector.”***

The objectives of the summit were:

- To raise awareness about the work undertaken by NGOs in partnership with government
- To partner with private sector and other role players to ensure sustainability of the NSS
- To review the current NSS implementation model and to get views from other stakeholders on how best the model can be improved.

The EPWP Non-State Sector (NSS) was launched in 2009/10 with the aim of partnering with Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) to draw a significant number of the unemployed into productive work, thereby contributing to alleviation of unemployment and poverty among communities as per the EPWP mandate. Since its inception, the Non-State Sector has contributed to creating 35 000 work opportunities through the Non-State Sector NGOs wage subsidy.

In its 4th year, the NSS through its successful implementation has raised increasing interest from various forms of NPOs, business and organised labour.

In his keynote address, Minister Nxesi urged all the role players responsible for the implementation of the Non-State Sector to exercise accountability in utilizing the allocated resources and commit to the delivery of quality services to the most vulnerable communities who depend on the EPWP projects to earn a living. “The most remarkable impact of the Non-State Sector NGOs Programme is its contribution to the delivery of basic services in highly marginalised communities. In many of the projects visited, the beneficiaries interviewed expressed how the programme has changed their lives,” the Minister added.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works, Ms Manana Mabuza offered her support in ensuring that the EPWP becomes a success and also acknowledged that there were challenges in the implementation of the EPWP and was pleased that they were taken into consideration and resolved accordingly.

Among the resolutions taken at the summit, the EPWP NSS committed to execute the following:

- Forge strategic partnerships with other governmental, developmental and private sector organisations.
- That awareness campaigns should be focused towards target group forums and networks that exist. e.g. women, youth and disability forums; and
- To develop exit strategies for NPOs to address the issue of sustainability post their participation in the EPWP Programme.