

Major overhaul set for construction sector

By **KHULEKANI MAGUBANE**

PUBLIC Works Minister Nathi Nhleko is gearing to introduce “radical economic transformation” in construction by revamping the construction sector code to align it with this purpose.

Nhleko, the former police minister of the “firepool infamy”, replaced Thulas Nxesi when President Jacob Zuma reshuffled the cabinet in March.

The construction sector charter was in the process of being finalised and was awaiting Trade and Industry Rob Davies’s approval, as well as that of the cabinet, said Nhleko, who was eager for the process to be finalised soon.

Should Nhleko have his way, benchmarks would be set for businesses that tender to the department in a bid to transform the

construction sector. The department would do this by incorporating this in the new construction sector code.

“The ministry, through the Construction Industry Development Board, is putting in place a transformation co-coordinating committee which will compose of industry to look also at a possibility of developing a policy document aimed at addressing the developmental challenges of construction,” said Nhleko.

The chief beneficiaries of the department’s drive to transform construction would be small, medium and micro-enterprises.

Department director-general Mziwonke Dlabantu said: “We need to protect sub-contractors from the abuses they may face from major contractors, which include late payment or even non-payment ...”



NATHI NHLEKO

Picture: SUPPLIED

The department is to host a transformation Indaba next Tuesday to discuss these issues.

South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Alan Mukoki said the department

had not consulted the chamber, but he would be eager to contribute to the transformation discussion as “the sustainability of the economy rests on how inclusive it can become”.

Mukoki said: “They have not consulted with us yet and we are not aware of what they intend to do. It’s a contested areas, as you would appreciate.

“We are here to look after the interest of our members. The long-term interest cannot be secured in an era where black business does not exist.”

History showed that government-led transformation initiatives in the private sector were fraught with contestation, but it was time business showed initiative in proposing transformative mechanisms which made a social impact, said Mukoki. — *BDLive*