

Let's stimulate economic activity in construction sector

New technologies need to be developed to support challenges facing the profession

THULAS NXESI

IT HAS been wonderful to witness the growth of the SACPCMP (South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions) in size, depth and scope. It's always at the forefront of the major issues confronting the sector.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) shares the following key priorities as national imperatives:

- ◆ To intensify the war against fraud and corruption.
- ◆ To stimulate economic activity and create jobs.
- ◆ In the case of the DPW and PMTE (Property Management Trading Entity), to manage state assets to create value.
- ◆ To reduce costs.
- ◆ To generate income to build skills which reflect the demographics of the country.
- ◆ To create employment and empowerment opportunities.

The DPW, through the provincial departments of public works and the Expanded Public Works Programme, has started responding to these challenges and all the DPW entities I know

share this vision. President Cyril Ramaphosa stated during his State of the Nation address (Sona): "Infrastructure investment is key to our efforts to grow the economy, create jobs, empower small businesses and provide services to our people".

These sentiments were repeated in the recently announced Stimulus Package, the Jobs Summit and the massively successful South Africa Investment Conference; and this will have widespread implications for the country – for investment, growth, jobs, development and transformation.

Some weeks ago I attended the 10th South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession which was also interrogating the implications of current technological changes. They flagged that the original built environment professions had developed to address the challenges of the 1st Industrial Revolution and it was now crucial to interrogate the implications of new technologies for these professions.

In his Sona, President Ramaphosa gave new impetus to the implementation of the National Development Plan and directed that:

"This year, we will be initiating measures to set the country on a new

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PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

path of growth, employment and transformation. We will do this by getting social partners in our country to collaborate in building a social compact on which we will create drivers of economic recovery.

"We have to build further on the collaboration with business and labour to restore confidence and prevent an investment downgrade.

"Tough decisions have been made to close our fiscal gap, stabilise our debt and restore our state-owned enterprises to health. At the centre of our national agenda is the creation of jobs, especially for the youth."

The outcomes of the Investment Conference last week were spectacular:

R290 billion in commitments (that's money in the bank) and a further R400bn in pledges (that's a general statement of intent to invest). So we are beginning to put flesh on the bones of this much heralded "New Dawn".

Let me illustrate from my own department and our participation in Operation Phakisa: Oceans Economy – focusing on upgrading small harbours – which brings massive opportunities for registered professionals in the Built Environment, as well as contractors, but also investors and communities, with the support of government.

Another important initiative relates to the building of government precincts in small rural towns and townships – bringing government services closer to the people.

Let me thank all the valued stakeholders that support and contribute towards the programmes and activities of the SACPCMP.

Nxesi is the Minister of Public Works. This is an excerpt from his speech at the sixth Project and Construction Management Professions Conference: Growth, development and transformation, held at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand.