



Cyril Ramaphosa and Ronald Lamola.



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Final access road to be built in early 2020

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Lowvelder reported in November 2017 that a local engineer described the access routes to the court as nonsensical, as it currently has only a left-in, left-out entrance from Samora Machel Drive.

Negotiations with the adjacent FET College to construct an alternative road through their property has been dragging on for years, though an agreement has finally been reached.

De Lille said that “when the plans were approved by the municipality, the municipality should have had picked it up

and should have advised the applicants before approval to include some kind of access road to the court.”

She advised that contractors have been procured and that access route construction will take place early in 2020.

“We are making history here today, as we are bringing access to justice closer,” she added.

Joseph Ngala, the spokesman for the City of Mbombela Local Municipality, could not be reached for a reply on the DPWI minister’s comment on the role the City had to play in ensuring adequate access to the High Court.



Judge Francis Legodi, Cyril Ramaphosa, justice Sisi Kampempe and premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane.

Ramaphosa emphasised the importance of access to justice for the people of the province during his speech. The opening represented a momentous moment for the citizens of the region, who often had to travel vast distances at great cost to obtain relief in the High Court in Pretoria. He highlighted that for justice and the rule of law to prevail, “we must endeavour to broaden access to the law, for its shelter and shade to protect everyone, regardless of their social circumstances.” He stated that since the dawn of democracy the government had strived to reform the justice system in order to curtail the costs of obtaining legal representation, to ensure linguistic accessibility as well as to provide access for people with disabilities.

“These administrative reforms were necessary, because the judicial system in the province was plagued by court backlogs and by extensive travelling to obtain justice,” Ramaphosa said. He indicated that the opening of this court will administer justice impartially and according to the founding principles of our Constitution, unlike the historic Delmas treason trial which took place in this province. “Never and never again will the rights of our people be undermined by the courts.” Ramaphosa specified that the court will serve the people of Manyelethi in Bushbuckridge, of Manyeveni in Mbombela, and of Kromdraai in Chief Albert Luthuli, who previously had to incur an assortment of expenses to attain justice. “Between April and the end of September this year, this court finalised 84 per cent of its reserved judgments.”

The president cautioned that the resources of the courts must not be used to fight legal battles when governmental departments fail to meet their statutory obligations, as claims against the state constrains the provincial as well as the national budget. He warned that government is “fed up” with municipal managers and governmental institutions who mismanage service delivery budgets. “We are tired of the condescending attitudes of civil servants, where they treat people without respect. The government will strengthen their supervisory role in the implementation of programmes.” He reiterated that it is critical that public confidence in the courts are maintained. “It is a beacon of hope for all who have suffered prejudice, victimisation and injustice.

“In this, the land of the rising sun, the courts must be an agent of transformation and issue progressive judgments that advance the rights of all people, especially their socio-economic rights.”