

‘Youth are tired of waiting’

Sibiya calls for implementation of RET

THABO MAKWAKWA
and SINENHLANHLA ZUNGU

HUMAN Settlements and Public Works MEC Jomo Sibiya said the youth were tired of waiting and called for the implementation of Radical Economic Transformation through the inclusion of youth in construction and supply chain processes.

Sibiya was speaking yesterday during the signing of contracts and a training session for at least 109 young contractors from around the province who would benefit from the programme through government opportunities in infrastructure projects.

The event was hosted by the MEC's department together with the national Human Settlements Department which was represented by various officials led by Deputy Minister Pam Tshwete.

“We remain committed to radically transform the economy of this province for the benefit of indigenous people. We are not apologetic about this. Young people are tired of waiting. They want change and they want it now,” said Sibiya.

The MEC emphasised that together with the provincial and national government, his department was forging ahead to ensure that these designated groups of youth benefitted throughout the housing value chain process including the construction, material, and equipment supply processes.

Sibiya said the department was committed to economic radical transformation and has elected a panel of 346 emerging companies for construction work. The 346 companies comprised 129 women, 109 youth, 101 black men, five military veterans, and two disabled individuals.

He said his department had budgeted R153 million towards training and allocation of work to designated groups who were part of the project.

“There will be an emphasis on utilising local businesses to source the aforementioned building material, particularly where housing projects are being implemented. Training, capacity building and skills development initiatives will be undertaken over three years commencing this financial year.

“It is now your turn to usher in eco-

nomie freedom. This is the responsibility you dare not delegate to other people. You are the generation born to defend the gains of our democracy while on the other hand you need to use our political power to liberate millions of our people from economic oppression,” said Sibiya.

When asked what he hoped to achieve after a year, Sibiya said he wanted the programme to succeed, and to see an upsurge in the number of young people in the construction industry and reduced unemployment.

Tshwete said the signing ceremony of youth-owned companies was a direct progressive response to the call by the government to accelerate the implementation of the 40% and 10% respectively set aside for women and youth contractors.

“Let me make a plea to the participants of this programme that they make this opportunity count,” said Tshwete.

Young contractors Qiniso Cabane, Nande Magomba and Thabani Mthembu were among the participants of the contracts signing ceremony and said the event proved to be a fruitful engagement with the government officials. They hoped for a positive outcome.

Cabane said: “I hope that it will be actioned. I would really love to get somewhere with my career in the next three years. I have had a bad experience in the past where the government had failed to live up to their part of the deal but I am hopeful with this one in particular.”

Magomba said: “I think the launch was amazing. I did learn a lot. I hope that everything that was discussed there will go accordingly with all efforts especially on our side as the youth in Construction.”

Mthembu said: “I am really happy about the opportunity. Getting into the construction sector is hard because you would have to compete with people who have the financial privilege. Having the government on our side means there's hope.”

The Daily News team hosted the panel discussion in which the MEC, Deputy Minister and Kwazulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements Director of Transformation Mdu Nhlozi responded to questions from the paper as well as the audience.