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SAFETY

## Deputy Minister cracks the whip over shoddy repairs to potholes

STAFF WRITER

PUBLIC Works and Infrastructure Deputy Minister Bernice Swarts has issued a stern warning to contractors over shoddy workmanship when patching potholes.

Swarts was speaking at an imbizo held at the Maquassi Hills Local Municipality under the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality as one of the district development model (DDM) champions deployed in the district.

Swarts commenced the imbizo in the district with the cleaning of neighbourhoods at Kgakala township in Leeudoringstad, responding to road maintenance programmes.

She raised concerns with contractors about their handling of road maintenance programmes, especially pothole patching and the compliance standards, including their preference for cold asphalt.

Questions were raised on guarantees on the durability of the materials and the equipment used in road patching.

"The government is spending a lot of money fixing potholes. We cannot

use material or patch in a manner that will be washed away after a small drizzle.

"We need to use materials that can give us durability so that the roads can last long. We need to reduce pressure on the fiscus by avoiding fixing similar potholes all the time.

"Roads are important for people's movement and to boost local economies. While we want to create employment opportunities and massify our expanded public works programme, we are very clear that there must be no dumbing down on quality in the service delivered as well as the improvement in the lives of participants," said Swarts.

"It is against this background that we are calling for the enforcement of standards in all municipalities to commit that the road works they have undertaken will last for at least 10 years. Anyone doing a bad job must be compelled to go back and do what has been paid for.

"We ask of engineers in municipalities not to compromise and for professional bodies to hold engineers accountable and to abide by industry

standards," Swarts added.

She also raised concerns that roads had no pavements and storm-water drainage as this compromised the lifespan of the roads.

Swarts concluded her visit with an imbizo with the Kgakala community.

She announced that the Kgakala Location extension 6 dumping site would be decommissioned.

She said it would be rehabilitated and the land used to build community facilities such as libraries and community parks.

The department also announced that it would explore a request to train the youth in firefighting as the district was prone to runaway fires.

Among the projects in the pipeline for the area are the establishment of a fresh produce market, the resuscitation of the rail networks, to be explored by the DDM Hub, as well as substations to meet the electricity needs of the community.

The projects will include a feasibility study on the suitability of the training centre, using some of the unused and abandoned buildings that can be renovated.