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■ The building in Umsinga earmarked to be renovated and be utilized by Bata shoe factory. | Supplied

#### ■ JOBS

# New partnership aims to create 300 jobs in KwaZulu-Natal

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A NEW public partnership between the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works and Bata Shoes will make a dent in the province's labour market with the 300 direct jobs that are set to be created.

The two entities solidified their commitment through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed on Tuesday, marking a significant step towards economic revitalisation in the area of uMzinga, in the uMzinyathi District Municipality, northern KZN.

MEC Martin Meyers, alongside his counterpart from Economic Development, Rev. Musa Zondi, visited what was once a government building in uMzinga that is now poised to become home to the Bata shoe factory. According to Public Works' spokesperson, Steve Bhengu, the inspection of the property in question aimed to identify ways to effectively leverage state-owned assets to stimulate the economy and

create employment opportunities.

"The inspection found that, despite the property being abandoned for several years, the building's structure remains sound," Bhengu confirmed. "However, revitalising the damaged and neglected parts of the facility will require an estimated R60 million." Bhengu said the substantial investment was poised to yield significant returns in the form of job creation and economic activity.

Meyers expressed optimism about the inspection results and acknowledged that the building's current state highlights the potential it holds. "The R60 million required for repairs can be viewed as an investment, considering the likelihood of generating at least 300 jobs in this facility," he said confidently.

Looking ahead, Meyers committed to exploring the number of state assets invested in uMzinga and promised to return to the site after consulting relevant departments for additional support. The collaboration reflects a broader strategy under the

Private-Public Partnership initiative, whereby the Public Works and Infrastructure department aims to convert over 10,000 public land parcels and structures, valued at over R20 billion, into viable economic assets.

Meyers also engaged with the area's traditional leadership in Mzinga, led by Inkosi Majozi, who sought to utilise unoccupied buildings owned by the department for traditional court proceedings. The traditional leaders highlighted their urgent need for revitalisation of the economy during their meeting.

Bhengu reiterated the importance of the collaboration with the local leaders, mentioning that topics raised by traditional leaders echoed discussions at the Build KZN Better property management conference held earlier this year, which attracted over 500 delegates from various sectors. The traditional leadership praised Meyers for his swift responses and commitment shown.

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