NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL
There is a NEW SHERIFF in town!

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Editorial Column

Why Should We Improve our Internal Communication Processes

Internal Communication is one of the most important if not the cornerstone of any successful organization, yet least focused on area of organizations or businesses.

Indeed without effective communication departments duplicate efforts and mistakes are made due to lack of information, while employees suffer from not receiving the acknowledgement and recognition they deserve.

Sometimes one asks oneself how significant is Internal Communication in our department? And I'm tempted to say Internal Communication is significant in any organization because it is the building block of the organization’s culture. That is the atmosphere of our department based on its values, mission and business processes.

When every employee of our department holds the same values, understands the work policies and procedures in the same way, and is focused on the same mission, the department’s culture promotes much more effective use of resources than under a culture that is more diffused in its interpretation. It can ensure that all employees are working towards a common goal and are assisting each other effectively.

There is quite a number of benefits to effective communication. When we communicate effectively with our employees, that develops a cohesive culture where everyone is focused on the same goals and has the same objectives.

Staff can identify with goals, mission and procedures of our department, which can result in a sense of making a difference and increase effort and efficiency. It is my belief that although effective internal communication may not bring all the results for all our department’s challenges, it can go a long way towards building an organizational culture where people work together effectively towards a common goal.

I was very encouraged by the New Sheriff in Town, his Excellency Mr Siwwe Dongwana when I asked him about communication’s role in delivering on our mandate and he said, “Communication can always be improved upon in any organization. Successful organizations communicate better, timely and effectively. The challenge for a communications unit in any organization is being able to anticipate and being proactive”.

As I conclude, I want you to think of the effect of having your name and the result of your most recent project printed in our publication would have. You would have a sense of recognition. You would, most likely, be energized and ready to tackle the next project with additional spirit. The most basic human need is the need for acceptance and recognition. Please don’t hesitate to share any good moment with this big family of Public Works, share with us what you do so that we can share it with every member of our family.

Aluta Continua!!! South Africa Works Because of Public Works.

Reggie Ngcobo is the Editor-In-Chief of WorxNews
On the 27th of July 2010, Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge MP, inaugurated the new board of the Council for Built Environment at Emperors Palace in Johannesburg.

Minister Geoff Doidge in his address, thanked the board that completed its term of office under the chairmanship of Mr Sipho Madonsela, for its contribution and the enthusiasm with which they have served and for taking CBE to the next level of institutional building.

“As we inaugurate the New Council and welcome you to what will undoubtedly be a very busy four years ahead, I have high expectations of this Council to further the establishment and aligning to the outcomes of government’s vision. I would like to see strong, productive working relationships develop between Professional Councils and the CBE”, said Minister Doidge. The Minister also challenged the new board to focus its attention on increasing the skills and capability in the built environment both through removing barriers that prevent entry, and by improving the success rate of young people.

He also emphasized the importance of finding mechanisms and ways to retain existing skills and encouraging the return of skills that have left the sector. Minister Doidge shared his passion for transformation of the Built Environment and other professions with the new board. He said the professions must become representative of the demographics of the country, where young people, women and the disabled are well represented.

“IThink we all understand that we have to focus on improving our processes for registration, we need to continue removing the Biases and Barriers that exist, but we also need to understand how the quality of candidate is changing, and why it takes modern students even in the developing world, longer to gain the skills necessary to register when compared with candidates in the past. Only then will we be in the position to address the problem holistically and effectively,” said Minister.

The Minister did not get shy to spell out clear his expectation from the new Board. He emphasized that the board needs to tackle things differently and as an entity of the Department of Public Works must contribute to his Performance Agreement. The Chief Executive Officer of the CBE Mr Bheki Zulu thanked the Minister for his unwavering support and leadership of the CBE. Mr Zulu also thanked the outgoing board for a job well done and wished the new board all the luck.

The new council members will serve a four year term that runs from June 2010 to June 2014. The process of appointing the new board started in February 2010 where nominees were presented to the Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge for approval and appointment of a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. After a period of deliberations, the Minister finalized the appointment on the 3rd of July 2010 and approval from cabinet was confirmed on 01 September 2010. The new council members under the Chairpersonship of Ms Portia Tau-Sekati are:

Ms EX Kula-Ameyaw, Ms EI Pieterse, Mr M Kubuzie, Mr C Isaalite, Mr HJ van der Hoven, Mr P Mashabane, Mr C Campbell, Mr VV Mdowa, Mr L Molobela, Ms S Ngxongo, Mr GT Chaane, Ms P Tau-Sekati (Chairperson), Ms Z Mvusi, Mr M Klapwijk, Ms PE Scott, Prof T Majozi (Deputy Chairperson), Dr C Ruiters and Mr F Johnson, Mr D Nkhwashu.

September

September / October – Profile some of the heritage (aesthetic) buildings we own / manage including castles, museums and hospitals such as JHB General and Pelene in Bloemfontein, with Public Works connection.

24 September - Heritage Day
Chief Of Staff Outlines her Vision for the Department

By Reggie Ngcobo

WorxNews caught up with the Chief of Staff to share her vision with the NDPW family.

Please share with us as to where you worked before you joined the Ministry of Public Works?

After successfully completing my Masters Degree, I lectured Sociology at the UKZN (Durban-Westville Campus) from 1995 to 2001 and my lectures focused on Research Methodology (qualitative and quantitative methods) and SA Society (historical and current). I lectured first, second and third year sociology students and I also supervised some projects of Honours’ students.

I then moved to Cape Town and worked within the ANC Caucus in Parliament as a researcher for the Correctional Services portfolio and then later, Foreign Affairs. In 2004, I was deployed to act as the ANC Human Resources Manager and thereafter deployed as the ANC Deputy Head of Caucus Support Services and then Deputy Head of the ANC Research Unit until my appointment as Chief Of Staff in the Ministry of Public Works in (Date of appointment here).

Give us a brief profile of yourself?

I am driven by the will to succeed at anything I do. I dislike sloppiness in attitude or work ethics. I am told I am a perfectionist (I believe in the adage if you want to do something, then do it well or not at all) and I am learning to delegate and not to be so in control all the time. I make no apologies for my political affiliation. As a loyal cadre of the ANC, I strive to ensure that in every circumstance one is faced with, the overriding principles of the movement are adhered to. We are here to serve the people, we are not here for self-enrichment or self-promotion. My staff members in the Ministry are people who I believe share the same ethos.

From where you are sitting, what is your vision for the Department of Public Works?

I have been asked “What my vision for the Department is?” I can only speak of what my vision is as the Ministry. As a Ministry, we share the Minister’s vision, which is to ensure that the Department of Public Works reclaims its mandate, transforms the property and construction industry and commits itself to clean and transparent governance.

Interview with Chief of Staff and IDT Awards

IDT Rewards Excellence

By Khomotso Gosebo

The second Independent Development Trust (IDT) contractor awards were held on the 29 July 2010 at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg.

The IDT is the entity and implementing agent of the Department of Public Works that offers programme management and development advisory services for the eradication of poverty. Emphasis is on the eradication of chronic intergenerational poverty, especially among the rural poor.

The IDT Annual 2010 Contractor Awards are aimed at recognizing excellent performance by contractors who completed infrastructure programmes for the IDT for the period 01 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Through recognizing and rewarding these excellent performances, the IDT encourages contractors to improve on project delivery speed, job creation, community empowerment and innovation in service delivery.

The prizes that are offered to the winning contractors entail further training in the skills identified by the contractors themselves so as to improve their own capacity to deliver. The 2010 contractor awards are part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary since the establishment of the IDT. The awards focus on emerging contractors categorized under Grade one to six of the CIDB (Contractor Industry Development Board) grading system.

Minister Geoff Doidge, delivering his keynote address, said one of the immediate priorities of the IDT was to ensure that the entity is aligned to the twelve outcomes of the government. “I call on the IDT to interrogate the agreement I have signed with President Jacob Zuma and advise through your work how you will ensure that as a collective DPW family, we are able to deliver on the expectations of our government and our people.”

The winner for category 1 was Lorato Pakkins from Lorato Consultant situated in the North West Province. She won R10 000.00 worth of spending money and R10 000.00 worth of office equipment. Lorato excelled in the project assigned to her for the construction of 20 waterborne toilets with the project value of R959, 194.88. This woman contractor completed the project one month ahead of schedule with no variation from the original brief. She also installed electricity although it was not part of the scope of work.

The winner for category 2 was Lawrence Cwanyi from LM Cwanyi Construction and Cleaning Products situated in the Eastern Cape. He won R15 000.00 worth of spending money and R10 000.00 worth of office equipment. Lorato excelled in the project assigned to her for the construction of 20 waterborne toilets with the project value of R959, 194.88. This woman contractor completed the project one month ahead of schedule with no variation from the original brief. She also installed electricity although it was not part of the scope of work.

The winner for category 3 was Xolani Makhaba of Xolmak Construction in the North West. He won a cheque of R25 000.00 worth of spending money and also a cheque of R25 000.00 worth of office equipment. Xolani was in charge of a project with the value of R8 594 016.99. He was contracted to Ipokeng Middle School project which he completed four months ahead of schedule. There was also a large degree of community participation with the involvement of School Governing Bodies, the North West Department of Education and community supported projects.

The key factors in rewarding excellence were that businesses had to display sustainability, all the financial management principles were adhered to and the project was economically viable.
Interview With The CFO On MTEF 2011

By Reggie Ngcobo

Reggie Ngcobo: What informed the Chief Financial Officer’s (CFOs) guidelines for the new Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2011/12-2013/14?

Cathy Motsitsi: Annually we get these guidelines from the National Treasury. We customize them according to our environment, look at our plans and realign them to policies. What it basically means is that all programme managers must realign all their plans and where possible cut costs. This will ensure that we have a healthy base line, come the MTEF cycle. This is also about performance in the Department as the guidelines will highlight to us whether we have achieved our targets or not. The whole process requires a focused attention on deliverables starting from April 2011. Through these guidelines, we are basically saying to managers, be realistic, if some deliverables are not possible, do not include them in your plans now, and rather postpone them for later. We can’t afford to miss the bus on the MTEF process. Our main focus area during the current cycle is to fill in the vacant posts, cut costs where we can and move money to where it is mostly needed by weighing our options.

RN: What will the budget process entail?
CM: It entails the engagements with various branches, helping them to cost their plans and also assist our client departments in the process.

RN: Why are these deadlines critical?
CM: We want to be able to provide credible submission to the National Treasury supported by evidence that will enable us to get approval for our request.

RN: Who are the key role-players in this process?
CM: The Ministry and the Executive Committee (Exco).

RN: How does this approach differ from the previous one that we have been using all along?
CM: Previously our bids were not aligned to the Minister’s performance agreement, but to our strategic objectives.

RN: What exactly is expected of these role-players?
CM: All role-players are supposed to assess and approve the priorities and concomitant budgets.

RN: What is the role of ordinary employees of the Department in the whole campaign?
CM: Employees must understand that there will be serious cost cutting measures in the Department, due to inadequate budgets. The good thing about the process is that since cost cutting measures were introduced, we have managed to save up to R145 million which has been used to compensate the employees base since September last year.

RN: What are the implications of non-compliance to these guidelines?
CM: If we don’t comply, we won’t get the necessary funding from the National Treasury to deliver on our mandate.

RN: What benefits will it yield once rolled out?
CM: The one benefit is that regions and Prestige will be able to align their plans to available funding.

RN: Does this approach have anything to do with the recent economic meltdown or is it solely aligned to service delivery in the Department?
CM: It’s addressing both the challenges caused by the economic meltdown and alignment with service delivery outcomes adopted by the Department.

RN: Any document, legislation, policy or framework it is based on?
CM: MTEF is based on the Public Finance Management Act, Treasury Regulations and the Money Bill, just to mention but a few.

RN: What is your massage to all employees?
CM: Everyone must review the current allocation for 2010/11 in terms of its adequacy and begin to identify the unforeseen and unavoidable areas that will require adjustments to the current budget, secondly all programme managers must ensure that the output for 2012/13 forms part of the Estimates of National Expenditure Chapter which is due on 06 December 2010.
The Role Of Public Works In The 2010 FIFA World Cup And Beyond

By Reggie Ngcobo

WorxNews caught up with the Deputy Director-General Special Projects, Mr Mandla Mabuza to share with the readers on the role of Public Works in the preparations for the 2010 World Cup and beyond and this is what he had to say:

“For 31 days, we have witnessed South Africa hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, an unprecedented and extraordinary event never experienced in South Africa before. The entire world’s focus was on us as it did during the 1994 April democratic breakthrough. It is perhaps befitting to take a pause and reflect on what role the Department of Public Works played in the lead up to the auspicious occasion.”

1. Land Ports of Entries

“In the recent past complaints were raised regarding the state of infrastructure at the land ports of entry. The four commercial border posts, namely, Golela, Vioolsdrift, Lebombo/Ressano Garcia and Skilpadhek are major routes to neighbouring SADC countries (Swaziland, Namibia, Mozambique and Botswana, respectively). These routes are for export and import with high volumes of trucking and passenger vehicles. The border posts experience high peak traffic volumes in certain periods of the year, namely during the Easter Holidays and the Festive Season.

“DPW initiated these redevelopment projects to address the envisaged influx of people and goods, passing through these various Ports of Entry during 2010 Soccer World Cup event and beyond.

“Border infrastructure, improved operations and security in support of the facilitation of the legal movement of people and goods were critical challenges ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Readiness of infrastructure to support operational mandates of the various departments at the ports of entry by 2010 and beyond is an increasing imperative. “In this regard, the Department responded by identifying three key strategic objectives in its endeavour to invest in capital infrastructure at these ports. These are,

- Ensure smooth facilitation of people and goods to and from South Africa
- Aggressive prevention of transnational syndicated crimes within the borders
- Facilitate efficient and effective trade between South Africa and neighboring countries.

1. Golela Border Post

“The development at Golela Land Port of Entry is for the construction of a new border post facility which includes light vehicle and freight handling.

2. Vioolsdrift Border Post

The project is executed in three separate phases consisting of an operational phase, a residential phase and bulk services phase.

3. Lebombo Border Post

The development at Lebombo/Ressano Garcia Border Post was initially for the construction of the new border post facility, a One-Stop-Border-Post (OSBP) project as per the protocols signed in 1998 between South Africa and Mozambique.

After the scaling down of the project because of financial and legal constraints, the project took the following structure which broke down the OSBP development into phases.

Project A – Fencing the current border Post. (This is now 100% complete).

Project B1 – (Temporary Border Construction) 2 projects namely B1 & B2

B1= Pedestrian Facility and office park

B2= (Supply and installations of Park Homes – 100% complete).

This project provides for the temporary accommodation and the relocation of staff members who were residing at the border post.

2010 Contingency Plan

The 2010 Contingency Project focuses primarily on removing trucks from the current border and to create freight bypass road with parking areas along side the existing border post to reduce traffic congestion in time for 2010 SWC and beyond.

Skilpadhek Border Post

The development at Skilpadhek Border Post is for the construction of the new border post facility. The scope of work includes operational facilities, namely, the construction of the main border posts and major civil works for roads, sewer and bulk water supply.

2010 Stadia

The Department was a key player in the Inter-Ministerial Committee for 2010 chaired by the Deputy President Kgalema Montlanthe wherein the Department was represented by Minister Geoff Doidge. This Committee was key in coordinating all 2010 FIFA World Cup activities from the government point of view. According to the Department in partnership with the CIDB ensured that all public sector construction projects comply with the CIDB regulations to ensure quality of service delivery, efficiency and that infrastructure is delivered timeously.

“We have particularly intervened during the construction of the Green Point stadium by reducing thousands of seats in order to cap cost escalations. Within the same breadth, we were at the forefront in resolving the crisis of building of the 2 Matsafeni schools in Mpumalanga province where the stadium is built, given that this was the promise made to the community of Matsafeni. Today, both schools are built.

“The Department is the official owner/landlord of Soccer City stadium. As part of promoting good intergovernmental health relations and also complying with FIFA in terms of the role of municipalities during the world cup, we have given the City of Johannesburg a right of use of the stadium for 99 years. This means we have 99-year lease agreement with the city of Johannesburg.

This project consists of the conversion of 7 existing houses into office space and the construction of the new pedestrian facility with electrical and mechanical upgrade works.

The pedestrian facility is to process pedestrians who would be travelling by buses and/or taxis.

Mr Mandla Mabuza, DDG, Special Projects
A new programme has been added to the EPWP, namely the Cooperative Development initiative. This initiative is set to have a huge impact on business ownership by communities. Since the inception of the initiative in June 2008, more than 12 cooperatives have been awarded contracts, totaling R12, 9 million, either through quotation or an open tender process, for the provision of cleaning and gardening services. The figure of R12, 9 million is significant in that the Department has awarded 30% of its current cleaning and gardening contracts to cooperatives.

Through this initiative, cooperatives will be assisted to develop their business and technical skills in providing cleaning and gardening services to the Department, over 2 year contract duration. Once a cooperative is awarded a tender, the EPWP Enterprise Development Unit ensures that key linkages are formed with small business development agencies to ensure that cooperatives receive training, access to grants and assistance on matters such as marketing the business. To date, key relations have been developed with the Small Business Development Agency (SEDA) that assisted the Department to workshop cooperatives on formation, register cooperatives and provided basic business training. NDPW has also committed funds for the branding and training of cooperatives and its members.

The programme is fully operational in the Port Elizabeth Region al Office and will be expanded to several of NDPWs Regional Offices. In 2010, many Regional Offices have commenced with roadshows to ensure that communities are aware of this opportunity.

Cooperatives, as a business entity, is a fairly new concept within Government and the Department has been applauded on leading the way in formalizing the use of Cooperatives, as another type of business entity in comparison to close corporations, sole proprietors and partnerships. It is envisaged that through cooperative members being active within the day to day running of the business, that there will be an increase in Business Acumen and that issues such as financial management and productivity will be addressed. This initiative through the 12 cooperatives has resulted in 160 cooperative members and employees benefiting.

This initiative also symbolizes the effective partnerships between the Facilities Management, Procurement and EPWP Units within the Department. It is only through the collaborative work of these units that service delivery and development objectives of our country can be addressed.

1. Defining the basic economic problem
In the real world wants are always unlimited while resources are always limited. Resources have to be allocated among competing wants/needs. The basic economic problem when society has to allocate limited resources to unlimited wants/needs. Needs are goods or services that are necessary for survival e.g. food, clothing, medicine and shelter. Wants are goods that we can survive without e.g. entertainment, jewellery, designer clothes.

Resources refer to natural resources (land and mineral deposits) capital (money, plants, machinery and inventories) and human resources (workers with different skills, qualifications and managerial talent)

Examples
At home there are limited resources (fixed monthly income) and unlimited wants/needs education, grocery, healthcare etc.
The government has limited resources (budget) and there are unlimited wants (roads, schools, hospitals, salaries etc).

2. Identifying the key actors in the production process
The production of goods and services is the engine of any economy because apart from producing goods for consumption it also creates employment. The key actors in the production process are:

2.1 Households (consumers)
They supply labour (which is one of the factors of production) to producers businesses. Households supply their labour at a price in the labour market and get wages. Households buy the goods and services they want in the market for goods and services. Generally, consumers play an important role in the economy because they create a demand for goods and services.

2.2 Business (producers)
Businesses produce goods and services by mixing the factors of production (land, labour and capital).
They sell these goods and services to consumers and get a profit. Businesses get the factors of production they want in the market for factor of production.
This is called the supply side of production.

2.3 Government
Government makes laws and policies that facilitate and regulates the functioning of the economy and the production process. Government also make laws to protect both consumers and the environment. It also supplies some of the goods that cannot be supplied by the market. Government also influences demand in the economy by its actions namely its expenditure.

3. The circular flow of economic activities
Economic activities involving all the actors in the economy flow in a circle. The flow of goods and services from producers to households and the flows of factors of production from households to businesses are indicated in the circular flow diagram below:

Source: Principles of economics
The circular flow diagram is made by the physical flow of goods, services and productive factors and the flow of money expenditure as a payment/reward for these goods, services and productive factors. The physical flow goes opposite the expenditure flow because when goods flow from the goods market to households, money flows simultaneously from the households to businesses through the goods markets. When households sell their services in the labour market (which is part of the factor market) they get a reward called wages while the reward for land is called rent. On the other hand when businesses sell goods and services in the market they get a reward called profit.
The Department’s newly appointed Director-General Mr Siviwe Dongwana is ready to steer the Public Works ship to greater heights. Out of his busy schedule he took sometime to share his vision with WorxNews’s Reggie Ngcobo.

Reggie Ngcobo: Could you please share with us your career life before joining the Department of Public Works?

Mr Dongwana’s extensive experience in the private sector should stand him in good stead as he steers the department that is chiefly responsible for overseeing and maintaining all government’s national fixed assets and properties.

Director General: I spent over ten years in the audit and consulting environment covering auditing (external & internal); corporate governance and risk management, corporate finance and financial and management consulting.

Reggie Ngcobo: What attracted the DG to the Department?

DG: Yes! A recession means less jobs for people in the private sector and so transfers the burden to government to support the livelihoods through social grants and job creation initiatives like the EPWP. At the same time, tax revenues decrease significantly during a recession, which creates a contradiction wherein government has to do more with less.

Reggie Ngcobo: Are you ready to lead Public Works?

DG: What do you think will be the role of communication in ensuring that we deliver on our mandate as a department as well as to contribute to government programme of action?

DG: Communication can always be improved upon in any organization. Successful organizations communicate better, timely and effectively. The challenge for a communications unit in any organization is being able to anticipate and being proactive.

Reggie Ngcobo: How are you going to proceed?

DG: In some ways, starting a new business is easier than taking over an existing one. For instance in a new business you don’t have to take managers that do not suit you. What are the challenges when you take over a team of managers you have never met?

DG: As a consultant one had to regularly work with new clients and their management, so one has to be adaptable.

Reggie Ngcobo: From your short stay in the Department, are there any critical areas that you think needs your immediate attention?

DG: Potential to make a meaningful contribution leveraging off my skills set and so make measurable impact, for example, in accelerating progress towards a clean unqualified audit report.

Reggie Ngcobo: What is your vision for the department?

DG: A place where individuals are attracted to work, make a meaningful contribution in delivering a consistent quality service to our client departments and other stakeholders in a vibrant and nurturing environment.

Reggie Ngcobo: Are there any immediate changes you would want to implement in the Department?

DG: Being more client-centric. This is very critical for DPW to reclaim its mandate from client departments. We need to have a solution orientation versus listing reasons why things cannot be done.

Reggie Ngcobo: What do you think will be the role of communication in ensuring that we deliver your vision?

DG: A temptation is always there to introduce new things! The one thing that could benefit everyone is the consistency in doing the right things all the time.

Reggie Ngcobo: What is your massage to the entire family of Public Works?

DG: To be consistent in delivering excellent work and take pride in what we do all the time.

New Sheriff in Town is Ready to Lead Public Works

The newly appointed Director-General of the Department Mr Siviwe Dongwana started his work in the department on the 1st of July 2010, following the cabinet approval of his appointment on the 19th of May 2010.

Mr Dongwana’s extensive experience in the private sector should stand him in good stead as he steers the department that is chiefly responsible for overseeing and maintaining all government’s national fixed assets and properties.

Prior to joining the family of Public Works, Mr Dongwana worked at Nedbank as a student and later on, on a fulltime basis as an Assistant Manager. He also spent a short stint with Deloitte in USA and when he came back he became a partner.

Mr Dongwana is married with two kids. He listens to music and reads a lot. But since he joined Public Works, that privilege is gone. What is also interesting is that he loves singing.

He is like a teacher as he likes explaining things to people and is very particular on how he needs things to be done.

Those closer to him regards him as a philosopher.

He loves soccer but kept his favourite team a secret.

Contact Details in the Office of the Director-General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Tel no (PTA)</th>
<th>Tel no (CTN)</th>
<th>Mobile no</th>
<th>Fax (PTA)</th>
<th>Fax (CTN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joyce Nyoka</td>
<td>Acting Director: Office of the DG</td>
<td>(012) 310 5128</td>
<td>(021) 461 7016</td>
<td>082 957 3839</td>
<td>(012) 310 5280</td>
<td>(021) 461 2115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dineo Motsoeneng</td>
<td>Personal Assistant to the DG</td>
<td>(012) 310 5934</td>
<td>(021) 461 7016</td>
<td>076 487 1113</td>
<td>(012) 310 5280</td>
<td>(021) 461 2115</td>
</tr>
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New Director-General in Pictures

Department of Public Works Director-General

Department of Public Works Director-General

Department of Public Works Director-General

Department of Public Works Director-General
In Honour of ‘The Woman’ and Her Role In South Africa

By Martina Nicholson

"Empower a woman and empower a nation"

“A woman would not hold out her hand and wait for someone; she would go into the garden, she would do something to ensure that there is a meal on the table. My point is that when you empower women, you empower a nation.”

- Ms Noluthando Mayende-Sibiya, Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities.

Women take on so many roles in society. Traditionally they have always been mothers, wives and homemakers - seen as the ultimate nurturing force. The modern woman is still all of these things but she is capable of so much more. Nowadays women are also soldiers, entrepreneurs, politicians, athletes, astronauts, judges and leaders of nations. Women are powerful – they are the bedrock of society.

With more than 53% of our members being women, the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) would like to take a moment to pay tribute to women in South Africa and in Government specifically.

Women in our country have travelled a long road to get to where they are today and have fought hard for their rights. That is why on 9 August every year our nation celebrates National Women’s Day, a commemoration of the march of women on this day in 1956 that petitioned against pass laws.

Since that day women have shown that they have the ability to do great things, and today make up more than half of the South African Government at 55.8 percent. Women truly have begun to prove themselves and make their mark – indeed, recent research has indicated that teams made up of 50 percent women and 50 percent men are the most creative and productive, while teams made up of only men are the least creative.

Despite the advancements that women in South Africa have made, they still face many challenges such as physical abuse, HIV/AIDS, and a lack of spousal support. Another issue affecting women all over the world, including South Africa, is the problem of cultural expectations where women are expected to stay at home and take on the traditional roles of wife and mother.

The pressure that is put on women to perform their traditional roles often leads them to abandon their own dreams. It is also often the case that women are not provided with the support and infrastructure that they need to pursue their goals, preventing them from becoming the independent and powerful individuals that they are so capable of being.

However, things are looking up for women in South Africa. According to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap index, South Africa is now ranked as number six in the world where it was previously ranked as number 22. This index measured economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political attainment, health and the survival of women in 134 countries.

Our country was also ranked first in the world for employment opportunities for professional and technical female workers, as well as registration in primary, secondary and tertiary education. With a population that is 53 percent female, improved access for women to education and employment is much needed and will without doubt reap positive rewards for our nation.

Whentonetakeintoaccountthatmorethan 45 percent of South African men between the ages of 15 and 65 are economically active, while only an approximate 37 percent of women are able to find work, it becomes clear how important it is to create better opportunities for women. As Minister Sibiya also pointed out: “We need to see the quality of life improving for all women in the country.”

GEMS is committed to giving women the opportunities that they need to empower themselves. Indeed, women form the foundation of GEMS. With more than half of our members and 70 percent of our total staff complement being female we have much to be proud of. Add to this the fact that two thirds of our executive committee members are female and there is little doubt that women are a force to be reckoned with at GEMS, South Africa’s youngest and fastest growing medical scheme.

GEMS would like to salute the women of South Africa this Women’s Day. We thank you for always being the rock that has supported this nation, and now the beacon that leads us, lighting our way into tomorrow.

For members who have any questions on Women’s Day, please phone the GEMS call centre on 0860 00 4367 or send a SMS to 083 450 4362. GEMS will assist you in every way possible to ensure your family’s health and wellbeing.

Sources:
Stats SA – www.statssa.gov.za
Unicef – www.unicef.org
The Business Women’s Association of South Africa – www.bwasa.co.za
Top Women in Business and Government, 6th Edition

Ends

Research and written on behalf of the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) by Martina Nicholson Associates (MNA). For further information kindly contact Martina Nicholson (021) 459-3015 or martina@mnapr.co.za

In Honour of ‘The Women’ and Lets have Fun for a Moment

Two political candidates were having a hot debate. Finally, one of them jumped up and yelled at the other, “What about the powerful interest that controls you?”

And the other guy screamed back, “You leave my wife out of this!”

After hearing that one of the patients in a mental hospital had saved another from a suicide attempt by pulling him out of a bathtub, the hospital director reviewed the rescuer’s file and called him into his office.

“Mr. Jones, your records and your heroic behavior indicate that you’re ready to go home. I’m sorry to tell you that the man you saved later hanged himself.”

“Oh, he didn’t hang himself,” Mr. Jones replied. “I hung him up to dry...”

Sam and Becky are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Sam says to Becky, “Becky, I was wondering - have you ever cheated on me?” Becky replies, “Oh Sam, why would you ask such a question now? You don’t want to ask that question....”

“Yes, Becky, I really want to know. Please...”

“Well, all right. Yes, 3 times....”

“Three? Well, when were they?” he asked.

“Well, Sam, remember when you were 35 years old and you really wanted to start the business on your own and no bank would give you a loan? Remember, then one day the bank president himself came over the house and signed the loan papers, no questions asked!”

“Oh, Becky, you did that for me! I respect you even more than ever, to do such a thing for me. So, when was number 2?”

“Well, Sam, remember when you had that last heart attack and you were needing that very tricky operation, and no surgeon would touch you? Then remember how Dr. DeBakey came all the way up here, to do the surgery himself, and then you were in good shape again!”

“I can’t believe it! Becky, you should do such a thing for me, to save my life. I couldn’t have a more wonderful wife. To do such a thing, you must really love me darling. I couldn’t be more moved. So, all right then, when was number 3?”

“Well, Sam, remember a few years ago, when you really wanted to be president of the golf club and you were 17 votes short...?”
Supply Chain processes play a very important role in departments like Public Works where huge capital projects and the provision of accommodation to client departments is executed almost everyday.

This poses a challenge for Supply Chain Management Unit to ensure that their policies, directives and business processes are aligned to core business of the department.

The Unit embarked on a three-day workshop at Umhlanga Gardens Court Hotel in Durban recently, in order to review their policies and business processes.

The workshop under the theme “Raising the bar to meet organizational challenges” was held under the guidance of the head of the SCM unit in the Department, Mr Trevor Tabane.

Mr Tabane opened the proceedings of the first day by explaining the purpose of the Workshop to the delegates from all the Public Works Regional offices. Tabane was assisted by Mr Malakia Mashiloane, Director: Demand and Acquisition Management.

Speakers from all relevant Directorates with the Supply Chain and Property field respectively shared the platform, imparting to delegates their varied experiences.

Representatives from Sekela also engaged delegates on issues of Movable Asset Management, explaining how they plan to ensure that by the end of the financial year the department’s Asset register is fully compliant with the treasury regulations.

In spite of his busy schedule, Mr Tabane managed to take some time off to speak to WorxNews on the sides of the workshop.

He said it was important and long overdue that the workshop was conducted. “Looking at various challenges that we had to deal with from regional offices the workshop was necessary” said Tabane.

Mr Tabane said this was for the first time they had such workshop since the unit was developed in 2008.

He said at the end of the workshop a number of useful resolutions were agreed upon and one of the important ones was to have a dedicated session with Property and Project Management units respectively.

WorxNews caught up with EPWP Social Sector Manager in Polokwane Ms Mmamotshabo Kganyago and this is what she had to say:

When did you join the Department of Public Works, and what does your daily job entail?
I joined the Department of Public Works in 2008 and my daily job entails coordination and provision of technical support to implementing bodies.

Can you give statistics of the people who benefited from projects in the province?
In the first phase of EPWP, Limpopo Social Sector managed to create 17000 job opportunities out of the target of 20000 which is the highest figure as compared to other provinces.

What kind of support do you provide to the projects?
Support is given through stakeholder meetings, briefing sessions and participating in the monthly meetings organized by individual implementing bodies. I also do project verification to ensure that the projects we report on really exists. It is also crucial to mention that I also monitor training where beneficiaries are conscientised of what EPWP is.

What kind of challenges do you come across as the Region and how do you deal with them?
We are currently experiencing delays in the payment of the stipend by implementing departments. Another challenge is that EPWP is an add-on function to other officials and this delays some of the processes to be undertaken during the implementation of the programme. With regard to payment of stipend, we are in the process of meeting with the implementing departments to review their policies and check if there is no way we can improve on the stipend payment. It is also important to mention that all our caregivers, cooks and gardeners (who were receiving R500.00) in the province will receive a stipend of R1100 as from 2010/2011. Technical cluster committee assists in advising the Head of Departments (HODs) of implementing bodies to prioritise EPWP as one of the flagship programmes.

What kind of interventions do you make to the projects which are on the verge of collapse?
Projects do not normally fall apart, but to ensure provision of quality service, we provide training to beneficiaries e.g. NQF level 4-5, Ancillary Health Care level 1-3, Cooks 101, etc.

Is there anything new that the EPWP second phase has brought?
The second phase brought in new programmes which target communities, like Malaria Control Programme, HIV Counseling and Testing to peer educators, Masupatsela Pioneering Programme, etc. We will also be reporting on Mass Participation programmes in 2010/2011.

Can you share with us the successes that the sector achieved in the past few years?
We got approval of the five year business plan. The province has successfully hosted the social sector provincial Kamoso Awards which recognize the work done by the different projects in the province. We were the finalists in all social sector categories for national Kamoso Awards where we won the Best Innovation Award, among others.
CIDB Honours Women in Construction

By Thamsanqa Mchunu

The Department of Public Works remains firmly committed to fast-tracking women contractors in the industry through the Incubator Programme.

This assurance was given by the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, to hundreds of women contractors who converged at the OR Tambo Airport Premier Hotel on Tuesday, 31 August 2010 for the cidb Women in Construction Excellence Awards.

"Even though a lot more still needs to be done, to strengthen women contractors, the Department will continue to hold the hand of women who are determined to succeed in their chosen field," the Deputy Minister said.

The colourful function, held at the spanking new hotel in Kempton Park, was in honour of women contractors who are successful in building vibrant enterprises in the construction sector. The awards brought to a close provincial celebrations that recognized women achievers on the cidb Register of Contractors who are performing exceptionally well in delivering infrastructure projects whilst building successful businesses.

Deputy Minister Bogopane-Zulu, speaking on behalf of the Minister, congratulated women contractors who have made it in spite of all the problems and challenges in this sector. She paid tribute to the late Minister of Public Works, Stella Sigcau, for her vision in empowering and sustainability.

According to the CEO of the cidb, Mr Ronnie Khoza, the awards are meant to encourage women to rely on performance and best practice for success as the basis for self-empowerment and sustainability.

"The cidb will always recognize the best practices by women contractors. We will do our level best, in conjunction with our principals in the Department, to ensure that women contractors who give it their best shot, are helped in every way possible," concluded Mr Khoza.

Deputy Minister Addressing Delegates

Deputy Minister with the Recipients

CIDB Awards and Deputy Minister’s Visits to Regional Offices

Deputy Minister visits Regional Offices

By Motlhabane Skade and Tshuluzi Nkaona

Public Works Deputy Minister Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu has embarked on a fact finding mission to departmental regional offices. After her first visit to Durban Regional Office, her next stop was in Nelspruit.

After honouring a game between Italy and New Zealand, the Deputy Minister extended her stay in Mpumalanga to pay a courtesy visit to the Nelspruit Regional Office, with an aim of meeting management and staff to understand the nature of their work.

Among those present at the meeting in Nelspruit was the Regional Manager, Mr. Pat Mashiame, his Assistants and Deputy Directors. What came out of the meeting are the hurdles that the office experiences as result of capacity issues, planned maintenance, budget issues and administration budget which they said is not enough.

Requirement for client departments were also discussed, especially those that would require accommodation space and timelines when they are supposed to occupy their allocated accommodation.

As part of its contribution in helping municipalities, the Nelspruit Regional Office provides municipalities with the list of properties that the Department owns in the province and even show them how to claim their rates and taxes against those properties.

The Deputy Minister then proceeded to one of the Department’s Capital Works Project at Lebombo Border Post, which is a land port of entry between South Africa and Mozambique. She visited three main projects at Lebombo Border Post and these are road, water purification and sewage plants project. The road project is 89% complete and is aimed at reducing congestion at the border gate which comes as a result of huge influx of pedestrians, passenger vehicles and trucks using the same narrow road, especially during peak periods.

Part of the renovations at Lebombo Gate includes a new pedestrian facility which is 95% complete as well as overheads canopies for truck inspection which is an add-on on the project.

Her next stop was Polokwane Regional Office. She also met with the Regional office management under the leadership of the Acting Regional Manager Thomas Dzivhane. In a round table meeting, the Deputy Minister explained the purpose of her visit before giving the section heads led by the regional manager an opportunity to explain what they are doing to carry out the mandate of the department.

It was indeed not an easy road for all those who made representations as the Deputy Minister interrogated each and everyone of them leaving no stone unturned. After the presentations, the Deputy Minister summarized the discussions by explaining the systems and processes that must be followed.

The Deputy Minister then visited a couple of projects that the Department is undertaking through its Regional Office.

Deputy Minister visiting Tzaneen Correctional Services Project

Deputy Minister Addressing Delegates

Deputy Minister with the Recipients
Studies offer conclusive proof that healthy teeth spells good general health!

Been to the dentist lately? No? Well, maybe you should do a quick rethink of the importance of dental health. Going to the dentist is all about taking care of your teeth, and ensuring that you have a full set of pearly whites into your eighties and beyond.

As part of the Government Employees Medical Scheme’s (GEMS) ongoing effort to educate our members and future members on a range of healthcare topics, we would like to provide you with some information on the importance of good dental hygiene and how it can improve your overall health and wellbeing.

Research conducted over several years now clearly indicates that the health and cleanliness of your teeth could play a critical role in the health of your whole body - and in making it possible to live until you are well into your nineties. A couple of landmark studies done have shown a clear connection between poor dental health and heart attacks, strokes, and miscarriages in pregnant women.

Some years ago Professor Mark Herzberg of the preventive medicine unit at the University of Minnesota, showed, in a series of experiments, that certain bacteria present in dental plaque cause blood platelets to clot. If these bacteria are released into the bloodstream, they could easily trigger a thrombosis, the clotting of blood platelets, which creates the perfect conditions for a heart attack or stroke.

The worst offender, according to Professor Herzberg, is the bacterium streptococcus sanguis that is found in enormous numbers in the mouth - it’s the most common of all the microorganisms found there. And when people have a lot of plaque on their teeth, the numbers are very much bigger. “We know a lot about the risk factors for arterial sclerosis and heart attacks,” says Professor Herzberg, “but nothing about the triggers”. It seems they may have found one trigger in a place where no one would think to look - in your mouth.

So there is a strong incentive to brush and floss regularly, right there. Does that mean you have to bite the bullet and visit your dentist? Yes indeed! These bacteria are released into the bloodstream, where they do damage, through exposed tooth necks or the soft gums that are symptomatic of periodontal disease.

More than heart disease once they are in the bloodstream, the bacteria can cause havoc in the body. Not only do they trigger the formation of blood clots, but they can also cause spontaneous miscarriage, it seems. Pregnant women who neglect their dental care are prone to have more miscarriages - and pregnant women have a natural tendency to develop the softening of the gums that opens the gates to the bloodstream for these bacteria.

There are other worrying connections that are being made by scientists. Evidently smokers with dental plaque run a much higher risk of getting lung disease than smokers who have clean, care-free teeth - and the lung disease is likely to be chronic, or long-lasting. Another, and different factor that could affect your general health is if you have what they call a poor “bite” (badly aligned teeth) - or a nervous tendency to grit or grind your teeth. People with these problems can end up with chronic neck and shoulder pain, or bad headaches, and never make the connection to their teeth. So if you have similar problems, it might be worth a trip to the dentist to find out if they can be solved in the chair.

For some people, however, even the threat of a deadly disease is not enough incentive to get to the dentist’s chair. Perhaps you had a bad experience as a child, or just don’t like the idea of that dental drill. Bear in mind that most dental procedures are now so sophisticated that there should be no need to suffer anything more than a little discomfort when you go to the dentist - real pain is a thing of the past.

Dentists are also not sadists - they have no wish to inflict pain. So chat to your dentist about your fears and worries. He or she will probably be quite willing to work out a system of sign language that will enable you to feel in control, because you can indicate, at any point, that you want him to stop what he’s doing RIGHT NOW!

Practise slow breathing throughout the procedure, dissociate your mind from your mouth by visualising or even daydreaming, and you should be able to sail through your appointment.

Sources:
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- Periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease by R GENCO - 2002 Herzberg MC, Meyer MW: Effects of oral flora on platelets: possible consequences in cardiovascular disease adajournal.com/cgi/content/full/33/Suppl_1/145
- Two strains from the Streptococcus sanguis group (SSG). The difference, jmm. sgmjournals.org/cgi/reprint/40/2/110.pdf – Similar

Ends

Research and written on behalf of the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) by Martina Nicholson Associates (MNA). For further information kindly contact Martina Nicholson (011) 469-3016 or martina@mnapr.co.za

Jean Kim Farewell in Pictures after 32 Years of Service in the Department

Deputy Minister bidding farewell to Mrs Jean Kim from Durban Regional Office

Deputy Minister thanked Ms Jean Kim for her stay in the department and the job well done during her stay.
One of the satisfied citizens is Fikile Manzini of Mpumalanga, who raised concerns about the lack of water in Pienaar, Kwa-Msogwaba and the construction of RDP houses in her area. The local municipality, Mbombela, intervened and the area now has water and the building of Manzini’s house has been completed.

Another happy citizen is Lynette Temlett, who had been struggling to get the subdivision of her plot at Ruimsig in Roodepoort registered. She has since written a letter of appreciation thanking the Presidential Hotline for helping with the registration.

Others include service providers who were owed money by municipalities and have now received refunds. The municipalities include Matlosana Municipality in North West, Matjhabeng Municipality and Ngwathe Municipality in the Free State and Emakhazeni Municipality in Mpumalanga.

President Jacob Zuma has thanked the public who took their time to call the Hotline and relate their enquiries. “We thank those who report anti-corruption allegations as well; they will help us in our campaign to ensure clean governance and to root out corruption in the public service.”

One of the problems the public were experiencing in their effort to use the hotline is poor access to the Presidency and government, and a lack of reassuring responses from government departments and provinces. President Zuma said he was aware of some of the frustrations of the public and was working on improving the line to make it accessible to all people. “We will continue working to improve this service as it is clearly a valuable tool in keeping government in touch, and also to train public servants to take members of the public seriously when they raise issues and enquiries,” said President Zuma.
## Promotions and Appointments

### Appointments and Promotions

**Mr. Karel Lesiba Thutlang**
**Ivy Mofomme**
**Mr. Themba Morakile**
**Portia Maletsiri**

### In Memory of our Fallen Colleagues

Rest in Peace Collegues

### Interns for June 2010

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### Learners for August 2010

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Atillery House in Potgieter Street Pretoria. Picture by Martin Brooks

Library in Atillery House Potgiter Street Pretoria. Picture by Martin Brooks

Durban Regional Office

Anglo-Boer War Museum in Bloemfontein

Military House in Potgieter Street Pretoria. Picture by Martin Brooks

Old National Archive Queen Victoria Street in Cape Town. Picture by Martin Brooks