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MEDIA STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, PATRICIA DE LILLE, MP

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES TO TEMPE MILITARY BASE BY DPWI IMPROVES EFFICIENCIES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

Ahead of the Presidential Imbizo in Mangaung tomorrow, the Deputy Minister of DPWI, Noxolo Kiviet and I conducted a visit to the recently completed infrastructure refurbishments at the Tempe Military Base in Mangaung Free State, today.

The Deputy Minister and I visited the 1 South African Infantry Battalion (1SAI) and the 44 Parachute Regiment, the South African Army's chief airborne infantry unit at the Tempe Military Base, to view the completed project implemented by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

The DPWI through its implementing agency, the Independent Development Trust (IDT) appointed contractors to carry out major refurbishment of facilities and civil infrastructure services at the Military base.

At the Parachute Regiment, the South African Army's chief airborne infantry unit, major refurbishments of facilities and civil infrastructure services were completed to bring the base to a greater level of efficiency.

The projects also provided Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) opportunities and training of unemployed and unskilled youth.

Projects overview:

The Tempe Military Base is situated in the city of Bloemfontein. The 1 South African Infantry Battalion (1SAI) is one of the units in the base which has undergone major refurbishment of its facilities and civil infrastructure services.

The scope of work includes amongst other things, major refurbishment of civil infrastructure services such as residential Accommodation, offices and stores.

In addition to electrical and mechanical installations, the internal facilities and infrastructure at the base, refurbishments were completed at 77 buildings and structures.

The project was completed in April 2021 to the value of R146million.

Local sub-contractors benefitted from the project with 49% of the project spend benefitting local companies.

Overall, 194 work opportunities were created on this part of the project including 126 beneficiaries under the EPWP and National Youth Services project. Of the 194 EPWP participants on the project, 47 were female.

The 44 Parachute Regiment, the South African Army's chief airborne infantry unit, is another unit on the base, which has also undergone major refurbishment of its facilities and civil infrastructure services.

This part of the project was also implemented by DPWI's implementing agency, the IDT and the appointed contractors.

The scope of work included major refurbishment of civil infrastructure services included residential Accommodation, offices and training facilities.

Refurbishments were completed at 81 buildings and structures. In addition, electrical and mechanical installations were made. The project was completed in May 2021 to the value of R111million.

This part of the project created 24 local contractors employed with 36.3% of the project value benefitting local companies.

A total of 168 work opportunities were created during construction of which 120 were part of the EPWP and National Youth Service programmes.

The Deputy Minister and I were pleased with the vast improvements the refurbishment and infrastructure upgrades work has brought to the military base.

We heard first-hand from Brigadier General Molefi Hlalele, the head of the base how these upgrades have improved the SANDF's operations at the base.

Artisans Training Project and EPWP in the Free State:

Following the visit to the Tempe Military Base, we also engaged some of the participants of the DPWI Artisan Training Programme at the DPWI regional office.

The Artisan Programme is being implemented by the Agriculture Sector Training Authority (AgriSETA) through a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the DPWI.

The objective of the partnership is to train EPWP participants across the country on Artisan Development, utilizing the funds received from the Department of Higher Education and Training through its National Skills Fund (NSF).

Training commenced in January 2021. The trades undertaken on the DPWI/AgriSETA Apprenticeship training across the country include amongst others boiler making, diesel mechanic, automotive mechanic, electrician, mechanical fitter, bricklaying and plumbing.

The MOA with the AgriSETA is providing training to a target of 400 artisans across the country from July 2020 to September 2023. Currently 354 have been registered for the training.

Out of the national target of 400, the Free State province was allocated a target of 40 who are on training on boilermaker, plumbing and hairdressing trades.

The project seeks to provide a supply of people seeking to enter the work based training by acquiring the knowledge and skills in a trade.

In Free State province, the learners were recruited from the EPWP projects database across all the EPWP sectors namely: Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, Social and Non State.

The project is being implemented in 3 districts of Free State province and is hosted by 3 employers to train 40 EPWP participants on hairdressing, boilermaker and plumbing trades.

We were pleased to hear the enthusiasm from the participants who are being up-skilled through this programme and the positive impact it is making on their lives.

I urged the participants to take full advantage of the training and use the skills to improve their lives and that of their communities.

While participating in the training, the learners receive a monthly stipend to cover expenses for transport and food.

The Artisan Development Programme has created 40 training opportunities in the Free State as follows: women: 20 (50%) and youth: 40 (100%) and is being implemented in the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, the Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality and in the Mangaung Metro.

Apart from the Artisans Training Programme, in the Free-State province across the provincial and municipal spheres of government a total of 25,609 EPWP work opportunities have been reported against a target of 33,398 EPWP work opportunities for the 21/22 financial year.

The EPWP provides vital short term work opportunities for job-seekers and I impressed on the DPWI management during the visit that we must work closer with all stakeholders and work much harder to improve the performance of the EPWP programme and provide more work opportunities to more people in all provinces.

The opportunities must be allocated to various projects in-line with the District Development Model to ensure that we leave no person behind and bring more progress across the length and breadth of our country and in every corner of our communities.

ENDS

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