



public works

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Public Works
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MEDIA STATEMENT

PUBLIC WORKS RECLAIMS ITS MANDATE

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TSHWANE-The National Department of Public Works will from now on conduct its business faster, efficiently and effectively. This is the unequivocal message that the new Minister of Public Works, Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, MP, sent to senior management of the department during the two day Political Strategic Planning Session which started in Pretoria today.

Minister Mahlangu-Nkabinde took the senior managers present to task in ensuring that the department performs in a manner consistent with the mandate given to it by the performance agreement signed with the president.

“We must indeed work hard to change the negative perceptions about our department. I must admit that indeed I am also one of the worst critics of this department however, I commit myself to ensuring that I will serve you to the best of my ability. Although, I inherited a performance contract from my predecessor and I’m not going to change anything in it but I’m going to do things in my own style,” Minister Mahlangu-Nkabinde said.

The minister further embraced the need to fast-track the job creation through the immensely successful Expanded Public Works Programme. According to the minister, “EPWP should not be married to figures...we need to see the real life impact of the

EPWP in our communities. The need to create more jobs has never been more profound than it is now.”

In her effective and efficient businesslike approach to conducting the business of Public Works, Minister Mahlangu-Nkabinde acknowledged the challenges faced by the department and urged the senior leadership of the department to promote and maintain a solution orientated approach to confront the surmountable challenges faced by the department.

“We must use the remaining 37 months of our current term in office to change the lives of our people. Lets change the language of hopelessness into one of hope. Our attitudes to our people and clients must change so that we serve with honour and pride,” the minister said.

In a light-hearted but hard hitting confrontation with the awkward truths facing the department, the minister sent a clear message that, ‘we should veer away from the culture of procuring signs for potholes instead we must take that money and fix the potholes. I will be so happy to come with my pair of scissors, cut the ribbon and hand these projects over to our people for their use. Our government has a contract with the people and indeed in whatever we do, we must bear this in mind and ensure that we respect this undertaking to serve our ultimate stakeholder-the people of South Africa.”

Another critical point observed by the minister was that of fast-tracking the procurement systems of the department without necessarily flouting any rules. In her own words on this critical issue the minister said, “Any person/business that has done some work with us must be paid within 30 days. We must ensure that all people/businesses that have done work with us this year are paid come the 31st December 2010.” The minister highlighted this as a critical empowerment attitude particularly when the department has procured services from SMMEs who do not have sufficient reserve capital to look after their daily overheads whilst waiting for the payment from the department.”

The straight-talking minister assured the senior managers in the department that she will always embrace a zero tolerance attitude towards fraud and corruption. “Today we are committing ourselves to taking our people in confidence and serving them with the

dignity, humility and ethical conduct that they deserve. We are simultaneously burying and unveiling the tombstone of fraud and corruption and I am sure that you will leave this important session with a renewed sense of hope and a positive work ethic consistent with expectations arising from our social contract with the people,” the minister emphasised.

According to the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, “this engagement with senior managers in the department should encourage you to go beyond the call of duty. We should leave this session with clear thoughts and understanding of the political implications of what we do as a department. We should further use the session to confront our challenges while at the same time embracing the unmatched hard work ethic of our minister.”

Mr Mandla Mabuza, the Deputy Director General in charge of Special Projects described the Political Strategic Planning Session as an opportunity to clarify the purpose of the National Department of Public Works. “We are gathered here to fully understand and implement the critical concept of doing things faster, simpler and better more so to hit the ground running on the core principle of continuity and change,” Mr Mabuza said.

The Political Strategic Planning Session further emphasised the need for the department to revitalise its mandate of being the custodian of immovable property of the state and to be at the coal-face of transforming the property industry. “We are going to reclaim our mandate, empower previously disadvantaged people in the construction industry and ultimately turnaround the image of this department,” the minister concluded.

The session ends tomorrow.

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