

MEDIA STATEMENT

TSHWANE – The National Deputy Minister of Public Works, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, MP, today (Wednesday 08 July 2009) announced the start of the fourth annual *National Construction Industry Development Week* campaign to highlight and recognize the contribution of the construction and built environment sectors in the development and growth of the country.

The National Construction Week (NCW) (as the campaign was popularly known) is celebrated in many industrialized countries in the world and in South Africa it is traditionally observed during the last week of July (this year from Sunday 26 July to Sunday 02 August.).

A brainchild of the Department of Public Works, the National Construction Week, has been celebrated annually since 2006 and the 2009 theme is: ***“Construction industry lays a concrete foundation for the era of renewal”*** and is sub-themed ***“the role of the construction industry in economic growth, social development and human resources transformation”***.

Government job creation and poverty alleviation programmes such as the Expanded Public Works Programme, the Rural Development and the Urban Renewal strategies were to a larger extent dependent on the viable construction and built environment industries for their achievement and impact. Water reticulation, sanitation, rural road network, low cost housing, and the provision of other basic but essential public infrastructure such as schools, clinics, and the Thusong multi-purpose were all the products of a competent industry.

Therefore the theme recognizes the significance of the industry in job creation, job retention, and heightened contribution to the Gross Domestic Product amidst the gloomy global economic outlook. It also pays tribute to the role of the sector in social development as the construction industry is integral to the public

sector's more than R787 billion infrastructure roll-out programme and its side kick, the national infrastructure maintenance strategy - to alleviate poverty by improving service delivery, employing labour-intensive methodologies to create job opportunities while stimulating emerging enterprises.

The announcement by the Deputy Minister marks the start of the awareness campaign to call upon and invite all the stakeholders including government, the private sector, the media and the civil society to identify activities that will underline the programme of events during the actual celebration of the NCW at the end of July.

Already the Construction Industry Development Board (Cidb) and the industry stakeholders which include the South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC), the South African Institute of Civil Engineering, the Gauteng Master Builders Association, the Further Education & Training Colleges and the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre have organized the Youth in Construction Exhibitions in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape encompassing the entire NCW Week. The aim was to "expose the Youth to construction careers and business opportunities".

According to the Deputy Minister, the National Department of Public Works will during the NCW Week, "among other activities pay tribute to the emerging contractors who have demonstrated reticence and were benefiting from the empowerment initiatives of government such as the Contractor Incubator Programme". Consequently the Minister, Mr. Geoff Doidge and the Deputy Minister will kick-start the NCW on 26 July by visiting a R60-million construction project at Diepsloot outside Fourways in Gauteng where an emerging contractor was undertaking the construction of the biggest Police Station in the country in terms of rand value, while employing the Expanded Public Works Programme guidelines to create job opportunities for both the locals and the youth under the National Youth Service.

From the public sector side, the provincial departments of Public Works, the State-Owned Enterprises and other government infrastructure departments will be joined by the Public Entities such as the Independent Development Trust, the Council for the Built Environment and the AgrEment Board of South Africa as they showcase their distinct technical prowess in celebration of the National Construction Week. END.