



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Issued by Chief Directorate: Communications

Enquiries: Thami Mchunu 079 519 6997

MEDIA STATEMENT

ISSUED: 26 September 2011

PUBLIC WORKS DEPUTY MINISTER MS HENDRIETTA BOGOPANE-ZULU, MP, PRESENTS ALTERNATIVE BUILDING METHODS TO THE NORTH WEST PUBLIC WORKS MEC MAHLAKENG MAHLAKENG IN MAHIKENG

The Deputy Minister of Public Works, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, is set to expand the programme of improving the alternative building technologies, developed in conjunction with the department through its public entity Agreement South Africa (ASA). The presentation also forms part of the North West province's plans to revitalise Mahikeng.

The technology, which was conceived by the company Hydraform and licensed by Agreement South Africa, which is a public entity reporting to the Minister of Public Works, was last month launched at the Gombani village in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, with the building of two houses.

The two houses were meant to showcase the alternative technology to build and improve the lives of rural women.

In terms of the methodology, a diesel powered machine runs continuously to mix the soil and the negligible amount of water and cement to produce interlocking bricks, which after 7 days of drying are ready to be laid, requiring little or no cement mortar in between them.

In the case of the Gombani experience, the department bought the machine and gave it the 12 women who were formed into a cooperative and registered under the Expanded Public Works Programme. They receive a stipend while assisting each other to build their own homes, using the national specifications as set down by the Department of Human Settlement. This is to ensure a sustainable economic opportunity for these and other rural people still caught in situations of extreme poverty.

According to the statistics from the National Land Committee, between 10 and 15 million South Africans live in areas that are characterised by extreme poverty and underdevelopment. The vast majority of households in these areas are headed by women. That is why the Deputy Minister decided to embark on this programme to contribute to rural development and enhance women's opportunities to economic empowerment.

To this end, the Department of Public Works has been joined in partnership by the South African Women in Construction (SAWIC) and the Mmabatho Foundation for Women Development, in spearheading the use of alternative technologies. These technologies will improve the quality of life of rural women and facilitate their active participation in infrastructure development and economic empowerment.

The Deputy Minister emphasised that the project is meant to change the lives of rural women by empowering them to participate in the economic activities. "The overall objective of the government is to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for rural development that will be aimed at improving the quality of life of rural households, enhancing the country's food security through a broader base of agricultural production and exploiting the varied economic potential that each region of the country enjoys," she said.

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Issued by:

Thami Mchunu

National Department of Public Works

Director: Media & Stakeholder Relations

012 337 2039 - Landline

079 519 6997 - Mobile

