

**MEDIA STATEMENT: PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER GEOFF DOIDGE RESPONDS TO MEDIA QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO HIM FOLLOWING BRIEFING TO PARLIAMENT'S PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS THIS MORNING**

**PARLIAMENT** – The National Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge, MP, today (Thursday, 16 September 2009), responded to media reports where quotes were attributed to him regarding government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Phase 2.

Minister Doidge has challenged the reports, following the sitting of Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Public Works this morning, that he is of the view that the current economic crisis poses a serious challenge to government's plans to create 500 000 jobs by the end of the year.

“We went to great lengths during the presentation this morning; to explain that the jobs being shed due to the economic crisis are in no way connected to Government's planned 500 000 work opportunities by December this year. It is a fact that the economic crisis has brought major challenges to our country but we are in no way saying that due to this, government will not be able to meet the targeted work opportunities by the end of the year”.

In placing the presentation to the portfolio committee into context, Minister Doidge explained that members of the committee were this morning informed of the reported work opportunities in the first quarter since April 2009.

“We reported to the committee that a total of 83 900 work opportunities were reported in the first quarter from April to June 2009. We did however make it clear that this is a conservative figure as there have been challenges with poor reporting, under-reporting and in some cases no reporting on active projects across all three spheres of government. Accurate and timely reporting would paint a different picture in terms of the work opportunities created thus far”.

In reemphasising Government's commitment to reaching the targeted 500 000 work opportunities by December this year, Minister Doidge explained how concrete steps have been taken to ensure that the targets are reached.

"The Department of Public Works has over the past few months been engaging with Provincial Cabinets across the country making presentations on EPWP Phase 2 and explaining how the each Province can access various programmes within EPWP in creating work opportunities. We have also signed EPWP Implementation Protocols with seven out of nine Premiers where each Province commits to creating a number of work opportunities which will contribute to the target 500 000 work opportunities. With commitments and hard work on a national, provincial and local level, we are confident that the targets will be achieved".

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For more information:

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