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## THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TACKLES THE SCANDAL OF MUD SCHOOLS

The Minister of Public Works, Thulas Nxesi, welcomed the news that twelve new schools had been completed on time and on budget in the Eastern Cape and North West as part of government's programme to replace mud schools:

*"There is good news from Public Works. Two of the public entities that report to the ministry of Public Works are responsible for successful pilot projects using Alternative Construction Methods to tackle the scandal of mud schools. The Independent Development Trust (IDT) is the implementing agent, whilst the materials used were quality assured by Agreement South Africa."*

These methods produce buildings that are in many respects superior to conventional buildings - more sustainable, cheaper and quicker to erect. There are also important gains in terms of job creation and skills transfers to local communities. This was verified in research findings by the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research).

The MEC of the Eastern Cape – where ACMs have been used to replace mud schools – has invited other provinces to visit these schools.

Minister Nxesi addressed a quarterly meeting to report on the performance of public entities held this weekend in Pretoria. The minister explained the implications of the recently announced national infrastructure roll-out plans:

*"The roll out of Strategic Integrated Projects for the revitalisation of health facilities and the national school building programme – require that Public Works, nationally and provincially, together with client departments, local authorities and implementing bodies - work closely together to ensure effective delivery. This means maximum coordination, and changing the way we work to reduce delays and cut through the bureaucracy. The roll out of health and education infrastructure will also stimulate further economic activity in communities and job creation."*

### **Public entities which report to the Minister of Public Works are:**

- *Agreement South Africa* - primary role is to assess and certify fitness-for purpose of non-standard construction products in South Africa.

- *The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB)* - The Board's outputs include: developing standards for government tenders; combating fraud and corruption; and maintaining the contractor registration and grading system which is both a risk management tool for clients as well as a development tool for emerging contractors.
- *The Council for the Built Environment (CBE)* - enhances public protection by ensuring that only registered and competent professionals are allowed to practice.

It remains a concern that only 24% of registered professionals are black. The Council, in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training, is developing a candidacy programme to remove bottlenecks in the skills pipeline to allow aspiring young black professionals to attain professional registration.

- *The Independent Development Trust (IDT)* - supports the DPW to fulfil its mandate – as well as providing project management services to other national and provincial departments.

**END**

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