

**Speech delivered by Deputy Minister of Public Works
Mr. Ntopile Kganyago MP, during the official opening of
the Umthatha Regional Office.**

Date: Friday 11 November 2005

Venue: Umthatha Regional Office(DPW)

Time: 13h20

The Programme Director

MEC for Public Works in the Eastern Cape Province Mr. Christian Martins
Acting Director General and Chief Operations Officer Dr. Sean Phillips
Members of the Top Management Committee
Regional Manager Ms Fezeka Mafongosi
Colleagues

We meet today barely a day after we launched the Tshwane Inner City Programme under the slogan “Re Kgabisa Tshwane”, yesterday.

The launch was a culmination of many years of planning which involved the Department of Public Works, the Department of Public Service and Administration together with the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

The Tshwane Inner City Project is therefore a clear demonstration of the value of working in cooperation between the three spheres of government towards service delivery.

We told the media and various stakeholders that the “Re Kgabisa Tshwane” project will have numerous benefits to the public and private sectors. It will afford civil servants a more pleasant working environment, which will allow them to be more effective in the delivery of services to the public.

We also said that members of the public would then benefit from a more productive, accessible and improved public service. It is also a matter of common cause internationally that infrastructure investment by government leads to the improvement of urban management systems and is part of enhancing the area's image and reputation.

Our coming here is partly to remind ourselves of how important these series of activities are to the stimulation of economies of Cities such as Umthatha and

Tshwane, and how they create opportunities for Black Economic Empowerment companies, Small Medium and Micro Enterprises and the private sector in general. This is the background against which we launch this regional office of the Department of Public Works.

It is important to indicate why we are re-launching this office today. You will remember that it was first officially opened in 2000 by Minister Stella Sigcau as a sub-branch of the Port Elizabeth Office.

By May last year there were only 33 members of staff stationed here. Today, we are happy to announce that by April 2005 there was at least 160 staff members stationed here. This followed a declaration by the Director General Mr. James Maseko that this office must begin to offer a full service.

This declaration was informed by our understanding of the distances involved in accessing services in a province like the Eastern Cape, which is barely smaller than the countries of Hungary and Austria put together! In those countries no person would be expected to travel a distance from Umzimkhulu to Port Elizabeth in order to access a full government service. Yet this is what we expected our people to do!

As we re-launch this office we do so mindful of our obligation to provide a working environment for our civil servants that is conducive to productivity. We do so because we are aware of the link between a happy and fulfilled public servant on one hand, and the increase in levels of productivity. This is the basis of the government philosophy Batho Pele (People First), the service delivery initiative which places at its centre each and every one of our people.

MEC Martins, we are glad to say that we are also informed by what the Premier of the Eastern Cape Ms Nosimo Balindlela said in her State of the Province address in February 2005.

In that address the Premier said that infrastructure investment would be a key area of focus for the Eastern Cape. We have no doubt that this building has begun to bridge our collective asset poverty as identified by the African Union and Nepad as a key impediment to ridding our people of overall deprivation.

Nationally this is part of our Strategic Plan which among other things is to ensure a built environment which meets our country's financial, technical and social requirements by providing adequate accommodation in which those can be met.

We are challenged to effectively carry out our custodial responsibilities to ensure that national government's immovable assets are well managed. Secondly, we are constantly challenged to improve the standard of our service delivery.

To conclude, this office is now available to you and the communities of the people of this province of the Eastern Cape.

We have no doubt that this office will bring more value in particular to the people of the OR Tambo District Municipality where it is situated. It will no doubt become a catalyst for further economic development of this region.

So we say today to you the people of the Eastern Cape in particular of King Sabata Dalindyebo, Mbizana, Mhlontlo, Ntabankulu, Nyandeni, Port St. Johns and Qawukeni, This is your office!

Let Us, Together look after it!

Let Us Together, Own It!

Let Us Together, Use it, to build a South Africa that truly belongs to all!

I thank you

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