

MEDIA STATEMENT

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EPWP AIMS TO CREATE 6 MILLION WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The commencement of the 2014/15 financial year has marked 10 years of the existence of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and ushered in the EPWP Phase 3 that will be implemented in the next five years (2014/15 to 2018/19).

Since its inception in 2004, the EPWP has alleviated the social and economic living conditions of struggling families by creating over 5 million work opportunities for poor and unemployed South Africans.

In the first Phase (2004/05 to 2008/09) the Programme created 1.6 million work opportunities, surpassing the 1 million Cabinet-mandated target a year ahead of schedule. During the implementation of the EPWP Phase 2, (2009/10 to 2013/14) the EPWP created **4 069 640** work opportunities.

The EPWP is implemented by all spheres of government and civil society organisations across four sectors, namely; Infrastructure, Non-State, Environment & Culture and Social Sectors.

Speaking in Pretoria today, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Jeremy Cronin outlined the key objectives of the EPWP.

“The EPWP remains the key government Programme that strives to uplift the socio-economic status of the poor and unemployed. It also seeks to provide opportunities for basic training to new job seekers and in some cases newly qualified young people.

“We are delighted with the cooperation that the EPWP enjoys with a number of stakeholders from municipalities, provincial and national departments, as well as civil society organizations. We are also equally pleased by the positive impact that the EPWP has made on lives of many families across the country.”

Deputy Minister Cronin added that the government was confident that it would meet the target of creating 6 million work opportunities by 2019.

Some highlights of the EPWP Phase 2 include:

- The incentive grant model was revised to give rural municipalities easier access to grants in order to increase labour intensive work opportunities through the EPWP projects.
- The Programme reached its target for women and youth participating in the Programme, with 60% of the participants being women and 50% being youth, compared to the targets of 55% women and 40% youth.
- All 278 municipalities across the country have signed protocol agreements, committing them to achieve their EPWP targets.
- The government has collaborated with civil society organisations to create work opportunities and provide services at grass roots level.

Another achievement was the placement of Northern Cape learners with Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA), Phelindaba in Gauteng. The following are some of the testimonies by the participants that have undergone and passed trade tests in the Artisan Development Programme in learning areas such as Fitting and Turning as well as Welding.

This learnership programme is a very good example of what can be achieved through a committed partnership – in this case between provincial and national departments.

Alromanus Boyes is a 26 year old male from Springbok, Northern Cape and has passed the Artisan Development Programme trade test under the auspices of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) since he enrolled in 2011 after matriculating in 2004. The trade test was conducted in July 2013 and he was employed on a six months fixed contract at NECSA.

Boyes said it was not an easy journey but worth it, “It was difficult but I went through, I advise other young, unemployed people to take note of any opportunity that arises as that has helped me to be where I am today” he concluded.

Pearl Rainers is a 22 year old female from Springbok who matriculated in 2008 and passed her Artisan trade test in July 2013 as well. When asked how she made it to passing the test, she had this to say “I really love the work that I am doing and I abide by the timelines”. She intends to study further within the Artisan Industry.

Ross Marving is a 32 year male from Keimoes who passed his trade test in September 2013. “ The EPWP is a good initiative which provide skills development to the unemployment and reduce poverty, I am very happy to be part of this Programme as it has made my dream come true”, said Marving. His vision is to further his studies within the Artisan Industry.

In Phase 3 of the EPWP the key approach will be to drive Public Employment Programmes (PEPs) through community participation to ensure that poor people become actively involved in government programmes within their communities.

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