



public works
& infrastructure

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STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, PATRICIA DE LILLE

Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to work with all stakeholders to urgently repair damaged buildings and provide support to install bridges to communities in need

Today, along with the Deputy Minister, Noxolo Kiviet, KZN MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works and Human Settlements, Jomo Sibiya, head of Infrastructure South Africa and the heads of various entities of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), I conducted a visit to various sites in Kwa-Zulu Natal following the devastating flooding over the past few days.

A range of DPWI entities in the built environment such as the Council for the Built Environment (CBE), Agreement SA, Independent Development Trust and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) amongst others were part of the visit and we have formed a multi-disciplinary team of built environment professionals such as engineers, architects and quantity surveyors to assist with the assessments and plan of action for repairs under DPWI's responsibilities.

The storms in parts of Kwa-Zulu Natal resulted in major damage to infrastructure such as roads, bridges, reticulation networks and also to residential homes, business and public buildings.

The unfortunate experience resulted in loss of lives and injuries to many residents. Our thoughts are with the families who have lost loved ones and those still searching for their lives ones. We pray for that they may be comforted during this time.

DAMAGE TO STATE-OWNED BUILDINGS

Over the past few days, the DPWI in KZN has been in contact with all client departments and requested that all damages to state property are to be reported immediately.

So far, around 50 state-owned buildings under the custodianship of DPWI have been damaged by the inclement weather.

These damaged buildings include 27 magistrate's courts, 11 police stations, 11 military bases and 1 museum. The damages include leaking roofs and flood damage to infrastructure.

The department is working closely with client departments to ensure that the most urgent repairs are done speedily and as soon as possible.

Procurement for material for 20 buildings will start this week.

The facility management unit and professional services are conducting these site inspections and provide the detailed findings for supply chain processes and considerations.

Today we visited the Prospecton Airforce base where flooding caused severe damage to a number of buildings on the site and left the base without electricity and water. We engaged the leadership on site and committed that DPWI will work with our team of professionals to start repairs to the buildings as soon as possible.

RURAL BRIDGES

Apart from repairing damaged State-owned buildings, the DPWI and Department of Defence have entered into an agreement to collaborate in the installation of Modular Steel Bridges in the country.

Dozens of bridges have already been installed in Kwa-Zulu and in the Eastern Cape to provide much needed relief and improved access to rural communities where residents have to cross river streams to access schools, places of work, clinics and other amenities.

The DPWI and Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Transport signed an MOA to install the bridges within Kwa-Zulu Natal Provinces. The total number of eighteen (18) bridges were planned for 2022/23. These were bridges planned before the current floods.

Of the 18 bridges, nine (9) already planned for the financial year are in the affected areas.

Due to KZN floods 2022, KZN DOT have submitted additional six (06) bridge sites, the number is expected grow.

DPWI and DOD members have done a technical assessment of the six bridges late last week April 2022 and assessments are ongoing to determine the priority areas of where bridges need to be installed first.

The areas where bridges will installed in the coming weeks include; the Mvoti, Ilembe, Ndwedwe, Mkhambathini and eThekwini municipalities.

The total number 24 bridges to be constructed in KZN province in 2022/23 financial year.

We also visited some of these sites today where bridges need to be installed and I appealed to the teams to work with urgency and prioritise bridges according to where the need is most pressing.

RURAL ROADS:

Various reports were also sent to Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) on affected infrastructure in the province.

- ISA has met with the KZN Department of Transport on rural roads and has already identified roads to repair.
- ISA has indicated that KZN must put forward road projects that have detailed designs but were halted because of budget constraints.
- ISA is working with the province to unlock funding for those roads projects.

SCHOOLS:

- ISA is currently running an Accelerated Social Infrastructure pilot programme for Schools in the Northern and Eastern Cape.
- This pilot project can be extended to KZN within the allocation that is there is within National Treasury.
- ISA is assisting the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and provinces to extend the programme to KZN.

STATE-OWNED LAND

- DPWI will provide a list of state-owned land in urban and rural areas that can possibly be used for resettlement of communities displaced by the floods. This will be provided to the national and provincial departments of human settlements.

CONCLUSION:

Following the above initial reports to Cabinet, I met with a range of DPWI entities in the built environment such as the Council for the Built Environment (CBE), Agreement SA, Independent Development Trust and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) amongst others.

Several of the entities joined me on the visit today to provide support and expertise to assess the damage and determine the type of repairs needed and will be assisting with the cost and timeline scoping.

ISA will also coordinate all the technical services that will be provided to the province.

The flooding in Kwa-Zulu Natal has laid bare the severe impact of climate change and has shown how it is our most vulnerable communities who bear the brunt of these impacts.

As government, we are putting shoulder to the wheel with all departments on board to work with urgency and assist where we must.

As DPWI we are determined to work with speed and I have urged all DPWI employees and entities to constantly work with speed and to think of the many families affected by the storms and flooding.

The devastation is heart-breaking and we must all work together and work with urgency to ensure that we settle families and build and repair infrastructure to serve our communities the way they deserve to be served.

I will provide a report to Cabinet on our plan of action for repairs following my visit today and will also keep the media and public updated.

Once again, on behalf of the Deputy Minister and the entire DPWI team, I extend my deepest condolences to residents who have lost loved ones due to the storms and flooding.

ENDS

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