



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

PRETORIA – The National Department of Public Works and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Public Works have agreed to review, where feasible, the programmes of the Department including the procurement processes with a view to further increase their contribution to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGI-SA).

This emerged after a two day strategic engagement (Monday & Tuesday) where the Department presented its 2006/07 – 2009/10 strategic plan to the Portfolio Committee for inputting ahead of its Budget Vote on 29 March 2006. Both the Minister of Public Works, Ms Stella Sigcau and the chairperson of the Committee, Mr Fezile Bengu were in attendance.

ASGISA details government's interventions to grow the economy by 6% and reduce poverty and unemployment by half in 2014. And the Department of Public Works through its programmes is crucial to government contribution. The Department manages government's immovable asset portfolio made up of more than 110 000 properties including land and buildings central to service delivery, land reform

initiatives and economic empowerment. In addition, the Department working through the construction and property industries, manages a capital works expenditure programme worth more than R 5 billion per year to lease private space as well as build and maintain public infrastructure on behalf of government and its departments. Its client list includes among others the SAPS, Justice, Correctional Services, Defence, and Home Affairs.

Since 2004 the Department has been coordinating the Expanded Public Works Programme to develop skills, create job opportunities and improve service delivery. In the first year of its existence, the EPWP expended more than R3 billion to create in excess of 224 000 job opportunities and 1971 contractor learnerships.

As part of the deliberations, constraints which might impede the goals of ASGISA were identified and these included inconsistencies in the procurement environment, fronting, fragmented empowerment programmes, scarce critical skills, and lack of transformation in the relevant industries.

The two parties agreed on quarterly progress reports detailing the Department's efforts to incorporate recommendations aimed at eliminating the constraints and unlocking the potential of the departmental programmes to contribute to the shared growth.

Speaking at the end of the session, the Minister expressed concern about the choking effects of fronting but added that heads will soon

roll in the construction industry following the verification process report of 2005 that identified companies involved in fronting. Currently the report was with the law enforcement agents for forensic audits and prosecution.

END

ISSUED BY:

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