

Mr Jeremy Cronin, Deputy Minister of Public Works Speech at the Practical Completion of Renovations and Repair of Mdantsane Magistrate Court on 12 July 2016

Executive Mayor of Buffalo City Metro

Councillors Present

Official of both Departments Justice and Public Works

Ladies and Gentlemen

We came here to celebrate. What we are celebrating collaboration of the two departments, Department of Justice and Correctional Services as well as Department of Public Works. This needs to be celebrated because more often than not government departments work in silos. And that produce nothing at the end of the day. But here we see what working together, collaborating and cooperating brings. We have a Magistrate Court that is now healthy and habitable.

This was a dilapidated building. Yet, it was dispensing justice and rendering other services as well, to the community of Mdantsane. We don't only want justice to be done. We also want to see justice done. So, the Department of Public Works and Department of Justice have done justice to this building. We have seen that during the touring of it.

There are three things that have impressed me about what I've heard and what I've seen here. The first one I have already mentioned the working together of the two departments to pull this tremendous work through. The second one, is that this is a **PLANNED MAINTENANCE**. The third one is that the Project Manager of this Planned Maintenance Project is a young black woman. The fourth one is that, this work of renovating and repairing this court did not only create work opportunities for young people who have never worked before but skills transfer took place during the course of work here. The testimony that we have received from the participant of the Expanded Public Works Programme, who spoke confidently, eloquently, passionately and enthusiastically about her involvement in this project, once more proves that these Public Employment Programmes are building the nation.

They contribute to job creation, sharing of skills and changing the quality of life in our communities. Ms Cacisa Binza, the Public Employment Programme participant, who addressed us here said, her first day at work was intimidating. She felt lost. It not only her, I am sure her colleagues who have never worked before felt the same if not worse. First day of work comes as a shock. Colleagues there is a sea of unemployed out there, some of whom have never worked before. Others have stopped looking for jobs. This message of Ms Binza has conveyed that message. It then says, we need to multiply our efforts in dealing with unemployment. Thank you, Sisi for sticking with the work. Thank you to all of you for not quitting after having been intimidated. Now you just said here loudly and boldly that she are a qualified Plumber. We are proud of you. Clearly, the future that was bleak before all of you became participants in this project, has been replaced by brightness. We need to celebrate your achievements. And may fortune favour you as you adventure.

The contractor involved in this work is the product of our **INCUBATOR PROGRAMME**. May I also mention that it is led by a woman.

Colleagues, we can achieve more than this if we are focussed, we are creative and we have vision.

Back to Planned Maintenance, we need to do more of those regular maintenance.

It is important to speak truth to power, but let's also make power truthful. We have not been good in maintenance. We may need to cut a bit on ribbon cutting and focus more on maintenance. There are quite a number of public buildings that are derelict. And we need to change that situation. Historically, we have not looked after the property properly. There has been a lot of bureaucracy and it has not been managed professionally by engineers, architects and surveyors and other professionals like that in the property portfolio. In the property management space we are the largest property owner. We therefore need to have better ways and means of managing it. Our Property Management Trading Entity is now established and it is beginning to move towards the correct direction. It may hit some boulders on its path but those will only strengthen it than doing the opposite. So, we are getting there.

Let's talk about what was done here. On the finance and information side of this court, that is basically where we are, we changed the ceiling, we also did very

important thing of fitting in new energy sensors lights, replace windows, we created more space by building new offices.

In the public seating area, we filled roof sheets giving birds no more chance. Tiles that were broken and badly damaged we fixed them. We also build a retaining wall.

On the Information side, the old information desk was not closed. We closed it. We removed vinyl tiles and replaced them with vinyl sheets..

Largely, the work that we did here, was the general building work, dealing with the crack walls by properly fixing them, electrical installations. We did painting, flooring, plumbing, total replacement of the aluminium window shop-fronts.

Civil infrastructure, meaning in this case, storm-water, water and sewer line replacement.

The parking areas are now slurry sealed to give them a facelift.

It should be remembered that in this court, birds created havoc in the roof. They used few eaves that were there and created more. Their droppings dropped the habitual levels of this court down. More eaves and bigger ones made it easy for wind to penetrate under the roof and lift it. That why the roof here was blown away twice by wind. This then meant the center of the project had to be the roof. Replacement and servicing the roof infrastructure became the critical work of this project.

We thank all the workers for this product. We want them to continue maintaining all our buildings. I did indicate to the Executive Mayor, that the skill that we've grown in this project must be maintained and importantly expanded. There are municipal buildings around here, as there are public buildings everywhere that need maintenance. We have young and energetic young people that are a product of this project of this court, let's build on that, by giving them more work whilst recruiting others to join in. It was easy for me to say that to the Mayor because he raised the issues first and I just added by concretizing a proposal. Truly colleagues maintenance has a capacity of sustaining jobs.

So, the more we plan and undertake these maintenance projects, we are not only removing eyesore building out of sight but we save lives in many ways than one can

imagine. You heard Ms Binza here, who spoke on behalf of Public Employment Programme, I need not to repeat her words.

Department of Justice, here is the building. We are handing it over to you. We have no doubt that you will look after it. I am also told that our loss has been your gain. I am sure though that we will all benefit in your gain. The colleague who has left us and join you as a Facilities Manager will find it easy to connect with his previous life and that will push the work.