

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, Mr.
NTOPILE KGANYAGO, MP, GIVES A VOTE OF THANKS
AT THE OCCASION TO SIGN THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

DATE: 15 November 2007

**VENUE: VILLA STERNE BOUTIQUE HOTEL,
WATERKLOOF, TSHWANE, GAUTENG**

- **Your Excellencies**
- **The Minister of Public Works of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable Thoko Didiza**
- **The Minister of State of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Honourable Pierre Lumbi Okongo**
- **Top Management and High-Ranking government officials of both countries**
- **Other senior managers**
- **Distinguished guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries is the culmination of the programme which began earlier in the week and has been characterized by hard work and dedication as officials prepared their principals for today.

I believe that in the process friendships have also been formed and today we can proudly assert that we are now comrades-in-arms, fellow combatants in a war against poverty and underdevelopment so characteristic of our beloved continent.

Today marks a historic moment; a milestone amongst many in the journey that began decades ago when Africa, then still reeling under the yoke of colonialism and apartheid, suddenly woke up to the necessity to unite and cooperate in its efforts to liberate itself.

As Africans, we are united in our vision to accelerate the reconstruction and development of our continent, so that Africa can take its rightful place alongside other nations of the world. Our diversity, rich heritage, and

common historical experiences are a resource from which we draw our inspiration.

Nowhere is the destruction and devastation of apartheid and colonialism more visible than in the areas of infrastructure hindering the economic integration and social development of many of our people.

Infrastructure development has been identified as one of the key priorities under NEPAD and consequently South Africa is instrumental working with other African member states to spearhead infrastructure regeneration and development, hence the occasion today.

We like to thank the Congolese delegation for the insight that they shared with us with regard to the challenges they are facing. From our interactions we hope it became apparent that their struggle is our struggle and that South Africans are prepared to work with Congolese to reverse the effects of poverty and restore the dignity of the Congolese.

The last two days have been fulfilling, and we have managed to open up to our colleagues and share with

them our achievements, challenges and mostly our dreams. I like to thank the Public Works officials for their diligence in leaving no stone unturned to make the stay of the Congolese rewarding. Gratitude should also go to our Public Entities who once again rose to the occasion to complement the value chain we have come to strengthen in our war on poverty. The City of Johannesburg deserves a special mention for facilitating the visit to the construction site of the stadium in preparation for South Africa hosting the 2010 Soccer World Cup on behalf of FIFA and Africa.

We remain inspired by the leadership and vision of the heads of the two countries and we believe that the experience today lays the concrete foundation for the practical cooperation that will be led by the Ministers here to make the dream of the African Union a reality.

I THANK YOU ALL.