

**Deputy Minister of Public Works  
Rev KM Zondi  
3 September 2001  
Rustenburg**

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## **Nerpo Annual Awards Ceremony**

### Introduction

I am honoured to be amongst leaders of both the emerging and commercial red meat producers of Sub-Saharan Africa at this, your Regional Conference of Livestock Farmers. Times certainly are moving ahead and we need to keep up, act in unity and do so proudly in this Millennium of Africa.

On behalf of Minister Stella Sigcau and the whole team at Public Works, I thank you for the award, and for the acknowledgement of our contribution to rural development.

Since our democratically elected government has come into power, we have strived to broaden the participation of traditionally rural communities in the mainstream economy. We have done so through the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and subsequently integrated the various aspects of work into national departments' budgets and performances, to ensure delivery and good governance.

### THE COMMUNITY BASED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

Our re-aligned Ilima/Letsema (Community Based Public Works Programme), which has been implemented since 1998, certainly highlights successes and achievements, and the future vision of the programme has been mapped out.

Numerous challenges have been encountered and overcome to ensure the success of the Ilima/Letsema Programme and to place it in its rightful place as a flagship of poverty relief programmes being implemented by Government today.

In the calendar year 2000, the Department of Public Works implemented R1 billion worth of community based public works projects. These projects have been implemented in more than 20 District Councils in the provinces of Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Province and North West.

We have actively encouraged farming activities through this programme by including at least one directly productive project in every project cluster. This has resulted in a significant portion of the funds financing the infrastructure (and sometimes start-up capital) for projects such as:

- \* Community gardens and food lots
- \* Piggeries;
- \* Dipping facilities;
- \* Stock dams;
- \* Poultry;
- \* Irrigation; and
- \* Food processing and food silos.

In the previous financial year, an amount of R60 million was spent on projects that directly support farming. A further R18 million worth of farming related projects were identified in the current (2001/2002) financial year.

The Ilima/Letsema Programme focuses on the identification of clusters of projects within identified poverty pockets in rural disadvantaged communities. The primary objectives of the programme are poverty alleviation and job creation by way of employment while creating community assets or local rural infrastructure. The Ilima/Letsema Programme targets South Africa's poorest and most disadvantaged sector of the population, the rural poor.

### PROJECT CATEGORIES

The projects implemented are in the following broad categories:

- i) Improved access to trade opportunities:  
Comprising improving road access and facilitating community markets.
- ii) Directly productive:

Projects which provide ongoing sustainable employment such as agricultural food lots, small-scale irrigation, recycling, waste collection, stock dams etc.

iii) Labour saving:

Projects which result in reduced labour usage by communities such that the saved labour can be used for more productive activities. Examples of projects include water supply (which reduces time and labour required in carting water large distances), creches (which facilitate childcare while mothers are working) etc.

iv) Social cohesion:

Projects which create social cohesion within disadvantaged communities such as multi-purpose centres, sports facilities etc.

v) Environmental protection:

Projects which result in protection of the environment such as erosion control, donga rehabilitation, re-vegetation, schools sanitation etc.

## DISASTER INTERVENTION

Following the extreme flooding experienced in January 2000 in which severe damage was caused to infrastructure both in South Africa and neighbouring states, the Ilima/Letsema programme was able to rapidly intervene with appropriate measures to reinstate damaged infrastructure and also to create work for those who had lost land and crops in the process. Projects included a major road bridge in Mpumalanga, storm damaged roads in the Northern Province and tornado damaged schools in the Eastern Cape as well as the Land Rehabilitation Programme which was implemented in the worst hit areas.

## EMPLOYMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

To date (since 1998) Ilima/Letsema has created close to 76 000 temporary employment opportunities with at least 42% of these jobs being filled by women and 43% being filled by youth. The programme is close on achieving its social impact targets (for employment: 50% women, 15% youth and 1%-3% disabled).

More than 6 300 sustainable jobs have been created via the directly productive assets created.

In order to ensure the sustainability of infrastructure, the training of the people involved in both creating the assets, as well as those responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the asset is crucial. For this reason a specific training framework for the programme has been developed and is included in the PMS (Programme Management System).

Since 1998, the programme evaluation evolved to capture the impact of the programme on beneficiaries as well as key process aspects (such as training).

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Furthermore, the success of the programme has generated a lot of expectation on the part of district councils and communities. The Department is always inundated with requests from communities and municipalities who are currently outside of the Ilima/Letsema targeted areas. The MTEF R274 million allocation plus the R100 million Departmental top-up have become too small for the demand. The current year programme is progressing well, with R105 million of the budget already spent by end of July. An expenditure management projection has been developed to have all the funds spent by January 2002.

## ISRDS

Ilima/Letsema is a vital cog of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS). Of the 13 ISRDS nodal areas, the programme has been operating in 11 for the past four years. This is because Ilima/Letsema also targets the poorest of the poor areas.

## COMMUNITY PRODUCTION CENTRES

As an extension to the notion of the productive assets, the Department has adopted the concept of Community Production Centres (CPCs) in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture. Six pilot Community Production Centres, two each in the Northern Province, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, have been established with a view to promoting agricultural production activities for market.

This programme has demonstrated a high potential for a massive impact on poverty alleviation. It incorporates a number of villages and therefore benefits directly and indirectly a large number of people. This is a prototype project for integration of government programmes because of the number of government

departments involved. In the current financial year, Public Works has budgeted R15 million for Community Production Centres. Public Works has since the inception of the project been inundated with requests from communities, local and provincial government departments for similar projects. It is for this reason that the Department is considering not only enlarging the CPC programme, but also looking at projects with potential impact on a larger population and more economic viability.

#### Conclusion

I wish you all the success in your endeavours, in providing an essential contribution to development and nutrition, and wish to thank you for your support of government initiatives.

Issued by: Ministry of Public Works, 3 September 2001

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