

**Deputy Minister of Public Works**  
**Rev KM Zondi**  
**10 October 2003**

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## **IFP Women Brigade**

### **Introduction**

Given our past, the history of South Africa has been skewed, with a tendency to favour urban areas to rural communities. Many rural areas still face untold hardships brought by daily experiences of poverty. Lack of infrastructure, jobs, commerce, industrialisation and opportunities, characterises poverty. Provinces of Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal contain larger pockets of mostly impoverished rural communities. Mpumalanga, Free State and North West are not far-off. A multi-disciplinary approach is required to halt poverty.

### **Community Based Public Works Programme**

In 1994, government mandated the National Department of Public Works Programme. The two-legged National Public Works Programme consists of the Community Based Public Programme (CBPWP) and the construction Industry Development Programme.

Community Based Public Works Programme is a rural infrastructure development initiative to primarily build basic but essential physical projects among the poorest of the poor people in the rural areas. In the process of building these structures public works apply labour intensive construction methods to create jobs for the beneficiary communities. Mainly women, youth and the disabled are the targeted beneficiaries, in line with government's objective to open opportunities to the previously disadvantaged groups.

In 2002/3 the National Development of Public Works invested over R250 million towards CBPWP and built a total of 638 community projects nationwide. About 134 of these projects were in KwaZulu Natal from an allocation of R69,5 million . projects included rapid delivery ones such as access roads and renovation of schools as well as special projects including 1200 sanitary infrastructure to halt the spread of cholera in KwaZulu Natal.

Multi-Purpose Community Centres are government one-stop service places where communities can, within reach, access essential government services including application for social grants, identity books, birth and death certificates.

### **Emerging Contractor Development Programme**

Building, construction and fixed property management are the core competencies of the Department of Public Works. On daily basis, the Department interfaces with the above industries with the primary purpose to procure fixed assets and related services, on behalf of government.

Unknown to many, the construction industry is one of the key economic activities that will drive the development agenda of the government, and the continent. In South Africa alone, the construction industry has an annual output of R37 billion. More than half of that is the construction made by the government and parastatals in their demand for construction-related goods and services. In other words, the public sector is the biggest single consumer of construction industry output in South Africa.

Using the purchasing power, the government through infrastructure-intensive departments such as Public Works, Housing, Transport, Water Affairs and Public Enterprises, has collaborated with the construction industry to bring about change and transformation in the composition of the industry.

Through Affirmative Procurement, the Department of Public Works has increased the state of the previously disadvantaged groups from 4% in 1994 to 43% in 2002/3 in the procurement of capital projects.

This achievement was made possible by deliberate interventions initiated by the Department of Public Works to accelerate the participation of blacks and women in the industry. In May 1998, the Department announced the strategic projects Initiative to identify, appoint and capacitate black-owned construction enterprises.

About R600 million worth of construction projects, each with a minimum value of R5 million, were earmarked

for execution by black companies. The aim was to accelerate the graduation of black contractors from a sub-contractor to a prime contractor level. Projects successfully implemented included:

- R32 million Richard's Bay Police Complex in KwaZulu Natal
- R88 million Kokstad Medium Prison in KwaZulu Natal
- R24 million St Alban's Prison Production Workshop in the Eastern Cape
- R8,5 million Butterworth Police Station in the Eastern Cape.

In a study undertaken by the South African Gender Commission in 1999, it was concluded that mining and construction were the two industries less likely to offer opportunities to women.

In response, the National Minister of Public Works, Ms Stella Sigcau, announced the establishment of the Strategic Empowerment Programme for Women in Construction in August 2001. More than 50 projects worth in excess of R128 million were identified for execution by women-owned enterprises. To date, 79 contracts with a combined value of R188 million had been awarded to, and successfully implemented by women contractors. These include:

- R19 million Repair and Maintenance Project at Leeuwkop Prison, Gauteng
- R3 million Repair and Maintenance at Krugersdorp Prison, Gauteng
- R3 million Repair and Renovation Project at Standfontein Police Station, Western Cape.

Since its inspection in 1997, the Emerging Contractor Development Programme has benefited more than 3257 emerging contractors registered on our database. More than 50 000 contracts, of varying sizes, had been awarded to this group, in an investment exceeding R400 million.

The development of blacks and women remain the priority of government to address past imbalances. At Public Works, this government objective informs all tenets of our business.

### **The Expanded Public Works Programme**

In order to increase the impact of government poverty eradication programmes and reduce resource duplication, the President Mr Thabo Mbeki announced the launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme as one of the many initiatives to reduce levels of poverty and unemployment in the country through:

1. Investment in social and economic infrastructure
2. Creation of large-scale job opportunities
3. Development of human resources through skilling and training

The thrust of the Expanded Public Works Programme Business Plan is essentially

- Expand existing programmes (i.e. special employment programmes) to increase impact
- Re-orientate a portion of the existing infrastructure budgets by adopting Labour Intensive technologies
- Identify/ initiate joint programmes with social partners
- Actively involve all spheres of government

The distinguishing feature of EPWP is that it will be a highly centrally coordinated programme for effective monitoring and evaluation meanwhile it will be decentralised in terms of execution and implementation for rapid rollout and immediate impact.

The recent Growth and Development Summit identified the construction industry as one of the sectors critical to infrastructure development and job creation. As such the industry will drive infrastructure element of Expanded Public Works Programme.

We are encouraged by successful provincial programmes including Gundo Lashu in Limpopo, Zivuseni in Gauteng, Zibambele in KwaZulu Natal and other labour intensive initiatives in the Western Cape and these examples will be emulated when we rollout the programme at the national scale.

At a national level, the Department of Public Works has been successful in creating sustainable special projects with potential to create jobs and stimulate local economic development. Community Production

Centres are a point in case. These community-owned commercial enterprises, mostly agricultural in orientation, could even produce for the export markets. Working in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, to date 14 centres, at varying stages of finalisation, have been brought on stream through an investment of R50 million, including Ndaya and Makhathini Flats in KwaZulu Natal.

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