

**Deputy Minister of Public Works
Ms BM Nzimande
12 August 2000
Mmabatho Convention Centre**

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**Official Opening of the Mmabatho Regional Office
National Department of Public Works**

(Compare to delivery)

Master of Ceremonies, Mr TP Nchocho
Mayor of Mafikeng, Mr Mandla Magwetyana
MEC of Public Works, Roads and Transport North West Province, Mr F Vilakazi,
Reverend Mongoaketsi
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen,...

Minister Sigcau, in the beginning of this year, outlined the five-year plan for Public Works. She indicated that one of our Department's objectives is to upgrade our regional offices as delivery arms of the Department. As part of ongoing transformation to maximize service delivery, regional offices are being converted into operational business units, giving them larger decision making powers to facilitate speedy service delivery.

Today I can proudly share with you one of the deliveries on this plan - indeed true to our slogan "Mintirho Yavhulavhula", which means that actions speak louder than words.

By opening this office here today, the spectrum of services rendered by the Department of Public Works is brought closer to the people of the North West Province.

The Department of Public Works plays a vital role in facilitating service delivery by other government departments by providing them with physical accommodation and conducive working environments. The Department services other government departments so that they can serve you, the public, better.

Our major clients include national government departments such as the South African Police Service, Correctional Services, Justice, The South African National Defence Force and others. Once Public Works has secured appropriate accommodation for these departments, they are supported in discharging their particular duties and in fulfilling their respective mandates and tasks more efficiently through continuous maintenance including renovations and repairs.

In the North West Province alone, the national Department of Public Works manages a total of 10 174 fixed property assets. These comprise of 1 795 land parcels, 4 030 functional structures and 4 349 various living quarters. Currently, we are leasing approximately 400 properties from the private sector in this province of which the average monthly rental is ~R2 million.

Until today, all functions relating to the national Department of Public Works have been managed from our Johannesburg Regional Office, including the state-owned and leased properties I have referred to. It has always been an arduous task to effectively service our clients from Johannesburg, considering that many of our clients are located as far as Pomfret, Taung, Mothibistad and Pampierstad. The central location of our regional office in Mmabatho affords the public and our clients easier access to our services.

Other benefits which the sub-regional office will have for the people of the North West concerns business opportunities. In all the work we do, we must ensure that the broader socio-economic as well as transformational objectives of government are met. Here I am referring to job creation, black economic empowerment and poverty alleviation.

I am pleased to note that we have amongst us delegates from both the construction and property management industries. I want to extend a warm welcome to the members and officials of the North West Builders Federation. Our continued co-operation with organizations such as yours lend credence to the government strategy to promote and strengthen Public Private Partnerships.

Through the Emerging Contractor Development Programme (ECDP), our Department focuses on creating economic and business opportunities for emerging contractors. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of job opportunities awarded to emerging contractors in this province. From April 1999 to July 2000 ten emerging contractors have received contracts ranging from R30 000 to R873 000. This number will increase as soon as the help desk facility whereby emerging contractors may be captured on a database

becomes operational.

Information about government tenders and tender procedures will also be readily available at this sub-regional office. In the past, contractors from the North West had to collect and submit tender documents in Gauteng.

Promotion of Women in Construction is one of the key focus areas of the Emerging Contractor Development Programme. Some of the major constraints faced by women in construction today are the lack of technical, contracting and management skills. By holding regular workshops in the regions including here at Mmabatho sub-regional office, these needs will hopefully be addressed. The participation of more women in the construction industry still remains a burning challenge for the Minister and myself. I am sure you are able to understand the reasons, without me elaborating (Minister and myself are women and are working tirelessly to stimulate interest and promote participation of women in this sector).

There are other reasons underlying the opening of the sub-office in Mmabatho. North West Province has a 22% share of the National Capital Works programme and a 20% share of the Repair and Renovations Programme. The total value of works in the current building programme amounts to R280 million. Three major projects involving the upgrading of facilities and the subsequent maintenance thereof to specified standards over a three-year period have been identified in this province. They are the Odi prison (Mabopane) at R9 million, Losperfontein prison (Brits) at R11 million and the Rooigrond prison (Mafikeng) at R13 million. These are to be awarded within the current financial year.

The recent floods also took an acute toll on the infrastructure of the province. Minister Stella Sigcau, as chairperson of the Emergency Reconstruction Committee, will play a crucial role of co-ordinating and facilitating repair and reconstruction programmes. This will include among others soil rehabilitation, repairs of roads and bridges. The estimated cost to repair the flood damage in this province is R 37 million and the expected time frame for delivery is three to seven years.

Minister Sigcau is expecting to return to the region before year-end to launch our Department's flagship programme, Community Based Public Works Programme(CBPWP) in your province.

CBPWP is the national government's response to rural poverty and underdevelopment. Since 1996, the Department of Public Works has invested more than R1.1 billion in CBPWP, building in excess of 1600 projects and creating 89 000 jobs in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Northern Province. The three provinces were chosen because of their acute poverty indices.

In the 1999/2000 financial year the Department has extended the CBPWP to Free State, Northern Cape and North West.

About R9.2 million has been allocated for twenty-four projects in the eastern part of this province (Eastern District Council). The projects are divided into four clusters namely Dipetloane, Thulwe, Fafung and Rabokala. Most of these contracts have already been awarded. These projects include the construction of multi-purpose halls, market stalls, sport facilities, bakeries, access roads, water supply, food stores and improvement of local schools.

The provision and maintenance of infrastructure has the potential to impact positively on the quality of life and the economic development of the North West Province. The Department of Public Works will continue to do its best to realise these objectives and look forward to meet the challenge by serving our clients diligently and efficiently from this office- to the benefit of growth and development of our country.

I thank you.

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