

**Deputy Minister of Public Works
Rev KM Zondi
16 August 2002**

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**Parliamentary Media Briefing
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Cape Town**

EMPOWERMENT

The interventions that Minister referred to enabled us to achieve a Target Grouping for preferential treatment as part of our broader socio-economic upliftment programme in the award of contracts as we have set out to do. More than 40% of contractual appointments were made to Affirmable Professional Service Providers (APSPs). This translates to R130 million.

In respect of capital works and planned maintenance, 47% of contracts, representing R705 million, was awarded to Affirmable Business Enterprises.

The waiving of guarantees for contracts below R2 million in lieu of progressive increases in retention monies has proven to be a great success in the accelerated award of tenders.

Emerging contractors have continuously been constrained by the lack of access to finance. Currently we are facilitating such access to finance through Financial Joint Ventures. The term Financial Joint Venture is indicative of the relationship between the contractor and the financier (for example Khula and Taskas well as the IDC) where the Department facilitates payment into a banking account, without allowing any single member to the Financial Joint Ventures to compromise, arrange or change the banking details.

Women In Construction

With regard to progress on our Women in Construction programme, 24 projects have to date been awarded to women with a total value of R90 million.

The largest of these projects are a R19m project at Leeukop prison that was awarded to a women contractor and another Johannesburg Cluster Development project of R31,8m that was awarded to a 52% women-owned construction company which comprises 13 units of which 5 have already been completed.

The Community Based Public Works Programme

The Community Based Public Works Programme in itself represents empowerment of rural communities through the provision of local economic development infrastructure. Even more so in that the actual building of these facilities are also used as vehicles of training and skills transfer to participant local residents who not only find employment in this way, but also become better equipped to find employment, generate income or manage ventures in future. Since 1996, Public Works has invested more than R2 billion in the Community Based Public Works Programme. On these projects, 85% of the contractors are previously disadvantaged persons and we are meeting our employment targets of 50% for women, 15% for youth and 1-2% for the disabled.

Training of officials

Within the Department itself, a major challenge that we face is the inability to attract and retain skilled personnel. The Department is working closely with the DPSA and other departments to introduce effective strategies to attract, develop and retain the best skills in the built environment. Our Human Resources unit is developing systems to enable us to become a learning organisation. There are bursaries, study programmes and training events organised for all our employees every year. Last year we offered 282 bursaries, worth almost R1,5 million to our employees.

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