

Deputy Minister of Public Works
Ms BM Nzimande
26 May 2000

[Back](#)

Budget Vote

Madam Speaker

Introduction

The Department of Public Works is proud to act in the interest of our country, our citizens and the State, particularly so in our role as custodian of State fixed property assets. We are making a contribution to the generation of sustainable economic growth and employment creation, which, inevitably, raises the level of human resource development.

It gives immense pleasure to witness communities in far flung areas empowered to take charge of their own destiny, generating self-confidence and optimism about the future. The Hon. Minister has painted a clear picture of the various functions of our Department.

Ukhulumile Nkosazana YeNkosi. Nyawuza!

Many of the measures taken within the National Public Works Programme as well as the new integrated initiative well articulated by the Minister the Community Production Centres and Multi Purpose Centres deserves enthusiastic support and reoriented focus in public expenditure.

This all embracing new approach adds value to the foundation laid by the National Public Works Programme in that it support community driven low institutional capacity infrastructure projects in various communities. The co-operation with other departments, as the Minister indicated, through the clustering of services delivered, as well as incorporation of provincial task teams into planning and execution of services, will go a long way in ensuring success in the priority of this government, which is poverty eradication.

Our Department carries a lot of responsibilities including financial, practical, moral and social objectives in service delivery.

I am going to illustrate our discharge of these responsibilities by one practical example, amongst many.

The Palace of Justice

Focused on our objectives of affirmative procurement, job creation, skills transfer, previously disadvantaged and women empowerment as well as time, cost and quality in service delivery, we have embarked upon restoration of the renowned Palace of Justice on Church Square in Pretoria. This architectural gem played stage to most important political trials during the apartheid era.

Skills development on labour intensive work on this R38 million project has excelled in transforming previously disadvantage individuals who were mere labourers into professional sophisticated artisans. Three artisans, Victor Mongwe, Frans Mahlangu and David Tlabela, to mention a few, found a niche in artistry by refining their work to tiling, plastering and carving respectively, showing that local talent can compare with the best in the world.

Two women subcontracted to do specialist Joinery Work (court furniture, library bookcases, staircases and woodgraining of doors) and decorative painting on the walls, are a pride to witness at work.

We are proud of these extraordinary women and men who have achieved world-class work on this project, something that would not have been dreamed of just six years down the line.

We will not merely hand over to our client a usable courtroom - but a contribution to the empowerment, equalisation, upskilling and pride of our nation. It is indeed an example of building a new heritage.

We see similar trends when monitoring Community Based Public Works Projects-excelling performance by individuals in the process of taking forward opportunities arising from government investment in infrastructure.

I invite you Hon. Members visit the Department's exhibition in Parliament today and see what the women in particular are contributing from rural areas. Arts and crafts are but one aspect.

Energy

Apart from the work we do in often-sensitive environments such as Antarctica, Gogh Island, Marion Island and other conservation or rural areas, we are confronted by the daily energy consumption from State-owned properties. Albeit a small burden on the taxpayer and industry, the vast majority of this energy consumed is from a non-renewable, limited source. We are therefore promoting a culture and expertise to erect optimally energy efficient buildings within an environment conducive to the efficient use of energy in all sectors. It is a long-term programme, taking cognisance of factors, actions and modifications such as:

- Outside environments
- Expected life of the building
- Client requirements
- Power factor correction
- Combustion process where boilers are installed
- Light intensity
- Implementation of a building management system (to mention a few)

The Public Works Energy Conservation Programme involves both the design of new building and the energy management of new and existing buildings to rationalise and reduce the use of energy. The results have been quite remarkable, as in some buildings more than a 25% saving was achieved. In total the saving for the Pretoria area from 1990 to 1999 was R40 million, and for the Cape Town area from 1997 to 1999, R5 million.

I believe this also illustrates the achievement of our financial, moral and social objectives. Emerging Contractor Development Programme Minister Sigcau has already contextualised the

Emerging Contractor Development Programme.

More than 260 women are currently on the ECDP database. This is a major achievement, considering the extensive obstacles in terms of tendering, financing, etc. that had to be overcome. In June 1999 the percentage of women that were registered with the ECDP was 7%. Woman contractors registered with ECDP in March 2000 showed a marked increase from this 7% to 18%. About 27 woman contractors are involved in real construction processes such as building, electrics and plumbing. The remainder of women is still working on levels of labour, dealing with site cleaning, general cleaning, horticulture and catering. In terms of award values, women total at R574 569 and men at R16 223 706. This as such is indicative of the potential for women growth within the building industry, even at emerging contractor level.

This is an encouraging scenario considering that gender is a key dimension of poverty. Research have proven that the poverty rate is 50% higher among female-headed households than those headed by men and ofcourse a substantially higher unemployment rate is among women, with heavy workloads devolving onto women owing to lack of access to water and fuel.

The trend, which still persists, where a greater value of contracts is awarded to non-ECDP Contractors than ECDP contractors is a focus of our attention.

Improvements however is noticeable as in February 2000, for all six regional offices, non-ECDP contractors got R5,3 million as opposed to R5 million for ECDP contractors. The difference is now minimal and we trust that the trend will be completely reversed in the further roll-out of this programme. In Johannesburg, Cape Town and Kimberley we have already succeeded to channel a grater value of spending to ECDP contractors as compared to non-ECDP contractors.

Working with the officials of the Department, I recently convened a preliminary meeting with some of the role players in the materials supply sector. We currently reaching out to more than twenty emerging material suppliers in the Soweto area alone, half of which are women. The Department is also starting to reach out the established material manufacturers and suppliers to explore the potential of partnerships to empower black materials supply outlets, with a particular focus on women. These preliminary meetings are beginning for formulate a concept, building on existing initiative of the established sector and one that seeks that seeks to reach into the rural areas through the Department's Community Based Public Works Programme.

The Department's vision is that of a strategy which will ensure that all role players benefit from this process and one which fosters partnerships between the established sector and the black material distributors and small outlets, particularly women in the rural areas, especially in the most impoverished and deep rural areas.

Prestige Accommodation

Lastly, but in terms of my responsibilities most definitely not the least allow me to refer to Prestige Accommodation. I would like again assure Honourable Members, and everyone involved in fulfilling the functions of the State, that Public Works regards it as being of national interest to provide and maintain the accommodation at your disposal to the highest possible standard. Still, we need to maintain the balance with affordability and sound investment and management practises of a huge property portfolio, as Minister Sigcau has indicated.

Facilities management contracts will be applied to all Prestige properties and the envisaged National Call Centre, where all prestige complaints may be lodged and directly prioritised, will speed up response times. Re-imaging of Prestige properties will reflect the full artistic expression of our traditional African crafts as well.

Improvements and services at Mahlamba Ndlopfu, Brynterion Estate and the Union Building are continuing in Gauteng. These have been extensively discussed before and I will not repeat it. As an example of our gender awareness, we are currently employing 58 women contractors on a gardening service contract at the Union Building to the value of R4,4 million. Fifteen more women, all registered with the ECDP, have been awarded works to the value of R2 million for services ranging from cleaning, fire service, building, electrical and painting.

Planned maintenance and refurbishing to specified areas are continuing to King's House in Durban.

Proudly, a number of very contentious issues are now provided for in the budget and can be dealt with, such as:

- The piping in Acacia Park
- The compliance with fire protection regulations of 120 Plein Street which is to be completed by the end of this month
- The upgrading of the air-conditioning system in 120 Plein Street that should be completed towards the end of this year
- The upgrading of the lifts in 120 Plein Street (R3 million) - to name only a few.

In total, R5,7 million was allocated to Prestige Capital Works Services for the Western Cape. Projects already committed to will account for almost R1,3 million, leaving ±R4,4 million to deal with 19 prioritised projects. This leaves 20 more identified projects at an estimated total cost of more than R3,8 million for which additional funding is required.

Conclusion

I wish to thank sincerely Minister Sigcau for her guidance and trust in me, and for affording me various opportunities to handle diverse aspects of work in the Department. With her at the helm the Department can only grow from strength to strength. To the management team, officials of Public Works and stakeholders with whom we regularly interact - thank you for your contribution. Also to the staff in my office - you are the people who ensure that things work and move, thank you.

[top](#)