

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, Mr NTOPILE KGANYAGO, MP,
ACKNOWLEDGES INPUTS OF THE COMMUNITY DURING THE IMBIZO VISIT TO
MPUMALANGA**

DATE: 26 APRIL 2006
VENUE: UMJINDINI COMMUNITY HALL, OUTSIDE BARBERTON,
MPUMALANGA

- The MEC for Public Works, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini
- The Executive mayor of Umjindi Municipality, Councillor Richard Lukhele
- All other Councillors
- Senior Management
- The Communities of Umjindi Municipality
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the National government, I want to acknowledge all the inputs this morning. We stand here today as your government, your elected representatives, to demonstrate our willingness to work with our communities to find lasting solutions to poverty and improved service delivery. We thank you for your views, suggestions and other important ideas.

The idea is not to sound nor appear defensive otherwise such an action might make a mockery of the purpose of our being here. I want you to know that your pleas have been registered and your concerns noted, all of which will receive the attention of government.

If we were to work like this most of the time, we can achieve more than we already had to date. In the last ten to twelve years the relationship and therefore the cooperation between the different spheres of government has matured. Government has committed to improving the capacity and the ability of the municipalities to do even more.

Since 1994, the National Department of Public Works has worked with the local government to bring about poverty alleviation initiatives. Often the facilitation was done by the provincial government. We launched the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) to build community owned infrastructure projects as part of poverty alleviation in that year. When we discontinued the programme in 2004, CBPWP had invested two point two billion rand (R2,2 billion) to build 4000 infrastructure projects in seven of the nine provinces including Mpumalanga.

Between 1994 and 2004, Mpumalanga was allocated one hundred and fifty nine million rand (R159 million) and the money was used to build 337 projects in Nkangala, Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni District Municipalities. As a result, three thousand eight hundred and sixteen (3816) jobs were created of which two thousand (2000) were in Ehlanzeni. We have built projects at among others Graskop, Tonga, Nsikazi and here at Barberton. The taxi rank here in Extension Eleven and the Market Stalls, were as a result of that cooperation with the Local Municipality.

In May 2004, the President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, launched the Expanded Public Works Programme with an explicit purpose to:-

- i) To create at least one million jobs
- ii) To Improve the skills base of our workforce through accredited skills development interventions

- iii) To bring essential services to our communities as part of service delivery improvement and poverty alleviation.

To date, the Expanded Public Works Programme has exceeded our expectations. By the end of the first year of the existence of the programme it had expended more than three billion rand of its budget and had generated in excess of two hundred and twenty three thousand jobs against the first year target of hundred and thirty thousand jobs. More than two thousand contractor and other venture learnerships had been created, ensuring that a new breed of future employers is born.

In the Mpumalanga province alone two hundred and fifty four million rand (R254 million) had been invested in the programme since its inception to execute one thousand and four hundred and seventy six (1476) projects resulting in over twenty three thousand (23 300) job opportunities. Judging by the standard of the three million rand (R3 million) EPWP road project which the MEC opened this morning, one can safely conclude that the effects of EPWP on service delivery are noticeable.

We shall continue to communicate with other spheres of government, particularly the local government to encourage them to embrace the EPWP and adopt its guidelines in their procurement of public services. This in essence means that local government should seek to use labour intensive technologies and methods more often to procure services and infrastructure meanwhile employing many of our people.

I want to thank you all, and call on each and everyone to make it their citizen duty to familiarize themselves with the work of government and the impact of its policies and programmes on your life.