



**public works**

Department:  
Public Works  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## **Council for the Built Environment (CBE)**

### **Inauguration of the 4<sup>th</sup> Term Council**

***CBE Boardroom, 05 September 2014***

### **Keynote Address:**

**Honourable TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works**

Protocol:

- Programme Director
- Chair of the 3rd Term CBE Council, Ms Portia Tau-Sekati and members of the 3rd Term CBE Council
- Incoming Chairperson, Mr Isaac Nkosi, and members of the new 4th Term CBE Council
- Presidents/Chairs as well Deputy Presidents/Deputy Chairs of the 6 Built Environment Professions Councils (architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, project and construction management, property valuation and quantity surveying)
- Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the other 3 Public Works Entities (Agrement SA; CIDB and IDT)
- The DG and Senior Officials of DPW
- The CEO of the CBE, CEOs and Registrars of the 6 Built Environment Professions Councils and CEOs of the other 3 Public Works Entities
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this important event – the inauguration of the 4<sup>th</sup> term of the

CBE Council. This is a time to thank the 3rd term Council for their work and contribution, and to welcome the members of the 4<sup>th</sup> term Council and to exhort them to pick up the spear and continue the work of the CBE.

***CBE: the mandate***

Let us remind ourselves of the Council's vision:

*“An environment built to meet people's needs and aspirations.”*

So the message is clear – the built environment is more than just concrete and steel. It is about people and communities, and meeting their needs and aspirations.

CBE's stated mission is:

*“Implementing projects and programmes that address built environment issues and add value to the built*

*environment professions, government and the general public.”*

CBE’s specific legislative mandate – enshrined in the CBE Act of 2000 - comprises the following objectives:

- to promote and protect the interest of the public in the built environment;
- to protect and maintain a sustainable built environment and natural environment;
- to promote on-going human resource development in the built environment;
- to facilitate participation by the built environment professions in integrated development in the context of national goals;
- to promote appropriate standards of health, safety and environmental protection within the built environment;
- to promote sound governance of the built environment professions;

- to promote liaison in the field of training in the Republic and elsewhere and promoting the standards of such training in the Republic, and
- to serve as a forum where the built environment professions may discuss the relevant issues and ensure uniform application of norms and guidelines set by the Professional Councils throughout the built environment.

So the remit of the CBE is wide, complex and yet highly technical in nature – also with a major bearing on the socio-economic development and welfare of the society in general.

### **Achievements of the out-going Council**

In thanking the Third term Council members, let us reflect on some of the strides made during this last term. These included:

- securing the agreement of the 6 Built Environment Professional Councils (BEPCs) to become co-signatories to the Construction Health and Safety Accord;
- During the Third term, CBE co-championed the Skills Plan for the government's infrastructure roll-out programme under the leadership of the Department of Higher Education and Training. *[On Tuesday, I participated in the launch of the DHET Report: "Skills for and through SIPs". I was very proud to be able to report on the substantial contribution made by CBE and CIDB to this project.]*;
- The third term Council undertook research work on labour intensive construction, as well as research into the state of technical built environment skills in the 13 largest municipalities in South Africa;
- The council also formulated a transformation implementation framework and model;

- As well as formulating a comprehensive workplace training model for built environment graduates;
- The third term Council also undertook submission of the identification of work (IDoW) exemption applications, initially for the 5 built environment professions councils and lately submission of (IDoW) exemption applications for engineering (ECSA);
- The CBE hosted a successful Built Environment Conference Indaba, and
- Has handled the processing of appeals within the legislated 60 days.

### **Challenges faced by CBE**

Of course there have been challenges along the way – but challenges make us stronger. The point is to identify the problems, analyse them and, together, develop and implement solutions:

- The key challenge that faced the 3rd Term CBE Council was issues of corporate governance;
- The other major challenge that confronted and still confronts the CBE and the 6 professional councils, remains, the slow pace of transformation of the built environment professions in terms of race and gender composition.

At the end of 2013/14, 76% of all built environment registered professionals were White and 24% were Black (Africans, Indians and Coloureds); 91% were male and only 9%, were female. We will need to work hard to radically improve on that.

The other general challenges in the CBE environment include:

- Lack of alignment to government policy in that currently there is inadequate alignment in policy,



planning and implementation between DPW, CBE and the professional councils. The professional councils have been at arm's length from DPW and therefore are not always privy to the debates and decisions taken by DPW. This leads to the disjuncture in the business plans of professional councils and that of DPW. The former have not sufficiently embedded in their business plans, their contributions to Government's national priorities.

- There are also challenges of accountability - Professional councils are established through legislation as public entities created to maintain professional competence, protect the public, register professionals and encourage growth of the professions – all very important tasks.

However, the professional councils, although appointed by the Minister of Public Works to perform a regulatory role, sometimes perceive themselves as independent of the state, representing the interests

of professionals – like a trade union - not always fully appreciating their wider societal roles and responsibilities.

- There are also oversight challenges - the professional councils are not monitored on a regular basis to ensure the extent to which they are implementing their respective legislative mandates. They do not participate in the quarterly meetings between the Minister and DPW's other public entities. The CBE as the "overarching council" represents the built environment professions at these meetings. Even these quarterly meetings provide only minimal oversight.

So this is an area that will receive much greater attention under the new Administration. There are two initiatives I need to mention:

- First, you will be aware of the Built Environment Professions Policy that was gazetted for

comment. The objective of this process is to deepen transformation within the built environment professions, and to align the production of key professional expertise to government's overall policies and national agenda;

I have received verbal comments expressing concern that the Policy does not sufficiently address issues of transformation. With that in mind, DPW extended the period for submission of comments to allow interested parties to make further representations.

- Second, I also want to mention an initiative of the Department of Public works with the formation of a new branch: the 'Governance Risk and Compliance Branch' – initially conceived of to lead the struggle against fraud and corruption – but now carrying a more holistic mandate to tackle governance and

compliance issues in general. With this in mind, the Branch will be taking a closer look at issues of oversight in relation to the entities and professional councils.

The objective here is to strengthen governance and accountability, and promote alignment with national priorities – some of the challenges that CBE itself has identified.

## **Priorities for the new Council**

Let me say something about the priorities that the incoming 4<sup>th</sup> term Council of CBE must tackle.

The central thrust of the NDP (National Development Plan) is to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment. The Built Environment Professions are key development enablers as they are central to planning, conceptualising, building and maintaining of infrastructure which is the life-blood of any economy

and a crucial driver of economic development and job creation – key to combatting poverty and inequality. It follows that priorities going forward must include:

- ensuring effective alignment to government policies;
- The CBE 4th Term Council must direct the organisation to deepen the partnerships with the key sector stakeholders to drive the agenda of a built environment that is responsive to the needs and priorities of the country; including supporting initiatives for strengthening of built environment technical capacity for the state and the country;
- Also, the CBE 4th Term Council must focus the organisation to drive and support built environment professional councils and industry, in undertaking transformation initiatives at schools, tertiary institutions and undertaking quality assured workplace training programmes to increase the

throughput of registered and competent professionals.

- The Council must ensure that the CBE partners with the Construction SETA (CETA) for workplace training of candidates and recent built environment graduates and interns for experiential training. The Department of Public Works (including Provinces), Water Affairs, National Treasury, ESKOM, PRASA, SANRAL, Transnet and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency (MISA) on behalf of municipalities, must be brought on board as training and workplace host partners with the CBE.

It is in the national interest that we build adequate capacity to produce the scarce skills that are needed for the infrastructural development of the country.

The President alluded to this in his State of the Nation Address.

It is for this reason that I now urge CBE to investigate further what has to be done to ensure

that registered candidates gain structured workplace training and experience to allow them to upgrade to professional status within the prescribed period.

This will be one of the key indicators that I will use to assess the achievements of this fourth term Council.

- The CBE 4th term Council must also engage academic institutions to incorporate health and safety and labour intensive construction modules, into the built environment academic curricula.
- The Council must research and provide cutting edge information to guide decisions on a variety of built environment matters.
- It must obviously continue in its core function to promote and protect the interest of the public in the built environment and serve as an appeals body for all matters pertaining to the actions and conduct of professional councils.

- The Council must ensure that the CBE partners with countries in Africa with a special interest in Africa-wide infrastructure roll out programmes and improving the built environment in the continent as a whole.

## **The 5 Year Vision for DPW**

In June I announced my five year policy statement and vision for the Department of Public Works. Let me take this opportunity to share with you. Allow me to quote the summary of key priorities:

- 1. One: The creation of 6 million work opportunities for poor and unemployed people through the labour-intensive delivery of public services and infrastructure. Public employment programmes must facilitate community participation, and provide tangible benefits to communities, the society and the economy.*



2. *Two: The operationalization of PMTE (Property Management Trading Entity) and the transformation of the core property business (including construction management). This necessarily includes a programme to rebuild technical and professional capacity.*
  
3. *Three: The operationalization of the Governance, Risk and Compliance branch to drive anti-corruption and to spearhead the second phase of the Turnaround – Efficiency Enhancement - using the tools of planning, Service Delivery Model processes and performance management. This also means working with HR and Change Management to promote a committed performance driven work culture.*
  
4. *Four: In consultation with all stakeholders – particularly the wider Public Works family in the provinces - a policy review culminating in a Public Works Act. This will provide a solid foundation for the*

*third phase of Turnaround: Sustainable Development, and will clarify and refresh the mandate of Public Works.*

*5. Five: In partnership with our entities, the charter councils and relevant stakeholders, a renewed and sustained programme of action to transform the Built Environment – the construction and property sectors – as part of the second more radical phase of transition to democracy.*

- so that ownership and management in the sector better reflect the demographics of the country; and
- we produce many more black and female built environment professionals.

In recognising the importance of the relationship between the Department of Public Works and its entities, I also said the following:

*I believe that we need now to engage on a continuous basis to forge a common vision and goals. This is*

*necessary to comply with the oversight duties of the Minister. It also makes good business sense – so that our efforts complement each other; we support each other and pool resources to maximise delivery. This approach needs to be reflected in the strategic plans of the respective organisations.*

*In relation to the Built Environment Professions Policy, I said, We need to finalise consultations with the CBE (Council for the Built Environment), the professional councils and relevant stakeholders. This is not about protecting turf. The engagement must take place in a spirit which says that the built environment professionals are a key factor both in unlocking infrastructure spend, and in expanding the skills base – especially from formerly disadvantaged groups.*

In closing, let me again thank the out-going Council and welcome the 4<sup>th</sup> Term Council of the CBE. I wish you well in your endeavours.