



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

Ceremony to welcome the Cuban Technical Advisors

**8 December 2016
The Farm Inn, Pretoria**

Input:

TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works

- Programme Director
- From the Cuban Embassy:
 - Mr Pedro Arteaga Cardenas, Economic and Trade Counsellor;
 - Mr Luis Cantero, UNECA National Coordinator
- From host provinces:
 - Honourable Jerry Ndou, MEC for Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, Limpopo Province
 - Mr Charles Morolo, DDG: Public Infrastructure, Mpumalanga Province
- From the Department of International Relations and Cooperation:
 - Ms Mmaiky Dube, for Latin America and the Caribbean; and
 - Deputy Director, Mr Thilivhali Ratshitanga
- Officials of the Department of Public Works and the PMTE
- Representatives of public entities and professional bodies:
 - CBE
 - CIDB

- ECSA
- Public Works beneficiaries: bursary holders and young professionals present
- Members of the Mamelodi Secondary School Music Department
- Members of the media, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and
- Most importantly, a special welcome to South Africa to the Cuban Technical Advisors who will be deployed to both national and provincial departments of Public Works.

[If it has not been done already, it may be appropriate to request a moment's silence in memory of our fallen revolutionary and leader of the Cuban people, Cde Fidel Castro.]

I am very pleased to be a part of this welcoming ceremony, which represents Phase Two of the Cuban

Technical Advisors Programme which began with Phase One back in 2007.

In my input today I want to cover two areas:

- The purpose and nature of this specific joint programme with the Cubans; and
- To also say a few words about the historic links between the peoples of Africa and the Cubans. This is mostly to educate ourselves as South Africans – because my experience of Cuba tells me that the Cubans know this history very well.

Historic Links between Cuba and South Africa

- The peoples of our two countries share a painful history of slavery, racism, capitalist exploitation and colonialism – as well as a common struggle against oppression and imperialism.

- It is significant that after the successful Cuban revolution, the people of Cuba continued to demonstrate solidarity with oppressed peoples in other countries and continents.
- In relation to Africa, we know that in the 1960s Che Guevara led an armed contingent to support progressive forces in the Congo.
- Ten years later (1975), Cuba deployed thousands of troops and military hardware to defend the Angolan Revolution against reactionary forces – which included the invading South African apartheid forces.
- Cuban troops - in alliance with the liberation movements – halted the advance of the South African forces at the battle of Cuito Cunivale – a massive psychological blow to white supremacy in the region.
- This was to prove a turning point in the battle for Southern Africa:

- Consolidating the revolution in Angola,
 - Leading directly to the liberation of Namibia, and
 - Contributing to shifting the balance of forces – laying the basis for a negotiated settlement in South Africa itself.
- This is the record of solidarity between Cuba and Southern Africa. This is the reason why progressive South Africans – 20 years after liberation – warmly embrace Cuban visitors and representatives. Most recently, last year South Africa was pleased to host a visit from the ‘Cuban 5’.

Cooperation and Development

- Since liberation and democratic elections in 1994 there have been a number of cultural, technical and economic programmes and exchanges between our two countries including:
 - The provision of Cuban doctors;
 - The medical training of South Africans in Cuba;

- The signing of a Bi-National Agreement in 2001;
- Which led to Cuba providing professional and technical construction personnel (engineers, architects etc) to the national and provincial Departments of Public Works in 2007. (A total of 107 personnel in Phase One of the programme.)

- We have now embarked on Phase Two of the programme. In December last year, we sent a technical team to Cuba to interview potential candidates.

- I then met with my counterpart – the Cuban Minister of Construction to finalise arrangements for this joint programme.

- I need to thank the South African Embassy in Havana and the technical organisation UNECA (*the Cuban equivalent of CIDB/CBE*) for assisting in facilitating this process. And I need to thank the

Minister and the Cuban government for making available its skilled personnel to South Africa.

- As a result we were able to recruit 39 Technical Advisors, 37 of whom you see before you today. [I assume the other 2 will be following later.]
- The Cuban Technical Advisors will provide technical support and expertise in the area of construction project management, and will be distributed between the national Department and the Mpumalanga and Limpopo provincial Departments of Public Works. Most of those working for National will be deployed to regional offices, specifically: Polokwane, Umtata. Mmabatho and Nelspruit.
- The 39 Advisors include the following areas of expertise:
 - Civil, including structural, engineering (15)
 - Mechanical Engineering (7)
 - Electrical Engineering (9)
 - Architecture (2)

- Construction Project Management (5), and
- Traffic Engineering (1)

- The specific scope of work of the Technical advisors includes the following:
 - Project planning, designing and implementation
 - Conducting Structural Audits for defects
 - Procurement - site briefings and tender evaluations
 - Management of contract documentation
 - Participate in the execution of DPW projects, Artisan Development, Internally Executed Projects, and Wastewater/ Sewerage Treatment Plants
 - Transfer of skills to the youth and existing employees
 - Supervision of contractors and quality assurance
 - Managing and attending to day-to-day maintenance
 - Investigation of costing of construction projects

- Project management and schedule tracking
- The Cuban Technical Advisors are participating in an induction programme which covers the following:
 - Security Awareness - carried out by our A/Chief Director: Security
 - Background to the Built Environment in SA - led by ECSA, SACPCMP and SACAP
 - The Construction Industry in SA – led by CIDB
 - Quality Standards – led by our entity, Agreement SA
 - Technical Challenges and the Structure of DPW - led by the Construction Branch
 - Built Environment Education and Training - carried out by Prof. R Nkado of WITS University
 - Cuba/SA Relations – led by DIRCO
 - Norms and Standards that regulate the Built Environment – led by CBE
 - Standards for Infrastructure Procurement Delivery Management – led by National Treasury

- A Workshop on Archibus, the Project Management Tracking system used by the DPW
 - The 3 Year Plan inclusive of the Scope of Work
 - The Skills Transfer Plan
 - Monitoring & Evaluation of the programme, and
 - A Language Intervention - led by DIRCO.
- I need to make the point that the Cuban Technical Advisors will not be abandoned and left to their own devices. The Three Year Plan and Skills Transfer Training system will be subject to continual monitoring and evaluation, including:
 - Individual performance management contracts;
 - Monthly and quarterly progress reporting, and
 - Regular technical meetings to share experiences and best practice.
- Specific projects included in the Three Year Plan include the following:
 - Construction of Health Support at Thabampoopo Hospital

- Construction of a workshop, 72 hours water stand-by storage and mechanical works at Letaba Hospital
- Construction of medical records and admissions block at Letaba Hospital
- Construction of new OPD, Casualty and X-ray building at Maphutha Malatji Hospital
- Construction of Dzanani Service Centre
- Construction of Musina Hospital
- Construction of FH Odendaal Hospital Health Support
- Construction of Malemati Clinic upgrade
- Design of new CHC completed (Lekwa CHC)
- Design of new Department of Social Development offices project complete (Thaba Chweu Sub-District Office)
- Technical and functionality assessment of 2 Hospitals (Rob Ferreira Hospital and Themba Hospital)

- Condition and functionality assessment of 2 community Library facilities (Mbombela City Library and Mkhuhlu Community Library)
 - Maintenance contracts awarded and administered for Delmas Public Library,
 - Minor repair projects for Botleng Public Library, Sondra Public Library, Thembisile Hani Public Library, Siyabuswa Public Library, and Enhlanzeni District Office of the Department of Education
 - Construction of Mehale Clinic upgrade
 - Technical Conditional Assessments completed (per building) for the 300 Top Buildings of NDPW.
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- I also need to mention that, looking forward, the Department of Public Works, working with CBE, is developing a proposal for an Exchange Programme targeting youth to be sent to Cuba to undertake built environment studies and gain specialized skills required for infrastructure delivery. This proposal is

to be informed by engagements with South African Universities, Professional Built Environment Councils and Cuban counterparts. So this relationship is due to run for some time to come.

Concluding remarks

- South Africa and Cuba share a common history of resistance to oppression and struggle for national liberation.
- The solidarity that characterised this earlier period of history – has now to be carried forward into the new current conditions – to mutually strengthen and support the economic and social development of the peoples of both countries.

I thank you – Gracias.