



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

2016 EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (EPWP) SUMMIT

St George Hotel, Irene

17 November 2016

Closing Remarks

TW Nxesi, Minister of Public Works

- **Protocol**
[Check]

The positive impact of the EPWP and the relevance of this intervention are cited in many publications. The recent United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER, pp. 21 report on “Demographic, employment and wage trends in South Africa” indicates the following:

The Government’s Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is an important driver of public sector job creation. “Public sector employment grew significantly between 2008 and 2014, from 14,5% of total employment in 2008 to 17,5% by end of 2014”.

“This suggests that the state as the employer of last resort acted accordingly in creating jobs during a period of extreme labour market distress.” No significant improvements in the economy have been realized to warrant state withdrawal from job-creation.

Breaking down occupation categories which makes up public sector jobs created, the report finds the greatest majority “fall under the category of elementary

occupations (unskilled workers)... [and] the other major contributors are primarily within the service and related workers category [medium skilled workers]...including home-based care-workers, protective services, cooks and child-care workers” – all categories in which EPWP work opportunities are highly represented.

It becomes very important to pause and reflect on the need and not want of this Programme. The public policy priorities encapsulated in tackling the triple challenge of Unemployment, Poverty and Inequality are at the centre of EPWP implementation. The emerging lexicon and strategic risk on the success and failure of EPWP is youth Unemployment characterised and aptly defined as the 18-29 age group, 43% of South Africa’s population **not in employment, education or training**. We dare not fail the future of South Africa.

In order to oversee the implementation of the Expanded Public Works Programme, our local brand of Public Employment Programme, the Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC)

chaired by the Deputy President was launched on the 22 July 2015.

The Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee has provided high-level and collective leadership towards the key outcomes of public employment programmes namely to respond to the poverty challenges through providing work opportunities to the poor and unemployed.

A major milestone of the IMC to date is the development of the EPWP Recruitment Guideline which will serve as a guideline for the appointment of EPWP participants to deal away with challenges relating to political interference and nepotism, lest we forget the ethical obligation entrusted on us all.

As part of phase 3 of the EPWP my department began working with different stakeholders to expand the footprint and impact of EPWP. We will engage with resolutions of this summit as part of this process. Let me reflect and remind ourselves of the Summit emerging

issues for uptake as we return back to the implementation frontline.

The issues emerging from the EPWP summit 2016 are as follows:

- Noting the under-reporting in the 15/16 financial year, public bodies agree to intensify their efforts to report on work opportunities so as to enable the attainment of 6 million work opportunity target. The EPWP Reporting System will be used as the authentic source of reporting on the programme.
- EPWP protocols signed on EPWP need to be implemented and monitored.
- Municipalities have not aligned all their policies to EPWP phase 3. To this end Municipalities should ensure that their EPWP policies should be aligned to EPWP phase 3 by 30th June 2017. The National Department of Public Works and Provincial Department of Public Works will continue to provide technical support to Municipalities in this regard.

- Public bodies should ensure that EPWP targets should be incorporated in the performance agreements of senior managers.
- It was noted that there is lack of full compliance by public bodies to Ministerial Determination on their EPWP projects. Public bodies were and are urged to work towards full compliance. The NDPW undertakes to develop a Standard Operating Procedure that will spell out the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders with regard to audit requirements.
- Municipalities should continue to prioritise EPWP in their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). Public bodies need to ensure compliance to the requirements of the different grants to optimise creation of work opportunities that contribute towards the EPWP. Public bodies should also optimise their non-grant funding towards EPWP.
- There is agreement that the national EPWP policy will developed.
- Public bodies should set aside part of their budgets to fund training of participants on their projects.

NDPW and all lead sector departments will continue to liaise with relevant stakeholders to source additional funding for training and ensure that quality training is provided to EPWP participants.

- NDPW and all lead sector departments will continue to provide technical support to all spheres of government to promote the implementation of the EPWP in the use of labour-intensive methods, promotion of community involvement, sustainable livelihoods, and convergence.
- There is agreement that coordinating departments and public bodies shall establish partnerships with state and non-state actors to promote the implementation of EPWP.

Thank you.