



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DPW: Human Capital Investment Bursary Awards Ceremony

*The Farm Inn, Pretoria
15 January 2016*

Keynote Address:

TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works

PROTOCOL

- Programme Director, Mr Thulani Ntombela

- Our partners in the DPW Schools and Bursaries programmes:
 - From the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement - Dr Jabu Nukeri
 - From University of Pretoria – Professor Tinus Maritz
 - From Wits University – Professor Samuel Azasu
 - From UNISA – Dr Ramodungoane Tabane
 - From UJ – Profesor Didibhuku Thwala and Professor Tshilidzi Marwala - also representing HEI

- The CEO of the Property Sector Charter Council – Ms Portia Tau-Sekati

- Ms Ndumiso Dlamini of the Council for Geoscience

- Representatives of the entities of Public Works – including Ms Nomvula Rakolote, Registrar of the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions and the Registrar of the South African Council for the Architectural Profession - Mrs Marella O'Reilly
- The Acting Director-General and Head of the Property Management Trading Entity, Mr Paul Serote – and officials of the Department of Public Works – particularly from the Human Capital Investment Unit which facilitated this event
- Representatives of the schools which partner with Public Works – with particular thanks to Mr Matsapola, Principal of Dendron Secondary School, for his input
- Most importantly, the successful students who are today receiving bursaries from the Department of Public Works – represented today by Ms Zintle Mtsheke of Mpondombini Secondary School. Not

forgetting the input by previous beneficiary and Mechanical Engineering student, Ms Kgakgamatso Tsagae (*Good to see females taking their rightful place in the built environment*)

□ Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome all. It gives me great pleasure to be a part of this important event. Clearly it is an important occasion for the beneficiaries of the 40 bursaries to be awarded.

But – to reiterate what I have said in previous years - I also need to make the point that this initiative is part of a much bigger picture – our Seven Year Plan to rebuild the Department of Public Works – which includes the following objectives:

- To rebuild the technical and professional capacity of Public Works and the state;
- To promote training and skills development in the Built Environment – in line with the needs of the National Infrastructure Plan and the NDP; and

- To transform the Built Environment professions to reflect the demographics of the country – and in particular to facilitate access for learners from disadvantaged communities. (We cannot be complacent that only 25% of built environment professionals are black – and only around 10% are female.)

I firmly believe that - as Public Works - had we had an adequate complement of professional and technical staff – such as qualified project managers, quantity surveyors and engineers – then we would have avoided most of the irregularities that we witnessed all too often in the past.

It follows, therefore, that as Public Works we have a clear and strategic long-term interest in, and commitment to, technical and professional training in the Built Environment – both to rebuild the professional capacity of the Department – and to contribute to

scarce skills required in the Built Environment generally.

This task is all the more urgent as the country embarks on a massive National Infrastructure Plan as part of the National Development Plan.

We need to remind ourselves - that money spent on the education of our children is not simply another expenditure and therefore a drain on the fiscus.

Rather, it must be seen as an investment in the lives of the learners, in the economy, and in the future well-being of the society as a whole.

Let us never forget the words of our own Tata Madiba:

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Department of Public Works Schools Programme and Bursary Programme

In an attempt to address built environment skills shortages, Public Works adopted the Council for the Built Environment's Skills Pipeline Strategy. The strategy spells out three inter-linked intervention areas aimed at ensuring a seamless flow of professionals into the Department. These are:

- *The Push Strategy* – aimed at providing enough competent and skilled professionals in the built environment through supported and funded secondary and tertiary education programmes;

- *The Intermediate Strategy* – aimed at providing and training built environment professionals through supported candidacy and mentorship programmes to the level of professional registration; and

- *The Pull Strategy* – aiming at making the built environment an attractive profession through retention and continuous professional development.

Under the Push Strategy, the Human Capital Investment Unit prioritizes the Schools Programme and the awarding of bursaries.

The Schools Programme

The objectives of the Schools Programme include the following:

- The adoption of schools for targeted support
- To promote and de-stigmatise careers in the built environment and property sectors
- To advance and support learner interest in Mathematics and Physical Science
- To increase throughput of learners with university-entrance passes in Mathematics and Physical Science to pursue built environment careers

- To attract potential professionals into the built environment, and
- To provide funding for built environment and property studies.

From 2013, the Department adopted schools throughout the country. The selection of the schools was done in collaboration with the provincial education departments. The criteria used for selecting the schools included:

- Well-performing schools (with learner achievement of 65% and above in maths and science)
- Schools with a potential to expand the provision of high quality maths and science teaching and learning
- Schools from disadvantaged communities
- Most importantly – schools that displayed a commitment to success.

In other words, we were – and are - looking for schools in disadvantaged communities that are clearly well-managed and where learners are performing well.

Amongst other initiatives, the Department annually hosts a Forum for principals and chairpersons of School Governing Bodies from adopted schools – designed to strengthen institutional support to schools and targeted learners.

Targeted learners in the adopted schools are then supported in their studies and orientated towards the various careers within the built environment through career exhibitions and during the schools camps held annually.

The need for the Schools Programme was informed by the 2008 Skills Audit Report conducted by the Council for the Built Environment. The Audit analysed skills shortages within the Built Environment – which were mainly attributed to poor throughput rates in the

education system. The Schools Programme therefore seeks to address these challenges and promote the teaching of Maths and Science as well as to open up access to the Built Environment professions.

CBE's Skills Audit – and more recent updates – indicate that still only a quarter of professionals in the Built Environment are black. One of the mandates of the Department of Public Works is to facilitate transformation in the Built Environment – and the Schools Programme is clearly in line with that mandate to promote the training of black professionals in the sector.

In 2015, 17 schools were adopted from across the 11 regions of the Department of Public Works – targeting 35 learners – consisting 23 females and 13 males – to ensure a greater representation of women in the built environment professions.

The Bursary Programme

The Department awarded one hundred and seventy one (171) bursaries in 2014. Out of the 171 bursaries, 90 bursaries went to the Schools Programme beneficiaries. Eighty one (81) bursaries went to students in their second, third and final year studies.

Ten (ten) of these bursary students have since joined the Department of Public Works, in 2015, to be part of the Candidacy and Internship programmes.

I need to make the point that bursary holders sign a contract to join the Department's Candidacy Programme upon graduation from university and, thereafter, to work for DPW for a period equivalent to the number of years for which they received a bursary. This is mutually beneficial: the graduates move immediately into the candidacy stage, whilst the Department receives much needed skills.

Although, the majority of the 2014 cohort succeeded in their studies, I stated last year that the HCI needs to do two things:

- To undertake an analysis of what caused the minority to fail – and to implement the necessary measures. Ideally we don't want anyone to fail;
- And secondly, HCI must look at continuing to provide remedial support where appropriate. As the Department, we don't want to leave any student behind – including those who may have failed. HCI must explore – with them – the possible alternatives that they can pursue.

I need to get an update on action taken to implement these suggestions.

In 2015, a further 40 bursaries were awarded – and these students are now entering their second year of studies.

Today, the Department will award bursaries to 40 learners accepted to pursue studies in the built environment disciplines. Thirty (30) learners were part of the Departmental Schools Programme. Five are Ministerial recommendations. Five (5) learners come from the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SASTA). SASTA is one of our stakeholders, which manages programmes similar to the Schools Programme.

Each learner will receive a bursary to the value of R130 000 to pursue full time studies in the following degrees:

- Quantity Surveying
- Engineering (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical)
- Architecture
- Landscape Architecture
- Town and Regional Planning
- Construction Project Management, and
- Property Studies

The bursary will cover the following:

- Tuition
- Accommodation
- Study materials
- Monthly allowance, and
- Academic projects and resources.

The 2016 cohort consists of 17 females and 18 males.

[Incidentally, the mathematicians here will have noticed that the figures don't add up: $18 + 17 = 35$, although I said previously that there would be 40 beneficiaries. I am sure that the HCI can explain the discrepancy.]

Whilst we are on the subject, I also need to know that every effort is being made to attract and support learners living with disabilities.

I need to mention that the learners – or students as they are now - are not left to fend for themselves when they get to tertiary education. Yesterday, the Department hosted a University Readiness Workshop -

aimed at preparing students to transition well from high school life to life at university.

The Human Capital Investment Unit provides student support, care and counselling through its bursary care programme on a quarterly basis. Officials from HCI visit the students and arrange for interventions to support less well performing students as per need.

Finally, let me address a few words to the students who will be awarded bursaries: Never forget that you are here today as a result of your own hard work and commitment.

Your future – as you negotiate the Higher Education environment – holds many opportunities, but also many challenges. Ultimately, success is dependent on you. You need to keep up the hard work – and avoid all the obvious temptations.

Support structures are in place – academic, spiritual and psychological – so if you do run into problems seek help as soon as possible. There are people there whose job it is to support you – so make use of these facilities.

When I say work hard, take a balanced approach – also make time for sporting, cultural and other activities. So work hard – but enjoy your time in Higher Education as a time to develop as a person, holistically – personally, socially, spiritually, physically – as well as academically and professionally.

I wish you well for the future. Indeed, you are the future of the Built Environment professions in South Africa.

I thank you.