



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

DPW: Human Capital Investment Bursary Awards Ceremony

*St George Hotel, Irene
13 January 2017*

Keynote Address:

TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works

- Programme Director, Mr Reggie Ngcobo
- Our partners in the DPW Schools and Bursaries programmes:
 - From SAASTA (South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement) – Dr. Jabu Nukeri and Mr James Tlhabane
 - From UNISA – Dr Ramodungoane Tabane
 - From the Outlook Foundation – Mr Segomotso Kelefetswe
 - From the University of Pretoria – Professor Tinus Maritz
- Guest speakers:
 - At the Principals Forum – Mr Jeremiah Maema
 - At the University Readiness Workshop – Ms Zine Nkukwana
- The CEO of the Property Sector Charter Council – Ms Portia Tau-Sekati

- The CEO of the Institute of Internal Auditors of South Africa - Ms Claudelle von Eck

- Representatives:
 - of the Public Entities of Public Works and statutory councils
 - from academia
 - from the built environment sector – construction and property management, and
 - from other government departments

- Principals from DPW adopted schools (*your role is crucial in this programme*)

- Mr Sam Thobakgale, Acting Director-General and senior officials of the Department of Public Works – particularly from the Human Capital Investment Unit which facilitated this event

- Members of the media

- Most importantly:
 - The Public Works-funded students present
 - Departmental Young Professionals and Interns
 - And all those beneficiaries who we have recognised today (Bursary awardees, professionals and Internal Audit Technicians – and their mentors)

- A special mention for learners from Mamelodi Secondary School Music Department and their Music Instructor, Ms Laura van Niekerk.

- 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 in 2017, as well as for the 33 Professionals and 24 Internal Audit Technicians who we have recognised today.

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.)

In fact, you will have heard from Mr Gwazube earlier, that as Public Works, we take this so seriously that we have created a dedicated 'Professional Services' branch with the express purpose of opening up that skills pipeline to ensure the necessary supply of skilled professionals and technical people - both for ourselves as Public Works, and to expand the capacity of the state.

I firmly believe that 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 the state – and to

contribute to scarce skills required in the Built Environment generally.

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

We also 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 powerful 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

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 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.

At the heart of the Schools Programme is the objective of supporting and strengthening the quality of teaching and learning of Maths and Sciences in targeted schools. Other objectives include the following:

- To promote careers in the built environment and property sectors, and
- To increase throughput of learners with university-entrance passes in Mathematics and Physical Science to pursue built environment careers.

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 hard work and success.

In other words, we were 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 from adopted schools (which was held yesterday) – as well as a practical Maths and Science Teacher Programme at 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.

These programmes are run in collaboration with our partners – particularly UNISA, University of Pretoria, the Outlook Foundation and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement. We appreciate your contribution.

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.

The Schools Programme began in 2013. The following schools were participating in 2016:

- In Gauteng:
 - Soshanguve technical High School
 - Mamelodi Secondary School, and
 - Fons Luminis School, Diepkloof

- In North West: Regolotswe Secondary School

- In Mpumalanga: Inkomazi Secondary School, Kwalugedlane

- In Limpopo:
 - Giyani Secondary School
 - EPP Mhinga Secondary School, Malamulele,
 - and Dendron Secondary School

- In Northern Cape: Mogomotsi Secondary School, Warrenton

- In Free State: Matlwangtlwang Secondary School, Steynsrus

- In Eastern Cape:
 - Mpondombini Secondary School, Bizana
 - Amazizi Secondary School, Peddie, and
 - Masikanyise Secondary School, Dordrecht

- In KwaZulu-Natal:
 - Okumhlope Secondary School, Umlazi, and
 - Emthulasizwe Secondary School

- And in Western Cape: UmyezoWaMaApile, Grabouw

The Bursary Programme

The Bursary Programme is jointly funded by the Department of Public Works and the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). Since 2014 228 bursaries have been awarded. In 2016, 163

students were enrolled. 59 students have completed their studies. 27 of these are currently in the Department in either the Internship or Young Professionals Programmes. 32 are expected to join the Department this year for their Internship Programme and later move on to the Young Professionals Programme.

So you can see that the seeds we planted in the Schools Programme in 2013 and in the Bursaries Programme from 2014 are now bearing fruit.

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 employment and the candidacy stage of their careers, 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 am aware that HCI has analysed the challenges and proposed solutions, including:

- Introduction of Technical Drawing at high school level – the absence of which causes problems for students in the first year of university.
- Intensifying mentorship support from senior students and professionals, and
- Second chance opportunities for failed students encountering engineering for the first time at university.

I need a progress report on the implementation of these proposals.

Today, in 2017, the Department has awarded bursaries to 40 high performing learners who have been accepted to pursue studies in the built environment disciplines, including the following:

- Engineering (Civil, Structural, Transport, Electrical, Water Care, Mechanical, Chemical and Hydrology)
- Analytical Chemistry
- Construction Project Management

- Quantity Surveying
- Architecture
- Landscape Architecture
- Urban and Regional Planning
- Interior Design
- Horticulture
- Actuarial Sciences and
- Property Management.

Young Professionals Programme

Just a brief word on the Young Professionals Programme – which is designed to address the shortage of professional skills both in the Department, in the state and in the built environment sector at large – by providing the necessary practical experience, training and mentorship to candidates for professional registration.

85 Young Professionals have obtained professional registration since the programme started in 2007. 53 of

these now work for the Department, whilst the rest are employed in municipalities, other government departments and the private sector.

The 33 professionals we recognised today obtained their professional status between 2014 and 2016. I am pleased to say that the gender balance is fairly even: with 16 females and 17 males – pretty good in a sector where traditionally less than 10% of professionals are female. Fourteen were co-funded by Public Works and the CETA (Construction Education and Training Authority).

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

The Department is committed to expand the capacity of the state, this is possible through the Public Works Skills Forum, led by the NDPW. The Forum provides a platform to strengthen capacity building programmes

within the Public Works family – across the provinces. One professional from the Mpumalanga Provincial Department is amongst those recognised today.

Internal Audit Technicians Programme

Today we also recognised the achievements of the 24 people who participated in the Internal Audit Technician Professional Training Programme. [A further 3 who qualified as Internal Audit Technicians accepted employment outside the Department – so they will make their contribution elsewhere.]

The Internal Audit Technician (IAT) is the first level designation and qualification that all internal auditors entering the profession should obtain. Its content provides excellent background to candidates starting out in internal auditing or wanting to improve their internal audit skills.

Now some may be wondering: what has internal audit got to do with the mission of developing built environment skills? Let me say that for Public Works, strengthening internal control assessment and reporting on performance and financial management is crucial – both in terms of ~~legal~~-compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and to improve the way we do business. Internal Audit is vital to achieving that – and the improvements they have brought has been noted both by our ~~external~~-Audit Committee and by the Auditor-General.

In strengthening our performance, financial and administrative management, we create conducive conditions in which the built environment professionals can do their work.

Concluding remarks

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. On Wednesday, 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 have been 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 – and, dare I say it, politically, as well – although never lose sight of your educational and professional goals.

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

I thank you.