

Keynote Address

Minister Nkosinathi Nhleko on the occasion of Departmental Bursary And Recognition Ceremony

St. George's Hotel, Irene

12 January 2018

- Programme Director, Mr Reggie Ngcobo
- Honourable MEC's Present
- DG of the Department of Public Works and Senior managers
- Heads of Provincial Departments
- Chairpersons and CEO's of our Entities
- Representatives from our Industries
- Representatives of Institutions of Higher Learning
- School Principals, Teachers and Parents
- Our honoured guests: Bursary Recipients, Young Professionals, Internal Audit technicians, Water Treatment Technicians and Graduates
- Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to welcome all of you to this great ceremony – recognising the hard work of our youth who have done

exceptionally well in their matric examination. Today our bursary recipients are our guests of honour and let us give them a round of applause. Today we also recognise artisans and professionals who have participated in the Artisan Development Programme and the Young Professional Programme.

This is the 5th year that the Department of Public Works has afforded deserving learners from disadvantaged communities, with an opportunity to go to university and study for careers that will have an impact on the country.

The Public Works Bursary Scheme caters for deserving learners mainly from the department's Schools Programme; to pursue studies at various tertiary institutions in fields specifically related to the department's mandate. The criteria used to award these bursaries include students from disadvantaged families and areas, Grade 12 pass (minimum 80% pass rate in Mathematics, Physical Science and 65% in English), Confirmed University acceptance to enrol for Built Environment or Property Studies preferably at traditional university.

Yes, ordinarily, these very intelligent young men and women would have been overlooked because of the kind of schools they come from, the geographical location of where they come from and went to school, e.g. rural, township and farm schools.

The schools programme of our Department, which you, our guests of honour have been part of, is aimed at developing and nurturing scarce skills as part of DPW's ongoing transformation process of the Built Industry. We also express and confirm this goal our Department through this bursary programme. These programmes also highlight the Department's mandate and contribution towards improvement of socio-economic factors such as youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, job creation, women empowerment and monetary relief for disadvantaged communities to enable them to further their studies.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is important to note that in as much as the bursary programme started in 2014, the department has been driving capacity building initiatives since 2007. These then led to the adaptation of the Council for the Built Environment (CBE)'s Skills Pipeline Intervention Strategy in 2014. 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 – aiming at providing enough competent and skilled professionals in the built environment through supported and funded secondary and tertiary education programmes. Under this strategy, we have a number of programmes which include the schools programme, the bursaries which have brought us together today, job

shadowing, winter school camps, community outreach and career exhibitions.

The second strategy is the **Intermediate Strategy**– This is aimed at providing and training built environment professionals through supported candidacy and mentorship programmes to the level of professional registration. The programmes under this strategy include graduate and experiential internships, learnerships, artisan training, young professionals candidacy, asset and property management development programmes.

The final strategy is the **Pull Strategy** – which is aimed at making the built environment an attractive profession through retention and continuous professional development. The programmes under this strategy includes OSD remuneration, centres of excellence, continuous professional development and appointment of retirees.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are also recognising 121 Built Environment and Water Management Young Professionals who joined the Department in December 2017 and January 2018 respectively. In total, there are 83 Built Environment Young Professionals and 38 Water Management Young Professionals being recognised today.

We also are recognising 15 Professionals, 149 Registered Artisans, 2 Internal Audit Technicians and 30 Graduates who have successfully attained professional status and or completion of qualifications.

The Department of Public Works has invested a lot of money in educating the youth. This investment will not only benefit the beneficiaries and the department, but will also capacitate all three spheres of government. Once these students complete their studies, they will also work for municipalities, provinces as well as other national departments. They will also be able to work for the private sector. This is because there are huge skill shortages in both the public and private sector.

To prove that Public Work initiatives are bearing fruit, since 2007, 88 Young Professionals obtained their professional registration through the Young Professional Programme. Of the 88 professionals, 56 of them are still with the department while 32 are now employed by municipalities, other government departments and the private sector. This speaks directly to employment creation and capacity building and I think it deserves a round of applause.

Through an excellent working partnerships between the Department and the Construction Education and Training Authority (Ceta) over R86 million has been invested in

bursaries, technical internships, artisan development and candidacy programmes between 2014 and 2017. A total of R20 million is set aside for bursaries for the year 2018/19.

Two hundred and fifty eight bursaries have been awarded between 2014 and 2017. Of those, 103 bursaries were awarded to females and 155 to males in the same years. It gives me a great pleasure to note that the number of women choosing built environment / property sector careers is increasing.

I am delighted to announce that the department started a pilot programme for water management. The programme is aimed at ensuring compliance and bringing under our management, all water facilities currently managed by consultants.

The project was first piloted in Kwa-Zulu Natal under the Durban regional office and in Mpumalanga under the Nelspruit regional office when 100 young people were trained in water treatment operations. Thirty professionals were trained in KZN and 17 in Mpumalanga. All 47 are now permanently employed by the department of Public Works.

In 2015 the Department expanded the Programme with the appointment of 290 Water Management Graduates with the Funding from National Skills Fund. It ended last in December. The graduates have been placed in Regional Offices and are

responsible for the maintenance of proper water quality and control of treatment plants.

Thirty eight of these graduates are appointed on the Water Management Programme for the the period of two years, starting this year. Upon completion, this will help them qualify as Water Scientists.

Huge strides have been made by our bursary recipients.

When we started the bursary programme in 2014, we had 50 beneficiaries. I am happy to announce that 30 of those completed their qualifications in record time.

They will be joining the departmental internship programme this year – 2018.

Our programme takes a holistic approach in taking care of our beneficiaries. We take learners from our adopted schools, from grade 8 to 12, provide them with support through the Winter School programme and give them bursaries for their tertiary schooling. A student support programme focused at the student's academic, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being then kicks in. Upon completion of tertiary studies, students join the Department of Public Works through the Internship programme.

I believe that our Department is on the road of fulfilling its primary mandate to build technical capacity to enable the state to deliver on its infrastructural projects. With a little more determination, we shall beat the crisis around the scarcity of critical skills in the built environment.

In conclusion, I want to congratulate our shining stars for repaying our confidence in them and showing that our investment was not misplaced. Let us therefore shower them with their well-deserved accolades.

Thank You.