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**SPEECH BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND
INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE HANDING OVER OF BURSARIES TO
STUDENTS ENROLLED FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT COURSES**

**Our next generation of built environment professionals must grab
this opportunity to use education to change our country and build
South Africa to realise our true potential**

Good Morning, Goeie More, Molweni, Dumelang, as-salaamu ailakum, shalom

It is my great honour and privilege to be with you all today for this inspiring occasion where we celebrate and reward excellence in our future engineers, actuarial scientists and construction project managers.

This is truly one of my favourite days in the department where we get to meet and reward young people who have excelled at school level and who choose to enter built environment professions.

Our country is in need of professionals in this sector and this is why the department initiated the Bursary and Skills Pipeline Programme and let me thank all of our young people here today for choosing to go into these fields of study.

On behalf of all of us here, let me congratulate you on your excellent matric results. You can be so proud of what you have achieved so far especially in difficult circumstances due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Many of you have pushed through trying circumstances such as losing loved ones and many other challenges.

But your being here today and your excellent results shows that you have what it takes to overcome adversity and shape your own destiny.

I always tell young people that it doesn't matter where you come from and what you didn't have, you can design your own future.

I looked at some of your matric results and I want us to take a moment to applaud all these young bright minds.

Many of you achieved over 80% and 90% for tough subjects such as Maths and Physics and you can all take a bow because I am sure it was no easy feat.

A good number of recipients also achieved distinctions in all subjects and we salute you for a job well done.

Your lives will change dramatically in this next phase of your life, but keep your head up, keep focussed and above all keep working hard.

By doing this, you will achieve your dreams and you all have it in you to become our country's next top engineer, actuarial scientists or architect.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) started this Bursary Programme because there is a lack of skills in the public sector for built environment professionals.

Our country has a lot of work to do in this space to build infrastructure and the buildings and homes so desperately needed by our people who have yet to taste the fruits of our democracy.

As recipients of bursaries today, know that you are very fortunate to receive this opportunity and you are tasting the fruits of our democracy.

Treasure this reward, work for it and become the professionals one day that will help build South Africa up for the benefit of our grandparents and parents who have yet to taste the fruits of our democracy.

As Tata Madiba said: "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world".

This is indeed rings true for all recipients here today because working hard with your high school education has changed your life by being selected for a bursary. It is now up to you to further your education and continue changing the world.

Become the professional that will one day contribute to building our country by using your education to change our communities by building bridges and all other infrastructure that will bring more progress to our country.

The Bursary Programme is also aimed at removing financial barriers to students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and who are in need of financial assistance and those who display excellence and enroll for courses in the built environment for their tertiary education.

The DPWI has a Bursary Programme linked to an overall Skills Pipeline project whereby pupils are encouraged on school level to consider careers in the built environment.

The programme is aimed at increasing the number of built environment professionals from previously disadvantage groups to represent the demographics of the country and ensure transformation of the built environment sector.

The programme further serves as feeder to the departmental Internship and Young Professionals Programme and later form a pool of qualified built environment professionals to serve the state in the delivery of infrastructure projects.

The bursary accommodates the following study areas: Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Marine Engineering, Property Studies, Real Estate, Actuarial Science, Quantity Surveying, Construction Project Management, Landscape Architecture, Architecture and Town and Regional Planning.

This year we are pleased to be handing over 43 Built Environment bursaries for the 2022 academic year, for the courses: Actuarial Science, Electrical Engineering, Construction Studies, Urban and Regional Planning, Civil Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Mechanical Engineering to be studied at various accredited Traditional Universities.

I am so excited at how we are starting to turn things around in these male dominated industries because of the 43 bursaries we are awarding today, 24 are female recipients.

Recipients hail from all nine provinces and have been accepted at the following universities, North West University, University of Johannesburg, University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand.

The value of the bursary is estimated at R150 000 per student per year, this amount covers tuition, accommodation, meals, textbooks, laptop, project, books, excursions, workshops and monthly stipend allowance.

Over the past 8 years, DPWI has awarded bursaries to 401 students since the programme started in 2014, an investment of R52million into the lives of the students and to bring the required skills into the public sector.

One hundred and forty six (146) former bursary recipients are currently working for the DPWI either as a Professionals, Candidates or Interns.

Thirteen percent (13%) of former bursary recipients work in the private sector as some in other spheres of government.

While you all have completed one milestone in your life with completing school, you are entering another important phase and we want to support you in every way to prepare you.

So you have all been part of The University Readiness Workshop to help equip the bursary recipients with basic knowledge and understanding of university life in order to set them up for the journey ahead and to ensure they make an easy transition from high school to university.

Student coordinators (existing bursary holders) from various universities have been sharing their experiences.

The new recipients will also be introduced to the Buddy Programme wherein senior students are paired with candidates and Interns and junior students paired with 1st year students for mentorship purposes.

Importantly as part of building life skills and supporting you, beneficiaries have also heard talks on the subjects of mental health as well as financial management.

In closing, I want to thank some of the stakeholders with us today for your continued support and guidance provided to our young people in this programme.

I also want to express my deepest gratitude to all the teachers and for the role you have played in supporting our young people to get to this point.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you to everyone who had hand in developing these young people and giving them a helping hand for the next phase of their lives.

We are pleased to be able to award bursaries to another group of students and I want to remind everyone to appreciate this opportunity and keep working hard and making us proud. Good luck with your studies and God Bless you all.

ENDS

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