

**Address by the Minister of Public Works, Ms Thoko Didiza, At the  
Inauguration of the Board of Agreement South Africa**

**Venue: CSIR Campus**

**Date: 19 February 2008**

**Programme Director**

**Director-General of the Department of Public Works, Manye Moroka**

**Chairperson of the Board of Agreement SA, Mr Phetola Makgatha**

**Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Odhiambo and Management**

**DDG's Present**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

This is a very special occasion for Agreement South Africa and we are delighted to be here to carry out the task at hand. We have two key purposes this afternoon. Firstly, it is to thank the outgoing Board as well as releasing them as the Accounting Authority of Agreement; and secondly to formally Inaugurate and welcome the incoming Board and to provide the new Accounting Authority of Agreement with a mandate in terms of our expectations as the Shareholder.

The new Board comes in a time when the all government institutions have been given a new set of marching orders by the President of the Republic. I hope that you are all aware of a new operating regime: Business Unusual. This new way of doing things was spelled out clearly by the President in his State of the Nation Address two weeks ago. Business Unusual means that all of us will have to work quicker and smarter to deliver on our responsibilities. I am happy that the Board of Agreement will be holding a strategy session immediately after this function. This is more than important. If this organization will deliver on its mandates as the government expects, it needs to take stock of a whole lot of things pertaining

to operations, mandates and objectives and abilities to deliver. This is important so that you can identify gaps and come up with ways of plugging them.

We as the Executive Authority are aware of the challenges facing Agreement South Africa and we are highly appreciative of the Board and the CEO's willingness to engage on them and come up with solutions to those. Anyway, Agreement is in an innovative organization, which is why it should be able to come up with solutions. I hope that your strategic session will come up with solutions to the varied challenges you have identified in streamlining your operations as an organization and correctly locating the organization in the development landscape of our country.

We are all aware of the crucial role that Agreement South Africa is playing in the certification of innovative construction materials and development. As part of our commitment to the eradication of mud schools and inadequate structures, we will need this organization to work even harder in procuring and popularizing these materials and building systems. We know that these materials and systems provide an alternative to the conventional one in terms of costs, job opportunities for local communities and energy efficiency.

The growth of the South African construction industry in recent years bodes well for the vision that we set ourselves in the mid 1990s when we drafted and adopted the White paper on the creation of an enabling environment to stimulate the development, growth and transformation of the sector.

Underpinning this growth should, among other things, be the ability of the country to constantly generate new innovative technologies in support of quality products and services. There is also the need to improve the speed of delivery in our industry which is necessitated by the backlogs in socio-economic development. The role of Agreement SA therefore is really indispensable in this scenario.

Since its foundation in 1969, Agreement SA has been in the forefront of pioneering research and the ultimate approval and certification of non-standardised and innovative construction products, building systems and roads products as central to its mandate. As a continent claiming its rightful place among the nations of the world, Africa needs to dig deep into its ingenuity to produce home-grown solutions to its many problems, including technologies biased towards promoting job creation, human resource development, social and economic growth.

We are excited about the achievements of this organization. We would like it to accelerate its role in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment. I would like to pay tribute to the outgoing Board for a great job that it has done in the last three years of its existence. I am sure that you have laid the platform for the incoming board to launch the organization into the future. We thank the outgoing Chairperson of the Board, Mr Phetola Makgathe, who took the chair midway due to the forced retirement of Mr Carl Schlotefeldt, due to ill health. Thank you sir for holding the fort and keeping the organization moving forward during times of troubles.

Both the new chairperson and the new Board will be expected to continue to raise the standards and set new goals for the quality and quantity of the outputs of the organization. For our part, the government is prepared to help as much as possible in ensuring that Agreement South Africa continues to make and a difference to the lives of South Africans. We look forward to your continued contribution to the ideals of African renaissance as you contribute to the SADEC region.

I would now like to introduce to you the new Board. The Chairperson is Mr Pepi Sllinga who is the CEO of the Coega Development Corporation. Members of his new Board are:

Mr Canon Noyana – Managing Director of Noyana’s Management Consultancy

Mr Solomon Malebye – DDG Operations at the Dept of Public Works

Ms Nozibusiso Shabalala – Director at Asphalt

Ms Khomotso Choma – Managing Director at Turnkey Project

Ms Ntebo Ngcobo – Director at Civil Projects Engineer

Mr Mike Marler – Municipal Infrastructure Specialist at the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

Mr Lethole Moshe – from the Department of Trade and Industry

Mr Sydney Seane – General Manager for Mechanical and Materials at South African Bureau of Standards

Mr Edwin Kruger – Bridge Network Manager at the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL)

Dr Mohammed Tayob – Chief Executive Officer at Ezindaleni Global Holdings

This then is the new Board that will drive the operations of the Agreement South Africa for the next three years. Congratulations to you all for your appointment.

I thank you all.