



public works

Department:
Public Works
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENTAL LEKGOTLA

4 FEBRUARY 2010

MINISTER GEOFF DOIDGE OPENING ADDRESS

Deputy Minister Bogopane-Zulu

Acting DG Mr Sam Vukela

DDG's

Acting DDG's

Chief Directors

Regional Managers

Directors

Invited guests

Dr Somadoda Fikeni

Dr Johan Snyman

Mr Ronnie Khoza (CIDB)

Mr Bheki Zulu (CBE)

Mr Joe Adiyambo (Agrement SA)

Good Morning and welcome to you all, on behalf of the DM and myself, allow me to extend our best wishes for the New Year to those whom I have not seen or spoken to since our return from the festive season. I trust and hope that it is with a renewed sense of enthusiasm and energy that we approach this very monumental year in our country's history.

This is a year that sees us hosting the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup, but also a year where we celebrate 20 years since the un-banning of our liberation movements, the release of former President Nelson Mandela from prison and the ANC's fifth term in government.

On Monday we held our Mintop meeting where we for the first time extended the invitation to regional managers and chief directors. The meeting was highly successful where presentations were made on the new outcomes based approach by government as well as the proposed structure of the Property Management Entity.

It was agreed on Monday that we hold these extended Mintop meetings on a quarterly basis so as to constantly reflect, communicate and plan as a collective. I want to once again thank those who were here on Monday for a successful and insightful session and look forward to further engagements with you.

At the conclusion of the Extended Cabinet Lekgotla last month, a number of us left with a renewed sense of direction, a renewed sense of purpose and most importantly, a renewed sense of approach in terms of how we intend to do our work as government. I expect that at the end of the next two days, with your valued inputs, we will leave here with that same sense of purpose on how to best serve our country and our fellow South Africans.

I want to state from the onset that it has been agreed with the Acting DG that we have a specific and results based approach to the deliberations and discussions that we will have over the next two days. The rule that we have set for this Lekgotla is that there will be no lamentations and complaints when we engage in discussions.

If you are going to raise concerns, we expect that you also provide a proposal or recommendations as to how we should tackle the particular point you raise. We are not here to lament but rather to, as a collective, propose a clear direction as to how we intend to move forward as the Department of Public Works.

In his closing of the Extended Cabinet Lekgotla, President Jacob Zuma highlighted a number of areas and raised questions which I believe we should use as guidelines and should be asking ourselves as we begin this morning. The President spoke of his expectations from the discussion, to focus on the following questions:

“What are we doing to fix the problems we have, what is to be done, how, by whom, within what time period and using what measures? How do we know we are making progress and by how much? If we are not making progress, how are we going to change things?”

These are the questions we should be asking ourselves and most importantly, ensure that we have answers to at the end of this Lekgotla. It is time that we become realistic and interrogate how far we've come as a department, what we need to change and how best to apply best practices in our work. This is not a point of debate or opinion but one of fact.

We have as government taken stock of how far we have come over the past 15 years since our liberation. There are areas where we are honest with ourselves in admitting our failure. In places where either a policy or the implementation of a policy did not work, we have acknowledged and have noted the need for change.

I suggest that as we are gathered here this morning as a collective, we are honest with ourselves as a department in acknowledging our shortcomings but most importantly, chart a way forward that will yield the desired results. How do we while raising concerns, also come up with suggestions of a way forward? We are not individuals where some question and others answer, we are a collective who need to come up with collective inputs and solutions.

In the DPW budget speech to National Assembly last year, we raised a number of priority areas which we should reflect on and examine our progress. We should be asking ourselves what contribution we made to achieving these targets and if we believe that as a department, we have managed to do what we committed do. Your answers should guide your approach to this Lekgotla and your actions once we leave here on Friday.

1. How far are we in changing and realigning the business model of the department so that it is better positioned to give effect to the mandate that the people gave the majority party in government?
2. In our contribution to the creation of decent employment, have we ensured that all construction-related projects are actually EPWP labour-intensive projects?
3. Have we been effective in the transformation of the construction industry and built environment?
4. Are we geared for the implementation of the Property Management Trading Entity?
5. Are we committed to ensuring that we have energy and water efficient buildings and also buildings accessible to persons with disabilities?
6. Have we made progress in our contribution to fast tracking proper rural infrastructure development through programmes such as EPWP, National Infrastructure Maintenance Strategy and the Inner City Regeneration?

In our budget speech, we also mentioned the need to establish teams that will look into the review of our department's white papers. We expect all responsible people in this regard, to breathe energy into this process and conclude this important task we have.

I highlight these specific areas because if we look at the five priority areas and 12 outcomes identified by government, and cross reference them with what we highlighted in the budget speech last year, as a department, we are not far off the mark in terms of government expectation. The key is to reinforce these objectives and maximise on reaching the outcomes.

It is important that as a department, we collectively understand government priority areas as this guides the outcomes based approach, which will be explained to us this morning, through the presentation by Ms Ronette Angela, Chief Director in Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency.

When we discussed the structure of this Lekgotla, we deliberately looked at ensuring that we stick to the deliverables of DPW in relation to the overall priorities and outcomes of government. We intentionally decided on specific commissions which speak directly to DPW's contribution to our developmental state. It is through these commissions that we will be focused on what we intend to achieve by the end of tomorrow.

If we look at today's agenda, you will see them listed as follows:

- Create decent employment through inclusive economic growth
- Create efficient, competitive and responsive infrastructure network
- PME
- Efficient & Effective and development oriented Public Service and an empowered, fair and inclusive citizenship
- Skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path

These commissions, over and above them speaking to the outcomes of government, also allow us to be more specific about how we intend to truly reclaim the mandate of public works. This is another point we made in the budget speech last year and continue to make. The reclaiming of our mandate will best guide our roles and responsibilities as a government department in various clusters and in achieving our outcomes.

I want to remind our senior managers of our Mintop meeting on Monday when we spoke of how if we are not careful, if we are not resolute in our work as DPW, this department will be non-existent in a few years.

We will this morning have a presentation on the Property Management Entity, from the team tasked with developing the best structure for this entity. The presentation was made on Monday and we agreed that all those invited to the Lekgotla should also be privy to the new approach.

The fact is, colleagues, if we do not get the matter of the PME right, and get it right, now, we are going to be in serious trouble. We cannot afford a situation where our department is faced with another adverse opinion by the Auditor General and yet here we are in this room, capable South Africans who are in the driving seat of this department. Honestly, it will be an indictment on all of us if this happens again.

I gave an example on Monday of how a person, a business man, came into my office and mentioned that he had 7 billion rand in funding to build a new SAPS head office. Such examples should make us question ourselves as to whether or not we are aware of the dangers we face if we don't up our game. Are we prepared to leave it to other people outside of DPW to carry out our mandate?

If we do not start to take more pride in what we do, if we do not strive to do more, if we do not continuously take into consideration the sacrifices made for us to even be in the positions we are in now and how so many people depend on us, if we do not make Public Works work, this department will disappear. We will face a situation where other people, other departments, other entities do what we are supposed to do and the mandate is taken away from us.

It is for these reasons that we need to be clear as to what we came here to do. We are not here to waste or pass time, we are not here to lament and we are not here to complain.

We are here to build. We are here to set a clear direction for our department so that we can in a few years from now, know that we were part of the turning around of this department. We were part of turning DPW into a cutting edge, exemplary and effective national government department.

Besides the saying this year, "FIFA 2010 World Cup, I was there" are you going to be in a position to say, when Public Works truly made South Africa work, "**I was there?**"