

Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission

**Inter-Governmental Launch for SIP 13:
National School Build Programme**

11 December 2012, IDC Sandown, Sandton

Supporting Remarks:

Mr TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works

PROTOCOL

- Minister Angie Motshekga, Basic Education
- Ministers and Deputy Ministers
- Premiers and MECs
- Officials of the departments
- Distinguished guests
- Programme Director, DG: Bobby Soobrayan

Allow me to start by expressing my sincere pleasure to be part of this important occasion – the launch of SIP 13: the National School Build Programme.

Let me also congratulate the Minister of Basic Education and her team for their work in developing the project to the point where we can confidently hold this launch today. From the side of the Department of Public Works, we pledge our support and commitment to work with Basic Education and the other stakeholders to roll out the National School Build Programme.

Speaking personally, as someone who has spent many years in education – as a practicing teacher and as a trade unionist – I can only applaud the scale and ambition of SIP 13 which seeks to:

- Replace inappropriate school buildings – a continuing scandal
- Address backlogs of schools and classrooms
- Provide basic services, as well as ensuring access to libraries, ICT, laboratories and sports facilities.

In a very real sense, SIP 13 gives concrete expression to government's commitment to prioritise education.

Whilst the building of safe and effective modern schools is an end in itself, we have also been reminded that SIP 13 forms a part of a much larger national infrastructure roll-out plan which seeks to achieve a number of objectives:

- To use infrastructure spend to drive inclusive economic growth and social development;
- In turn, driving job creation and skills development;
- To address the legacy of apartheid spatial planning by integrating those parts of the country – rural areas in particular – which have been historically excluded from economic development, and
- To use infrastructure development to lead the struggle against the triple evils of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

- These tasks are all the more urgent in an uncertain global economic context, where South Africa has to rely on its own efforts to drive economic development.

Led by the PICC – chaired by the President – the infrastructure plans are now in place. The crucial thing now is how we implement these programmes. We have to ensure that when we plan and implement the infrastructure roll-out, the benefits do not simply end up in the coffers of the large construction companies, or in the hands of tenderpreneurs.

I would argue that the infrastructure roll-out is both a challenge – and also constitutes a massive opportunity for transformation. Let me explain. Challenges include:

- Working smarter, faster and in a coordinated way – between departments and between levels of government – to get the job done.
- As the state, I have argued, we need to rebuild technical capacity both to unlock infrastructure spend and to manage relations with contractors and service providers – from design right through implementation and sign off.
- We have to tackle the issue of ineffective procurement processes, over-pricing and fraud and corruption – and we have to work with the construction sector to achieve this.

- And we need to deliver quality infrastructure and value for money for government and for society.
- We also have to learn from the challenges we experienced around the 2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums – in relation to over-pricing; poor labour relations and the lack of long-term empowerment and transformation.

In all that we do we have to be clear: that we are not simply building infrastructure for its own sake – and that this is also a strategy for driving economic growth and social development – and that this includes job creation, skills development and empowerment of emerging and female contractors and professionals.

If we can get an efficient infrastructure roll-out - which goes hand in hand with empowerment and the transformation of the built environment – we have the ultimate win-win situation.

I join you in wishing every success to SIP 13 and in pledging the support of Public Works in this worthy endeavour.

I thank you.