



**public works**

Department:  
Public Works  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Official Handing-over of the  
Makhado District Office  
to the  
Department of Home Affairs**

***Makhado, 26 March 2014***

**Input by:**

**TW Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works**

## PROTOCOL:

- Programme Director
- Minister of Home Affairs
- MECs, Chief Whip and Speaker
- Executive Mayor and local mayors
- Councillors
- Chief
- DGs and government officials
- The Project Manager, contractors and service providers
- Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be a part of this important event and to officially hand over this District Office – built by the Department of Public Works – to the Minister of Home Affairs.

This government – from the onset 5 years ago – has sought to improve services and bring government closer to its citizens.

Home Affairs provides vital documentation to the public – allowing every citizen the opportunity to access their rights. These documents include:

- Birth certificates
- IDs
- Marriage and death certificates

Without these documents we would not be able to exercise our rights as citizens - to vote, to access social grants, to open a bank account – and many more.

We need to commend the Department of Home Affairs - and the Minister – for a successful Turnaround, ensuring a speedier and more efficient service to the public. As the Department of Public Works we seek to emulate your example.

**Department of Home Affairs: Makhado District Office**

Since 1994 the Department of Home Affairs in Makhado – despite the fact that it serves a population of over half-a-million - has operated from a small office of approximately 100 square metres in a building which it shares with other government departments.

The mandate of the Department of Public Works is to provide suitable accommodation to departments of government so that they can deliver services to the people.

So, with this in mind, the Department of Public Works identified state-owned land for the construction of new office accommodation for Home Affairs. In 2009 a Procurement Instruction was issued for the planning, design and construction of the new office. The tender went out in early 2012 and the site was handed over for construction in April of that year. The project is being finalised currently with the erection of a new electric sub-station.

It is with some pride that I can say that – despite all the problems we have had in the past with corruption and mismanagement, there remain important centres of excellence within the Department of Public Works which allow us to deliver – as in the case of this magnificent District Office – which includes the following features:

- 1,200 square metres of office and other accommodation
- Modern architecture
- An exterior of a durable and low maintenance face brick finish
- The design includes passive energy efficient principles – to make use of natural ventilation and day light – thus reducing the use of electricity
- Facilities include:
  - Security
  - Adequate waiting area
  - Fingerprint area

- Baby room
- Matrimonial room
- Archive space
- Immigration office
- Passport processing area
- Boardroom
- Disabled facilities, and
- Parking

Let us be honest – the implementation of this project took too long – with detrimental effects to the Department of Home Affairs in their attempts to serve the people of Makhado. In the case, delays were caused by storm damage and lack of adequate power supply. This has been addressed with the erection of an electric power sub-station.

In general, in relation to timeous delivery of projects, I can assure you that, as Public Works, we have learnt from our mistakes and we are addressing them:

- Through CIDB (Construction Industry Development Board) we have launched the National Development Improvement Plan – to train and support emerging contractors.
- Where projects are delayed by non-performance and legal challenges we have developed strategies to minimise building delays.
- We are also developing joint teams to work with client departments – so that we move together on a project and we ensure at every stage that we provide exactly what the client wants in terms of accommodation.

I need to mention the important spin offs from the building of the Makhado District Office in terms of employment and training:

- On average the contractor employed 26 skilled workers comprising 19 builders and 7 operators.
- Up to 37 unskilled labourers were employed at the building site – from the surrounding areas in the Vheme District. This included on-the-job training.
- Local contractors, supplier and gardening services were employed.
- The Architects also played an important role in training the building contractor – transferring skills on how to manage the project

## **Concluding remarks**

Let me conclude with some general remarks on the state of South Africa as we move towards elections.

Since 1994 government has delivered:



- We have built a non-racial constitutional democracy, built on a culture of human rights
- There are 6 million more permanent jobs now than there were in 1994.
- In 1994 only 50% of people had access to toilets. Today that figure is 84%. So there is still a way to go.
- We have subsidised and built 3.3 million houses.
- In 1994 less than 5 million households had access to clean water. Today 13 million households have access – of which 7 million receive 6,000 litres free each month.
- We have built a universal free and compulsory education system - and extended schooling to include Grade R.

- We have doubled the number of university students and graduates.
- We now feed 9 million school children daily, and
- We have provided social grants to 16 million people – a vital lifeline to the poorest and most vulnerable of our fellow countrymen.

Going forward, the government has announced:

- its intention to fast-track land reform, and
- has announced a Four Trillion Rand infrastructure roll-out to drive economic growth and job creation.
- Government has also announced the creation of 6 million job opportunities in the next five years under EPWP and other public employment programmes to provide relieve to the unemployed. The global economic crisis means that the South African

economy – and jobs – has only grown at a very slow rate since 2008. That is why the government is stepping in to create additional work opportunities.

One international measure of poverty is the number of people living on under 2 Dollars a day (R22 per day). In 1994 the figure was 20% of the population. Today it is around 3%. [*So we still have a way to go.*]

As we prepare for elections in 2014, I want to make the following points:

First, it is your right and duty to criticise government officials and representatives when we do not deliver. I would urge you to do this through the Ward Committees.

Second, I would be the first to admit that mistakes have been made. A large part of my job as Minister of Public Works is exactly to address these mistakes and

to root out the tenderpreneurs and corrupt elements.  
The same process is happening in other departments.

Thirdly, let us never forget that it was the Alliance – led by the ANC – which after decades of struggle and sacrifice – brought down the cruel Apartheid regime. That Alliance remains the only vehicle capable of defending the South African revolution and leading the struggle against poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The ANC has called for a second phase of transition to bring about real economic and social transformation and justice for all. The task then is to hold the next ANC government to account and to ensure that the promise of a better life for all is fulfilled.

I thank you.