

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR GEOFF DOIDGE DELIVERS HIS SPEECH
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE GREENING SEKHUKHUNE AND FETAKGOMO LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY FOOD FOR WASTE PROGRAMME.**

THEME: Celebrating Excellence in EPWP implementation

Venue: Jacob Marwale Primary School, Fetakgomo

Date: 02 December 2008

- ❖ **Programme Director**
- ❖ **MECs**
- ❖ **Executive Mayors**
- ❖ **Councillors**
- ❖ **Management of our public entities**
- ❖ **Senior managers present**
- ❖ **Senior management of the province and municipalities**
- ❖ **Representatives of our industry**
- ❖ **Traditional Leaders**
- ❖ **Members of the media**
- ❖ **Ladies and gentlemen**

The Greening Sekhukhune and the Fetakgomo Local Municipality Food For Waste Programme we are launching today is an initiative by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the National Department of Public Works as part of the new expansion areas of the Environment & Culture sector of the EPWP.

According to the Limpopo State of Environment Report, 2006, about 10 percent of land in the province is classified as degraded land. Of this percentage, forest and woodlands make up the greatest portion amounting to just over 5 percent.

Socio-economic activities such as overgrazing, fuelwood consumption, urbanisation, mining, all contribute to land degradation. The Sekhukhune District is identified as the district which is acutely affected by land degradation.

The area is struck by severe land degradation due to socio-economic pressures that are prevalent in the district. Land degradation and poor land management practices are estimated to cost the country billions of rands per year as a consequence of reduced production, loss of soil and soil nutrients, pollution of rivers, poor water quality and flooding amongst other impacts.

The greening we are launching here today will focus on individual homes, clinics, schools, municipal offices, parks, multipurpose community centres, libraries, community gardens and on farms.

The greening initiative will provide employment and training opportunities for the youth and women in the five local municipalities that are under the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality

The greening initiative for 2008/2009 incorporates the establishment of the vegetable gardens, revitalization of the nursery and planting of 40 000 fruit and indigenous trees. This initiative will significantly alter the state of degradation in the Sekhukhune catchment, alleviate poverty and increase job creation.

It will also increase allowable carbon sink and help to curb the greenhouse gases and reduce the rate of global warming. The Greening concept is in line with the Letsema/Ilima Campaign that was launched by the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Sekhukhune District on the 15th November 2008 aiming at encouraging communities to turn unutilized fallow land into full production in order to realize the target to increase agricultural production by 10 to 15 percent.

The Food for Waste Concept

The model originates from Curitiba, Brazil and was adopted in South Africa after a visit by a delegation from KwaZulu Natal Provincial Department of Transport to Curitiba in September 2006.

The model involves beneficiaries collecting waste and being rewarded with food parcels. In the country; the model is applied in KZN under the Department of Transport located in the Hibiscus Coast and Msunduzi local municipalities and is also being piloted in the Thulamela and Fetakgomo local municipalities here in Limpopo Province.

The Piloting of the project in the Hibiscus Coast Municipality was officially launched in Port Shepstone in April 2007 under the banner of the “Siyazenzela” Project. Beneficiaries work a maximum of two days per week and in return they receive food parcels and vegetables every two weeks.

The concept has several advantages which include the following:

- Compensating Communities with food assures Food Security and protection of the vulnerable.
- Ensures a reasonable period of employment.
- Beneficiaries have free time to pursue other economic activities.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Greening Sekhukhune and the Fetakgomo Local Municipality Food For Waste Programme responds directly to the 2004 election manifesto of the ANC which promised to create one million work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

And this year (2008) former Minister of Public Works Ms Thoko Didiza officially announced that the Expanded Public Works Programme has created the targeted one million work opportunities a year ahead of the scheduled five years.

This is indeed an excellent job done by my predecessor in the Department of Public Works, Ms Thoko Didiza and we recognize her lasting legacy and the unwavering professional support she received from the national cadre of professional workers in the department.

As the current minister of Department of Public Works, I am duty bound to continue with the excellent work done by my predecessor with the commitment and energy that appropriates perfectly with government's key message for this year- business unusual, all hands on deck to speed up change.

Ladies and gentlemen

This launch is a constant reminder that although the EPWP has reached and surpassed the target of creating one million work opportunities a year ahead of the scheduled five years, our government, led by the ANC, is still on course to create more work opportunities in a manner consistent with the ANC's promise to create a better life for all.

The environmental sector of which projects we are launching here today, is a significant contributor to the million work opportunities created in the past four years.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are still on course to fulfill our contract with the people of South Africa to create work and fight poverty.

One of the key resolutions by the ANC at its 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in December 2007 is the need for government to redress poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation of people and communities and other legacies of apartheid and discrimination.

The central and most pressing challenges we face are unemployment, poverty and inequality. In this regard as per the Polokwane resolutions, our ANC led government reiterates its determination to halve unemployment and poverty from their 2004 levels, and substantially reduce social and economic inequality.

Answering the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality means that we must simultaneously accelerate economic growth and transform the quality of that growth. Our most effective weapon in the campaign against poverty is the creation of decent work, and creating work requires faster economic growth.

Moreover, the challenges of poverty and inequality require that accelerated growth take place in the context of an effective strategy of redistribution that builds a new and more equitable growth path.

This challenge is best addressed through a concerted effort by government in all spheres to work together and to integrate as far as possible their actions in the provision of services, the alleviation of poverty and the development of the people and the country.

The ANC's Polokwane Conference further resolved to directly absorb the unemployed through:

- Labor intensive production methods and procurement policies.
- A significant expansion of the public works programmes linked to the expansion of economic infrastructure and meeting social needs with home-based care and early childhood development on a massive scale.
- A much larger national youth service and ensuring the linkage of industrial strategy with key youth development programmes in the form of an integrated Youth Development Strategy.
- Introduce more programmes that target the employment of women.

The moment we are marking here today is the continuation of our concerted efforts to respond positively to these milestone resolutions.

Batho ba Sekhukhune

As we have entered the new electoral cycle, let us all go to the polls in the first quarter of next year and cast our votes for the political leadership that has proven itself to be an agent of change for our people.

It is equally important to remember that we are gathered here today as a result of the sterling work done by our ANC led government in partnership with the people of South Africa. The ANC led government is responding appropriately to the pledge of a people's contract that binds all of us to pull every sinew of our body to halve unemployment and poverty.

In this same spirit of fighting the bilateral relationship between poverty and unemployment that we are gathered here today to celebrate an important day in the history of the communities in the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality.

The greening project we are launching will go a long way in the annals of history as the day the lives of the Greater Sekhukhune District Community was changed for the better. Once again this serves to confirm that the ANC has not faltered in implementing the promises in its 2004 election manifesto. We are approaching the next election with the same undertaking of ensuring a better life for all through our formidable contract with the people.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We also recognise the cordial intergovernmental relations between the National Department of Public Works, Greater Sekhukhune municipality and its local municipality in supporting the programme, and we do not forget the critical role

played by the State entities SANBI and IDT in ensuring a successful implementation of the project.

Our continuing effort to green the nation is consistent with the dream of ensuring that our people live eco-conscious lifestyles.

Finally, I think it is appropriate for us to applaud the sterling work done by the coordinating team for this momentous event. We really appreciate the good work done by colleagues in the Department of Public Works in organizing this event.

Thank you.