

**Minister of Public Works
Ms S Sigcau
8 April 2002**

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Launch of the Council for the Built Environment (CBE)

Master of Ceremonies
Members of Parliament
Leaders within the built environment
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the gathering

This morning we are gathered together to witness the birth of the long awaited Council for the Built Environment. We have come together to celebrate our achievement and to recommit ourselves to challenges that lie ahead.

The CBE is a product of partnership, a partnership between Government and all stakeholders in the built environment. This morning we are therefore celebrating our collective labour over several years.

1.2 The Process

The process towards establishing the CBE started in 1994 when the Built Environment Forum was appointed by my predecessor to review the regulation of the professions actively involved within the built environment. This review was initiated due to inherent shortcomings identified in the previous regulatory framework. These include:

- Lack of proper coordination between the professions in respect of national development priorities
- Inconsistencies in the execution of core functions of the different councils
- Inability of professionals to respond to innovations and to recognise new professions
- Exclusive governance by registered professionals, as manifested in their representation on the councils
- Insufficient and, often, no recognition of different categories within the professions.

Debates and discussion within the Forum provided the basis for the policy framework published in 1999. It is this policy framework upon which the legislation establishing the CBE is based.

Although the legislation was passed towards the end of 2000, the process to establish the CBE could only commence once all six councils were established.

2 The CBE

2.1 Functions

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The CBE Act, over and above equipping the CBE with functions and instruments to promote our desired outcomes, also enables us to mobilise the significant resources embodied within our professions to meet the challenges of our emerging democracy and of infrastructure delivery in all our provinces.

I would like to summarise some of the objectives that we all believe are fundamental to the purpose of the CBE:

- The CBE should ensure coordination with Government and between the different professions.
- It should advise Government on matters impacting on the built environment as a whole, and act as a communication vehicle between Government and professions.
- The CBE should ensure consistent application of policy by the different Councils.
- It should enable the recognition of new professions; and provide access to the professions by promoting registration of different categories within the professions.
- It should further promote a range of new priorities and act as an appeal body for affected professionals and aggrieved members of the public.

I must emphasise that the role of the CBE is more than just coordination. It must provide strategic leadership to all the Councils of the Built Environment Professions to:

- Advance national social and economic goals,
- Ensure the inclusion by the professions of previously disadvantaged individuals and groups in the short, medium and long term through collaboration with the universities and technikons, and
- Enhance the role of the professions and their moral and social responsibility in the ongoing transformation.

2.2 Accountability and Funding

The CBE is accountable to the Minister of Public Works and ultimately, to the South African society. Adequate resources will be mobilised to ensure the establishment and operationalisation of this Council. Government will support the establishment of the CBE. However, the CBE will mainly be funded through membership fees payable to each of the built environment professional councils.

3 Challenges

3.1 Establishing an agenda for the CBE and the Professions

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The establishment of the CBE is the beginning of a new phase in our epic journey towards the transformation and development of the built environment professions. The launch of the CBE today is not only a celebration of accomplishments, but also a commitment by all of us to address the challenges that lie ahead. To fulfil its role, the CBE must move swiftly to develop its business plan and establish its executive capacity.

Professional expertise in our country is an asset and should honestly be managed as the scarce resource of high value that it represents. The innate value of the built environment professions lies in their essential role and function in social and economic development. In this regard, the CBE must move quickly to formulate a development agenda for itself as well as for all the professions within the built environment.

In assisting the CBE towards this end, the Department commissioned the compilation of a book. This book, written by John Bizzell, an experienced built environment professional and published by Solo Collective, traces the evolution of the professions. It illustrates how the professions have responded to various world events and Government policies. The fundamental theme emerging from the book is the challenge for the professions to take a more proactive stance in their development and towards the shaping of the built environment.

3.2 Link between the CIDB, CETA and the CBE

Government has recently established the Construction Education and Training Authority, the (CETA) and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). If we as an industry are serious about the development of the professions and industry skills, it is crucial for these two bodies to start reaching out to the professions and the CBE.

3.3 The Built Environment Convention and the Sustainability Summit

The theme for the upcoming built environment professions convention to be held in Johannesburg in May this year is Sustainable Development. Sustainable development should be the cornerstone of the ethics and design principles applied by all professions.

The professions form the very basis to develop and sustain the basic infrastructure needs for both the rural communities and the highly sophisticated modern cities.

The built environment professions need to enhance their understanding of the needs, benefits and demands of sustainability. They also need to understand the role and value of an integrated approach to sustainability. To achieve this, the various disciplines need to work together to enhance unity and singularity of purpose within the built environment.

This upcoming convention provides a unique opportunity for all the professions represented here today to prepare joint contributions for presentation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg in September.

4 Conclusion

We have arrived together at base camp. Our partnership is intact. The immense task of implementation looms before us. We must pursue a sustainable systematic transformation, development and improvement path together that will be to the benefit of all the built environment stakeholders and society in general.

These members appointed to the Council for the Built Environment, collectively represent the necessary leadership capability, breadth of expertise and knowledge in the built environment while maintaining a reasonable balance in terms of competence, race, gender, and geographical composition.

I am sure that you will find the necessary assistance from both the industry and government as you lead the Council for the Built Environment to fulfil its mandate. I cannot stress enough the importance of the Council's major role in ensuring that the industry indeed responds as the national asset it should be, and be appreciated for that.

Allow me to conclude by thanking all the members of the Council for the Built Environment for making themselves available to serve on the CBE.

You have a challenging time ahead. May I also avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of our support and to wish you success.

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