

Minister of Public Works
Ms S Sigcau
12 October 2001

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Sod Truning Ceremony at Qamata Great Place

His Worship Councillor Mayor of Intsika Yethu, Chief Ngangomhlaba Matanzima,
Chief Sizinzo,
MEC of Public Works, Mr Masualle,
Executive Mayor of Chris Hani District Municipality, Bishop Mbethe,
Bishop Mboniso and
Distinguished guests.

Molweni Batembu. Today represents another milestone in our advance towards a better life for all. I am happy that this sod turning ceremony is taking place at the Qamata Great Place, the land belonging to the Western Tembuland King, K.D Matanzima (Aah! Daliwonga).

Qamata Great place is intertwined with the history of South Africa. Since the advent of the new democracy our people are uniting for change. The challenge of undoing the legacy of apartheid requires that institutions of representative democracy and traditional leaders act in unison. Indeed the challenge of united action for change confronts all our people.

It is no exaggeration to say this area bears the scars of the consequences of apartheid. This area is inhabited by about one million people who lack access to basic services. There are no recreational facilities, access to clean water or job opportunities.

Political freedom that is not complemented by economic emancipation is a hollow shell. Our democratically elected government through the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy seeks to uplift the rural poor. This strategy ensures that the poor are not objects of development but the drivers of transformation.

The perspective of government on development is firmly rooted in the Ubuntu philosophy. This philosophy teaches us to put people first in whatever we do. The Reconstruction and development programme captures this spirit of Ubuntu by identifying people as drivers of development.

The National department of Public Works through its Ilima programme otherwise known as Community Based Public Works Programme, is a reliable partner in the struggle to uplift the rural poor. Since the launch of this programme in 1996, the department has invested more than R1billion in the rural areas. By providing this infrastructure the department has laid a firm foundation to bridge the antithesis between urban and rural areas in the long-term.

The Community Based Public Works Programme was established as an initiative to contribute towards poverty alleviation, employment creation, community assets and infrastructure development. In the spirit of ISRDS, all our projects seek to promote social cohesion and progress. This involves a collective harnessing of public resources behind common goals and within a framework of mutual support.

To this end and most importantly, in the interest of a better life for all our people, we cannot overlook synergy between different spheres of government. These are, the National Government, the Provincial Government, the Local Government, The District Council and the Traditional leaders. I must express the Government's gratitude towards the cooperation that has been demonstrated by all in respect of the establishment of the QAMATA MPCC.

This centre for which we are turning this sod today, will be built at a cost of R5 million and will consist of a multi purpose hall, King's offices, conference room, dining room, lounge, kitchen and SMME workshops.

The construction work is scheduled to begin by 26 November and to be completed by November 2002. The implementation of the project will provide short-term job opportunities to local communities. Local people will be employed to do brick laying, carpentry, plastering, painting, plumbing electricity and general labour.

Thirty percent of the total budget will be spent on local labour, i.e., 50% women, 35,7 % of which will be heads of households, 35.7% will be youth and 7.1% will be the disabled. Albeit temporary, these jobs will contribute immensely towards job creation and therefore poverty alleviation. In this project my department has complied

with the injunctions of our constitution with respect to gender issues and the employment of persons with physical disabilities.

The SMME workshops will offer opportunities in cooking, sewing and other trades like handy craft.

By leveraging private sector resources, we will ensure that this project is viable in the long term.

The counseling centre will make a huge contribution

towards the fight against HIV/AIDS and the Youth Centre will deal with youth programmes to empower our youth with life skills to improve their quality of life. The resource centre/library will benefit the youth from neighboring schools and the community at large. President Mbeki's government is committed to the attainment of universal education for all our people. The truth of the matter is that illiterate people cannot access the benefits of freedom.

Today we are making our humble contribution to the renaissance of Africa. By proclaiming this century as the African century, we affirm ourselves as our own liberators. I challenge the community of Qamata to pledge themselves to nurture this project for posterity.

This Multi Purpose Centre is yours and should benefit all of you.

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