

Minister of Public Works
Mr J Radebe
13 October 1998

[Back](#)

Official Launch of the
KwaZulu-Natal Rural Anti-Poverty Programme
Izingolweni

President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
His Majesty, King Zwelithini
Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi
Premier Ben Ngubane
Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, MECs, MPLs
Ladies and gentlemen

Last night many areas of our Province were blessed with soothing rain. It has cleansed the air, refreshed our landscape and brought with it the source of life for our crops and plantations, our livestock and our people. Kwazulu-Natal is a Province rich in history, abundant in resources, and immensely proud of its people, traditions, religions and cultures. It is a diverse province. In remote mountain areas where people live and labour without much interference from the outside world. We boast a thriving African city in Durban, and a string of other important urban centres. We provide the nation with some of the best schools and tertiary institutions in the country. Our soil has nurtured great leaders and many, many ordinary citizens of incredible stamina, imagination and courage. And yet, under the deliberate influences of a colonial and a more recent apartheid past, it remains one of the poorest provinces in our beautiful land.

Mr President, we have journeyed here from many corners. The people gathered here today are drawn from around the whole area of Izingolweni. The gathering represents the whole people of our province, people who for too long have borne the brunt of poverty and inadequate access to resources. We are honoured by the presence of guests from beyond the borders of Kwazulu-Natal. Political, community and religious leaders have come to witness the official launch of our unity government's Rural Anti-Poverty Programme. Your presence today, Mr President, and the presence of our King Zwelithini, other royal guests and Kwazulu-Natal leaders such as the honourable Minister of Home Affairs and the Premier of the Province, add a special note of interest.

Valuable lessons have been derived from the earlier implementation of the Community-Based Public Works Programme [CBPWP]. As a result, the major thrust of the re-aligned CBPWP is sustainability of derived benefits to the communities as well as building institutional capacity of local government structures, community based organisations, non-governmental organisations and community based enterprises. This is Masakhane in action: co-operation from across the board within communities to ensure not only delivery of services and infrastructure, but also to ensure that they last a long time and in the process we unite and build communities.

The RAPP is designed to focus especially on the three poorest provinces: Northern Province, Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal. At the provincial level, the focus has been on sample areas drawn from the poorest regions of each Province. Hence, in Kwazulu-Natal, we have launched 60 projects in Izingolweni [including Shobashobane], Nongoma and Nseleni. All three of these areas suffer from extreme levels of unemployment, adult and youth illiteracy, an absence of many basic provisions, and a general lack of infrastructure.

Distinguished guests, today we celebrate the fruits of the constructive partnership that has arisen between the different spheres of government and the local community in the concrete delivery of these 60 projects. In a very real sense we are witnessing real democracy taking root. Through these projects, rural communities have participated in identifying, planning, co-ordinating and constructing projects. In our National Masakhane Focus Week this is of special relevance as local communities take responsibility for their own projects and utilise them to reshape their own destinies.

The implementation of these projects, when seen together with all the other important initiatives of national and provincial government, is a clear indication of our ANC/IFP Government of National Unity's full commitment to the challenge of addressing the community's massive unemployment figures, the poverty, crime, violence and particularly the need to uplift the poorest of the poor communities.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, independent and international commentators have reported publicly that the public works programme is the best operation they have witnessed to date in the whole of the developing

world. We are especially proud and pleased that they have acknowledged, too, that the projects have reached their targets of providing employment mainly for women and youth, and of reaching the poorest of the poor. Our objectives are being fulfilled each day that these projects are implemented. Communities all around our country have improved their lives and new opportunities have opened up for them. It remains critical that we extend programmes of this nature and for this reason government has increased its financial allocations for poverty relief in rural areas.

The roads open up access to the communities: ambulances can drive here now when needed; vegetables can be taken to market more easily. Relatives from town or other areas can visit more quickly. The garden and poultry projects provide better nutrition, and will help to overcome many problems of health. Schools clearly benefit our children. Day care centres assist children and mothers. The dairy and irrigation schemes assist our emerging farmers and provide greater opportunities. The markets make it easier for people to buy and sell. Bus shelters and taxi ranks protect our commuters from the heavy rain or the scorching sun. Multi-purpose centres provide venues for a whole range of different activities that communities wish to perform. Sports, arts and crafts facilities allow our people to exercise more fruitfully and to bring the wonderful examples of our craftwork to the attention of the world. All in all, the quality of life for people here improves in stages. The nation as a whole will benefit with the contributions of citizens who benefit from these schemes as well.

The success of the programmes has a great deal to do with the dedication and hard work of officials in my own and other departments. It has to do with the commitment of local officials and local communities and leaders. But most important of all, our programmes succeed because the people themselves mobilise their pride, their spirit of ubuntu, their ingenuity and skills to use the resources we make available to build their own lives together.

This Province in particular bears the scars of terrible violence. It's mothers weep for the children who are no more, cut down by curable diseases, malnutrition or crime and violence. The time has long passed that peace should reign supreme in every corner of this province. We sincerely believe that when we witness the actual fruits of working together for the benefit of all our people, regardless of political or other persuasions, we will come to learnt the benefits of the healing that comes with tolerance, unity, and community.

It is in that spirit of our human need for peace and security that I welcome you all here today. Let us go forward and build a common future. Let us ensure that the projects we launch today become monuments not only to the sometimes painful memories of the past, but become beacons of a co-operative and constructive future.

I thank you.

[top](#)