

**Minister of Public Works
Ms Stella Sigcau
17 November 2000**

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Launch of CBPWP Projects, Eastern Free State

Master of Ceremonies
President Thabo Mbeki
Premier for the Free State Province, Ms Winkie Direko
Her Worship the Mayor of Qwaqwa TRC, Me Mammie Leeuw
Chairperson of the Traditional Leaders, Me Mathokoana Mopeli
Other dignitaries
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are indeed honoured to have President Mbeki with us today at an official launch of the Community Based Public Works Programme projects. He has witnessed here in Qwaqwa how the people are working together to ensure a better life for all.

Today's occasion is a moment of celebration and reflection. When we cast our minds back, we draw the inescapable conclusion that a sure beginning has been made to overcome the legacy of apartheid, to fight poverty together and speed up change.

The Community Based Public Works Programme projects in the eastern Free State consist of three clusters, these being: Mangaung, Monontsha and Thaba Bosiu. Seventeen projects are involved, with a total government infrastructure investment of R7, 6 million in the area. The construction of these assets opens up job and training opportunities for 471 people - with a calculated impact on the lives of at least 2 355 people. The projects include community gardens, a multi-purpose community hall, sportsfields, footbridges, cr^ches, upgrading of roads and bridges, the building of access roads as well as a cave upgrade. The latter will have a longer-term effect of enhancing tourism potential in the area.

Even though the four projects we visited, the two footbridges, the cr^che and multi-purpose hall are small projects, it is the tremendous difference that these facilities will make in the lives of the community members, particularly our schoolchildren, that makes them important. These bridges will enable improved safe community access to a range of facilities and thereby promote economic and social interaction.

In keeping with the socio-economic objectives of government, the reconstruction and development of our country, these projects were created by choice of the communities. I trust, Mr President that all the involved parties have benefited in terms of exposure, decision-making, participation and opportunities to enhance their skills base as well as gain income from employment.

In total 103 people have been employed during construction on these four projects, of whom 57 were women. Indirectly, the contribution to households from this employment affects at least 500 people. Ten sustainable job opportunities are created by the cr^che and also the multi-purpose community hall should generate permanent jobs.

The cumulative effect of these projects will contribute in the long-term eradication of poverty by improved access and business opportunities as well as an improved skills base from where people are empowered to participate in the mainstream economy.

Certainly capacity building has taken place in the co-operative working of the national and provincial departments of Public Works, together with the Eastern Free State District Council who acted as implementing agent on these projects. This capacity will stand us in good stead for the continued integrated rural development strategy, where more line function departments will co-ordinate service delivery to communities.

We have been privileged indeed in the Community Based Public Works Programme to have the honour and opportunity to learn on the ground. These ongoing experiences enable us to entirely support the Integrated Rural Development Strategy, which you have initiated.

It is my privilege, Mr President, to introduce you at this occasion. You have come to your own people, who know who you are and what great strides you have taken in the liberation and transformation of this country. We thank you for your guidance and your exceptional leadership that acknowledges the plight of our rural communities, the poorest of the poor in our beautiful South Africa. Mr President we are looking forward to

listen to your message for us and we pledge our full support to the re-awakening of Africa's own power.

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