

**Minister of Public Works
Ms Stella Sigcau
18 October 2000**

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Opening of Thembalethu Community Safety and Security Centre, George

Master of Ceremonies
Minister of Safety and Security, Colleague Steve Tshwete,
MECs
Councillors
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Today is a happy day indeed that we can put into commission, through the formal hand over and official opening, this community safety and security centre at Thembalethu. It is a concrete example of the successful community oriented interaction between various departments of national, provincial and local government to indeed expedite the delivery of an integrated community facility.

The first of its kind in South Africa, this community safety and security centre brings easy, one point access to different services to the community. And to government as service provider, it minimises the duplication of activities, amenities, equipment and personnel - making it more cost effective all round.

In our young democracy the need is rife for facilities such as these to address the neglect and often deliberate oversight by authorities of the previous apartheid regime. Many communities find themselves in dire need (similar to the need experienced by Thembalethu residents before), of infrastructure from where basic public services can be provided, preferably at a one stop centre.

The Thembalethu Community Safety and Security Centre is a product of consultation with the community representatives and is in tandem with existing development frameworks for the area.

The delivery of this centre was done in keeping with policy and practice of the Department of Public Works in terms of targeted procurement, to give effect to Government's socio-economic objectives. What happened here is that community members formed part of the planning and delivery. A new capacity was brought to the community through participation in creating a much needed facility. Not only was the construction completed 2 months ahead of schedule, but 142 people from the local community, including women, were given employment. These people earned income for their households, and received on the job training and transfer of skills that will stand them in good stead for future opportunities. This is yet another reflection of our commitment to deliver needed infrastructure in support of our sister departments on time or before, quality and cost-effectively.

The Department of Public Works, in order to address the maintenance backlog on government buildings in an efficient and cost-effective manner and to provide accommodation of the required standard to client departments, is creating a National Forum comprising clusters of government departments with generic interests to prioritise national client departments' needs. This forum will meet twice annually and will have the authority to dictate as to how funds are prioritised.

In order to execute the efficient implementation of maintenance, we are utilising Dedicated Maintenance Contracts and Facilities Management Contracts and have reintroduced Annual Maintenance Contracts for day to day maintenance. This financial year we will be spending more than R300 million in rolling out dedicated maintenance contracts as well as introducing facilities management for the first time in government.

I do want to believe that this illustrates major progress in transforming our service delivery in the provision of suitable accommodation to government, and that it will impact positively in addressing the liberation of our formerly neglected societies. We continue to work for a better life for all. We know that the success of transformation lies in the process of being people-centred and people-driven.

It is together, as government and as population, that we should continue to harness a positive attitude and critical support towards the process of change. I trust that the community of Thembalethu will regard these facilities with pride and that you will effectively respect your responsibility to ensure that it continues to be a beacon of hope in your society. It is for the community to safeguard these facilities against vandalism and subsequent costly repairs. It is also for the occupants of the building to act against any perpetrators of disruptive and destructive behaviour or to call on the police to enforce proper conduct. Really, it has become time for our societies to cherish the infrastructure at their disposal.

Our rising quality of life also means that we want safety and security for all citizens to be a given. It is in this spirit that government has decided that while we are pursuing socio-economic change and improvement, it is critical that we implement an integrated national crime prevention strategy. Public Works contributes to this strategy by ensuring that accommodation infrastructure is made available to these government institutions within cost, time and quality criteria.

I do think that we all agree that peace and stability is a prerequisite for the successful transformation and adequate growth of the country.

It is my privilege to hand over to Minister Tshwete today, the new Community Safety and Security Centre here in Thembalethu.

I trust, Minister Tshwete, that these facilities will indeed improve service delivery to our community. That it will provide much needed basic social services within this area that lacked such services before. And that it will indeed enable service delivery in an environment that is secure, accessible, efficient and pleasant. I trust that these facilities will serve as a catalyst for the overall social and economic upliftment of the Thembalethu community and that it will contribute to the nurturing of further development.

I do know that this is an expression of the transformed way in which government invests in social infrastructure by establishing a new spatial, institutional and operational co-ordination of services to communities.

Funded through the RDP Fund, this R9,42 million complex provides accommodation for the:

SAPS:

A service point, offices for administration, SANAB and victim support, service areas, staff rest area, cells and parking.

Department of Justice:

Two courts (one for criminal and civil court sessions and one that can be used as a children's court), offices for administration, a cash hall, cells and public waiting areas.

Department of Correctional Services:

Offices, visitors' waiting areas, cells and service areas.

Department of Health:

Consultation and medical examination rooms, offices for assistance to victims of crime, training and counselling, first aid facilities and service areas.

Department of Welfare:

Offices and spaces for counselling as well as service areas where for instance, pensions can be paid out to elderly citizens in a proper environment.

I do trust that these facilities will be well used by the Thembalethu community and that service will indeed be the operative word.

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