

**Minister of Public Works  
Ms Stella Sigcau  
20 November 1999**

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## **Umngazi Farmers Scheme Hand-Over Function**

### **“THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SUCH AS ROADS, MARKETS, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AND VALUE ADDING LOCAL INDUSTRIES”**

Master of ceremonies (Mr W Mtakati), Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs (Thoko Didiza), MEC for Agriculture and Land Affairs (M Mamase), honourable guests, ladies and gentlemen .....

It is indeed a pleasure to share this milestone with you where much needed equipment is handed over to the project members of the Umngazi Farming Scheme.

You have asked me to speak on the government's role in infrastructure development, relating that to agriculture and rural development - particularly referring to roads, markets, small and medium enterprises and value adding local industries.

As the Minister of Agriculture is speaking to us directly hereafter, I will only refer to agriculture within the context of the Community Based Public Works Programme.

Let us then examine **the role of government in infrastructure development:**

**Government's mandate** can be summarised as three broad and interrelated goals, these are:

- To establish legitimate Government that is democratic and an effective instrument for change
- Nation-building and reconciliation
- Reconstruction and development.

Since 1994, the ANC-led government has expressed its great concern for the plight of our rural communities, communities often left in the cold by the apartheid era. Our legitimate government has been democratically re-elected and is represented at all three tiers of government. Our challenge is to deepen democratisation and empowerment of all these government structures in their interaction with the respective society and rural community structures to become fully effective instruments, serving the people in development.

As Government in South Africa, we believe that we have (and continue to do so) developed the best possible and most applicable policies, strategies and laws to address our major challenges and needs. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), set the parameters as an integrated programme, based on the people, that provides peace and security for all and builds the nation, links reconstruction and development and deepens democracy. It posed major new challenges in implementation in pursuit of the objectives of efficient, effective, responsive, transparent and accountable government at all three tiers to increase its capacity to deliver improved and extended public services to all the people of South Africa. It also implies and requires empowered citizens - which will be enhanced by the provision of infrastructure and services.

Government is committed to basic levels of infrastructure development, for instance in water availability, sanitation, access to public services, schools and clinics, road development and energy provision, to all citizens. All these will reduce the burden of poverty in rural areas, and allow rural people to use their time more productively and so contribute to the stimulation of local economies.

As Government, our task is to mobilise all our people, to create more and more opportunities, to ensure that the citizen's potential is given the fullest expression. We have to do this and more, sensitive to the feelings and expectations of the majority and minorities, those who already benefit from existing infrastructure and services, and those still deprived of such socio-economic stimulants.

Mere physical asset creation through infrastructure delivery will not solve the problem. Innovative integrated approaches, spanning socio-economic existence, are required to fully democratise our vigorous country. We believe that growth does not precede development, but that the way in which development is done, by actively involving people in addressing their own needs, not only benefits them through direct remuneration, but

contributes to building long term productive capacity and human resource development. Infrastructure and service delivery provides a link in integrating reconstruction, development, redistribution and growth.

### **The Rural Development Question**

The present Government views rural development in the light of a need to address the infrastructural backlog, poverty alleviation, job creation and local economic development. This necessitates an integrated rural development strategy so that Government rural development initiatives are implemented in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.

### **Government's initiatives**

#### *Co-ordination*

Cabinet has established a number of Clusters to ensure that there is coordination at the Ministerial level, e.g. Cabinet Employment Cluster of Ministers.

#### *Special Employment Programmes*

The Government has set up the Special Employment Programmes (SEP) that are being implemented to create job opportunities e.g. Community Based Public Works Programme and the Working for Water Programme.

#### *Targets*

Government rural development strategy targets areas and population groups of great need and vulnerability. The provinces of the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Northern Province have been prioritised in this respect, while youth, women and people with disabilities have been identified as special target groups.

### **Relationship with traditional leaders**

In terms of an integrated rural development strategy, the Government encourages participation of all stakeholders including the traditional leaders. Although delivery is Constitutionally the role of local government (namely the District and Regional Councils in respect of rural areas), traditional authorities continue to play a key role in the sustenance of development assets by virtue of their influence on communities. We ought to remember that traditional leaders are represented in the District and Regional Councils where they make valuable contributions in the identification of local priorities. Infrastructural delivery in rural areas is dependent on the support of traditional leaders, as they are the custodians of traditional land. The Government therefore has a policy of consultation with the traditional leaders.

### **The Department of Public Works and Rural Development**

In 1994 the National Department of Public Works developed a National Public Works Programme (NPWP) as an initiative to contribute to the alleviation of unemployment. The intention was that this programme would act as an enabling framework to regulate the terms under which public contracts are granted. A Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) was launched as a sub-component of the NPWP.

The Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) is a Government programme driven by the national Department of Public Works. The CBPWP is based on the principles of job creation, poverty alleviation and the creation of sustainable community assets. The programme execution relies strongly on partnerships - not only with regards to working with the local authorities, but also in working with the various line departments, non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

The Community Based Public Works Programme projects are categorised according to the following types: **Directly productive assets** (e.g. community gardens); **access to trade and services** (e.g. access roads); **labour saving** (e.g. crèches); **social cohesion** (e.g. community centres) and **environmental** (e.g. erosion prevention). The programme targets poverty pockets with emphasis on youth, the disabled and women as specific target groups.

### **CBPWP in Eastern Cape**

In the Eastern Cape, for the current financial year, the Department of Public Works alone has invested R168.6 m that created 12 511 job opportunities.

In the 1997-1998 financial year, the Department of Public Works allocated funds to the tune of R27 million for the implementation of roads, schools and agricultural projects in the Qumbu and Tsolo areas of the Kei District Council. These projects were completed in March 1999.

During the 1998-1999 financial year, the Department allocated R168,6 million - R88,6 million of this money went to the respective District Councils in the Eastern Cape and the remaining R80 million has been allocated for road projects linked to the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative (SDI).

An amount of R29 million was allocated to the **Kei District Council** and R13, 2 million has already been spent with **1929 job opportunities created**. Project clusters have been implemented at Vidgesville, Tombo, Tabase and Mqanduli clusters. The Vidgesville cluster is now complete and Mqanduli will be complete by the end of this month.

**Stormberg District Council** has the following clusters: Bolotwa, Kakamastone, McBride, Ilinge, St Marks and Lubisi Dam. Of the R16, 8 million allocated, R13,4 million has been spent to create job opportunities for **1462** people, 38 of whom are disabled.

For the **Wild Coast District Council**, the clusters are Magusheni, Lower Ntafufu, Clydesdale and Kromhoek. The District Council was given R23,9 and R9,6 million has already been spent to create **6659 employment** opportunities.

At the Amatola District Council, R24,9 million was allocated to implement the following clusters: Gatjana-Dwesa-Ntabakazi, Amatola Mountain East, Amatola Mountain West, Pedi-Fish River and Amatola Access Road. This Regional Council has made impressive progress and R15,6 million has been spent to create jobs for 2463 people.

#### *SDI roads*

An additional R103 million has been allocated from the Job Creation Fund for the implementation of the roads linked to the Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. An amount of R80 million will be spent on the Wild Coast SDI. Where access roads are concerned, part of this funding will affect three District Councils in the Eastern Cape namely Amatola, Kei and Wild Coast. Stakeholders have been engaged and contracts are now being finalised for these District Councils to be implementing agents. Business Plans have been submitted for approval and construction is due to start in January 2000.

These roads, for the Wild Coast SDI, apart from blading and patch gravelling of more than R11 million, are to be constructed mainly at Mkambathi, Lusikisiki, Hluleka, Coffee Bay, Willowvale and Port St Johns. The specific roads here at Port St Johns are the town entrance, where the CBPWP has allocated an additional R1 million, and access roads to Sicabeni and Silaka. There are, however, provincial roads which are being dealt with in conjunction with the Provincial Government.

Other CBPWP projects in this immediate area include the Mpande access road and bridge, a taxi rank and market stalls, Qandu multipurpose hall and sportsfield, work done at Lungisani and Nkwilini schools as well as the Bizana bridge at Tombo.

We are in process of fast tracking the finalisation of the implementation of CBPWP projects, primarily on existing clusters, within budget limitations, to ensure maximum development potential and sustainability.

Interesting possibilities are being considered in respect of community village centres and, in close cooperation with the Departments of Agriculture and Trade and Industry, Community Production Centres. Comprehensive conceptualisation and operational mechanisms still need to be fine-tuned before I will announce details on these developments.

In conclusion, I trust that you will agree that government is walking the talk on our commitment to rural development, infrastructure creation and economic stimulation. Our strong focus is on job creation, sustainable operation and contribution by the assets created to ensure ongoing economic activity within local communities and capacity building and empowerment of small and medium enterprises to ensure that previously marginalised people gain access to mainstream economic activity. This is done in a participative way, involving communities and all three tiers of government from inception, through construction and in

operation and management of the assets created.

Participants are encouraged to consider value adding to raw products as well as to take experience gained into the open market after delivery of the infrastructure.

Allow me to say finally:

If ever there was a time to become involved, be that in construction or any of the other activities opened up by government's dedication to rural development - that time is now. Let each one of us contribute to the best of our individual ability - not only will we gain as individuals, our community, our region and our country stands to gain from our participation.

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