

**Minister of Public Works
Mr J Radebe
21 August 1998**

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**Launch of the USAID Transkei Initiative
Tsolo Magistrates Court**

Honourable MC
The Honourable Minister of Justice
The Honourable Premier of Eastern Cape
His Worship the Mayor of Tsolo
The Honourable Director of USAID
Respected Traditional leaders
Respected workers
Distinguished guests and friends
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today in the Eastern Cape at the launch of this USAID Transkei Initiative. This is no ordinary occasion. Whilst we are gathered here to launch one of the most exciting joint initiatives between our government and USAID, we are also laying another firm stone in the building of our new democracy. The exciting improvements, new facilities, buildings and infrastructure which you see in this project as well as the other 18 magistrate courts and thousands of other projects around our beloved country, all of it is the fruit of the long and difficult struggle which ordinary women and men of South Africa have waged. It is the fruit of our new democracy. It is the fruit of the government, which you elected under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela.

In the same vein, I want to take this opportunity to express on behalf of government our sincerest appreciation and gratitude for the valuable partnership forged in this initiative with the USAID. Your continued support here and elsewhere is highly regarded and valued.

I wish to assure the new director for USAID, Mr. SW Rhodes that their contribution to this court upgrading project is even more valued in terms of strengthening the infrastructure of one of the most important institutions of our young democracy, namely our Justice system.

These projects are also a reflection of the commitment of our ANC led government to leave no stone unturned in addressing the fundamental needs and basic rights of all our citizens.

The untold hardship which people in this province, particularly in the former bantustan homelands of Transkei and Ciskei, had to endure as a result of the skewed apartheid policies is horrific. The derelict state of much of the public infrastructure bears testimony to the havoc, which was wreaked upon our communities. You will recall not too long ago the renovation and upgrading of 53 police stations which we had undertaken in this province.

Those projects concretely reversed the shocking conditions under which police officers, members of the public and inmates had to suffer, another testimony to the commitment of this government to redress the wrongs of the past and to strive towards integrated and sustainable development solutions.

As Minister of Public Works, I can therefore say with pride and conviction, that this project will make a measurable and positive impact on the lives of the women and men who daily pass in and out of its corridors, either to work or to seek recourse to our justice system.

I also want to pay special tribute to the officials of Public Works, Justice and USAID who have worked together tirelessly to make this project a huge success.

My department sees this project as a concrete opportunity to take forward its vision of Public Works towards the 21st Century. This vision is encapsulated in the dynamic policies, operational principles, work regimes and objectives of empowerment, which is reflected here in this project. Our aim is to strive for international best practice standards of service delivery to our client departments and the public at large.

In the challenging context of the legacy of underdevelopment and neglect which public infrastructure has historically suffered here and all over South Africa, the Project Management principles which we are applying ensures that the task is accomplished on an emergency basis in the shortest possible time, within the

strictest, disciplined and stringent application of budgetary obligations without in any way comprising the quality of the infrastructure delivered.

Though such a task may seem daunting and difficult to accomplish, the Department of Public Works as a leader in the development and practice of new construction delivery models, could draw on its valuable experience in its initial application of the pilot Rapid Delivery Procurement System(RDPS).

Through the RDPS we could meet the call of the South African Police Services to critically undertake the rebuilding of 53 police stations in the Eastern Cape which had fallen into a poor state as the result of years of gross neglect. The atrocious conditions in those 53 police stations rendered effective policing in those stations impossible. Besides the health and security risks which made working conditions for safety and security personnel unbearable, most of the cell blocks did not meet international health and safety standards. In many instances, the supporting infrastructure had totally collapsed.

We can now state with pride that the Rapid Delivery Procurement System, as a key alternative infrastructure delivery model of government delivered the goods on time, within budget and quality comparable with international best practice. In fact it performed better than the targets set. In real terms it reduced the excessive lead times in planning, design and tendering processes by nearly 50%. In terms of the tendering processes the RDPS has proven its ability to perform according to accepted international tendering procedures of being public, fair, transparent; open and competitive; responsible and accountable; competing at open market prices, without any risk of any cost premiums; able to accommodate the APP requirements.

I can therefore, without any fear of contradiction, say that the RDPS has won the support of the construction industry and has added tremendously to the management capacity of all who participated.

In the same way that we responded effectively to the call of the police here in the Eastern Cape, and concretely contributed to re-inforcing government's National Crime Prevention Strategy, we can with confidence today say to our partners in the Department of Justice and USAID, we will and are delivering a service and infrastructure that will meet the high standards which Public Works, and our government as whole, sets for itself.

The application of the RDPS for the upgrading of the 19 magistrates courts in the Transkei region will undoubtedly achieve the same measure of success and will effectively contribute to government's objectives of providing easy access to an effective and humane justice system. Through the generous donation of R11 million by USAID and the remainder of the project cost of R62 million provided by government, Public Works is project managing the refurbishment, renovation, addition and where necessary, the rebuilding of these magistrates offices.

Special attention is also being given to the improvement of security of the sites through fencing, provision of water and sewerage facilities, additional accommodation as well as the provision of proper toilet and ablution facilities.

I am pleased with the progress being made and as you can witness for yourself, the Tsolo Magistrates Courts are at present 90% complete, the projects at Libode, Cofimvaba, Elliotdale, Engcobo, Nqamakwe, Qumbu, Tabankulu and Willowdale are at present between 40 and 60% complete. The remaining ten courts at Maluti, Mount Frere, Mqanduli, Bizana, Lady Frere, Ngqeleni, Sterkspruit, Tsomo, Flagstaff and Umtata are at present being funded and will go out to tender shortly.

As with the pilot RDPS projects, I am confident that we will achieve our socio-economic targets and contribute meaningfully and substantially to the lives of the local communities.

I am told that already in terms of the participation in the projects under construction 56% of the contracts were awarded to prime local black contractors and a further 22% of the contracts were awarded to companies with 50% previously disadvantaged individuals(PDIs). In real terms, local sub-contractors contracted for plumbing, electrical and tiling contracts will get 20% of the total contract value. Of the R62,5 million it is envisaged that R35 million will be paid to local Affirmable Business Enterprises(ABEs).

Our government is therefore demonstrating its commitment through concrete delivery that will impact on the lives of ordinary South African women and men. Through the development of critical infrastructure we are creating economic opportunities for all sectors of the emerging market to contribute to the mainstream economy and to practically engage in the growth, reconstruction and development of the South African economy.

In this manner we are beginning to tackle the horrible legacy of unequal and uneven development of our peoples and urban and rural economies.

I wish to assure you that our ANC led Government remains committed to its goal of building a better life for all. Through the participation of local communities in these projects, we have shown our unfailing commitment to extend the victory of our political democracy to the ultimate victory of the democratisation of our economy. The Eastern Cape as a strong bastion of democratic struggle, must also take forward this challenge of uplifting the socio-economic well-being of all our communities.

On behalf of my Department of Public Works, I wish to assure you of our continued partnership in that endeavour.

Finally, allow me once again to express our gratitude to USAID for the spirit of positive partnership with which they have come on board in this project. I am confident, that the commitment expressed here is also manifested elsewhere as we chart our course towards the renaissance of our country, the Southern African region and the African Continent as a whole.

I thank you !

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