

**Minister of Public Works**  
**Mr J Radebe**  
**22 April 1999**

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## **Hand-Over of the Qumbu/Tsolo Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) Projects Qolo**

### **Ceremonial Greetings**

Ladies and gentlemen: It is said that "combating poverty is not only about overcoming the historical lack of resources, it is also about having the resolve and determination to climb out of the abyss." Centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid neglect has rendered many parts of our country desolate, undeveloped, underdeveloped and languishing in poverty. It is this legacy of despair in our deep rural areas that your ANC-led government has since 1994 transformed into hope for a better future.

It is this new foundation for a better life for all that we come to build on here in Qumbu and Tsolo today. Through your direct involvement in the creation of these community assets, you have demonstrated that you are prepared to be our partners in government so that we can stand together, fighting poverty. Despite the horrid policies of the past, and in particular the policies of the former homeland rulers of deliberating neglecting the Qumbu area, you, the people of Qumbu have now taken your destiny into your own hands.

Over the past five years numerous other communities throughout the length and breadth of the country have similarly joined in partnership with government creating various infrastructure projects that have dramatically improved their quality of life. Since 1995 through the Community Based Public Works Programme, my department has invested more than R600 million in more than 1600 projects. These projects are providing job opportunities to more than 200 000 people. In the 1997/98 financial year the Department of Public Works was allocated R85 million out of the Poverty Alleviation Fund. We targeted three provinces with the highest density of poverty pockets namely the Eastern Cape, Northern Province and Kwazulu Natal. The Eastern Cape was allocated an amount of R27 million. Qumbu and Tsolo were the two areas that were earmarked due to the extent of poverty found in these areas that manifested in violence and crime.

I am also pleased to inform you that of the R274 million allocated in the 1998/99 financial year more than R80 million has been allocated to the Eastern Cape. Those poverty pockets that we have not yet reached can be assured that we are working hard with your provincial government and local authority to ensure that such areas are identified. We will not rest until poverty, suffering and hardship is uprooted from every corner of our land. The projects that will be constructed from these additional funds further demonstrate our government's commitment to serving you and meeting your basic needs. I must everyone present here today to continue to work together to fight poverty.

Of the 53 projects that we are handing-over today in the Eastern Cape, 25 are in Qumbu comprising:

- 36% Access roads
- 28% School buildings
- 20% Environmental protection
- 12% Agricultural infrastructure and
- 4% Social cohesion

In Tsolo, there are 28 projects composed of the following breakdown:

- 46% Access roads
- 25% School buildings
- 18% Environmental protection
- 7% Social cohesion
- 4% Agricultural infrastructure

I am told that in the surrounding areas that I will be visiting and handing over projects, there are 8 projects with 2 in Qumbu (Machibini road and Buhle Belizwe Primary School) and 6 in Tsolo (Malepelepe and Kugubengxa roads, Ntshiqo and Mdibanisweni erosion protection, Mbutho irrigation and Nombizo Primary School). The total value of these is R2,6 million. These projects created 429 jobs during construction. It is

significant to note that the higher percentage of projects is access roads as I have indicated earlier on in the breakdown of projects above. These roads have now created easy access for people to other areas of service like schools and clinics. There is also open community mobility which has led to other spin-offs linked to the Spatial Development Initiatives and Industrial Development Zones.

These productive assets are the pride of the communities that built them through their own toil and sweat. I want to tell those who allege that government has not delivered. Come here and see these projects and ask these communities if they have benefited from government delivery or not.

We can say with confidence that through these projects we have generated employment during construction of assets. This has had tremendous spin-offs for the local economy by creating productive assets with a potential to generate sustainable income.

Ask the communities of Hlabisa and Dondotha in Kwazulu Natal. Ask the communities of Ha-Mulima, Tshipise, Ha-Ramogale in the Northern Province. Ask the communities here in the Eastern Cape at Malepele, Machibini, Buhle Belizwe, Ntshiqo, Mbutho and Mdibanisweni. I am sure they will all agree that this government is laying the foundations for a better life providing communities with renewed hope for the future.

One of the worst injustices that the apartheid state and its homelands inflicted upon our people for decades is the failure to provide adequate infrastructure that enable individuals and communities to eke out an honourable and dignified living.

Our government has invested substantially to address this glaring disparity. Since 1999 we have spent billions of rands upgrading the living standards and quality of life of the poorest segment of the population by providing basic community level infrastructure. This includes the provision of improved access to trade opportunities e.g. access roads, bridges. Directly productive assets such as agricultural food lots, irrigation ensure food security and overcome the evil effects of malnutrition. Labour saving projects such as day care centres enable working mothers to have peace of mind whilst contributing to the wealth of the family and the productivity of the community.

Through the provision of social infrastructure such as multi-purpose halls and sports facilities we provide a wide spectrum of the community with opportunities for recreation and various forms of social engagement. Our youth can develop the confidence and discipline that organised sport imparts. Perhaps here from the sportsfields of the Eastern Cape that we have built, will emerge the Lucas Radebe's, Josiah Thugwane's and Dingaan Thobela's of tomorrow.

In places such as Mdibanisweni we have been able to contribute to the protection of the environment through an erosion protection project. By caring for our environment we ensure that future generations will have a natural heritage that they can remain proud of.

Ladies and gentlemen: Allow me to pay tribute to all the community organisations, traditional leaders and local government for their outstanding role in delivering these projects. You have demonstrated that our people are our most valuable resource.

Our government has therefore identified capacity building as one of the key goals for developing a winning nation. We are therefore intensifying our efforts in building the capacity of individuals, developmental organisations and local government structures to manage development ventures. I was with Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki on Saturday at the site of the R245 million new Kokstad Prison. One of the most important things that he re-iterated is the responsibility that each and every one of us has to ensure that they do their bit to make South Africa work. We can only do this if we collectively enhance our skills base and capacities.

It is also significant that through the implementation of these projects greater co-operation between departments has developed contributing substantially to our quest for improved co-operative governance. The continued partnership between communities and government is also a positive sign that collectively we will overcome the challenges facing us.

That co-operation must also be extended to other areas of our lives such as rooting out crime and corruption; strengthening the moral fabric of our society and rekindling the RDP of the soul.

With your co-operation we will succeed in fulfilling the task you entrusted to us in 1994 to create a climate of peace and dignity to ensure that all South Africans enjoy a better quality of life. We will not waver in executing

your mandate but rather intensify our efforts through dedicating the resources for accelerating delivery.

This accelerated delivery is already evident in a number of areas. I have already mentioned the R80 million poverty relief funds that we have committed to the Eastern Cape for the 1998/99 year. We are already in the planning process for the new poverty relief allocations for the 1999/2000 financial year. In addition, my Department has undertaken substantial capital investment in this province since 1994. Over the past five years we have invested in infrastructure to the extent of R319 million. Nationally our targeted procurement since 1995 amounts to more than R2,1 billion. We have increased the access of black contractors to state construction contracts from less than 3% in 1994 to 28 % at present. In a very concrete way we are therefore reshaping the landscape of opportunity in South Africa. We are committed to continue empowering our people and ensuring that each and every South African has access to opportunity.

In conclusion, I want to say that the Public Works programmes that I have mentioned here, alongwith all other government programmes and initiatives, will lay a solid foundation for a better quality of life for all our people. I want to re-iterate that South Africans from all walks of life, government, the private sector, business, community based organisations and the unions must all work together in strengthening national partnerships to build a winning nation.. Together, we can fight unemployment, crime and poverty. Together, we can accelerate the pace of change. Together, we can build a better life for all.

I Thank You !

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