

**Minister of Public Works**  
**Ms S Sigcau**  
**23 October 2001**

[Back](#)

## Handing over of the King Sandile Chambers

Master of ceremonies, Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe  
Deputy President, Mr Jacob Zuma  
Premier of the Eastern Cape, Rev Makhenkesi Stofile  
King Maxhobayakhawuleza Sandile  
Members of the Executive Council  
Traditional leaders  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all.

A day such as this gives us the opportunity to reflect on some fundamental aspects of being a South African citizen.

Before 1994 some of our people, who have lost all hope, were made to believe, almost to a point of accepting, that it was natural for our people to be poor. Successive colonial governments, including the apartheid National Party government which ruled for almost 50 years, perpetuated poverty through racist laws and racially discriminatory social planning systems which compounded poverty and entrenched hopelessness.

Such laws stripped our people of their dignity. Thus the whole fight or struggle by our people was for an equal and a just society where there would be no racial divide, but a society united in purpose towards the advancement of all its people.

President Mbeki's government, our government, is committed to reversing the hardship caused by apartheid. Our presence here today is to show beyond any measure of doubt the commitment by our government to uproot poverty and bequeath a better life for all, particularly for the poor and historically disadvantaged.

We all know of the colonial wars in which our people, led by their traditional leaders, fought hard not to be driven away from their land and everything that they held dear. They were thus on the forefront of the struggle. That they were defeated because of superior weaponry is now history.

We shall always salute our past Kings and leaders for the role they played in those difficult times.

One of the ways to bring back human dignity and to fight poverty is to build infrastructure where none existed before and to rehabilitate existing infrastructure where it fits in with our objectives. Our strategy includes bringing services and information and help closer to the people. As government we are doing it. Others are dreaming it.

We want to move to a situation when we shall say : Gone are the days when our people suffered from a

- Lack of choices
- Lack of access to services
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of resources to change those conditions responsible for poverty in the first place and the subsequent stripping of human dignity.

Many rural areas and many urban black townships still experience these syndromes of poverty as listed above. Hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, homelessness, diseases including HIV/Aids and Tuberculosis persist to ravage our children, youth and the elderly who are the repositories of our African culture and good moral values.

It was this stark reality of the other side of South African life that confronted our new government in 1994. It is the very same reality today that undermines our democracy and threatens our new-found freedoms.

Delivery for a better life remains deeply entrenched in our strategy for the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development.

Coming to the project that we are proud to be launching today - I must say that it would have been a great oversight on the part of government which recognizes traditional leadership if it would not have seen the conditions under which these leaders operate - A complete lack of facilities to suit their status.

King Sandile first approached me while I was visiting Bisho as the then Minister for Public Enterprises. He told me about plans of how he and his people wanted this area to be developed. "What an impossible task", I thought then.

When I became Minister for Public Works, I realized that part of our programme was to deal with projects for social cohesion. The halls, market stalls, you name them.

As a department we initially thought we would build a hall as we were doing elsewhere. It however became clear that for any King such a hall would become a mockery without proper Chambers. Thus the decision by government to build facilities such as this one.

Xa sasisithi mayibuye iAfrika - xa sele ibuyile kufanele ukuba kwizizwe ngezizwe eziphethwe ziKumkani zethu, kube lapho kanye apho siqala khona ukubuyisela isidima kubantu bakowethu. Sisiqalo esi. Wakhe wayibona phi iKumkani enesingxungxo kwiOfisi zakwaRulumente - ingabi nezayo phakathi kwabantu bayo. Ingabinayo nendawo enesidima yokwamkela indwendwe zayo. Kufanelekile ukuba kubekho umahluko phakathi kwethu as the ANC led government and the apartheid government of the past. Sithi ngokwenza kanje ibuyile iAfrika!

[top](#)