

**Minister of Public Works
Ms S Sigcau
26 November 2002**

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Official handover of Mogwase Clean and Green Community Park

Master of Ceremonies, Mr T Mothuloe
The Executive Mayor of Bojanala District Municipality, Ms G Tema
The MEC for Public Works, Mr TJ Thibedi
Moruti S Thupayakgosi
Kgosi M Molopyane
Dr V Maphai
Members of the Local Council
Officials from Public Works and Independent Development Trust
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

The economic and social planning carried out during apartheid was designed to take away the dignity of the majority of the people. Under the apartheid system, black people were targeted for forced removals, often relocated from fertile lands and resettled in dry and barren areas where decent life was impossible.

Many watched helplessly as part of their natural environment disappeared. Rivers and streams became carriers of toxic material as the industries spew deadly substances often with impunity. In desperation, our people began to chop down trees to use as fuel. Apartheid had managed to divorce people from their environment.

In the urban areas the experience was the same. Our townships lacked proper road networks. Untarred roads meant the erosion of soil each time rain and winds came. Our drainage systems failed to cope as they were regularly clogged by mud and debris. Children literally grew up in the streets, using busy roads as playgrounds owing to lack of safe designated community parks and amusement centres for the kids.

Lack of capacity at municipality level meant that skills such as horticulture and landscaping were absent, resulting in township urban planning which was devoid of greening (i.e. no trees and parks). Our urban communities became catacombs of despair and frustration. Commercial centres and essential government services were located many kilometres away from the communities they were supposed to serve.

Since 1994 with the fall of apartheid, many South African institutions, including industries, became exposed to international competition and globalisation. The result was massive retrenchments brought by the inability of many organisations to compete at a global level and still make profits.

During the briefing, it was brought to my attention that the people of Mogwase are familiar with the situation I have just described above. Your area, I am told, is experiencing serious problems of unemployment as a result of the closure of the local industries like AECL and the restructuring of the casino industries. Even Sun City which is the main employer has had to shed a lot of job opportunities, swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

The launch of Clean and Green Programme at Mogwase was intended to provide a nucleus for the development of solution to the problems we identified above - these being poor environmental management, lack of jobs and the incapacity of the local municipality to provide for some services.

Clean and Green Programme is a special project within the Department's Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). CBPWP is a poverty alleviation initiative of the Department of Public Works and a main contributor to the Integrated and sustainable Rural Development Programme of government. The aim of Clean and Green is to address the social development backlog in previously disadvantaged communities, in particular where profound shortages of waste collection systems or services and a lack of environmental awareness were prevalent.

The objectives of Clean and Green are:

- To capacitate selected under-resourced local authorities in matters of environmental management and

waste control i.e cleaning / removing waste from households and greening our communities by planting trees and establishing parks.

- To break the deadlock between the local authorities and the communities with regard to the payment of rates and services which eventually lead to environmental degeneration (build up of litter and waste) ie. encourage people to play for services, by providing services.
- To promote public private partnerships in public service delivery.
- To create jobs and other economic opportunities for the communities e.g. recycling as an economic activity.

In 1999/2000 the Department of Public Works voted a budget of R10 million for the national launch of the programme. The Department was joined in the initiative by the South African Breweries who made available R2 million to the programme, thereby strengthening the concept of partnership between the government and the private sector.

To date all the provinces, with the exception of Northern Cape and Mpumalanga, have had the programme launched in their regions. I personally launched projects at Wallacedene and Grabouw in the Western Cape, also at Alice and Mount Frere in the Eastern Cape as well as at Mtubatuba near Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal.

It is an honour to be among the people of Mogwase today. This visit marks our second trip to the NorthWest Province in the calendar year 2002. Earlier this year (May), the Department of Public Works, again through the Community Based Public Works Programme, launched poverty alleviation projects to the Bakgatla of Kgosi Maubane and Kgosi Mathibe at Thulwe near Hammanskraal. Almost 10 000 people from areas of Moretele, Opperman, Potoana, One and Ten, Dan House, Thulwe and Prieska, were positively affected.

The Department of Public Works invested R600 000 through the Moses Kotane Local Municipality to improve the capacity of the Municipality to provide cleaning services meanwhile creating jobs and other economic opportunities to the communities of Mogwase and Moruleng.

According to the briefing I have got, the project at Moses Kotane consist of cleaning and greening activities as well as the establishment of two community parks and a playing amenities also for the community. The project has created 18 jobs for the local community and improved cleanliness levels of the affected areas. Each employed person, normally referred to as one person contractor is expected to collect refuse from ± 300 households per week. A local member of the community has been contracted to collect and dispose off waste. This is a business opportunity for a small and an emerging entrepreneur.

On the other hand, the greening activity is aimed at planting trees as well as laying grass in the public areas to regenerate some vacant plots which had become degenerated due to neglect. The importance of establishing community parks cannot be overemphasised. Children will have areas to play in and be safe from hazards posed by playing in the streets.

Speaking about community parks, I learned with appreciation that the landscaping of the park was done by a local woman contractor. This is not suprising. Over the centuries women have been visionaries - designing and erecting houses and by implication building communities. They also tilted the fields and decorated homes - both interior and exterior decorations. Public Works programmes in general but Community Based Public Works Programme in particular are replete with examples of women who excel in areas thought to be the exclusive domains of men.

In 2001/2002, the Community Based Public Works Programme created 562 community projects in the country and gave job opportunities to 25 124 people of which 10 627 (42%) were women. Currently there are construction related contracts in excess of R50 million awarded by the Department of Public Works and executed by women contractors as part of the Department' strategy to deliberately empower women and advance them in the construction industry. These contracts include the R19 million and R3 million repair and renovation jobs undertaken by women at Leeuwkop and Krugersdorp prisons, respectively.

I like to thank the Independent Development Trust for their role. They have assisted the Department of Public Works to manage the Clean and Green Programme for the past two years as Programme Implementation Agency for the government. Apart from performing secretarial support to the Provincial Coordinating Committee, they (IDT) also manage, monitor, evaluate and report on the progress of the project.

Big business continue to have a bigger role to play in community development and nation-building. It is for this

reason that we appreciate the partnership we have formed with the South African Breweries in the development of Clean and Green. Through co-operations such as this one, the vision of massive public works programmes as alternative job creation models are possible. Public Works Programme have the ability to create jobs meanwhile directly improving the quality of life of the people. The two World Wars and their resultant destruction proved the ability of public works programmes to reconstruct the society and redevelop the economy. We have faith in our ability to do the same following the wanton devastation caused to our people and the society by the apartheid regime.

Our government would achieve far less without the involvement and the support of the community, including traditional leadership. We encourage people to be proactively engaging with government, in a spirit not of begging but of seeking opportunities to be empowered. Empowerment precedes development, and development precedes prosperity.

Public awareness is essential in sustainable environmental management. And schools as institutions of continuous learning, are also encouraged to help spread community knowledge about the intentions and actions of government to create a better life and push back frontiers of poverty. I thank local schools for their role, assisting to introduce children, as future leaders, in issues of environment and its management.

Many words of thanks go to the people of Mogwase for welcoming me as a representative of government to their community. I represent a government you elected to improve your lives and I stand here today to testify with you to the actions of your government to create a better quality of life for us all.

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