

**Minister of Public Works  
Ms S Sigcau  
27 September 2003**

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**Anointed Voice of Africa Ministries' 20th anniversary celebrations**

The Bishop of the Church, Dr Joseph Kobo  
The Programme Director: Chief MN Mgcotyala  
Her Majesty Queen Bongoletu Ndamase  
Councillor Qoyo  
Chief BM Gxaba  
All local and international delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

The history of the church in the development of communities is well documented. Our struggle for political freedom owes its success among others, to the role of the church in conscientising people and isolating the system of apartheid as heretic and unjust. In fulfilment of the slogan of this church, which reads: "Taking the Church to the People", I need to remind you all that the Church has always dwelled amidst the people, bringing them hope, faith, strength and development.

In a post-apartheid South Africa, the religious movements, including Christian churches, have been identified to lead a campaign of moral regeneration as espoused by government. Politically steered by the Deputy President, Mr Jacob Zuma, moral regeneration encapsulates the involvement of civil society in moulding the moral character of South Africans to live a just and responsible life, as has always been the case in our history.

On this day of your 20th anniversary, let me take this opportunity to congratulate Anointed Voice of Africa Ministries on your long journey travelled. Through your trials and tribulations, I hope you have developed practical experiences and other case studies to share with, and visible, more audible to contribute your resources to the reconstruction and development of the communities.

Building on the initiatives already taken by African leaders to create a platform in the world out of which Africa needs its voice to be heard, let that voice be amplified through forums such as this church today. President Mr Thabo Mbeki, wants to be rest assured in the knowledge that all South Africans are behind him, rallying behind his ideals to give a voice to Africa in matters of international affairs. Unselfishly, the President had dedicated his entire political life to bring peace and development to Africa, to soothe the wounds inflicted by injustice; and to lay foundation stones for a morally rejuvenated and politically responsible continent.

As churches we are expected to emulate and lend support to these efforts which are in essence the domain of the church. At this stage, I like to commend the Anointed Voice of Africa Ministries for planting seeds of development through infrastructure building among our communities. I have noted with pride your plans to build a R5 million infrastructure as part of your "road map to rural economic development" which will include "building of a shopping complex a housing and primary health care programme" as part of your church's commitment to minister to all.

As a Minister of Public Works, my Department as part of the ANC government, has invested more than R1, 4 billion since 1998 to build basic but essential infrastructure in the rural areas of South Africa to turn the tide of poverty. We are targeting the poorest of the poor in the rural areas of Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, North West and Free State. The results are that in excess of 3000 community-owned assets have been built, yielding job opportunities for more than 150 000 people.

In the Eastern Cape only, my Department invested 70 million in 2002/03, creating 173 physical projects and stimulating 8 500 job opportunities targeting mainly youth and women.

This includes the construction of additional structures as part of improving Great Place in the Eastern Cape and South Africa in general. We acknowledge that the institution of traditional leadership has collaborated with the church, for centuries, to bring about a better quality of life through ministry, education, cultural and moral leadership.

Recently we opened a R8,5 million Police Complex at Butterworth, followed shortly by a R21 million Community Safety Centre at Centane. This Centre is a one-stop crime control facility and is one of the

Centres found in every province to prevent crime, punish criminals and ensure safety and security of our communities.

Without the empowerment of youth and women primarily, our political freedom is incomplete. Our history is inundated with women figures who struggled, sacrificed and served their communities. Today's ceremony is in honour of women, unsung heroes who have achieved great strides for the advancement of development. Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of Christ and others, displayed ingenious leadership and innovation. Their stories gave the Bible a balanced account of the role of women in spiritual regeneration and moral regeneration.

In 1999, the Commission on Gender Equality concluded that the mining and construction industries were the two industries least likely to offer empowerment opportunities to women. Ironically, this was at the same time that both industries received women leaders in the form of Minister of Public Works (Ms SN Sigcau) and Minerals and Energy (Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka)

Five years down the road, my Department has 20% of women at senior management level and 43% overall. As a procurer of goods and services, we have 257 women contractors registered on our database to supply goods and services through government tenders. On 09 August 2001 we announced a deliberate intervention to accelerate the quantity and quality of construction-related projects to be awarded to, executed and managed by women-owned enterprises. By 2002/2003 more than 79 projects worth R189 million had been awarded to women and many successfully managed. These projects included repair and maintenance of police stations and prisons, once again proving that women are builders of facilities endowed with moral rehabilitation and character correction. At Kutama Sinthumule Private Prison, in Limpopo, women comprise 50% of the shareholders. It is another milestone we are proud of, considering that it was my department's brainchild to procure and facilitate the building of that prison.

As government, we wish Anointed Voice of Africa Ministries success in their journey ahead. It is only through the practical examples such as the one demonstrated by your church that we can truly lend a hand to build anew our societies. Government initiatives such as Vukuzenzele and Letsema require the civil society to join a new struggle for economic growth, social development and moral regeneration.

I thank you.

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