

Minister of Public Works
Mr J Radebe
30 June 1998

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Launch of the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme
Ga-Mothapo, Ramogale Village, Northern Province

Honourable MCs
Respected Kgoshigadi Mathapo and all traditional Leaders
The Honourable Mr Collins Chabane. MEC for Public Works
Respected Guests
Members of the Media
Respected Workers and friends
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am extremely pleased to be with you today on the occasion of the launch of the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme projects here in the Northern Province. The launch of these projects once again demonstrates our ANC led government's commitment to improving the quality of life of all our people. Through these projects we have shown that ordinary women and men can make a difference in shaping the destiny of our nation. In particular, I want to pay tribute to the manner in which local communities have worked in partnership with government at the local, provincial and national levels. I believe that it is only in strengthening that partnership of co-operative governance that we can begin to address the stark legacy of skewed development inherited from the Apartheid era.

The Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP), of which the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme is a key strategy, aims to contribute towards sustainable poverty alleviation in rural areas through integrated rural development. This requires that communities participate in the processes of planning and identification of projects; that there is increased co-operation between various government departments at various levels in project planning and delivery and that resources are allocated according to development priorities.

The Community Based Public Works Programme also aims at enhancing social and economic equity by focussing on human development, particularly rural women.

In order to achieve this the CBPWP creates jobs in rural areas through the delivery of much needed productive community assets. The main focus of these assets is to kick-start the local economy by providing opportunities for sustained income generation. Experience has shown that the technical and managerial skills which are transferred during project delivery will enable those who have these skills to participate in other projects of a similar nature.

At the beginning of this year I announced the plans for the implementation of the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme. This was after Public Works was allocated a total amount of R85 million from the Poverty Relief Fund by Cabinet. In order to maximise the impact of this poverty alleviation initiative, we adopted a conscious and deliberate strategy to target the three poorest provinces. We thus directed our resources to the Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Great Northern Province, particularly focussing on women and women headed households.

Nationally the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme is delivering 12,800 temporary and 3,840 sustainable jobs. Of this 8320 will be women which represents 65% of the target group. The impact of this will also have a multiplier effect as other economic spin-offs are generated.

This means that in the Northern Province, the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme will create a total of 3,733 jobs of which 2,427 will be women. With the current level of project progress about 600 jobs have already been created, about 224 here in Ga-Ramogale, 122 in Ga-Modjadji/Bolobedu, 137 in Ga-Mamabolo and 49 in Ha Mulima. and the rest of our job creation targets will be met as the projects progress and unfold. What is also significant is the fact that through the revival of small-scale agriculture and community entrepreneurship, 1200 sustainable jobs will be created.

Our Provincial launch here today in the Northern Province is thus the first significant step in taking forward these initiatives and targets. I will be returning to the Great North to launch individual projects later in the year as they reach completion.

The CBPWP / Rural Anti-Poverty programme also comes at an opportune time. It comes at a time when

government and its social partners gear themselves for the Job Summit. As many of you might have heard, government has already released to the public its key proposals on creating jobs-the *Employment Strategy Framework*.

A central recognition in the Framework is the realisation of the role and contribution of Special Employment Programmes. Public Works and its CBPWP Rural Anti-Poverty programme, together with other Government initiatives such as Welfare Programmes, Municipal Infrastructure Programme, Land Care Campaign, Working for Water and Clean and Green Campaign will play an increasingly significant role in the short to medium term in addressing unemployment. These Special Employment Programmes will be dramatically expanded over the next five years and will pay greater attention to the finance stream, improved co-ordination of activities, sustainability, training and the contribution to local economic activity.

The Rural Anti-Poverty programme is thus not happening in isolation, but rather as an integral part of Government Strategy aimed at creating jobs and overcoming poverty.

Thus when we look to the future, and the Jobs Summit in particular, we look with hope and confidence. We, as Public Works, will intensify through our programmes, the creation of work and productive assets in the rural areas of our country.

This is our primary responsibility, and as the National Department responsible for the National planning and co-ordination of public works policy and programmes we remain committed to this task. In our interaction with the various spheres of government, we will ensure that these policies and programmes are implemented in a manner that contributes to the attainment of government's objectives.

As Minister of Public Works, I also wish to emphasise that we should guard against any potential for fragmentation as the Employment Strategy specifically calls for greater co-ordination between the various programmes of government at all levels.

It is for this reason that our programmes puts strong emphasis on clustering. It attempts to deal with development in an integrated manner. A single programme, whether it's Public Works, Working for Water or Municipal Infrastructure (MIP) will not achieve all the desired results on its own. We need to combine our efforts to have maximum impact on this scourge called poverty.

I must also emphasise that the role of Provincial Governments and local government is critical to the success of the Rural Anti-Poverty Programme (RAPP) and Special Employment Programmes more generally. It is here that I as Minister of Public Works wish to encourage the partnership that has developed between National, Provincial, local governments, communities and traditional leaders. Let us build on these partnerships with the understanding that we are building a better life for all our people irrespective of where we are located.

I also want to appeal to local communities who have benefited through the creation of these assets to take ownership of it and ensure that it is put to maximum use. Let us in the true spirit of Masakhane, all build together, by caring for these community assets and contributing to the development of our local economy.

Finally, the projects which we launching here at Ga-Mothapo-Ramogale, an access road, spring protection, Community Gardens, Sports facilities, a multi-purpose hall, a brick-making yard and additional classes all have the potential to contribute to the upliftment of the surrounding areas. These projects individually and collectively as a cluster have more value than merely in bricks and mortar. It has brought you together as a community and has given you the opportunity to shape the future lives of our children in all the surrounding areas.

Let us ensure that we continue to build on this important dimension in our war against poverty. Our greatest weapon in our struggle against the scourge of poverty is the resilience of our people. We have triumphed over the scourge of Apartheid, let us now continue our collective efforts to eradicate the scourge of poverty.

On behalf of government, I wish to assure you that we remain your willing partners and we remain committed to the task of Reconstruction and Development of South Africa which you have entrusted us with.

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