



**public works**

Department:  
Public Works  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Official Launch of the Setumo High School**

***Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District, North West Province***

***27 July 2012***

**Keynote Address: Honourable T W Nxesi MP**

## CHECK PROTOCOL

- Programme Director
- MEC(s)
- Mayor of the Naledi Municipality
- District Mayor
- Ward councillors
- Traditional leaders
- The good Reverend
- IDT and contractors
- Departmental officials, and most importantly
- Parents and learners – and a special word of thanks must go to the choir. Thank you.
- Ladies and gentlemen

Let me start by thanking you – the school community - for inviting me to join you today for this important event. We are here to mark the completion of a new school building – but more than this – we are here to celebrate the success of this school community – by which we mean the school management, teachers, learners and their parents – as well as the wider community and the Department of Education. We need to have all these stakeholders working together for a school to succeed.

We see this approach in the way that stakeholders were involved in the preparations for this launch event today – the municipality, the provincial departments, the Premier's office and local stakeholders.

This is crucial: that the wider community owns and supports the school.

## **Setumo Secondary School**

Let us pause to pay tribute to this school with its long history of striving to provide service to the children of this community.

Setumo Secondary School started in the 1960s at Stella and was accommodated in a church and other mud structures. The community raised funds to build the initial structures comprising of four classrooms.

That original structure was demolished during forced removals in 1980 and the school was moved 17 kilometres out of Stella. In 1987 a Mr Mentz, who was a farmer, restarted the school as Setumo in his farm.

In 1997, the land reverted back to its rightful owners who had instituted a land claim. Four mud classrooms were built by the community to extend the school as it was already cramped.

Many farm schools were being closed by farmers at that time. A new Setumo was rebuilt again on the land that had been returned to its rightful owners - with mud structures being demolished and rebuilt and eight extra classrooms built, with additional library, administration block and toilets.

An ABET centre was opened in 1994 as well as the Itireleng Advice Centre.

The school enrolment figures continued increasing due to farm school closures and people moving away from the farms to the newly built RDP houses that were being built.

An FET college was then started as learners were struggling to get accommodated out of Stella.

Setumo had its first grade 12 exams in 2011 and achieved a pass rate of 86.5%. The new school, which will run as a secondary school, was built in 2011. It consists of 12 classrooms, 2 laboratories, a library, computer lab and a kitchen. It has a thriving food garden that has been rated as one of the best 16 Mega food gardens in the District.

Congratulations to the Setumo school community on your history of struggle and your ultimate triumph over adverse conditions. Again we see this winning formula: the school and the wider community working together for mutual benefit. You provide a model for other communities to emulate.

### **Alternative Construction Methodologies**

I first saw for myself how Alternative Construction Methodologies could be successfully used for building schools when I opened the Phakamani Senior Secondary School in Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape –

to great excitement by the local community. Phakamani was one of 8 such schools to be built in that province. Two such schools have also been constructed in North West Province – Myra Primary and Setumo Secondary Schools.

These schools were part of an Alternative Construction Methods Pilot Programme funded by the National Department of Public Works and project managed by the Independent Development Trust (IDT). This means using new and cost effective building methods.

These methods produce buildings that are in many respects superior to conventional buildings - more sustainable, cheaper and quicker to erect. There are also important gains in terms of job creation and skills transfers to local communities.

The Independent Development Trust (IDT) is the implementing agent, whilst CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) has researched into the quality of the new school buildings. The materials used were quality assured by Agreement South Africa. Agreement and IDT report to the Minister of Public Works.

As Public Works – nationally and in the province – we have invited leaders and representatives from other province – from departments of education and public works - to come to North West and to see for themselves the products of Alternative Construction Methodologies.

My own thinking is that – especially in our campaign to replace mud schools and unhealthy or dangerous school structure as rapidly as possible – we must make use of these new technologies.

## **National Infrastructure Development Plans**

I want to use this opportunity to share with you the implications of the national infrastructure roll-out plans announced by the President in his State of the Nation Address at the beginning of this year. The intention is to use large-scale infrastructure building programmes to drive economic development, to break down apartheid geographic separation and to combat the triple evils of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The conceptual work has been done: 17 major long-term Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) have been developed with planned major positive effects on regional economies and job creation. Let me just mention **SIP 13**: National school building programme:

- Replacing mud schools – the Department of Public Works and the Department of Basic Education have been tasked to come up with a rapid programme to address this continuing scandal, and
- The longer term refurbishment of established schools.

IDT has a critical role to play here – it has the experience and the necessary track record to help us succeed.

The general point here is that government has committed resources to address the country's massive infrastructure backlogs. The crucial issue now is how we implement these decisions – to ensure success.

## **Rebuilding the Culture of Learning**

In my previous employ – as General Secretary of SADTU – we worked hard to establish the principles and practices of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign. We said that each of us – as stakeholders - have separate and distinct responsibilities:

- Educators are expected to be on time, on task and professionally behaved at all times;
- Learners must attend school punctually, do their work and reject anti-social behaviour;
- Parents must support their children – and maintain contact with the school. So also the teachers must engage with the parents;
- The community must look after the school – and provide a safe environment for education to take place. This means not allowing liquor to be sold to school children and other bad influences;
- Most important, it is the responsibility of the Department of Education to provide an enabling environment for quality education

to take place – classrooms, desks and chairs, learning materials as well as training and development for teachers.

We won't succeed in education – whether in the Eastern Cape or the North West or anywhere else - until all the stakeholders take these responsibilities seriously.

The point is that working together we can do more.

I thank you.