



WELISIZWE RURAL BRIDGES PROGRAMME KEY MESSAGES

BRIEF:

In his State of the Nation Address in 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the upscaling of the construction of bridges especially in rural areas as part of Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme.

In 2023, the President stated that about 24 bridges in KwaZulu-Natal were under construction while a further 24 were on site preparations. To date, 58 are under construction while many others are on site preparation.

The Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme is aimed at ensuring that rural communities are able to go on with their daily lives and easily and safely reach schools, workplaces and other amenities. The initiative also forms part of the Strategic Integrated Project (SIP-25) and supports government's economic recovery programme.

Since then, a number of bridges have been completed while many others are under construction in Free State, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. President Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to officiate the handover of the completed Welisizwe Bridges in KwaZulu-Natal at UMzinyathi District, UMvoti Local Municipality in Emakhabeleni Bridge Site on 31 January 2024.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<i>We are changing lives of people living in rural and disadvantaged communities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme is aimed at addressing the backlog of bridges infrastructure in rural and disadvantaged communities.• The construction of bridges in rural areas aims to improve communities' access to health facilities, schools and economic amenities.• The persistent heavy rains in rural areas over the past few months has had a devastating effect, causing damage to roads and bridges.• It has made it impossible to cross rivers and forced people and learners to stay at home as well as halted economic activities.• The initiative is managed by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and provincial Transport Departments.
<i>The Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme creates job opportunities and drives back poverty in rural areas.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The building of bridges in rural areas has created work opportunities through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).• A number of bridges have been completed while many others are under construction in Free State,

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
	<p>Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 58 of the 96 bridges announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2022 are under construction while others are on site preparation. • Over and above the EPWP job opportunities, 136 artisans and professionals will be given experiential learning opportunities on 96 bridge sites. • Each bridge site has five artisans and 40 EPWP workers and skills like welding, ground work and soil retention are transferred to workers. • Forty-eight bridges will be constructed in each of the six provinces during the 2023/24–2025/26 Medium Term Expenditure Framework totalling 288 bridges by 2025/26 financial year. • Just more than a thousand job opportunities will be created in each province in one financial year comprising 64 artisans, 960 EPWP participants and 21 graduates. • This means a total of 6 270 job opportunities will be created per financial year and this translate into 17280 job opportunities and 510 training opportunities created for the 2023/24–2025/26 Medium Term Expenditure Framework.
<p><i>Our investment in infrastructure in rural areas is turning bricks and mortar into hope for a better tomorrow for all.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is a catalyst to improve economic opportunities in rural areas, standards of living and social cohesion. • The infrastructure investment raises economic productivity and opens greater economic expansion for rural communities. • It forms part of the Strategic Integrated Project (SIP-25) and supports government's economic recovery programme. • In July 2020 a total of 62 Strategic Integrated Projects were gazetted, holding significant value in terms of growing our economy and driving development. • These projects are currently being implemented across all three spheres of government, state-owned entities and the private sector. • Our infrastructure investments are reversing the stranglehold that apartheid's policies had inflicted on the country's rural poor.