

Keynote Address of NQF 4,5 & 7 Certificate Award Ceremony by MEC for Works, Mrs Lydia Johnson

23 February 2007

Programme Director

Deputy Mayor-Councillor Logie Naidoo: Ethekewini Municipality

Cllr N.K. James of Sisonke District Municipality

Members of Portfolio Committee

Head of Department: Dr FB Madlopha

General Managers

Representative of IDT

Representative of EPWP

Representative of ABSA

Representatives of Higher Learning – Mangosuthu Technikon,

Elangeni Further Education (FET)

Distinguished Guests and Contractors

It is indeed an honour for me to be part of this special occasion. I am pleased that we are meeting at the beginning of the year. Within the period of four months in the Department as the new MEC I had an opportunity to view the Department from inside and understand its challenges.

We recently had a Bosberaad on 10 & 11 February 2007 reflecting on the achievements and challenges of the past year. All of us came out energized and committed to perform much better in the year 2007.

The President delivered the State of the Nation Address on the 9th February 2007 and the Premier delivered the State of the Province Address on the 14th February 2007. Among other challenges raised were poverty unemployment and scarce skills which impacts negatively on service delivery. One of the challenges we are dealing with as a Department is scarce skills.

I am happy that among us we have representatives from the Institutions of Higher Learning . We need your assistance and we are prepared to work with you in addressing this critical issue. The Department of works has a big role to play in poverty alleviation and job creation. In his State of the Province Address, the Premier declared the year of 2007 as of Building the economy through partnership.

We are gathered here today as different partners with a common purpose of improving the Quality of Life of our people who have been on the periphery of our economy. The time has come that they move from the periphery to the mainstream of the economy.

Let me now come back to the business of the day. We are here to celebrate with men and women as well as youth “AMAQHAWE” who have taken a great decision to empower themselves for better service delivery in Constitution Sector. The trainees are 134 officials and 605 contractors. Midlands – 114, Ethekwini – 229, Southern – 94, and North Coast Region – 168. As a Department we are proud of you, you are the first group of contractors and officials who have completed the training. I would like to take this opportunity to express our profound appreciation to IDT as an Implementing Agency. As a Department we could not have done it alone.

The Department has set aside R2.5 million for the training of contractors and officials to qualify for National Qualification Framework (NQF) 4,5,7 in order to register with the Skills Development Programme as stipulated in the Expanded Public Works Programme guidelines (EPWP guidelines). It will now be easy for contractors to access tenders with the Department of Works or with any other agencies in order to engage in the Implementation of Labour Intensive Methods of Construction Methods in the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) defined projects.

National Qualification Framework (NQF) :

NQF4 Level: implementation of Labour Intensive Methods of construction systems and techniques. Contractors implement these in the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) defined projects e.g. Civil projects, (repairs & renovations)

NQF5 Level: management and administration of the labour intensive methods of construction by the officials within the Department e.g. Officials - Middle Management (it involves Administration & Management of the Labour Intensive Methods of Construction (LIMC)

NQF7 Level: promotion and development of Labour Intensive Methods of Construction in the implemented projects, done by professionals within the Department in scope of works e.g Bills of Quantities for scope of works.

There are a number of benefits that contractors will have after receiving this training. This include amongst others:

- Contractors will be able to access opportunities when tendering with this Department or any public or private sector tenders.
- This training is also advancing the use of artisans and low level technology.
- They will also be contributing towards Skills Development during the Implementation of Labour Intensive Methods of Construction.

As a Department we have placed Skills Development and Capacity Building of Emerging Contractors high on the agenda. Some of the programmes that we will be pursuing is the exit strategy of the Construction Learners after the training and to put programmes that will ensure that what they have learnt is sustained and turned into job opportunities such as learners forming co-operatives.

There are a number of opportunities available e.g. maintenance programmes of the Government properties (Plumbing, Painting, Renovation, Grass cutting, etc.). We want to see “youth and women” participating. Implementation and application of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) has been placed high on the Departmental agenda.

When delivering the State of the Province Address, the Premier Dr. S. Ndebele said “The economic basis of apartheid regime was white economic

empowerment by law and black economic disempowerment by law. The Democratic Government has therefore, identifies Black Economic Empowerment as a means to redress this historical imbalance. When it comes to the essence of uplifting the socio-economic profile of society, no Government can be neutral”.

As a Department, we also want to see commitment from Contractors. Contractors that see Construction not just as a business opportunity but as a professional sector that contribute to the country’s economy. If you are level 1 today let us see you moving up to higher levels. As a Department we have a role to play in Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative Priority of South Africa (ASSGISA) and Joint Initiative Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). We will soon be developing a strategy on how we can contribute to Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASSGISA) and Joint Initiative Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA).

We believe that we can achieve this in partnership with our stakeholders. We are currently busy developing a business plan on youth service within the construction environment. We are to identify 500 youth who will benefit in Departmental tenders as business entities as part of Skills Development and job creation.

I would like to thank all our partners who have contributed to the success of this programme. All those who participated in the programme well done. Together building the future.

MASISUKUME SAKHE.

I thank you.