

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, MRS LYDIA JOHNSON AT THE THANKS GIVING FUNCTION IN APPRECIATION OF INKOSI YAMANGANGA ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2008

- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
- INKOSI YESIZWE SAMANGANGA , MR CB SHOZI
- HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF KWAZULUNATAL LEGISLATURE , MR W. MCHUNU
- HONOURABLE MPL, MRS Z. LUDIDI
- YOUR WORSHIP CLLR OBED MLABA
- COUNCILLORS
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADDIES AND GENTLEMEN ,

I greet you all

It is indeed a great pleasure that we gather here today to showcase our commitment to protection and promotion of our rich heritage especially as this event has been organized during this day.

Heritage day recognizes and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation. Within a broader social and political context, events during Heritage Month provide opportunities to nurture cultural pride and inculcate a shared promoting unity in diversity and reconciliation.

The democratic government has committed itself to work with traditional leaders to achieve our common vision of ensuring a better life for all. The province of KwaZuluNatal is still faced with the challenge of high poverty and illiteracy rates and the traditional leaders in partnership with the provincial government departments have played a critical role in terms of pushing back the frontiers of poverty and ignorance. I am happy that the people of Amanganga are blessed with a progressive leader, Inkosi Shoji. As government we need progressive traditional leaders so that there will be coordination of activities.

The Department of Public Works is entrusted with a responsibility of providing the infrastructure. Infrastructure delivery is crucial if we are serious about economic development. Our province has a huge backlog especially in black communities in terms of infrastructure delivery due to legacy of apartheid.

However I wish to state that as the Department we have initiated various programmes which are aimed at improving services delivery, public participation and empowerment of the previously marginalized people. Though we service client departments, its worth mentioning that we have adopted the end user approach. We want to make a positive impact in the lives of the people while ensuring adherence to Batho Pele.

Among the programmes the Department has developed is **Masakhe Emerging Contractor Development Programme**. This programme is aimed at assisting aspiring entrepreneurs within the construction industry. They receive training on business management skills, financial management, mentoring and an on going support. They receive this assistance until they are ready to stand on their own.

We also have the **Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP)** which is a National Initiative implemented at a provincial level. This programme encourages the usage of labour intensive methods in the construction of government structures with a view to provide as many jobs as possible. **In the 2007/8 financial year the Department had a target of 16000 jobs but the total number of jobs which were actually created is 17499 of which 11738 were secured by the youth.**

Another departmental initiative is called **Izandla Ziyagezana**. This is a labour intensive site clearing programme which is aimed at

addressing the challenge of poverty. **This programme was launched in July 2008 in Hammersdale and 18 people benefited. It has been extended to Hibiscus Coast in Ward six and eighteen and 9 people benefited.** The programme will be rolled out throughout the province. The beneficiaries receive a salary of R720 and work for 12 days a month.

Another programme is called the **National Youth Service (NYS)**. This is a skills development programme aimed at capacitating the youth with construction related skills with focus on **Plastering and Bricklaying**. Learners undergo a theoretical training for 6 months and receive a stipend of R600. On completion they proceed to practicals in any site where they practice under the guidance of a well established contractor and they receive a stipend of R1000. The youth benefits a lot from this programme. **Currently 181 learners have benefited.**

I should also indicate that the Department has a **bursary and internship programmes** which assist students who have passed their first years at the university. **This bursary is available for students who specialize in Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Architecture, Property Valuation and Project management fields.** The internship programme is available for students who have completed their degrees in the above mentioned disciplines. They receive training under a departmental and private sector mentorship for a year.

These are programmes which have been developed in order to respond to the challenge of high unemployment rate and skills shortage in the country. We believe that with these programme we can make a meaningful contribution in terms of poverty alleviation.

In conclusion I wish to encourage you to unite against challenges such as crime, xenophobia, drug and women abuse and all other

social challenges. We should also engage in home visits activities so that we can assist those living in poverty. The people living with HIV and AIDS also need your support.

Lastly, I wish to encourage you to ensure that you go out and vote in the forthcoming elections. The youth must ensure that they apply for ID's and vote. You must decide who must lead our country.

I thank you

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