



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR  
PUBLIC WORKS, MRS LYDIA JOHNSON  
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Programme Director

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Councilors

Distinguished guests, I greet you all

Today we have gathered here to share with you  
our achievements as the Department of Public  
Works in terms of ensuring excellent service  
delivery in KwaZuluNatal. The Department of  
Public Works is entrusted with the responsibility

of constructing government buildings and management of government properties. Therefore it is crucial for us to give progress report in terms of delivering on our mandate.

Today we pride ourselves as the Department that we have successfully implemented government programmes as expected. The government has committed itself to upliftment of all communities especially the previously disadvantaged communities. This can be achieved through robust infrastructure delivery.

The previously neglected communities were deliberately denied access to decent infrastructure. These communities were stacked with dilapidated roads, schools, halls, hospitals and clinics. When the democratic government took power in 1994, the ruling party committed itself to reconstruction and development with a view of ensuring sustainable livelihoods for these communities.

Today most of these communities enjoy state of the art facilities. This demonstrates the commitment of our government to meet the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty by 50% percent in 2014. This is achievable given the manner in which poverty alleviation programmes are prioritized in our country. Though we have not yet reached our targets but we are satisfied with the progress. We acknowledge that some communities are still without electricity, water, schools, clinic and other basic services. However we are optimistic that this backlog will be dealt with.

The infrastructure forms the foundation for economic growth and development. Adequate infrastructure delivery is a crucial incentive for investment. Therefore our Department plays a very strategic role for the development of our country.

There is more commitment to excellent service among the staff and the focus has shifted to end users. We ensure adherence to Batho Pele

principles. They say, the people must come first. We have adopted a people centered approach. We hold a view that people have a right to be served in a dignified manner.

The Department has introduced various programmes and policies which are aimed at improving our service delivery. To make a meaningful contribution in terms of development of our communities, the Department has responded by ensuring proper implementation of national initiatives. For instance with regards to EPWP, the Department has managed to meet its target.

Many families have benefited from EPWP defined projects. This is achieved mainly by ensuring that local people are prioritized when there are projects in their areas. **In the financial year 2007/2008 the Department had a target of 16000 jobs the total number of jobs actually created is 17499.**

The National Youth Service programme which is also under EPWP has also been successfully implemented. This programme is aimed at providing construction related skills, mainly plastering and bricklaying to our youth. The youth receive theoretical training for 6 months while receiving a stipend of R600 and practical training under a well established contractor for 6 months and receive a stipend for R1000.

**Currently there are 178 learners undergoing classroom training. Even here at Ilembe we have learners who have benefited.**

In responding to a call by our government to invest more in education, the Department introduced the bursary and internship programmes. To qualify for a bursary students should specialize in Architecture, Construction project management, Property valuation, Engineering and Quantity surveying and must have passed their first years in a tertiary institution. The internship is meant for students who have completed their degrees in the above disciplines who require practical experience. In 2009 the Department will fund 36 learners. To

date the total number of learners funded by the Department is 71 including those funded from previous years. The learners who obtained excellent results in matric have also benefited. Twelve learners benefited in 2009.

The Department has also initiated a programme called **Masakhe Emerging Contractor Development Programme (ECDP)** which **provides support to emerging contractors so that they progress to high grades.** With this programme emerging contractors stand a better chance to secure tenders as they fall within the same grade.

This programme responds directly to the issue of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment as the PPG groups are prioritized. Entering the construction industry has been made even easier as the Department has facilitated for the establishment of CIDB offices in Mayville, Durban. This center supports contractor development by growing contractor capacity, promoting equity, encouraging continuity and improving industry standards.

When I joined the Department in 2006 I crisscrossed the entire province holding meetings with contractors as they are our key stakeholders. I listened to their concerns and inputs. This led to formation of **Contractor Forums in all Districts. These forums are used as platform for constructive engagements and enhanced consultation.** Issues pertaining to construction industry are discussed and inputs are made regarding the partnership between the Department and contractors and measures to ensure timeous service delivery.

Another programme is called “**Izandla Ziyagezana**”. In this programme all vacant sites are cleared using local unemployed youth. This is a poverty alleviation and labour intensive programme. This programme has been launched in **Harmmersdale, Portshepstone, Margate and Ezakheni.** Through this programme many families will be able to put ends meat on their tables.

Another programme in the pipeline is called, **“Property Incubator Programme”**. **This programme seeks to empower the previously marginalized people in the property industry.** The entrepreneurs involved in the property management and property development businesses will receive training and mentorship support through this programme.

The above programmes have brought the Department closer to the people. Through road shows the Department has gained more understanding in terms of the needs of the people.

Today we are here to report back about the projects which have been undertaken by our Department within Umsunduzi Municipality. Our Department has made significant strides in terms of ensuring a better life for all through infrastructure delivery in this Municipality.

Therefore with those words I wish to encourage you to ensure that you protect government

properties in your communities. These are your properties. “Phansi nokucekelwa phansi kwezakhiwo zikahulumeni phansi” You must support the government by using the infrastructure effectively and efficiently. We should be patriotic and progressive so that the future generations will also benefit from these properties “Phambili nentuthuko phambili”

Lastly, I want to encourage you to ensure that you exercise your democratic right by casting your vote on 22 April 2009, especially the youth. Your future is in your hands. Your vote is your voice. Your vote is very important because it will shape the direction of our country.

“Together we can do more”.

I thank you.

