



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR
PUBLIC WORKS, MRS LYDIA JOHNSON
AT THE OFFICIAL HANDING OVER OF
KWADLANGEZWA THUSONG CENTRE
AT KWACALUZA: 09 APRIL 2009**

Programme Director

- Mayor of Umhlathuzi Municipality, Clr Zakhele Mqayi
- Head of Department , Dr F.B Madlopha
- Inkosi yakwaMthethwa, Mr. J Mthethwa
- Senior management of Public Works and Umhlathuzi Municipality
- Councilors
- Traditional leaders
- Pastor , Dube
- People of the media

Distinguished guests, I greet you all

This day mark one of historical events as we celebrate and witness real community development and opening of new opportunities for the people of Kwa-Dlangezwa. Rural communities have always been faced with many challenges, including high unemployment, high levels of illiteracy, outburst of deceases, and lack of access to government services and other amenities and high incidence households living below poverty line.

It is on the basis of this that the ruling party has included rural development in its manifesto as one of critical areas of priority. The government is committed to improve the living conditions of rural communities. The ruling party has acknowledged that though significant strides have been made, more still has to be done to ensure a better life for rural communities. The post apartheid government has managed to ensure that most of rural communities have access to basic services like water and electricity.

The Department of Public Works is entrusted with the responsibility of constructing government buildings and management of government properties. Our role is to ensure that all government Departments have adequate office space and that their building requirements are met. Therefore our Department is critical because we provide infrastructure which is the foundation for development for development.

As part of accelerating service delivery we are here today to hand over the Kwa-Dlangezwa Thusong Centre to Umhlathuze Municipality. Today, a new page is opened to Kwa-Dlangezwa community as we present you with the structure which can be used to create opportunities for local community. This centre should play a crucial role in shaping the economic status of this community.

The total amount spent for construction of this structure is R1.9 million. During construction, 76 job opportunities were created for local people of which 30 was women and 58 youth.

The centre consists of the following

- Multipurpose hall accommodating 250 people.
- 2 stalls
- 2 offices
- 1 kitchen
- Computer room
- Sewing room
- Floors polished with epoxy
- Fencing
- Disabled male and female toilets

I want to assure you that if this centre can be utilized efficiently and effectively the challenge of poverty and unemployment will be addressed. That will lead to expansion and creation of more job opportunities. You should take ownership of this structure and come up with ideas regarding projects and businesses ventures which can be explored.

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. **During the past five years the Department has created 60 800 jobs through this programme.**

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. At the moment our learners are doing practical training at Izibuko Primary school which is under construction at Nseleni.

In responding to a call by our government to invest more in education, the Department introduced the bursary and internship programmes. For bursaries a 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.

Our Department has also formed **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.

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.

The above programmes speak volumes regarding our commitment to serve the people. Therefore with those words I wish to encourage you to take ownership of this structure and use it efficiently so that the future generations will also benefit from them.

As the Department we have committed ourselves to engage in a vigorous anti-vandalisation campaign by training our communities about the importance of protecting public goods. We need to be patriotic enough to say no to vandalism of government properties. This can only be achieved when we work together because “Together we can do more”

I thank you.