



**Ministry of Human Settlements
and Public Works**

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

OFFICE OF THE MEC

Private Bag X 54 366

DURBAN

4000

Tel : +27 261 8997

Fax : 031 261 8157

Cell : 079 890 35 36

Email:

Sureshinee.govender@kznworks.gov.za

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**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND PUBLIC
WORKS, MS MAGGIE GOVENDER AT THE 2010 WOMEN IN
CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY SUMMIT**

The Deputy Mayor: Cllr Logie Naidoo

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works: Ms M Fraser

Deputy Chair: KZN Contractor Forum – Mr S Tlou

Our esteemed speakers

Officials of local and Provincial Government

Stakeholders in the Industry

All others present

The Women in Construction and Property Summit is held annually during the month of August as part of the celebrations of the Department of Public Works to acknowledge the strides that women have made in the construction and property sectors. More importantly this Summit also provides an enabling environment where aspiring women who want to become contractors and property developers can get information and assistance.

Where did it all start? In 1956, on 9 August, 20 000 women from all races and walks of life marched to the Union Buildings in protest against oppressive laws. This year marks the 54th anniversary of the women's anti-pass march and serves to remind South Africans about women's rights. South Africa today, led by the African National Congress is a different place to be in. Government recognizes that the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment are central to all efforts aimed at combating poverty and stimulating sustainable development.

President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation Address this year said, "This year 2010, shall be a year of action. The defining feature of this administration will be that it knows where people live, understands their needs, and responds faster.

The Department continues to advocate for active women participation in all sectors of society in becoming initiators and beneficiaries of socio-economic opportunities. I am now going to elaborate on the efforts and initiatives of the Department. This summit, shall not just be another "talk shop" but a mechanism to provide you with an up to date report on our achievements in advancing the

plight of women. You can and should hold us accountable, it is your right, not just as a woman, but as a citizen of our country.

At last year's summit, I launched the Property Incubator Program (PIP) commonly known as Ungasali in response to the Property Transformation Charter. Black people could not own property nor could they effectively trade on properties. In many cases land was held by Tribal Trusts, which precluded people living on tribal land from obtaining title deeds. These laws affected the ability of black people to create or accumulate wealth. Therefore the Department developed the Property Incubator Program to address the inequalities of the past. A total number of 63 PIP participants trained on Business Build-Up which is one of the modules that will lead towards the completion of the New Venture Creation - NQF level 4. Out of the 63 participants, 46 are women.

The second phase will begin in September 2010. In a positive move, I hope to announce at next years summit, the number of new entrepreneurial businesses in property management and development that will arise out of this program. I don't think that I am being overly ambitious, just optimistic and confident that the seeds have been sown and we shall reap the rewards. We look forward to engaging with these young people who will become our stakeholders.

The Izandla Ziyagezana programme was launched in 2008. This programme aims at reducing poverty by identifying the poorest members in a community, mainly women headed households to manually clear vacant government land. This program has been rolled out throughout the province. Currently there are 86 contractors of which 53 are women. **The impact is being felt and there is a growing interest to develop these people who have already been trained into small businesses to provide a garden cleaning and maintenance service to corporates, municipalities and residential suburban areas. This can work as the Izandla Ziyagezana beneficiaries are seasonal workers and are not employed full time. We need to make it happen and develop this program further.**

Government has implemented economic empowerment programs specifically to include women in construction. Through the Expanded Public Works Program, jobs created for women in 2008/2009 were 5219. In 2009/2010 we saw an increase to 5281. On a recent site visit to King George Hospital, I met with young women (Nomfundo Ndokweni) who started as cleaner, fresh from school and is now a junior foreman. Indeed women have taken huge steps. I am not talking of the architects, quantity surveyors or the professionals in the built industry, I am talking about ordinary people, who have left the domains of their homes to venture into the construction industry. I have also met with a group of cleaning contractors whom I have encouraged to form a co-operative to enable them to land government contracts and in turn become employers in the industry.

Our National Youth Service Program ensures that young women are given an opportunity to train as skilled trades-women in bricklaying, plastering, tiling and plumbing. I recently met Sibongile Gumede at Malgate House who is among the first to fly the flag of our country as a graduate of the NYS program. She has now secured permanent employment with the company that she trained with. Our total number of women who have gone through the NYS program is 175. Indeed, we have come a long way.

The Masakhe – Emerging Contractor Development Program, responding to the needs of our contractors have registered 5341 contractors, of which 3341 (62%) are women owned companies. Here I must warn, that if companies are found to be renting a woman or fronting, I will not hesitate to bring them to book.

I would also like to acknowledge the strides that CIDB have taken in ensuring the economic emancipation of our women. It is pleasing to note that the latest statistics reveal that there are 1225 women owned companies in construction out of a total of 2770 that are registered on their database. This in percentage is 44% and growing. Currently there is one level 8 women owned contractor and I salute you for persevering and wish you well on your way to reaching level 9 or even 10. Much more needs to be done to elevate our women contractors to the next level. Next year this time, I hope to report that a significant number have reached level 7 or higher. I therefore urge you to share with each other your lessons learnt on site and to apply for the Mentorship Program. Currently there are 4 women owned contractors on a pilot mentorship program in the North Coast Region.

In a further initiative to develop and capacitate contractors further, 28 women owned companies out of 48 are on accredited training in partnership with CIDB.

The Department also encourages professionals (architects, quantity surveyors, project managers, mechanical, civil and electrical engineers to register on our Professional Service Provider database. Out of 389 registered companies, 70 companies are women owned. We will be using their services on our infrastructure projects.

The Fixed Rate Period Contract Phase 1, another initiative to ensure that all contractors get a chance to enjoy the economic benefits of the construction industry, has awarded 189 projects to women out of 268 projects. This in effect is 71%. Out of 134 contractors on Fixed Rate Period Contract, 108 women contractors make up 82% of the total. Under Masakhe basic level one training in 2009//2010, 547 contractors were trained, of which 388 were women contractors, which makes up 71% of the total, need I say more. In monetary terms R 466, 492, 294.30 was awarded, of which R 221,972,197.16 (48%) were awarded to women. **I hope that some of you who have benefitted are sitting**

here today. We need you to share your knowledge and experience with those that are just starting.

We can celebrate Women's month in the knowledge that our foremothers did not just fight for our political emancipation but for our economic freedom as well. Gone are the days when we needed to get signed permission from our husbands to work or even to sign our contracts to open a bank or a clothing account. The shackles of apartheid has been lifted, but we now have another struggle, that of economic freedom for all.

To the mothers of our nation Lillian Ngoyi, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Ruth First, Rahima Moosa and others I thank you for your courage and resilience, because without your bravery the doors to the freedom we enjoy today would not have been opened. For that we salute you.

Let us commemorate 9 August 2010, by remembering 1956 as a year when it all began.

I thank you.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Sureshinee Govender
Acting Media Liaison Officer
Ministry: Human Settlements and Public Works
Telephone: 031 261 8997
Fax : 031 261 8157
Cell : 079 890 3536
Email: sureshinee.govender@kznworks.gov.za
Website: www.kznworks.gov.za