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Minister Macpherson Launches Working on Infrastructure Pilot Programme

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The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has officially launched the Working on Infrastructure pilot programme, a new initiative aimed at reforming the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and creating sustainable pathways to permanent employment for unemployed South Africans. The programme was launched by Minister Dean Macpherson in Durban on 4 May 2026.

The pilot programme forms part of government's broader commitment to strengthen the EPWP by improving transparency, addressing corruption, and ensuring fair access to public employment opportunities. It follows nine EPWP Listening Tours conducted across the country, where thousands of participants raised concerns about political gate-keeping, abuse, and unfair recruitment practices.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Macpherson emphasised the importance of employment in restoring dignity to citizens.

"A job is about dignity. And a job is about being able to look after yourself and your family," said the Minister. He further added that unemployment in South Africa is "not only an economic crisis" but also "a dignity crisis."

A key reform introduced under the pilot programme is the digitisation of recruitment through the SAYouth platform, supported by Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator. This new system will ensure that work opportunities are allocated fairly and transparently, reducing opportunities for corruption and manipulation.

Minister Macpherson stated that "the days of abuse within EPWP must come to an end" and reaffirmed government's commitment to protecting vulnerable job seekers from exploitation.

The Working on Infrastructure pilot programme will provide participants with structured employment opportunities lasting between eight and ten months. In addition to earning an income, participants will receive skills training, mentorship, workplace exposure, and work-readiness support to improve their long-term employability.

The initiative will also address infrastructure maintenance challenges by involving participants in the repair and maintenance of public buildings, schools, clinics, and municipal facilities. This approach combines job creation with service delivery, benefiting both communities and participants.

Government has partnered with TVET colleges, municipalities, small businesses, and organisations such as National Business Initiative and South African Property Owners Association to support training and create employment opportunities beyond the programme.

The pilot will begin in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, with the aim of expanding nationally based on lessons learned.

Closing his address, Minister Macpherson encouraged young people to take advantage of the opportunity, saying, "Help is on the way" and reaffirming government's commitment to restoring dignity

