



2nd EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME MUNICIPAL SUMMIT

CLOSING REMARKS

SPEECH: HONOURABLE THULAS NXESI, MP: MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS

VENUE: GALLAGHER ESTATE (MIDRAND)

DATE : ON 04 NOVEMBER 2011

CHECK PROTOCOL

Programme Director

MECs present

Executive Mayors

Municipal Managers

Councillors

SALGA representative

Invited guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Colleagues, this first week as Minister of Public Works has been a baptism of fire.

On the one hand, the continued allegations about irregularities in the Department – which we will address in the coming weeks. On the other hand, the pleasure of participating in this very large, very well-organised

and highly productive Expanded Public Works Programme Summit. I know where I would rather be. They say you must accentuate the positive. So let's end this Summit on a very positive note.

I want to briefly review the excellent resolutions that came from the commissions yesterday. I was unable to participate in the commissions due to prior obligations. I am told the level of discussion was excellent – and that having identified the problems, colleagues then went on to develop solutions. As we know all too well, it is easy to complain; much more difficult to offer alternatives.

- ❑ You resolved that all outstanding protocols should be signed by 31 March 2012. I am going to ask the officials to put that date in their diaries so that they give me a comprehensive progress report.
- ❑ The Summit noted progress made in the development of municipal EPWP policy endorsed by Councils at local, district and metro level – and resolved that all municipalities will develop and endorse policy on EPWP by June 2012. Again, I want the officials to give me a briefing on that date. So the important thing is that you – at the grass roots level – you report your progress to the departmental officials.
- ❑ You resolved that municipalities will ensure that their Integrated Development Plans (IDP) prioritise the EPWP approach and methodology in their projects in order to optimise the creation of work opportunities. I cannot emphasise this enough: EPWP calls for a radical change in mindset in favour of labour based methodologies.
- ❑ You resolved that municipalities will optimize their budgets to deliver on the EPWP across all sectors, and will use labour intensive methods in the delivery of projects in order to promote the creation of work opportunities. Our studies have shown that – for many projects - you can achieve the same results – to the same quality – using human labour – rather than capital-intensive technologies.

- ❑ The Summit noted the progress made by three provinces in establishing District forums, and encouraged all other provinces to establish District Forums. I would encourage you to do this.
- ❑ From the side of the Department of Public Works, the Summit said we should provide intensified, focused Technical Support across all EPWP sectors to optimize the implementation of EPWP. As I understand it, this means support right from the design stage, through implementation and to assist with reporting – until all municipalities are up to speed on these processes.
- ❑ The Summit supported the review of the integrated incentive models. This is clear: we don't want to put roadblocks and speedhumps in the way of job creation.
- ❑ The Summit also resolved that there needs to be strengthened relationships between, NPOs and municipalities to enhance implementation of the Non-State Sector.
- ❑ Municipalities undertook to intensify reporting on work opportunities created on projects implemented. This is important colleagues because it makes us accountable, it helps us to monitor and evaluate what is going on – and ultimately to improve delivery. If there are problems with capacity, please colleagues, let the Department know, so that we can help you to make a plan.
- ❑ At a very practical level, the National DPW will continue to develop and make available implementation manuals on EPWP.

Your task then, colleagues, is to implement the commitments you made here in the last three days. I am appealing to all of you, and particularly to municipal managers and mayors to drive this thing. Our experience is that where you have political buy-in, the projects proceed smoothly. Let's cut out all the bureaucracy, and when our officials come to visit, make them feel welcome.

Colleagues, this is the ultimate win-win situation. You are empowered to deliver services such as roads, ECD centres, schools etc – to your people, and in the process you also create work opportunities and incomes for unemployed families. And when you do this well, you will receive further incentives.

I wish you well in your endeavours, colleagues.

As I said last night, I hope to be able to visit at least some of you during the next year and to see the work you are doing on the ground.

Please, travel safely.

I look forward to working with all of you.

I thank you