

## MEDIA STATEMENT

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### DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, JEREMY CRONIN EMBARK ON EPWP PROJECTS VISITS AS PART OF WOMEN'S MONTH CELEBRATIONS

On 27 August 2015, Women's month celebration gained momentum in Kwa Zulu Natal when the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Jeremy Cronin, together with Deputy Mayor of Ethekewini Municipality Nomvuso Tshabalala visited Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme in Ward 3Inanda-Durban which constitutes 100% women representation.

The South African government has declared the 09th August as the National women's day whereby celebrations across the country take place under the umbrella of women's month. The objective of this month is to commemorate and acknowledge the contribution of women in the upliftment of the socio- economic conditions of the communities across the country.

This year's Women's Day celebration was hosted in Sasolburg in Free State under the theme: ***Women United in Moving South Africa Forward.***

During his visit to the EPWP projects visits, Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin engaged with EPWP participants on issues pertaining to the social impact of the Programme.

One of the EPWP participants, Ms Mhlongo said "I am a widow and have a responsibility as a mother to uphold the dignity of my family through provision of basic needs and before I was given an opportunity to participate on Zibambele Road Maintenance programme. I could not sustain my family. Thank you government for providing us with such good opportunities to sustain our families", she concluded.

Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin emphasised the EPWP as one of Public Employment Programmes (PEPs) which its mandate is to seek to alleviate poverty through the provision of work opportunities, skills development thereby providing an income support to its participants. He acknowledged that among all EPWP sub-programmes, the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme offers the most sustainable work

opportunities which play a vital role in alleviating poverty and creating social cohesion.

Since the EPWP Phase 3 implementation in 2014, the yearly work opportunities target for women is 55% and by the end of 2014/15 financial year, the EPWP surpassed the 55 % annual target and created 63 % total of work opportunities.

About 40 000 EPWP participants are employed in the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme which is a labour intensive programme implemented by the Department of Transport in KwaZulu- Natal (KZN).

Most of the participants come from women headed households and are provided with income support thereby improving the livelihoods of their households and contribute towards poverty alleviation and reduction of unemployment. This programme is recognized as the best practice example of an economically viable labour intensive road maintenance approach.

**Amongst other, the following are the objectives of the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme**

- Target the poorest of the poor
- Promotes sustainable livelihoods
- It is a gender empowerment programme
- Promote community involvement in the selection of participants

**Community benefits**

- Improved road safety
- Protection of public/ community assets
- Promotes community ownership
- 22000 km of rural road network receiving regular maintenance

The Zibambele Road Maintenance programme contributes towards maintenance of the existing transport network in KZN with a total budget of R400 million towards infrastructure maintenance for the 2015/ 16 financial year.

**ENDS**

**ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORK**

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