



## **Media Statement: EPWP Metro-wide Schools Ambassadors Programme to bring stability to schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality**

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The appointment 330 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) non-teaching staff at 209 schools across the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality will not only alleviate poverty and unemployment in the area, but will also contribute to the stability of schools in the municipality, the Deputy Minister of Public Works Mr Jeremy Cronin said.

He was speaking at the launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Metro-wide Schools Ambassadors Programme on 11 December 2015 at the Helevale Recreational Centre in Port Elizabeth.

The Deputy Minister Cronin said the programme would enable teachers to focus on delivering quality education to learners in a safer environment. The programme will provide work opportunities to 330 community members in the area.

“The participants will be responsible for a range of duties at schools including providing general maintenance work, cleaning, providing security and general administration work. The programme is critical as it will ensure that teachers no longer have to perform administrative work that takes them away from their core teaching duties. It will also ensure that the process of learning and teaching occurs in a safer environment,” Deputy Minister Cronin said.

Mr Cronin said “we must all work together to ensure that this programme becomes sustainable”.

“This is not a programme to last until the local government elections next year – it is not a short-term programme for some narrow short-term political process. We want to run this programme in an efficient and sustainable manner. We are not making any promises but we must all work together to make this programme sustainable,” Deputy Minister Cronin added.

The work opportunities created through these programmes contribute to the overall target of creating over 6 million work opportunities by 2019. In the recent years, poor schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality have been plagued by problems of gang violence, drugs, vandalism of infrastructure and shortage of staff, more in particular of non-teaching staff.

The EPWP Metro-wide Schools Support Programme is an initiative of the National Department of Public Works through EPWP, the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, the Eastern Cape Department of Education as well as the Independent Development Trust (IDT).

At the launch ceremony, Deputy Minister Cronin was joined by the Executive Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality Mr Danny Jordaan, the MEC for Roads and Public Works in the Eastern Cape Ms Thandiswa Marawu, MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape Mr Mandla Makupula and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Independent Development Trust (IDT) Mr Johan Pakade.

All the political heads emphasised that the programme was the outcome of cooperation of all three spheres of government.

Mr Jordaan said the Programme would address two critical issues in the municipality – jobs and quality education at schools in the area.

“There are two things that people want – a job for himself or herself and education for his or her children. These are the two fundamental things that all of us want. The EPWP Metrowide Schools Ambassadors will contribute a lot in the provision of these two important needs. We are truly happy about the launch of this programme and I congratulate all the participants who have been appointed to this programme,” Mr Jordaan said.

The participants would receive theory, practical and experiential learning while serving in the programme. It is envisaged that some of the participants will be empowered with skills to pursue employment in open job market or pursue self-employment enterprise development field.

Mr Pakade said the launch of the Programme was “a historical moment for the people of Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality”.

“Today we are witnessing what government has always spoken about - partnerships among our people,” he added.

Both MEC Marawu and MEC Makupula hailed the launch of the programme. “This programme will contribute in our wider strategies to tackle challenges facing our schools in the area,” Mr Makupula added.

The programme was one of several EPWP initiatives to alleviate poverty and unemployment in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality.

Last week Mr Jordaan launched 20 new trucks linked to the Water Ambassador Programme to fight against water leaks in the area.

Another initiative was Sophakama in KwaZakhele called Sophakama, a non-profit organisation that employed about five volunteer caregivers who work with the local clinics to care for patients in the area. Through the EPWP intervention, the NPO is employing over 273 caregivers, mainly women..

## **Participants**

Speaking on behalf of the participants Mr Kenneth Mlungiseleli thanked the government for the opportunity.

“The wages we are receiving through this programme helps us to look after our loved ones. EPWP has removed us from the streets and gave us opportunities to work. Today our families no longer go to bed hungry. Others may see our wages being little, but to us, the wages gives us life. We truly thank the government for EPWP,” he said.

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