

Protocol:

- Programme Director
- Ministers of sector lead departments (to confirm attendance)
- DM
- MECs
- Mayor of Tshwane, Cllr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa
- Officials from implementing departments and Public Works
- Most importantly, participants and implementers of the Expanded Public Works Programme present here today,

To the Award-winners let me say this: your hard work and creativity has paid off. You have been justifiably honoured. Let me also say that by recognising excellence in the work of individuals, organisations and implementing bodies, we also raise the bar and we inspire others to emulate their example.

Moreover, as we strive for excellence – as individuals and organisations – we contribute to the broader socio-economic development of society and we improve the conditions of the people as a whole.

Quite simply, when we – as individuals and organisations – strive for excellence, not only do we benefit ourselves, we also uplift the society generally.

Launched in 2007, these annual Kamoso Awards are intended to recognize and reward institutions that have strived for excellence in the implementation of the EPWP. The Awards were launched with the aim of encouraging, motivating and rewarding the best performing public bodies in the creation of work opportunities for our people.

The objectives of the EPWP Kamoso awards are:

- To acknowledge implementing bodies that have performed well, in terms of the objectives of the EPWP Phase 3;
- To mobilise Government stakeholders and partners to increase their efforts around the implementation of the EPWP;
- To communicate and showcase the progress, impact and successes of the EPWP as a key Government programme; and
- to increase the visibility of the EPWP and reinforce its objectives to the broader public.

The 2015 Kamoso Awards reward implementers of the EPWP for their excellent performance during the 2014/15 financial year.

The 2015 Awards have been refined and adjusted to reflect the principles which underpin Phase 3 of the EPWP, including:

- creation of community assets
- creation of sustainable livelihoods
- transparency in recruitment and selection, and
- promoting training alongside income support.

For the first time we have introduced a category for the best innovative project across all four EPWP sectors. This category was evaluated using the following criteria and guidelines:

- the degree of convergence between sectors
- Partnerships established - partnerships between departments, NGOs and the private sector
- The impact of the project in the community
- Compliance with Ministerial determination in relation to the minimum wage, UIF and Coida
- Transparent recruitment and selection procedures of EPWP participants
- Contribution of the project to sustainable livelihoods
- Duration of work opportunities, and
- Accredited training provided and number of training days.

In Phase 3, we have moved beyond concentrating on numbers alone – to focus also on the quality of assets created and the impact of projects on communities. For example, take the small bridges built in rural areas in Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape – and the beneficial impact of these - assisting scholars and community members to travel to clinics, schools, and other important amenities.

But of course the numbers still matter. So I am delighted to announce that we have reached and surpassed EPWP targets for the first year of Phase 3: a total of 1,24 million work opportunities were created against the target of 1,04 million work opportunities. In other words we have

exceeded the target by around 20%. I am confident that we are on track to achieve 6 million work opportunities by 2019.

We have also said that training is critical for the successful implementation of the EPWP programme. The training provided by EPWP is in line with the principles and guidelines of the Quality Council for Trades & Occupations (QCTO).

The following are types of training programmes developed and applicable to different EPWP projects:

- Accredited credit bearing programmes
- Dual purpose programmes
- Short courses to address specific needs, and
- Artisan Development Programmes.

Participants on EPWP projects receive training which ranges from on-the-job training to formal accredited skills programmes and learnerships. All workers who are selected for training receive full payment at the daily rate for time spent on training.

The EPWP draws its vision from the National Development Plan (NDP) which acknowledges that high levels of structural unemployment are likely to persist for the medium to long-term – the result of unfavourable international economic conditions. To mitigate this dilemma, the NDP calls for Public Employment Programmes to target the creation of 2 million work opportunities annually by 2020.

EPWP Phase 3 - launched by President Jacob Zuma in 2014 – seeks to create 6 million work opportunities by 2019. The EPWP Phase 3 objective is: *“to provide work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people through the labour-intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development.”*

Phase 3 has also prioritised the provision of work opportunities for women, youth and people living with disabilities.

Let me quote from one of the EPWP participants - Mr Thabo Mokoena - speaking during the inaugural meeting of the Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee in July 2015:

“The work that we are doing through EPWP at the Centre benefits the community of Orange Farm. We are teaching the youth and the school children basic computer skills. Our food garden is producing food for our community. We also have a clothing bank service that assists distressed households in the area.”

Let me give you another example - the North West Food Security Project - started in 2013 - and currently operating on a farm in the Ramatlabama Village in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The project – which employs 18 community members - is producing a variety of vegetables, including spinach, cabbage, onions, carrots, beetroot, pumpkin and potatoes.

This is one of the many successful EPWP Social Sector projects implemented nationwide. Its main aim is to address the issue of food security and create work opportunities for people in the North West Province.

Currently, the project is selling its produce to businesses such as Spur Restaurant in Mahikeng, Pick n Pay store in Mahikeng, Boxer Superstore as well as to the hawkers in Mahikeng and Zeerust. Any surplus produce is then donated to charity for the public good.

The type of training that the participants acquired included how to submit a tender, pricing strategies and bookkeeping. Mr Mbele, the project manager, had this to say: *“The EPWP training we received has assisted us a lot in moving the project forward.”*

He added that the vision of the project is to become a fully-fledged agriculture production company: *“We do not want to receive a stipend forever. That is why we are already working on our exit strategy from EPWP. We are using the EPWP training to create a fully-fledged and sustainable business. We want to give other people an opportunity to receive the assistance that we have received from EPWP.”*

For Mr Mbele, the project has brought hope and dignity in his life: *“I understand that there are problems of jobs in South Africa, but as young people we cannot fold our arms and wait for government to create jobs. We must do something for ourselves because South Africa is alive with possibilities.”*

One of the project participants - Ms Alina Khalane – gave her opinion as follows: *“The project has afforded me an opportunity not only to learn about food production, but also to contribute to the improvement of the lives of the vulnerable and needy in our neighbourhood. We are also able to provide food to our local centre for people with disabilities. Being part of this project has been life changing.”*

Ms Khalane added that the monthly stipend has given her dignity in her community. *“With the stipend I receive I am able to provide for my family which includes sending my children to school. I have also managed to save a bit of money for myself to survive the rainy days. The project has also equipped me with financial management skills.”*

In relation to training, Portia Khoza had this to say during the launch of the Artisan Development Programme in Emalahleni in June 2015:

“We thank the Government, MerSETA and all participating companies for giving us an opportunity to live our dreams! You have all given us hope for a better future and we are grateful. We urge you to extend this hope to more young people in South Africa.”

Ms Khoza, 24, from Emalahleni (Witbank) in Mpumalanga Province, is one of two women currently placed at FLSmidth Buffalo (Pty) Ltd where she is receiving training in electrical studies. This is what she had to say: *“As young women, we have been afforded an opportunity to shine in a workplace that is dominated by men. In our journey in this*

programme, we have been exposed to more than the electrical trade. We are receiving training in different areas such as assisting in building panels, wiring of machines, manufacturing of feeder breakers and in regular maintenance in the workplace.”

With effect from 1st November 2015, the prescribed minimum wage of EPWP participants increased to R78.86 from R75.10 per day. The EPWP wage is adjusted annually in line with the inflation rate.

In order to better coordinate public employment programmes across all departments and levels of government, the Public Employment Programme-Inter Ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC) was established, with

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa as the chairperson, and including the ten Ministers who are responsible for Public Employment Programmes and their Director- Generals.

The PEP-IMC is a high-level government structure aimed at achieving better coordination and synergy between the EPWP and the other poverty alleviation, employment, enterprise development and skills development initiatives. The Committee also ensures that the government scales up its public employment programmes to achieve the 6 million work opportunity target by 2019.

In conclusion, I need to make the point that Public Works would not be able to deliver the EPWP without all of you. I need to convey my sincere thanks to all the municipalities, the provincial governments, the

various national departments, Non-Profits Organizations, and State-Owned Enterprises for their excellent work and co-operation in ensuring that we delivered on our mandate – and in fighting against the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

I am also encouraged that a number of municipalities have made significant strides in implementing the EPWP. A total of 278 municipalities have signed protocol agreements. I am also pleased that some municipalities have signed the adopted EPWP policy.

Our challenge now is to ensure that all implementing bodies reach the same level of excellence as the organisations we are recognizing here tonight. Let their example spur the rest of us on to make a positive impact on those most in need in our society.

I understand that the selection was extremely difficult given the quality of the nominations received. I would like to thank the Adjudication Committee for the sterling work done.

Let us all join together with the recipients of the Kamoso Awards to celebrate their hard work and achievement. To all the finalists in the different categories – we are exceedingly proud of you.

Again congratulations to all the Award winners. You are living proof of the sentiments expressed by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle and I quote:

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation... We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

I thank you.