

**SPEECH BY PREMIER MAKWETLA AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ENKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY  
EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME THEMBISILE MUNICIPALITY  
23 APRIL 2005**

Programme Director

Honourable MEC's present today

Honourable Mayors

Honourable councillors

Your majesties Amakhosi and representatives of traditional authorities

Distinguished guests, friends and comrades

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dumelang. Lotshani. Sanibonani.

I am pleased to be here with you today as we launch the Enkangala District Municipality Expanded Public Works Programme.

Allow me to begin by congratulating the Honourable Executive Mayor, S.P.D Skhosana, and the entire leadership of the Enkangala District Municipality, the various municipalities, and their stakeholders, for the progress that has been made in putting together a viable set of EPWP projects and joining the provincial and national effort to create jobs and fight poverty.

Last year we launched the provincial Expanded Public Works Programme at Ntwane Village in nearby Dennilton and since then we have been impressed with the important strides that have been made in delivering this programme in our province.

In launching this important programme our President described the EPWP as "a comprehensive intergovernmental and people-centred programme that seeks to fulfill the overwhelming trust and confidence the masses of our people have placed in government that we should work together, in partnership, to create a better life for all".

It is therefore an honour and a privilege for me to stand before you and acclaim the work being done by the provincial political leadership of this programme, particularly MEC Candith Mashego-Dlamini and her colleagues, the provincial steering team, and, the Mayors, councillors and ordinary public servants.

As the previous speakers have indicated, the Mpumalanga province has exceeded its EPWP targets by a significant margin. We have met and surpassed our goal of creating 10 000 temporary employment opportunities by the end of the 2004/2005 financial year.

For the 2005/6 financial year, we have also boldly set ourselves the target of creating double the number of work opportunities that were created since August 2004.

MEC, Mayors, and Officials, it is through your efforts and actions that we have come here today and that we will soon observe an accelerated implementation of this programme at the local government level throughout our province.

We wish to salute you for your selfless endeavours and earnest contributions to creating a better life for all.

**The importance of work**

Programme Director, the significance of today's occasion, and the EPWP in general, is considerably amplified when we appreciate the importance of "work" to many of our people.

It is through "work" that our people expect to be able to feed themselves and their families, to educate their children, to lead a stable family life and to be able to provide for contingencies such as illness or old age.

Unfortunately too many of our people are without work.

Therefore this EPWP is an important and far-reaching intervention that seeks to address the causes and consequences of poverty by providing work opportunities and skills to thousands of our people.

The eminent Nobel Laureate and former World Bank Chief Economist, Joseph E. Stiglitz, has remarked that;

"For a large fraction of the world's population, work-employment-is important...some individuals can keep themselves happy and gainfully employed without a job. But for many, employment-the fact that someone else recognizes their contribution by paying them- is important".

He also goes on to say that:

"For individuals who lose their jobs, it is not just the loss of income that matters, it is also the individual's sense of self. Unemployment is associated with a variety of problems and pathologies, from higher divorce rates, higher suicide rates to higher incidences of alcoholism. And the relationship is not just a correlation: there is a causal connection".

As a government committed to a people-centred and caring society we would find much truth and inspiration from these remarks by Stiglitz.

The EPWP that is at the center stage of this gathering, in this particular municipality, is therefore a massive national response to the urgent and debilitating challenges of joblessness and the resultant rampant poverty in our communities, by creating at least 1 million opportunities for our people to be gainfully employed and develop their skills in the first five years of the programme.

Through the EPWP we are saying that, as a government, we will not stand by with folded arms while too many of our people are still without work.

We have also committed to pursue this intervention without any undue pressures on the fiscal stability that our country is enjoying at the moment. The EPWP is being funded through the existing budget and we have simply re-oriented line function budgets so that government expenditure results in more work opportunities, particularly for unskilled labour.

Indeed this Enkangala District Municipality EPWP that we launch here today is another concrete example of our steadfastness in forging the People's contract for a Better South Africa.

### **Building partnerships**

When our President launched the EPWP he spoke at length about the critical importance of partnership between the different tiers of government for the initiative to succeed.

At the launch of the provincial EPWP, last year, we also noted that this programme was an excellent example of what can be achieved through a successful partnership between the different spheres of government in our province.

We need to continuously assess how far and how effective we are in developing this partnership for the implementation of the EPWP in our province.

At the provincial level, we have a steering committee that is responsible for overseeing our collective efforts as Departments, however there is clearly a need to cascade this type of arrangement even to the local government level so that there is greater clarity about where we all are in our various endeavours.

We are aware and commend the role of provincial officials in improving awareness and assisting municipalities with the “**Guidelines for the implementation of labour intensive Projects under the EPWP**”, particularly in relation to the Municipal Infrastructure Grant or MIG.

However, we need to ensure that the impact of these efforts is felt throughout the length and breadth of the province and that none of our people or communities are left behind.

Our system of corporative governance is one of the marvels of our constitutional order in our country since 1994.

It has brought government closer to the people and allowed for the execution of nationally established policies and strategies in a manner that takes into account local and regional conditions and experiences

As we implement this EPWP let us ensure that we vindicate those that tirelessly crafted the roles of the separate tiers of government by enhancing our collaboration to ensure a better life for all our people.

A provincial vision for the implementation of the EPWP is one that will emerge more strongly as we continuously seek to share information and learn from one another, across Departments, sectors, and tiers of government, about best-practice interventions and problem solving initiatives.

### **There shall be Work and Security**

In a year in which we celebrate the 50 th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a document which the late Oliver Tambo described as “the one basic political statement of our goals to which all genuinely democratic and patriotic forces of South Africa adhere”, it is perhaps fitting that today we are launching a programme that gives meaning to the clauses in the Charter that “the people shall share in the country's wealth” and that “there shall be work and security”.

Creating work and fighting poverty are central in our programme as government for the creation of a truly democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous society.

This launch of the Enkangala District Municipality's EPWP is an important contribution to these endeavours. It is also an important milestone so far in a year that we have dedicated to achieving “DECENT WORK AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” in a vibrant people-centred province.

Programme Director,

Today we have gathered in one of our province's marginal and economically distressed regions where the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment are fairly acute.

Joblessness, grinding poverty that includes low levels of income and lack of access to basic services, are amongst the burning issues that confront our people on a daily basis.

It is heartening today to find that the municipalities in Enkangala will be implementing various labour intensive projects such as constructing and paving of roads, in areas such as Sakhelwe and Botleng, and the provision, upgrading or refurbishment of water supply to households in Tweefontein M, and Kwaggafontein, among others.

Through these projects not only are we creating employment opportunities but we are also addressing critical infrastructure needs in our communities.

Therefore I wish to again commend the entire leadership of the Enkangala District Municipality for the enormous strides that they have made in launching these EPWP projects.

It is our hope that through the necessary institutional innovations and leadership the lessons from Enkangala will be shared across the province so that the provincial EPWP targets are again matched and surpassed at the end of this financial year.

At the same time our collective efforts in empowering and uplifting our people and communities will further serve to fortify the socio-economic gains that our country has made over the past decade.

As in the words of our President, “the tide has turned”.

**I thank you**