

## REMARKS BY PREMIER MAKWETLA AT LAUNCH OF WALK-IN-TRAINING CENTRE

25 FEBRUARY 2005

### RIVERSIDE COMPLEX NELSPRUIT

Honourable Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

The CEO of SITA Mavuso Msimang

MEC's present

Heads of Departments

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the *Ten-Year Review: Synthesis Report on the Implementation of Government Programmes*, researchers at the Presidency noted that the challenges for governance and administration in the next decade include, among others, 'improving service delivery by building the necessary institutions and initiatives'.

They have also pointed out that as a country we should also focus on 'improving the capacity of provincial and local government at key technical levels, especially where it impinges on service delivery and financial management'.

We are grateful that today we are gathered here at an occasion that marks an important response to the challenges of accelerated service delivery. These are the challenges that our President also spoke about in his State of the Nation address last week, when he reminded us to spare "neither effort nor strength in building a South Africa that truly belongs to all, who live in it, united in our diversity".

To some among us here there is indeed no digital divide, and computers are part of their every day life, as a result they can not fully appreciate our need to respond to the imperatives of the "information society" in how government undertakes its work, which is the true significance of this initiative.

I am sure we all recognize the importance of our government's overall skills development effort which seeks to upgrade the skills of our workers so that as a country, we can improve our productivity and competitiveness in the face of globalization.

This strategy is also applicable to the public sector. It is particularly important to the public sector because without the necessary skills we would not be able to do our work and achieve our goal of a better life for all our people.

I am happy that this training centre will avail resources and expertise for training in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT), which is becoming increasingly important in our economy and in our ability to deliver services.

Those who are not appreciative of what we are doing today and of government's efforts on training in general, forget that apartheid robbed millions of our people of educational opportunities and access to skills.

These were skills and education that were important for them to be able to lift themselves from positions of disempowerment, such that as a result, many were unable to obtain decent jobs or to better themselves through access to sustainable livelihoods.

Within the scheme of grand Apartheid, Africans were to be no more than "the hewers of wood and drawers of water".

We were a country where the best education institutions were reserved for whites and those allocated to Africans were often third-rate institutions with poor quality teaching and a lack of adequate infrastructure and resources.

This was a dispensation that had no interest in their development as citizens or workers.

This has become only but a nightmare of the past.

We will continue to uphold and seek to achieve the vision of the people's document, the Freedom Charter, which so unequivocally tells us that our country belongs to all who live in it.

In conclusion, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, given our commitment to the spirit of Batho Pele, and a commitment to the three E's of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy, we must take seriously ICT's potential to assist us to improve our work.

We know that this is based on our understanding of how ICT's also provide a valuable resource for the management of government itself.

With a broad base of public servants that can use computers and are part of the "information" society we will be able to modernize and improve our work as a provincial government.

However, we must do more about with these resources and skills that we have at our disposal.

We must communicate and provide access to regulations, procedures, policies, and documentation and to provide links to external databases and contacts with these resources and skills.

This is perhaps a matter we will follow-up with the Director-General so that we can develop strategies to improve in the use of ICT's as a provincial government.

Honourable Minister, CEO of Sita and other important stakeholders here with us today, we are pleased for having been privileged to be the province where this initiative was launched in government.

Our employees are accorded the opportunity to advance themselves and to be equipped for today and their careers tomorrow.

These are truly exciting times for our country as our President and the Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel attested this week.

I wish to call on all our public servants to please take full advantage of this facility.

May I salute all the individuals and stakeholders that have participated in this project and contributed to this event.

**I thank you**