



public works

Department of
Public Works
FREE STATE PROVINCE

SPEECH BY FREE STATE MEC FOR DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FREE STATE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, F NGUBENTOMBI, DURING THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP, BLOEMSPA

4 February 2010

Programme director
Premier of the Free State, Honourable Ace Magashule
My Colleagues in the executive council
Mayors and councillors
The House of Traditional Leadership
Invited guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Today I'm particularly pleased that we are gathered here to find ways and means on how to deliver on one of the key five priorities of an African National Congress (ANC) led government. Government has in the context of building sustainable livelihoods in rural areas advanced the need to build a vibrant and cooperative movement. This workshop should assist us in our endeavour to adequately meet the need of our rural communities.

The strategic importance of rural development cannot be over emphasised, given the fact that Free State is largely a rural province. Our success in pursuing rural development should therefore serve as litmus test for the all-important cause of building a better life for all the people in rural communities. It must also be noted that our rural development function is more than just a core function that cannot only be delivered by a single government department. It is a transversal function that has to be performed in collaboration with other government departments, in all spheres of government.

We are gathered here today to develop a comprehensive rural development strategy for the province. The main tenets of such a strategy will be building social infrastructure, economic infrastructure and public amenities and facilities in rural areas and land reform and agrarian change. In this current financial year, with an allocated budget of R28 million, we are implementing eight rural development flagship projects. In executing these projects, we should be biased towards local communities, local suppliers, youth, the disabled and women.

Rural development is about enabling rural people to take control of their destiny, thereby dealing effectively with rural poverty through the optimal use and management of natural resources. It can be achieved through self help initiatives as well as through coordinated and integrated broad based agrarian transformation, through strategic investment in economic and social infrastructure that benefits the entire rural communities and not only those involved in agriculture.

Basic infrastructure provision has a positive impact on the socio-economic conditions of the rural communities in the province. Infrastructure is vital for the achievement of the economic growth and social development objectives, since the provision of infrastructure stimulates investment, promotes wider movement of people and goods, better flow of information and diversified investment in the economy.

Free State province, like the rest of the country is also faced with challenges of low economic growth resulting from the current global meltdown and recession. Infrastructure includes access to land, buildings, road networks and services such as electricity, water, waste and sewage services as well as social infrastructure such as schools and healthcare facilities.

The inadequacies in road and transportation infrastructure within the province make it difficult to promote sustainable development. It is within this context that solutions should be found in correcting this state of affairs. We will know that we are successful in the implementation of rural development when we see sustainable and vibrant rural communities.

Infrastructure development is a prerequisite for economic development of both the urban and rural developments; therefore our mandate on infrastructure delivery continues to play a significant and central role in confronting these enormous challenges. The importance of infrastructure delivery for economic development and decent job creation in the province has been clearly acknowledged through many strategies and plans.

Firstly, infrastructure development has been made the main core of government stimulus against raging economic crisis and recession.

Secondly, infrastructure development will drive the industrial development programme which is about strengthening the productive capacity of our economy for decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods.

Thirdly, infrastructure development will be responsible for providing social infrastructure and thereby helping expand access to education and health to rural communities.

And fourthly, the labour intensiveness of infrastructure development will help create employment opportunities for the people of the province, including women and the disabled.

It is a known fact that for the economy to perform well its growth should be coupled with a strong link to vigorous infrastructure investment, hence our mandate to speedy infrastructure delivery, especially in rural areas. Areas with poor infrastructure development will not attract viable economic investments.

We should therefore take cognisance of the bottlenecks which impede on the implementation capacity and its impact on accelerated economic development accruing from a robust infrastructure development programme. Together we can build vibrant and sustainable rural communities!

I thank you.
