



SPEAKING NOTES BY FREE STATE MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS F NGUBENTOMBI'S AT THE VISIT TO THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF BOITUMELO HOSPITAL

29 July 2009

This visit to the construction site of Boitumelo Hospital underscores the centrality of health and as a pillar in the current electoral mandate. We are here to showcase our construction work in the health sector. The National Construction Week (NCW) campaign is about raising the profile of and awareness about the construction industry, particularly its role and impact in economic growth and in social development. We are hosting this fourth NCW against the backdrop of the electoral mandate to work together and do more for our people.

Our mandate is to develop and transform the economy in manner that creates decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods. We also have a mandate to immediately create 50 000 job opportunities to cushion the poor against the current economic crisis arising from the global meltdown.

Just yesterday we tabled a budget vote that showed that the infrastructure delivery effort of government will contribute to economic development in a manner that builds industries, contributes to the creation of 50 job opportunities, develop skills and develop small contractors. We when talk about infrastructure delivery we are basically talking about the construction industry because construct schools, libraries, hospitals, stadiums and other social amenities.

Yesterday during my budget vote speech I said, "During this financial year and beyond, we will move with speed to deliver the much needed social infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. We are already tightly monitoring all the projects we are doing for the Departments of Education and Health in this regard.

Construction of healthcare facilities will go a long way in expanding access to health care services which are so basic in our quest to build a better life for all."

So clearly the construction industry is going to play an important role in the execution of the electoral mandate. The President has described this post electoral period as an era of renewal. The theme for this year's NCW is therefore appropriate in wording and formulation the construction industry lays a concrete foundation for the era of renewal.

We will make sure that the construction industry contributes to the creation of job opportunities. Indications are that the construction industry has potential to create these much needed job opportunities.

We want to do more in developing contractors. I don't want to talk a lot about contractors today because we have set aside Friday as day in which we will talk about contractors at a Construction Indaba. We want to seek the numbers of contractors getting jobs substantially increasing. We don't want a situation where everybody registers on Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) and yet they don't get any jobs and they don't raise through the grades of CIDB. We want to see the number of blacks in high-up grades increasing; black contractors must not only be concentrated in the lower grades.

The profile of this construction project of this extension Boitumelo Hospital indicates that over the past eight years a huge infrastructure drive has been at the centre of government's expansionary measures and investment in economy.

Government investment in infrastructure development has played a key role in the boom that we have witnessed in the construction industry over the recent years. The boom in the construction industry in turn played a significant role the relatively high rates of economic growth in the recent years, until the recession late year as a result of the global meltdown.

Even now during this period of economic crisis and recession, government has decided to use public investment in infrastructure development as both cushion and stimulus for reviving the economy. Billions of rands will therefore be used by both the national and provincial government, as well as municipalities, in this infrastructure drive.

The construction industry is still one of the best performing sectors in the economy despite the woes that have befallen the economy. Through the government's infrastructure drive, the construction industry will, once more, help to revive the entire economy. To make sure that we have a sustainable growth, the industrial strategy of government will also be implemented using the infrastructure drive as a major platform.

The theme for this year's NCW is therefore appropriate in wording and formulation, "the construction industry lays a concrete foundation for the era of renewal."

The construction industry also has an important social development role and impact. The delivery of the much needed social infrastructure such as schools, libraries, hospitals and clinics gives concrete expression to this social development role of the construction industry. The choice of this visit to this construction site of Nomsa Secondary School is therefore no accident. Education as one of the five important priorities of the electoral mandate has to and will also benefit of from the central role of the construction industry.

This school is or was a platooning school. This new school building that is currently under construction will therefore do away with platooning. The construction industry, through Government's infrastructure delivery, is therefore playing a role in expanding access to education and improving the learning conditions for our children.

The progress of the construction is also impressive as it indicates that we will conclude this project on schedule. Having started last year in (2008) June we are likely finish next year in February.

The project progress is now at 63 percent. The total number of job opportunities created during this construction project so far is 188. It is also pleasing to note that youth are 70 whilst women are 50 of those employed in this project so far.

The total cost for the contract is R 190,568,346.33. The school building we are going to have here is one of high tech. Our children deserve the best. Let's celebrate the fourth Annual Construction Week because, the construction industry lays a concrete foundation for the era of renewal.

I thank you.