

Address at the official launch of the Lambasi Community Production Centre

Lusikisiki, 25 November 2000

Your Majesty, King Mpondombini Sigcau, Tlandizulu Ndlunhulu
The National Minister of Public Works the Honourable Minister Stella Sigcau
All the National Cabinet Ministers and the Deputies here today
MEC for Agriculture and Land Affairs in the Eastern Cape, Mr Mamase
All other Members of the Executive Councils present today
linkosi Zonke Ezikhoyo
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Since 1994, government has opened up a new frontier in our struggle for total liberation. We have declared war on poverty and mobilised resources to eradicate conditions that give rise to poverty.

Before the 1994 democratic break through, successive apartheid regimes confined the people of Lambasi to the periphery of development. Inevitably, this marginalisation subjected the poorest of the poor to grinding poverty, disease, lack of health care facilities, food insecurity, lack of education and many other evils.

During the past six years, the democratic government has prepared the foundation to speed up provision of services; to build on what we have achieved; to make a bigger impact on the daily lives of the people.

As South Africans, we cannot begin to talk about a "nation at work for a better life" until we have all dedicated ourselves towards working to remove all the historical impediments to our self-fulfilment, as a nation.

Poverty is a product of our history. It is not a natural phenomenon. It was imposed by successive social, political and military forces, which spared little in their wake.

Government has spoken out repeatedly against these historical inequalities. We have continued to rebel against these inequalities even as they present themselves as being so steeped in history that they could not be changed.

We shall not relax our efforts to reverse the ravaging consequences of history, which continue to afflict our people. As we contain the spread of poverty and combat its ill effects, we are at the same time writing a desirable future for ourselves and our children. As I stand here today, I am reminded of the gallant battles that this area experienced, as our people fought for their freedom.

Many heroes and heroines lie buried in the mountains and valleys of this territory. We salute the bravery of the sons and daughters of this area and commend their unshaken resolve unselfishly to lay down their lives for our freedom. We salute Chiefs Mzimvu bu, Nyangilizwe, and Sigcau. We salute the heroes of Ngquza. Of course, we also salute the uncompromising spirit of Oliver Tambo. Today we walk tall in the knowledge that we are a free nation again. Their deeds of bravery and heroism will remain written in our memory for all time.

As a free people, we accept the challenge to rebuild our area and transform our lives. The launch of a Community Production Centre here at Lambasi continues our struggle to fight poverty, empower the people and improve their quality of life. Since 1996, the National Department of Public Works led by the Honourable Minister Stella Sigcau has invested more than R1.2 billion in the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) to fight rural poverty and unemployment.

After six years, the programme, which is an integral part of the national government's strategy to fight rural poverty, has created more than 43 000 job opportunities and 2500 community assets.

In line with government's socio-economic objectives, more than 45% of these jobs have gone to women, youth and the disabled.

The launch of the Lambasi Community Production Centre (CPC) signifies an important milestone in the Community Based Public Works Programme. Like all other milestones, this signifies the end of one phase and the beginning of another.

At a community, level CPC constitutes a vehicle of community ownership and ensures vibrant economic nodes. To ensure the latter, the programme promotes value-adding processes and skills development.

The success of this programme depends on the accurate identification of viable local and international marketing opportunities and the planning of production in accordance with such opportunities.

Furthermore, the success of this programme lies in the effective partnerships and co-ordination of the respective policies and strategies by the relevant government departments, private and community role-players. The positive experience of co-operation between the departments of Public Works and Agriculture in the implementation of the Lambasi CPC deserves emulation.

Although the project is still in its incipient stages, its positive effects are beginning to be felt by more than 56 000 people residing in the seven beneficiary areas of Lambasi, Hombre, Mbotyi, Mateko, Malangeni, Nkunzimbini and Njombela. This is the result of about R37 million that has been allocated to the creation and development of the six Community Production Centres in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Province in the 2000/2001 financial year.

Using the labour intensive construction methods, which are a hallmark of a Community Based Public Works Programme, the Lambasi Community Production Centre has already created job opportunities targeting mainly women and youth. The realigned CBPWP seeks to increase the asset base of the community and create jobs by building assets that are directly productive such as market stalls and poultry houses as well as those linking the communities with business centres such as access roads and footbridges.

Opportunities are limitless. Here in Lambasi, the following agricultural related projects have been identified, already laying the foundations for the development of downstream business ventures. These include manufacturing, repairs, storage, crop production, market facilities, and marketing and human resource development.

The rehabilitation of the water supply and sanitation systems will further advance the objectives of government to bring essential social services to within easy reach of the people. I have been reliably informed that both the construction of phase 1 and 2 of the access roads is nearing completion. We congratulate the emerging contractors who have been appointed to carry out these tasks. Their good work ethic should be an example to others that given an opportunity, they can rise to the occasion and deliver good quality products consistent with government standards and specifications.

Through government, tenders and other contracts we shall continue to empower those previously disadvantaged and insist on good quality outputs. Together with you, we shall continue the fight for change. We shall ensure that we travel the journey to a better South Africa with all due speed. The objective of government remains rooted in the eradication of poverty. Our guiding light remains: A Better Life For All.

I thank you.

