

Keynote address of MEC, of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Hon Sasekani Manzini (MPL), to the KAMOSO Awards, held in Ingwenyama Conference Centre.

Programme Director;

Executive Mayor of the City of Mbombela Cllr. S. Mathonsi;

Members of Executive Council;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Representatives from the House of Traditional Leaders

Executive Mayors and Councilors;

Captains of industries and State Owned Entities;

Heads of departments and Municipal managers,

Senior Managers from all spheres of government,

Representatives from NGO's and CBO's

Members of media houses, Ladies and gentlemen

Program Director, if the God's of the universe had allowed that Oliver Tambo be alive today, we would be preparing to visit him at his home tomorrow to wish him a happy 99th birthday. Unfortunately this cannot be, but let it be that this important occasion of the KAMOSO awards serves as a heartfelt birthday salute to one of the greatest sons of the African soil and outstanding architect of a free and democratic South Africa, cde Oliver Tambo.

We have convened here this evening to carry out a simple, but important act. We are gathered here at Ingwenyama Conference

Centre, to announce to the people of Mpumalanaga and that of our country, the public bodies and NPOs who have responded with distinction to the noble call of creating employment, through the Extended Public Works Program.

Ordinarily, I would have refused the department to host this event and request that the resources be channelled to service delivery programs. However, the reality which we must respond to, is that we have not convened here, this evening merely to give out prizes and parade our nice outfits. We have gathered here this evening to pay tribute to a rare human being, and to recite a humble prayer of thanks to President O R Tambo. We are paying this tribute, by reporting to President O R Tambo, that we are continuing with their march of creating a prosperous South Africa, free of poverty, unemployment and inequality, through our Extended Public Works Program.

The province started hosting the Kamoso Awards in 2009/10 financial year. This was necessitated by the excellent performance we saw through the EPWP projects that were being implemented by public bodies and testimonies by beneficiaries on the good work that was done by EPWP programme. The department really felt that, the type of excellency we witnessed deserved recognition.

Ladies & gentlemen the Kamoso Awards serves as the platform to recognize municipalities, provincial departments, public entities, non-state organization and individuals who excelled in implementing the Expanded Public Works Programme in the preceding year.

The Kamoso Awards recognizes the EPWP as a key government programme aimed at improving the general socio – economic conditions of all South Africans. The objectives of the awards include the following:

- To communicate and showcase progress, impact and success of EPWP as a key government programme
- To mobilize government stakeholders and partners to increase their efforts around the implementation of EPWP and strive towards greater heights
- To acknowledge implementing bodies that perform well in terms of the EPWP objectives
- To create a platform to enhance visibility of the EPWP and reinforce its objectives to a broader audience
- To promote creation of labour intensive work opportunities

The Mpumalanga Kamoso Awards recognizes excellence in the implementation of projects from the four sectors namely;

- (a) **Infrastructure:** – focuses on increasing the labour intensity of government funded projects

- (b) **Environment & Culture:** – focusing in public environment programmes i.e. working for water , cleaning public space and parks

- (c) **Social:** – crating work opportunities in public social programmes like Early Childhood Development Centres, Old Age Homes, Disability Centres etc.

- (d) **Non state:** – working with NGO's , community based organisations and faith based organization on job creation

The 2015/16 Kamoso Awards ceremony are of particular significance as they represent the milestones for the EPWP in drawing a number of municipalities and other implementing bodies into the implementation of the programme. As the MEC of this department, I am pleased to announce that out of 21 municipalities in the province, all 21 municipalities are participating in the EPWP programme with the addition of other provincial departments that are now participating in the programme and started reporting. I really want to commend all the implementers of the EPWP who are complying with the EPWP processes in reporting their progress.

This is encouraging and I request all government departments to start participating, because the EPWP program has a very important role to play in fighting poverty, unemployment and in equality.

Maybe, I must share with honourable Mayors and MECs present here today, that a number of countries in the global South have introduced innovative public employment schemes aimed at providing minimum consumption for the poor. These schemes included India's statutory Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Ethiopia's public employment component of the Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and South Africa's Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

Research clearly shows that these public employment programmes are very effective in alleviating hunger and poverty among the poor as they provide regular and predictable income to participants. Some of these schemes also have a potential to promote livelihoods of the poor through various ways such as creation of assets, improving the labour market performance of participants by providing work experience, training and starting of small businesses by individual participants.

So my humble plea is that, this program is a helpful instrument to fight poverty and must be taken with the seriousness it deserves. We know that there are those who still ridicule and criticise it and this could be, because of limited understanding about the program. Whenever we come across these critics, we must kindly remind them that Confucius said, ***"It is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness."*** There moral of the story been complaining is not helpful, but something must be done, no matter its size.

Competitions are generally tense and hardly leave everybody satisfied, but for these awards which are about goodwill, we try al that is practical for the competition to be free of any prejudice.

The set criteria for the adjudication process, for the public body to qualify needed to comprise of the following:

- 1) Demonstrated participation in EPWP 2015/16
- 2) Submitted to and /or been included in the EPWP quarterly reports 2015/16
- 3) Been compliant with EPWP guidelines and reporting process

I am not going to read out the winners of the categories because we will do that during the presentations of awards. But I must to say that the large number and rich variety of the awards is indicative of just how far we have come in our implementation of EPWP. For now, I will only say good luck to the nominees!

The Hon Premier, identified EPWP as a lead programme of our department. It remains a key government initiative aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment through the provision of work opportunities. Our task as DPWRT is to lead a concerted effort from the local government, public bodies and all other role players to implement EPWP to optimize the allocated resources to address the challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The implementation of EPWP phase 3 has started and as the province our Phase 3 target is creating about 300 thousand job opportunities over the next five years. We are now in the 3rd year of implementation and I am delighted to report that as of the end of June in the last financial year alone we created about 25 thousand jobs and our 2016/17 target is about 60 thousand jobs.

The EPWP has delivered many jobs, which cushioned the poor from abject poverty in Phase 1 and 2, and I am convinced it will deliver even more jobs in the current Phase 3.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am humbled by your hard work and commitment to realize the objectives of the Expanded Public Works Programme and your continuous innovations to improve the Programme and to further alleviate unemployment and poverty in our province.

Before I take my seat, because tonight is not my night, but that of the winners, allow me to make the following remarks about leadership.

Leadership is about responding to challenges and forging a future direction. As leaders, we must establish strategic directions and map wayforwards. We must harness change. We must consistently question and seek new answers for changing environments. In this context, providing leadership will mean reviewing the relevance of our programmes for the changing environments and use public finances more innovatively and responsibly for the purpose of job creation.

Program, I conclude by encouraging my peers who are political heads by reminding them of the words of Amilcar Cabral, in his seminal paper, Titled Tell no lies, claim no easy victories, Cabral says:

“Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to

win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children.”

In short, Iskhathi Sesi Scamtho Siphelile! The time to deliver jobs and a better life to our people is now.

I thank you!