

**KEYNOTE TO THE LAUNCH OF VHEMBE DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY UNEMPLOYED YOUTH SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT BY THE
DEPUTY MINISTER WATER AND SANITATION
MS PAMELA TSHWETE
VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
THOHOYANDOU
LIMPOPO PROVINCE
16 JANUARY 2015**

Programme Director, Public Representatives, Leaders of Political Parties, Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, Dignitaries, Community Members, Youth Representatives, Government Officials, the Programme Beneficiaries, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me on this occasion to greet you in the name of the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Compliments to you all in 2015 and may this year bring you laughter, love and success in whatever you wish to do and strengthen your commitment and dedication in making this world a better place for zzaus all.

When we took office in 2014, we visited all our provinces in this country and noted serious challenges in the maintenance of municipal infrastructure in general.

The buildings, the roads, electricity, water treatment plants, sanitation treatment plants and municipal facilities were all not well maintained in most areas we visited.

We have also noted the acute shortages of personnel with the necessary and saleable skills to perform the mandated municipal functions. It become very clear for us that the provision of municipal services requires artisans and personnel

with a full grasp of the municipal infrastructure layout and mechanical operations.

Today we are here to launch this Unemployed Youth Skills Development Project in Thohoyandou together with the Department of Public Works and the Vhembe District Municipality.

This is the kind of project that will be rolled out throughout the country to ensure that we adequately provide for the most needed skills in the administration and governance of our municipalities.

This programme is based on the provisions of the Freedom Charter, the Millennium Development Goals, the National Development Plan, the National Youth Skills Programme, the Youth Policy Implementation Plan, AMCOW Youth Development Strategy and many other youth focused policies aimed at empowering the youth.

All these initiatives are about skills development, job creation, the fight against poverty, economic development, building better communities, provision of life skills, maintenance of the existing infrastructure and facilities, roll out of the new infrastructure and ensuring functioning municipalities.

This initiative has been anchored on the shoulders of many critical partners such National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Stats SA, National Youth Skills Development Programme (NYSDP) and RUBBYTADT. These are national organisations I would not like embarrass myself to. Please save me by doing the right thing as we unfold the implementation of this project.

Out of this programme we seek to produce water and sanitation specialists in the form of technicians, artisans, plumbers, metre

readers, blue drop and green drop managers, community facilitators, water resource managers and security personnel, planners and installers of smart water and sanitation infrastructure.

Both the beneficiaries, that is the individual trainees and the individual municipalities must own this programme. The individual trainees must recognise the fact that they have been selected from a very large pool of the unemployed people in this country.

Secondly they have been selected to service very needy communities. These two factors must instil in them a sense of responsibility and selfless service to the people and never be the reasons for the failure of this project.

The municipalities have a responsibility to embrace this developmental process and incorporate it as part of their annual Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). In addition to the resources provided by the Department of Public Works individual municipalities must plan and budget for the ultimate takeover of this programme.

Never again must we see trained and energetic young people roaming the streets without being absorbed as permanent employees in the personnel of municipalities or being given the opportunity to service the communities whilst the same communities suffer from inadequate provision of services.

The communities as direct beneficiaries of this programme will have a much bigger responsibility of monitoring both individual trainees and individual municipalities in the implementation of this programme.

The community must ensure that the trainees attend all their training sessions and are actually performing their duties when employed in the municipality.

The community must also ensure that this project runs smoothly by ensuring that the municipality implements this project according to the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

For example the agreed stipend must be paid and be paid on time, those who completed their training programme must be absorbed and the social life of the people in this area must change for the better.

Through this programme we are ensuring that people govern themselves, they determine the pace of their development, they improve the quality of services they receive, they contribute to their economic development through Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and Cooperatives.

This project has so far taught me to understand the importance of water use demand and conservation management. Whilst we consume water we must at the same time conserve our water resource.

This talks to the notion of source to tap and considers a range of activities we need to employ before water gets to our individual households and the skills required to perform those activities.

This tripartite relationship between the Vhembe District Municipality, Department of Public Works and ourselves as the Department of Water and Sanitation must work for us all and indeed take our communities to another level.

I thank you