



Statement by KZN Premier Nomusa Dube

Statement by KZN Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube as she commits government towards advancing women empowerment and transformation of the construction industry.

24 August 2022, Hilton Hotel, Sandton: Today, I addressed the Empowerment Recognition for Women in Construction Awards Seminar which is hosted by the Construction Industry Development Board.

I outlined plans earmarked to reshape the province's economy and unlock opportunities for millions of emerging entrepreneurs, particularly women. We want them to be in the entire value chain of the built environment.

Importantly, as the provincial government we are rolling out socio-economic infrastructure as a catalyst for the province's economic recovery. We are of the view that catalytic projects, located in various parts of the province, will contribute towards radical economic transformation and ensure job creation for hundreds of people.

The overall infrastructure budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework amounts to R18.6 billion, R19 billion and R18.7 billion across all 14 government departments. When we made this budget allocation, our focus was on reconfiguring the structure of the economy of the province post the Covid-19 period.

We are also rebuilding the infrastructure damaged by devastating floods. We are directed to focus on entrepreneurship development which is important to the economic and social development of KwaZulu-Natal as we rebuild our province.

Therefore, our main focus is to ensure that emerging entrepreneurs are assisted to enter the entire value chain of the built industry. We want them to be the creators of wealth and ensure massive employment of people across all corners of the province. This is a key aspect of the Infrastructure Revolution.

We wish to inform delegates that we are finalising the establishment of the Strategic Infrastructure Development Agency (SIDA) to be located in the Department of Public Works. SIDA will be the Province's Infrastructure Nerve Centre.

Having this Nerve Centre will enable KwaZulu-Natal to better coordinate infrastructure projects irrespective of the sphere of government that is the custodian of the plans in question. The work of the KZN Treasury's Infrastructure Crack Team of technical specialists including project managers, engineers and architects is being strengthened to speed-up quality construction of public infrastructure and eliminate under-expenditure.

Critically, we remain committed to ensure that suppliers are paid within 30 days. We are fully aware that failure to pay suppliers has dire consequences for sustainability of small businesses, impacts negatively on job creation and compromises service delivery.

Government departments, with the assistance of Treasury, are developing an invoice tracking system in order to deal with this matter once and for all.

Delays in the processing of invoices either deliberately or due to demands for bribes – will result in criminal charges laid against any employee. We are calling on members of the public and emerging entrepreneurs to report such employees in order for government to take immediate action.

We have set up a Hotline for the members of the public to report such unscrupulous elements within all our government departments. Treasury and the Office of the Premier will work together in this regard.

In conclusion, we reiterate our position that gender empowerment is not a part time activity, of one person against the system, but it is meant to build a movement and a wave that will eventually shift the ground in the direction of transformation.

The Empowerment Recognition for Women in Construction Awards are a recognition of the hurdles women have had to jump in order to enter sectors that are seen as belonging to men.

Black women in construction are especially vulnerable as they face the triple disadvantages of race, but also gender and class.