

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND
INFRASTRUCTURE SIHLE ZIKALALA DURING THE DPWI-CIDB CONTRACTOR
DEVELOPMENT OUTREACH PROGRAMME, OLYMOIA HALL, ROYAL
SHOWGROUNDS, PIETERMARITZBURG, 13 JUNE 2025**

Programme Director: The Deputy Mayor of Umgungundlovu and Chairperson of Infrastructure Services, Cllr. Nonhlanhla Gabela;

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Public Works & Roads, Mr. Martin Mayer, MPL.

DDM Champion and MEC for Transport & Human Settlements in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr. Siboniso Duma, MPL.

Deputy Chairperson: Umgungundlovu House of Traditional & Khoi-San Leaders, Inkosi K S Zondi.

Mayor of Msunduzi Local Municipality, Cllr. Mzimkhulu Thebolla.

Mayor of UMgungundlovu District Municipality, Cllr. Mr Mzi Zuma.

Speaker of UMgungundlovu District Municipality, Cllr. Nonhlanhla Gabela.

Mayor of Mpofana Local Municipality, Cllr. Thembi Maureen Magubane.

Mayor of Richmond Local Municipality, Cllr. Melikhaya Ngcongco.

Mayor of Mkhambathini Local Municipality, Cllr. Nhlakanipho Ntombela.

CIDB Board and CIDB Board Member, Ms. Bongekile Zulu.

The CEO of the Construction Industry Development Board, Mr. Bongani Dladla;

President of the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP), Mr Lufuno Ratsike;

Representatives from state owned entities and public entities;

Social Partners;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are a nation in mourning.

We are a nation in deep pain.

Ours is the most unequal society on earth that risks the vulnerable poor to the vicissitudes and raging storms of nature.

This is our moment to remember that sustainability is not a luxury, but an absolute necessity.

As we gather in the historic city of Pietermaritzburg, our hearts are with the people Umthatha in the Eastern Cape who have lost their loved ones in the recent floods.

Infrastructure has been damaged, people injured and traumatized, and families lost their loved ones. As of yesterday, no less than 78 people were confirmed dead.

No less than 127 schools and 20 health facilities in the Eastern Cape have been damaged, many are in community shelters after their houses were washed away. Critical infrastructure including roads and bridges has been damaged.

Today, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa is on the ground in the Eastern Cape to touch the wounds of the injured and console the families of the deceased.

In our hour of national calamity brought by the ravages of mother nature, the reality of climate change, and our inadequate disaster responses, may I ask that we all rise to observe a moment of silence in solidarity with grieving families.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the flood disasters in the Eastern Cape evoke the painful memory of the deadly 2022 floods which affected no less than 40 000 people, destroying lives and livelihoods here in KwaZulu-Natal.

It is particularly impoverished, rural communities that are more vulnerable to climate disasters and poor climate disaster responses.

Again, we are all challenged to work together to reduce the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality identified in the NDP.

Let us seize the day to strengthen South Africa's disaster responses and to build climate resilient communities.

This is particularly significant in a year in which South Africa chairs the G20 under the theme, "**Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability.**"

South Africa has identified disaster resilience and response as a priority for South Africa's G20's presidency, given the country's increasing frequency of climate-induced natural disasters.

The G20 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group is seized with six high-impact priorities: a) **Addressing Inequality and Reducing Vulnerabilities**, b) Global Coverage of Early Warning Systems, c) **Disaster and Climate Resilient Infrastructure**, d) Financing Frameworks for DRR, e) Disaster Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, and f) Nature-Based Solutions and Ecosystem-Based Approaches for DRR.

South Africa is highly susceptible to climate-induced disasters, including floods, droughts, and wildfires, which have intensified with climate change, impacting communities, agriculture, and water resources.

Climate disasters pose a serious threat to development, disrupting livelihoods and undermining economic growth, especially in rural and underserved regions.

Rapid urbanisation has also led to informal settlements, which are highly vulnerable to floods and fires, underscoring the need for better integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into urban planning.

Fellow Compatriots, the 7th Administration or Government of National Unity led by President Ramaphosa has agreed to focus on three strategic priorities:

- Drive inclusive growth and job creation;
- Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living;
- Build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

In the aftermath of the 2022 floods, the July riots, and during the devastation of COVID-19, government developed the South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) to stimulate equitable, inclusive economic growth.

Announcing the ERRP, President Ramaphosa said: “***We are determined not merely to return our economy to where it was before the coronavirus, but to forge a new economy in a new global reality.***”

The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) identified infrastructure delivery and maintenance to be key, prompting the President to characterise construction as the flywheel of our economy.

There is consensus in the world that improved infrastructure can deliver major benefits to help nations achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to a world that is more inclusive, resilient, and safe, especially in an era of increased natural calamities brought about by climate change.

The ERRP is clear that our developmental state is pursuing infrastructure-led economic reconstruction and recovery given the multiplier effect of construction in stimulating various sectors of the economy.

In line with the ERRP, the CIDB also developed the Construction Industry Recovery Plan (CIRP) which is anchored on:

- 1) Robust Infrastructure Project Pipeline with Sustainable Funding.
- 2) Industry Capacity and Transformation.
- 3) Elevating Industry Growth and Performance to instill confidence in the investor community, assuring them that projects will be delivered with precision, efficiently, and on time.
- 4) Green Economy Implementation.
- 5) Strengthening the Public Sector capacity to expedite infrastructure delivery.

The ERRP singled out large-scale infrastructure delivery to be a catalyst in the revival of the construction industry, employment creation, the empowerment of women, the youth, people with disability and military veterans as well as the development of local supplier industries for infrastructure delivery.

To turn the corner and to transform South Africa into a construction site, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure began working closely with our agency, Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) to improve the state's technical, project preparation and financial engineering capabilities.

ISA was mandated to be a single window responsible for coordinating and driving the infrastructure investment programme. To fast-track project delivery, ISA was tasked to focus on project preparation of the Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs), the development of standard designs for social infrastructure, and clearing of permits.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the 7th Administration has not deviated from recognising infrastructure delivery as the backbone of the South African economy.

Recently, on 27 May during the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa in Cape Town, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted that:

- Infrastructure that is well constructed and maintained encourages investors to see our country as a great investment destination.
- Public infrastructure spending over the next three years will exceed R1 trillion.
- The capital value of the Strategic Integrated Projects has grown from an initial R340 billion in 2020 to over R1.3 trillion in 2025.
- These projects span energy, water and sanitation, transport and logistics, digital infrastructure and human settlements.
- In the past financial year, Infrastructure South Africa's project preparation fund supported the development of 34 infrastructure projects with an estimated capital value of R259 billion towards bankability and investment.

Compatriots, our government accounts for at least 40% of overall infrastructure investment in the country.

Despite our huge investment, black people in general and African women in particular are still underrepresented on the cidb Register of Contractors. Very few own companies at higher grades.

The pattern of underrepresentation of women professionals in general and black professionals in particular is also concerning, hence the CBE and Professional Services in the Department are implementing and strategies to augment the professionalisation of the construction sector.

Today, DPWI and the CIDB is leading social partners across all three spheres of government through the DDM to drive a process of meaningful development so that the strategy of government for infrastructure development to drive economic growth is an inclusive process that truly uplifts our communities, creates opportunities for emerging businesses and provides jobs on a large scale.

We cannot overemphasise the value of the construction sector in addressing our national priorities including job creation, inclusive economic growth, and the delivery of critical infrastructure for our people.

Despite multiple contractor development interventions over the years, the majority of emerging contractors in South Africa remain trapped in the lower cidb grades with limited progression, poor access to funding, and weak post-programme support structures.

Evidence from the CIDB Construction Monitor Reports, provincial departments, specific case studies (e.g. through Eyesizwe program), and through contractor experiences, several systemic issues are highlighted. These are:

- Low progression rates: Fewer than 36% of contractors in Contractor Development Programs progress beyond their initial grade.
- Payment delays and funding gaps: These undermine project delivery and contractor sustainability.
- Fragmented and inconsistent contractor development programme implementation: Infrastructure clients apply different standards, not aligned to a unifying framework.
- Limited post- Contractor Development Program support: Most contractors receive no structured mentorship or projects access after training.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, together with its entity the Construction Industry Development Board (cidb), is supporting contractors through a focussed approach to development underpinned by the National Contractor Development Framework (NCDF), to which Contractor Development Programs must be aligned.

The National Contractor Development Framework is aimed at ensuring the sustainable development and progression of emerging contractors — with a particular emphasis on targeted groups, including women and youth.

Development has been given a further boost through the cidb B.U.I.L.D Programme which provides for the B.U.I.L.D Fund, the Enterprise Development Standard and the Skills Development Standard which are implemented on infrastructure projects.

The B.U.I.L.D Programme enables clients to drive development through procurement and is fully compliant with all relevant procurement prescripts and policies.

Our message to all infrastructure clients, starting with the Public Works Sector is that compliance with the B.U.I.L.D Programme is non-negotiable.

For the year ahead, R 100 million from the B.U.I.L.D Fund will be used to provide funding for emerging enterprises.

Emerging contractors will also be supported in terms of competence assessment and top-up training.

The process has commenced to target 1000 contractors to be assessed in terms of competence assessment (Assessment of Prior Learning) and 200 contractors for Construction Management Systems Training and Certification so that developing companies can sustain their businesses and participate meaningfully in infrastructure projects.

We are there pleased to host contractors today and to share opportunities for development, including infrastructure projects that contractors may access.

The programme for today will also cover various support areas including cidb Registration & Compliance; SARS; BBBEE Basics, Tendering and Procurement; Business Management Administration; Project Management; and other areas of support.

We have also brought in a number of stakeholders to support our contractors to access the services offered including PRASA, MBSA, NAFBI, EPWP, ISA, Umgungundlovu Economic Development Agency, and other role players.

We call on all stakeholders to work together to fight organised crime in the construction sector. The scourge of violence, intimidation, and extortion does not only sabotage the delivery of important social infrastructure like human settlements, hospitals, courts, police stations, but also affect economic growth and job creation.

We must continue strengthening social facilitation and ensure community by in and community benefit with all our infrastructure projects.

Both the public and private sector must embrace economic transformation and the empowerment of those who were historically excluded because of the colour of their skin.

Let us work with communities and law enforcement to end criminality and extortion in the construction industry.

Compatriots, on Monday, 16 June, our nation will commemorate the heroic 76 youth generation that confronted the apartheid regime which sought to confine black people to the status of hewers of wood and drawers of water in the land of their birth.

They paid the ultimate price for rejecting “baaskap” or white domination which apartheid architects like Dr Hendrik Verwoerd sought to entrench through the diabolic system of Bantu Education.

It was Verwoerd who said, ***“the Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them. There is no place for the Bantu child above the level of certain forms of labour.”***

Today when DPWI supports the teaching of Maths and Science in impoverished schools and careers in the built environment through, we are making a dent to the racial division by Verwoerd who said: ***“What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live.”***

It was under the ANC-led congress Alliance which included the white Congress of Democrats, the Indian Congress, the Coloured People’s Congress and SACTU that the ANC led the Congress of the People that adopted the Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955, declaring that *South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white*.

Since 1994, we have put programmes in government that aim to build a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society.

Through such important programmes like the cidb contractor development, we seek to actively empower previously disadvantaged communities and transform the face of the construction industry to reflect the demographics of our country, advance inclusive growth and job creation.

The proposed legislative amendments to the cidb Act of 2000 will go far in transforming the construction industry and increase black representation in the sector.

Together, let us ensure that as infrastructure projects are rolled out, they truly transform our economy and uplift the lives of our people.

Please join us in growing the South African construction industry and ensuring that it leaves no one behind.

We encourage you to participate fully today!

It is in our hands to grow an inclusive, sustainable, transformed construction sector, create jobs, and restore hope to the millions of unemployed South Africans.

Let us build back, better!

No one must be left behind.

I thank you.