

REFLECTIONS OF RESOLUTION OF THE 2025 NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SUMMIT BY CIDB BOARD MEMBER, KHULILE NZO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE EAST LONDON CONTRACTOR DEVELOPMENT ROADSHOW AT EAST LONDON ICC, EAST LONDON, EASTERN CAPE.

24 APRIL 2026

Opening and Acknowledgements

Molweni! Good morning to the heartbeat of our industry: the men and women who wake up every day to literally build the foundation of the Eastern Cape.

MEC Lusithi,

Executive Mayor Faku, and

Our Deputy Minister, Honourable Sihle Zikalala,

It is a privilege to be back in the home province.

Now, I see some of you looking at me and thinking: "Khulile, you look remarkably relaxed for a man with a 10-minute slot."

For those who were with us at the National Construction Summit in November, you might remember my secret for these high-stakes days: I moisturised especially for you this morning!

I understand the assignment: look sharp, speak the truth, and leave you inspired to build.

But in all seriousness, I am here because there is a golden thread connecting our discussions in Gauteng last year to the work we are doing today in East London.

The Spirit of Freedom and Economic Liberation

We meet at a significant moment. In just three days, our nation celebrates Freedom Day.

There is something providential about being here in the Eastern Cape, the birthplace of Tata Nelson Mandela, just as we prepare to mark the anniversary of our democracy.

They say there are no coincidences in history. Tata Madiba fought for a freedom that was not just about the right to vote, but the right to dignity and economic participation.

On 27 April, we commemorate that dawn, but for the entrepreneurs in this room, freedom has a very practical definition.

True freedom is the ability to build a sustainable business. It is the freedom to compete on a level playing field and move from survivalist contracting to strategic business leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are here to ensure that the heritage of the Eastern Cape is not just one of struggle, but one of soaring success and world-class construction.

Following Through on Our Promises

This is not a one-off event.

This is the third Contractor Development Roadshow, following our successful sessions in KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape.

We are here because at the National Construction Summit in 2025, we made a non-negotiable handshake: we resolved to reach every province by November 2026.

Today is a direct implementation of those Summit resolutions. We aren't here for a talk shop, today is designed to be hands-on and opportunity focused.

Our technical masterclasses and the infrastructure pipeline presentations are here to provide you with a clear map of what projects are coming, where they are, and exactly how you can participate.

Building Capability Beyond Technical Skill

A key resolution from our 2025 Summit was to train one thousand contractors on Construction Management Systems this year.

Why? Because the market doesn't just reward those who can lay the straightest brick; it rewards those with the best systems, the tightest compliance, and the strongest risk management.

I am incredibly proud that today, right here in East London, we are recognising a group of contractors who have completed this training.

Congratulations!

You are proving that capability is a choice.

You are moving toward better project outcomes, fewer stalled projects, better safety, and higher quality.

This is how we "Build Your Business" to "Build South Africa."

The Provincial Reality and Tailoring the cidb Intervention

The cidb Board is here today to listen directly.

We know that a policy written in Pretoria must survive the reality of a site in East London or Mthatha.

We want to understand the Eastern Cape reality:

- What are the specific barriers blocking your grading progression?
- Where are the gaps in your business systems?
- Are the project packaging and subcontracting models working for you?

We have brought along our partners, from SANRAL to Infrastructure South Africa, to ensure that the support we offer is not generic but tailor-made for your growth.

We have also established a Centre of Excellence with Walter Sisulu University, launched just weeks ago on 07 April, alongside partnerships with University of Johannesburg and University of Free State.

These are the engines that will accelerate your training through the cidb B.U.I.L.D Programme.

Stabilising the Foundation

Ladies and gentlemen, we also know that you cannot grow in an environment of chaos.

Finance and skills cannot flourish on a disrupted site. That is why we are at an advanced stage of rolling out the Integrated Social Facilitation Framework (ISFF).

This framework is designed to address site disruptions through early stakeholder engagement, ensuring that when you break ground, you can finish the job without unnecessary interference.

To our public sector clients and implementing agents in the room: contractor development must be embedded in your project delivery.

We need fair participation models and credible reporting. We cannot afford a system where development is a side project, it must be the core of how we deliver infrastructure.

Closing

I know you are all eager to hear the vision from our national leadership, Deputy Minister, Honourable Sihle Zikalala.

So, without further ado, as we look ahead to the next National Summit in October 2026, let today be the day we move the needle.

PLEASE, USE THIS DAY!

Ask the hard questions in the masterclasses.

Engage with the exhibitions.

Identify the support you can take up immediately.

We are committed to learning from the Eastern Cape context so that our interventions are responsive and developmental.

Let's take the spirit of Freedom Day and use it to build an industry that is inclusive, competitive, and world-class.

The work starts now.

Thank you!

ENDS.