

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY,
DR B.E. MZANGWA, DURING THE OVERSIGHT VISIT
OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
TO THE FREE STATE**

23 JANUARY 2012

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works,
Honourable M C Mabuza

MEC for Public Works and Rural Development,
Honourable Sisi Mabe

Members of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works

Executive Mayors, Mayors, Speakers, Traditional Leaders
and Councillors

Honoured guests

Officials

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour for me to be granted such a great opportunity to welcome you all at this significant moment of an oversight visit to our district by the parliament's portfolio committee on public works.

It gives me much more great pleasure that this visit takes place just a week after the district municipality of Thabo Mofutsanyana, Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, Department of Energy and Sasol oil company have conducted a sod turning ceremony to mark the start of work in the building of an Integrated Energy Centre in Makwane Village right here in Qwaqwa. This centre will be

a one-stop energy shop owned and operated by the community Co-operative and organised as a community project.

With establishment of such a centre we demonstrate once more our government's commitment to the socio-economic development of its communities, and that much progress has been done in uplifting our people from the quagmire of marginalisation and feelings of dejection.

Honourable Chairperson, it is through initiatives and programmes such as this that we will be able to bring to halt the grinding poverty that has ravaged poor communities for so long, and today it is so befitting that the committee will be looking into progress on the implementation of such one magnificent government programme, which is the Expanded Public Works Programme.

As we take time to exchange ideas in measuring the impact of this programme, I believe that at the end of the day we shall emerge with much better practical ideas and innovative ways on how best we can implement this programme in our municipalities for the betterment of our communities.

We should always bear in mind that as politicians, especially at the local government level, people are always looking at us for solutions. When there is no food on the table, they always expect us to provide solutions. When there are no jobs, they expect us to provide solutions. When they need houses, they also expect us to provide. When the infrastructure collapses, they still expect us to provide solutions. When their children have no money to go to school, they still expect us to provide solutions. When the society become chaotic, they still expect us bring order. One moment we are their darlings,

the next moment we are the sworn enemies, however we may appear to them but they still expect solutions from us.

Colleagues, it is therefore imperative that given the opportunity and a shoulder to lean on through programmes such as EPWP we should excel in service and development of our people. We should not owe our communities anything but quality service and love. Our love for our people must propel us into greater heights.

Chairperson, let me quote Cuban revolutionary leader, Ernesto Guevera de la Serna, popularly known as “Che”, when he wrote about qualities of a leader in the type of work we are doing:

“Let me say at the risk of appearing ridiculous, that a true revolutionary is guided by feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without these qualities. This is perhaps one of the greatest dramas of a leader; he must combine an impassioned spirit with a cold mind and make painful decisions without flinching a muscle.

“Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealise their love for the people, for the most sacred causes and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the places where ordinary men put their love into practice....

“Our love for the people must propel us into greater heights; we must, hand in hand with communities, march together as we seek common solutions to the challenges facing us. The challenge has been made. The battleground has been set.

Seremos como el Che: We will be like Che”

Let me conclude by saying that it is an indisputable fact that government leaders ought to be in contact with the people to see the extreme, overwhelming poverty of the people and to awaken people's intelligence and the onward progress of their consciousness.

Thank you