

VOTE 14 : NFP DEBATE ON PUBLIC WORKS

12 May 2015

HON SPEAKER

HON MEC

HON MEMBERS

Honorable Members, the current government policies and programmes can be blamed and accused of expediting poverty. A disturbing factor is the amount of people who are unemployed and many of them are still deprived of basic social infrastructure such as houses, roads, bridges, community halls, clinics, hospitals, water and electricity.

The NFP recognizes and applauds the initiatives that the Department of Public works has undertaken in acknowledging the importance of dealing with poverty and unemployment immediately. The NFP therefore hopes that this budget will meet your ultimate goals but not only on paper but also in the actual implementation of your programmes.

The EPWP , which is currently in place for quite sometimes, does not address the our unemployment problems especially for the unskilled temporary employees in the province and the stipend or salary of +- R65 a day does not address the issue of poverty and unemployment. This amount of money is

an insult to our people. This is just a bus or taxi fare; how are these people expected to buy lunch for themselves whilst at work, let alone buying food for their families. It is for this reason that this programme has no impact in alleviating poverty. It doesn't even begin to address the issues of inequality. Can the government consider increasing this amount? In doing so the government needs to be guided by the designed living wage for the day. If this is not done crime and corruption will continue to escalate.

Honorable Members, the Infrastructural Development Projects do not improve people's living conditions in rural areas and in the townships. These infrastructural development programmes in most of the time benefit the business sector through dubious corrupt tender procurement systems as opposed to the intended needy communities. Something needs to be done to prevent this from happening. The hungry and poor job seekers, who are helpless are being abused and exploited by the tender entrepreneurs and this will complicate the implementation of NDP promises.

We are being told and informed here through this budget vote, that the functions of EPWP Provincial Coordination and Monitoring is being moved from the Department of Transport and will be taken over by the Department of Public Works from 2015/2016 onward. Our question as NFP is that, does

the Department of Public Works has capacity to do excellent job while it is still struggling with its asset register or data?

We discourage that the Department of public works has under-spent on its budget allocations by R15.340 million by the mid term. The NFP is concerned about the impact that this is going to have on EPWP.

We are pleased to hear that young people have started training towards National Certificates: building and civil construction NQF level 3, congratulations to those beneficiaries and with the hope this exercise will gradually respond and address the issue of skills shortage. We also hope that the government will also assist in terms of job placement rather than wasting the tax payers money on increasing the number of unemployed graduates.

Hon Members, when it comes to the KZN Integrated Greening Programme, that aims to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that will support a wide range of community based greening activities, the government is on the right track and this will most definitely assist in the fight against climate change, however currently there is nothing that can be shown as successes, so we are living on the hope that it is not going to be hijacked to serve political interests.

Please speed up the programme of rolling out this program and put more focus on rural areas.

The NFP would like to draw the attention of the Hon Minister and his Department to the need to spread the Public Works intended programmes all over the province of KwaZulu - Natal, not only to ANC led municipalities. It can be important to look at the department's previous report and budget which clearly show that this programme is currently concentrated on one and the same municipalities, such as Ethekwini, Amajuba, Richmond as well as other ANC led municipalities. There is nothing reflecting the previously disadvantaged municipalities such as Nongoma, Nkandla, Ulundi, Greater Kokstad etc.

As the NFP, we don't feel it is correct and proper to use councilors to recruit and mobilize youth beneficiaries on behalf of the department. We strongly believe this should be left in the hands of municipal and departmental officials. Involving politicians does not serve the good cause of the programmes because some of the councilors use these government initiatives wrongly. For example the programme in Richmond, where you will find volunteers or beneficiaries wearing political t-shirt during working times. As the the NFP, we would like the government to put some regulations when it comes to clothing.

As NFP we welcome the budget vote allocations and also support all the efforts of the Honorable MEC in trying to uplift the standard of living in our communities .

I, thank you !!!!

Delivered by : Hon B NZUZA MPL (NFP)