

Department enhances Public Participation through Community Development Workers

The Honourable President of South Africa, Mr Thabo Mbeki, in his 2003 State of the Nation Address, pledged to create structures and systems aimed at promoting people-centred governance.

This was premised on the need to strengthen points of interface between government and the people and to entrench the role of the citizens as partners in their own development.

Through the CDW programme, government has a direct link with the populace.

The CDW Programme is based on the following imperatives:

- The need to inculcate participatory governance as per Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Amendment Act
- People's Contract for improved service delivery
- Empowerment and deepening of democracy
- Citizen education

Since the introduction of the programme in 2004, the Department of Local Government & Traditional Affairs recorded a number of successes.

The Department managed to employ 370 CDWs. A process of recruiting an additional 259 CDWs has been initiated.

MEC Xasa, speaking at a CDW graduation ceremony held at Mthatha said that CDWs are central to efforts aimed at deepening democracy, creating an informed citizenry and realizing the vision of the social contract.

"They are our foot soldiers who are part of government's machinery to carry messages to the citizens". During the graduation ceremony, MEC Xasa handed over 180 laptops to the CDWs to support them in implementing their mandate.

"This programme is at the heart of not only the first citizen of our country but many of us who believe that public participation should be enhanced. We owe it to the citizens of this province, to give them their return on their vote investment", said MEC Xasa.