

**Address by MEC Neliswa Nkonyeni on the occasion of the launch of  
housing project at Margate**

**27 November 2008**

All protocol observed

It is with utmost sincerity that I thank you for granting me an opportunity to be with you as you launch one of the most remarkable achievements by a woman in a male dominated industry.

Gugu, my daughter, you know and we know that to most people when it comes to empowerment issues, they think government!

They sit down and say this government Department; this municipality, must give me this and that.

Today you have shown all of us that true empowerment is not entitlement but that it is hard work and passion coupled with risks and most importantly acquiring skills and understanding in a venture one is involved in.

Construction, ntombazane, is not just a male dominated industry but it is a domain of conglomerates like Group Five, Basil Read and Grid; we are here to tell you that we want to see you succeeding, going out for bigger ventures.

I said I am glad that you are demonstrating your prowess in the private sector tackling accommodation and flats that will be privately bought and owned but I also want you to know that as government we have a duty and a mandate to see to it that you grow. I for one will tell you that as a Department of Health in KZN we have two big hospitals that we will be constructing at Inanda and KwaMashu and that from what we see here today, there would be no reason why you should not be considered to be part of that construction. Talking about problems that government and a quest to address them ANC Treasurer General ,**Dr Mattew Phosa** spelt it out that business people like Gugu need to be involved:

*'It is in times such as this when we need leaders in business to come forward with innovative ideas on how to partner government to transform challenges into opportunities.'*

It is in that vein that I also implore my colleagues at local government to utilise, grow and nurture your talent and expertise in this monopolized and difficult industry.

My parting shot to you Gugu and all those who want to emulate your good and bold guidance will be to quote words of wisdom uttered by our beloved late President, **Oliver Reginald Tambo** in 1981 when he said:

"Women in the ANC should stop behaving as if there was no place for them above the level of certain categories of involvement. They have a duty to liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and role of women in society and in the development and direction of our revolutionary struggle."

Fellow compatriots, to achieve the above stated we have to gather strength from the women whose struggle brought us liberation. In mind here comes **Mama Victoria Mxenge, Mama Lilian Ngoyi, Mama Ray Simmons** and a host of other unsung heroines.

**WATHINTA ABAFAZI WATHINTA IMBOKODO, UZOKUFA.**

Let us all strive to give meaning to the slogan that says,

**Women building a South Africa that truly belongs to all those who live  
in it.**

**I thank you**