

CONFERENCE CONTENT

GALA DINNER AND THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2

DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AND CLOSING REMARKS



A D E C A D E O F D E M O C R A C Y
Achievements, Practices, Challenges & Partnership

**CONFERENCE CONTENT
WEDNESDAY, 1 DECEMBER**

GALA DINNER REMARKS

DEPUTY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA



The Presidency: Republic of South Africa

**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA,
AT THE GALA DINNER OF THE
ACCESS 2004 CONFERENCE,
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE
CAPE TOWN
1 December 2004**

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
Esteemed guests,

Good evening to you all.

As you are all aware, every year since the advent of our democracy in 1994, we observe Disability Awareness Month during the November and December Periods.

The culmination of this Awareness Month is the 3rd of December when we all gather as a united nation to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons.

This year we will gather at the Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane, not only to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons but also to celebrate our ten years of democracy.

Ten years ago the new democratic government committed itself to creating a better life for all – including people with disabilities.

Ten years down the line, we have achieved amongst other things the following:

- Developed and adopted a White Paper on Disability, “The Integrated National Disability Strategy”.
- Set employment equity quotas that apply to the private and public sector regarding the employment of people with disabilities.

- Increased the basic disability grant and extended its provisions to a wider sector of people.
- Introduced Inclusive Education across the country (i.e. the provision of equal education for people with disabilities in mainstream schools.)
- Actively participated in continental and international initiatives on improving the lives of people with disabilities such as the African Decade and the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
- Provision of free primary healthcare to people with disabilities.
- Established Equity Court.
- Established a national Office on the Status of Disabled Persons with supporting offices in all nine provinces.
- Established Disability Desks and Disability Units in many line departments of all spheres of government.

In April this year, we received another overwhelming mandate, to enhance, build on and increase what we have done in the past ten years, including the challenge of eradicating poverty and unemployment.

In all our policies and action, when we talk about “our people”, it must be known that we include people with disabilities, women, children and all other historically marginalized sectors of our society.

Ladies and gentlemen, Government has committed itself to focus on the implementation and provision of services over the coming ten years.

We therefore hope that this Access 2004 Conference will emerge with a concrete proposed Programme of Action, with clear timeframes and measurable indicators that will show both a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the lives of people with disabilities.

People tend to traditionally interpret “access” as meaning physical or environmental access only. This is in itself limiting and a form of discrimination. It is an approach that ignores the full range of abilities and the full rights of people with disabilities.

We note that the Access 2004 Conference has been designed to ensure that access issues are discussed and addressed in the broad and inclusive sense of the word.

We support the context and framework of this Conference that addresses the equal rights of people with disabilities to education, to housing, to economic opportunities and to a social life. In other words, a context and framework in which people with disabilities are accorded all the same human, political, social and economic rights as any other citizen.

Government has committed itself to halving unemployment and poverty by 2014. We are doing it because we are bound by our sincere belief in the inalienable rights of all our people to a just and equitable life, as politically reflected in our governing party’s manifesto and in the Constitution of our country.

People with Disabilities are and must be a significant target group of our attempts to eradicate poverty and unemployment.

As a marginalized group that continues to experience little or no access to socio-economic opportunities, it is vital that all our projects and activities include people with disabilities – both as beneficiaries and as implementing partners.

In order to ensure this, we need to follow through on meeting our Employment Equity targets.

We must ensure that increased support to SMMEs and Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment includes entities wholly or partially owned and managed by people with disabilities. We must set targets for procurement that will translate this intent into practice. They must be targets that can be implemented and met by all sectors of society.

We must ensure that in maintaining and upgrading current infrastructure, we address the issues of physical accessibility.

We must ensure that the planning and design of all future infrastructure addresses issues of physical accessibility for all types of disabilities, such as ramps with wheelchair facilities or Braille signage in the lifts.

We must set targets for involvement of People with Disabilities in our Expanded Public Works Programme.

The targets, on the one hand, must be on the level of procurement, a percentage of the public works programmes expenditure that will be provided for business entities comprising of people with Disabilities. On the other hand, we must set targets for people with disabilities as beneficiaries of the Expanded Public Works Programme.

This two-pronged approach, of people with disabilities being active partners and implementers as well as beneficiaries, is the crux of mainstreaming. Going forward, we need to increase and strengthen our mainstreaming activities over those that we call "special disability projects".

Please remember, we are not saying that such projects should not happen. They have a place and a role and should be continued.

We are merely highlighting that special projects can be limiting in that they can reinforce the notion that people with disabilities are different and therefore need to be treated differently.

We are saying let our Special Projects be a means to an end and not the end itself. Mainstreaming should be the end so that one day, we can all proudly stand up as South Africans and say we are a united nation free of discrimination on every level.

National government has identified a number of strategic priority areas towards meeting its goal eradicating poverty and unemployment.

Our President has highlighted these in his State of the Nation Address and his Address to the Opening of the 3rd National Assembly. This Access 2004 and other such conferences need to engage with these priorities and to find and exploit the opportunities that exist for people with disabilities, within these set priorities.

The opportunities for mainstreaming in these government priorities are enormous. This approach will allow us to ensure that disability issues are a critical component of all our programmes, not just an add-on. It also ensures that we address disability issues in a manner that is aligned and complementary to national priorities and activities.

The challenge of mainstreaming lies in adequately providing redress for the past inequities faced by people with disabilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, the participation of other sectors of society and other role-players in this Conference attests to government's commitment to working in partnership; in a People's Contract.

The participation reflects the common understanding between government and all other sectors of society that we can only achieve our goal through working together and by combining our respective expertise, knowledge, skills and resources.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to creating a better life for all, including people with disabilities, to tangible implementation and service delivery and to work in partnership with all sectors of society.

Let us hold hands, and walk together into the next decade with a mutually unwavering commitment to deliver a better life for people with disabilities.

I wish you well with our deliberations.

I thank you.

CONFERENCE CONTENT
THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER

CLOSING REMARKS

MARIE HENDRICKS

CLOSING AND THANK YOU – ACCESS 2004

On behalf of the Western Cape provincial Government and the OSDP I would like to thank the following people for their valued contributions to making ACCESS 2004 a remarkable success. Already there is talk of an Africa conference in 2006 – certainly something we will gladly explore.

A special word of thanks to:

All our international guest speakers: Christy Lynch, Jerome Bickenbach, Jim Calloway, Ben Johnson, Nathan Burrell. Your sharing with us is greatly valued and we look forward to an ongoing association for partnerships, knowledge, skills and expertise sharing.

The Organising Committee in particular Marius Du Randt our Chief Director responsible for disability, youth and gender amongst many other responsibilities in terms of International Relations – thank you for all your support before and during this conference. Fast Function our contracted service provider for outstanding organisation, planning and management associated with the entire roll-out process of ACCESS 2004. The gala dinner was stunning, but so everything else.

The Programme Committee: it was great working with you all as we deliberated and reached consensus on the 20 topics for the workshops. Your inputs are greatly valued and certainly I would like to call on you to consider remaining part of the ACCESS Biennial conference initiatives to follow in the years ahead.

All session chairs and panellists on Day One: your presentations were certainly providing the kind of direction that ACCESS 2004 needed, as well as providing opportunities for reflection; best practice, knowledge and expertise sharing; the identification of networking and partnership-formation opportunities; and the identification of the critical challenges that we are still faced with in terms of universal access, economic empowerment and social development. Imagine if we turn all that passionate sharing into practical achievable and sustainable initiatives that impact on the lives of the all at grassroots level.

All workshop facilitators, panelists and all conference delegates on Day Two and Day Three: what a vibrant, intense, diverse, interactive, exploratory experience all of you contributed and made possible. Your hard work yesterday and today will be used to provide the direction to us over the next two years in shaping programme development and implementation that improves the quality of life of all persons with disabilities. Today you will leave here with a draft copy of the key issues highlighted in each of these sessions. We will at a later stage marry this information with the Day One presentations as well as the outcomes from the Appreciative Inquiry sessions.

Well done to all of you and thank you most sincerely. Bridget Woods, Marinda Calitz, Leslie Swartz, Lisa Venter, Maryam Wannenburg and Douglas Chitepo you were great – thank you for assisting in pulling it all together. Thank you for the opportunity to share, to dream, design, and work towards delivery. Transforming dreams into designing and delivery certainly is what this country needs more and more of.

All of our Sponsors: we say thank you with great appreciation to the Services SETA for your funding but also your participation in the programme development of this conference. We certainly would like to extend an invitation that this partnership becomes an ongoing relationship and that we will together plan

and develop the next conference in 2006. We also say thank you to SARS, National OSDP, and the CITY OF CAPE TOWN, and of course Kfm 94.5 – your coverage of the ACCESS 2004 conference has certainly contributed to placing disability on the mainstream media agenda. We hope that this partnership with you can become an ongoing association so as to ensure that disability indeed becomes part of everyday life and mainstream society, socially, politically, economically and culturally.

Sign Language Interpreters: thank you for assisting us in making ACCESS 2004 accessible in spite of oversight at times. We all learn, and we give you the assurance that we will strive to improve communication for all people at the future ACCESS conferences.

THANK YOU, HAVE A GREAT FESTIVE SEASON, AND HELP US BUILD A SOCIETY FOR ALL – A HOME FOR ALL.