



# Construction of Mandela Legacy Bridge on track

BUTTERWORTH: The building of the Nkosi Dalibhunga Mandela Legacy Bridge outside Butterworth in the Eastern Cape is on schedule and will officially be opened on 10 May 2013 to commemorate the day Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president.

By [Lulama Teka](#) 15 Apr 2013

The new bridge will, on completion, link Ludondolo village with Mandela's birthplace of Mvezo.

The Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Gugile Nkwinti, visited the area on Friday, 12 April 2013, to check on the construction of the project's final phase.

He said the bridge would not only further Nelson Mandela's legacy but ensure that residents from the two Eastern Cape villages will no longer have to risk drowning when trying to cross the Mbashe river.

"The river that flows under this bridge has claimed many lives, some from Ludondolo village and some from Mvezo village. Gone are those days because the villagers will be able to use the bridge and the new 10km paved road," said the minister.

He said the day chosen for the opening of the bridge was special as it not only honoured the former president for his role as a freedom fighter, but also as father of the nation.

The 12-metre wide bridge was initiated by the department as part of its Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP).

Nelson Mandela's grandson and chief of Mvezo village, Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandla Mandela, said it was heartwarming to see that his grandfather's legacy was still being honoured.

"On behalf of my family and the Abathembu tribe, I am grateful to all who made this project a success. The cries of my people have been heard, because crossing the river was a huge risk," said Mandela.

Local prince Xhanti Sigcawu said the project had significantly boosted the economy in the area.

"The project created 209 job opportunities for people from Mbashe and Mvezo villages. We will also be getting a concrete block plant, which will further benefit our people," said Sigcawu.

Ludondolo Village resident Sipeto Gada couldn't believe the construction of the bridge over the Mbashe River was nearly complete.

"We've always dreamed of having a bridge, but we never thought it would happen. We've always had to take a 49km detour on the highway to get to Mvezo village," said Gada.

In July last year, President Jacob Zuma launched the construction of the bridge, saying it was fitting that positive change is brought to Mvezo village, the birthplace of the man who changed the world for the better.

The bridge will also link the community to the busy N2 freeway, and thus reduce the distance between this area and East London, Mthatha and Idutywa by more than 50km.

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