

**Honourable Chairperson of the National Council of
Provinces**

Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces

**Honourable Chairperson of the select committee
on Cooperative governance and Public administration –
Mxolisi Kaunda**

**Honourable Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi
Simelane, in absentia**

Honourable Members

Fellow South Africans

MANDINIBULISE NGALENJIKALANGA

Today we reaffirm our collective responsibility to ensure that the people of South Africa live not on the margins of dignity, but at its centre.

In 2003, then Minister of Housing Mme Brigitte Mabandla issued a powerful reminder to the nation when she said these words: (Open quote)

“There is a strong sense of attachment in the new settlements, and an overwhelming sense that home ownership has empowered and given dignity to many people.” (Close quote)

Her words remind us that dignity blooms where families find safety, memory, and hope. When a child grows up in a home that is theirs, the future becomes something they can touch. We are not only building shelter. We are restoring families, unlocking potential, and returning people to the centre of their own lives.

We gather in this august House today under the theme “Restoring the dignity of our people through spatial planning, provision of human settlement, water and sanitation,” to reflect on how we convert the promise of freedom into the lived reality of dignity. This is not merely a debate about bricks, mortar, cement and pipes, but about our constitutional imperative.

South Africa's history has been shaped by struggles over land and space, determining who belongs, who is excluded, and who still awaits their rightful place.

Apartheid may have been defeated in law, yet its geography remains imprinted on our cities, villages, and rural towns. It haunts the daily lives of millions who live far from opportunities, separated from our country's economic hubs. Our task is to replace that geography of exclusion with a geography of inclusion and hope.

This mission is a constitutional obligation. Section 26 of our Constitution demands that the state progressively realise the right of access to housing and prevent unlawful evictions without due process. The Housing Act, the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, the National Development Plan and the National Spatial Development Framework all guide us toward sustainable human settlements that are spatially just, integrated, and inclusive. The Draft White Paper for Human Settlements builds on these imperatives as we move towards the transformation envisioned for 2050.

The Department of Human Settlements continues to work as both architect and advocate for this transformation. Through Breaking New Ground, we promote well-located and mixed-use communities that erase the artificial distance between where people live and where opportunities exist. Since 2023, two thousand four hundred (2,400) hectares of well-located land have been released for human settlement development. More than seventy thousand (70 000) title deeds have been issued, restoring ownership, dignity, and long-term economic stability to families across the country. We are finalising a modernised housing subsidy system with SITA, to ensure that allocations are transparent and that no family is denied fairness due to inefficiencies.

A home must not only exist on paper, but it must also stand strong in reality. We are strengthening oversight to ensure all units built meet strict standards of quality and safety. We are fast-tracking the resolution of blocked projects, implementing targeted audits, and enforcing accountability where contractors fail our people. A state-built home must inspire pride, not burden families with defects.

Spatial transformation is guided by the National Spatial Development Framework and the designation of Priority Housing and Human Settlements Development Areas. These are the anchors of a future South Africa in which public investment is used to correct past patterns of exclusion. Through the district development model, we're fostering a whole-of-government approach to deliver cohesive services that make a real difference in people's lives.

Honourable chairperson

It would be remiss of me if I don't mention the Western Cape's record that is a tale of two extremes: successes that showcase what's possible, and failures that are unacceptable and demand attention.

Some municipalities have demonstrated responsiveness and coordination. Yet there are places where the provincial government has failed to honour its constitutional obligations to the poor.

Karatara is a scar on the conscience of the Western Cape. Families who lost everything in a devastating fire in 2017 continue to exist, not live. These families are forced to live in an environment that was meant to skill young people of Knysna. For nearly a decade, these families have been housed in a Tsiba Tvet College, children have grown up in cramped rooms, more than 10 family members crammed in a small dormitory. Children, the elderly and persons with disabilities continue to live in this appalling environment where sewage is spilling, damp walls, and squalor.

This is not a lack of resources, it is a lack of political will. Serviced sites stand ready in Knysna, yet the Western Cape Provincial Government has failed to move a single family into a dignified home. Their inaction has turned a disaster into a prolonged humanitarian crisis.

In Khayelitsha, fire consumed the home of an elderly wheelchair-bound woman. In the blink of an eye, decades of struggle, of raising children, of survival — turned into ashes, She sat outside the ruins, breathing smoke from the place where her dreams once lay.

But unlike those who disappear when disaster strikes, national government did not sit back. Working with the NHBRC, we moved at once — because true leadership arrives before the cameras and long after the headlines fade.

Her story is the clearest message: restoring dignity is not optional, it is urgent, it is human — and it separates those who govern with compassion from those who govern with excuses.

However the City of Cape town has still failed to deliver and because of their lack of political will, the process of building her house remains stalled.

Honourable Chairperson, these two cases are disheartening and speak to the direct failure of the Western Cape Provincial Government, failing to service the people, and their blatant lack of political will.

Communities in places like Mandela Park, Silverton, Taiwan, and Kosovo are demanding better coordination from government. When different spheres of government work together, progress accelerates. But when politics overshadows service delivery, progress stalls. We are finalising a departmental action list from the oversight findings to ensure every recommendation results in measurable change, as such we are strengthening the legislative foundation.

The Medium-Term Development Plan for 2024 to 2029 sets ambitious but necessary targets that will change and better the lives of the people. We will continue to upgrade thousands of informal settlements with infrastructure and security of tenure. We will continue to build housing units in serviced sites, and we will continue to renew inner cities through well-managed social rental housing. We will unlock title deeds that restore dignity and intergenerational pride.

Honourable Members, restoring dignity is not just a slogan; it is the heartbeat of our constitutional mandate. When decent sanitation finally reaches a community, we assert that basic services and safety are not luxuries for the wealthy but basic human rights for all. When a family holds a title deed, we restore dignity, and provide certainty, and ownership

Our construction goes beyond just buildings, we create safe havens, foster identity, and inspire hope. We are building a sense of belonging. A better life for all isn't just a nostalgic memory it's our current mission. We will keep working tirelessly until every South African has a place to call home, where they can pursue their dreams without fear, and live with dignity,

Together, we must renew our commitment to making freedom a lived experience. We will continue to work neighbourhood, by neighbourhood, family by family, until dignity is a reality for all.

**Thank you
Ndiyabulela**