



MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MS
NOMAINDIYA MFEKETO, MP, AT THE WOMEN IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
INDABA
EAST LONDON ICC, 30 AUGUST 2018**

Programme Director;

Deputy Minister of Human Settlements Ms Zou Kota-Fredericks;

MEC for Human Settlements Mr Mlungisi Mvoko;

MMC for Human Settlements in Buffalo City Ms Ntombizandile Mhlola;

Director-General of the Department of Human Settlements and officials;

Representatives of the entities that report to the Ministry;

The leadership of SAWIC

Representatives of women in this sector;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning to you all

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you to the Human Settlements Women Indaba taking place as we come to the end of August, popularly known as

Women's Month in our annual calendar. It is during this month that we celebrate the gallant efforts of our women. The country is abuzz with activities to celebrate women's efforts and as we join everyone we must also be mindful, that it is time to refocus and recalibrate our efforts for social and economic emancipation of our people. Evidently, we could not have chosen a better time to reflect on the road we have traversed as women functioning in this space, as a sector, and on the challenges we have to contend with when it comes to meaningful women empowerment. We draw inspiration from the legacy of Mama Albertina Sisulu, during her centenary; we salute many of her generation that bequeathed on us such a magnificent legacy.

Distinguished guests

The theme that underpins this Indaba is befittingly coined in the terms and spirit of Accelerating Women Economic Empowerment and Fast Tracking Delivery of Adequate Housing. The stated objectives of this Indaba provide an elaboration of what we seek to achieve towards the realisation of equity and equality in the sector. As President OR Tambo once remarked that South Africa will never be free until her women are truly liberated and emancipated from the bondage of oppression, exploitation and patriarchy.

In my Budget Vote Speech, I spoke about the golden era of human settlements expansion and at this Indaba, the key themes of your discussion here connect in great ways. Women have an important role as developers and beneficiaries of government programmes because are co-creators of societal transformation. I

trust the commissions will be rich in discussion as we develop holistic perspectives that will inform our strategies in the human settlements sector.

We call this an Indaba because there are issues that need to be discussed by women in our sector. These issues must guide, input and translate into government policy- making and legislative reform. More importantly, women constitute a critical partner in policy- formulation and implementation; therefore there must be appreciation of our all-round influence and commanding presence in this sector and beyond.

Women, as the majority of the population cannot be spectators while society is striving for economic transformation. Our economic transformation is pivotal to the realisation of the national development goals and hence in the human settlements sector we must show a tangible contribution to the economy whilst ensuring that women are the primary benefactors of such game-changing and transformative programmes.

The policy directive issued by the National Treasury instructing Provinces to ring-fence 30% of their allocation for women driven initiatives, are one of such key instruments we must use to empower women, however we all know that we are not doing well in this regard. There needs to be real economic benefits for women across the value chain. To this end I would like this Indaba to debate and deliberate on what accounts for this non-compliance and what are the tangible actions that we need to take in ensuring that we achieve this target and surpass it.

The need for real economic benefits for women across the value chain, not just, in construction is an urgent task that requires our united voice and collective effort. We need to deliberate about women participation on the land discourse an involvement in tangible economic assets. We all know that those who own land control the means of production. Women cannot play on the margins of land redistribution and ownership in this country; we need to be beneficiaries and active participants in the land and property sector. We must get value for money beginning with the R32 billions of our annual budget allocated by the National Treasury to fulfil our mandate in the sector.

The property sector is worth R5, 8 trillion and contributes to the Gross Development Product (GDP) and the time has come for women in construction to lay a claim to this industry.

Programme Director,

Allow me to demonstrate some of the challenges facing women in our country. In the study conducted by the Department of Women on the “Status of Women in the South African Economy”, there are three areas that arose from that study, which I have highlighted for purposes of the conversations at this Indaba. These are access to land, credit and property. These three areas relate to the ability of women to engage in the economy and sustain livelihoods through leveraging assets. The report goes on to observe that South Africa has, since the advent of democracy been progressive in promoting access to credit in various borrowing

contexts, although barriers to financing remain due to a lack of collateral and lower levels of financial literacy.

Therefore as we debate about the financing of the human settlements sector we need to also debate about what it means for access to credit and finance for women, more especially if we might not own tangible economic assets.

We cannot leave young women out of the equation as we know that our population is getting younger and there is a rising challenge of youth unemployment. Last week, when I was addressing the newly appointed Council of the NHBRC I posed a fundamental question to the Council on how they are going to contribute to addressing this challenge. I have tasked all the entities to deal seriously with the issue of transformation both inside in the organizations as well as in the societal impact of their work.

In my view, we do have a number of unemployed graduates that the Council could train and skill in providing quality assurance either as inspectors or as other professionals that are involved in the human settlements sector. This does not just apply to the NHBRC I would like to re-iterate the same challenge to the rest of the entities in our stable.

Distinguished guests

Let me take this opportunity to inform you tenures of Boards and Executives of Human Settlements Entities are coming up progressively. I would like to see more

women raising their hands to be counted in these boards to fulfil our transformation mandate not only in terms of representation but also prioritization of having women at the main table of decision- making. Women will be in the sidelines no more.

The private sector also has a role to play in ensuring that women are appointed as executives as well as in governing boards/or bodies in those institutions. Women possess the skills, drive and determination to contribute to successful businesses and assist in changing social and economic landscape of South Africa.

Programme Director, I would like this Indaba to come up with creative and fresh ideas of how to turn things around in terms of implementation of the 30% policy. The political will is not in question, we need strict timelines attached to subjects and as a stakeholder, we truly value your contribution in this regard. The sector will also be richer with a united voice from women in the sector, especially now that debates about the expropriation of land without compensation are rife, the implications for us in Human Settlements are profound.

The provision of sustainable human settlements is a complex and time consuming exercise. This urgent task calls upon all of us to have all hands on deck. It calls for campaigns and programmes pioneered by women and youth whose conviction and drive is the realisation of people-centred human settlements and a caring society.

The sector is not only concerned about the provision of houses, but has to deal with matters of land acquisition; reversing the apartheid spatial planning; inequitable procurement processes; beneficiary management; provision of bulk infrastructure; alignment with sister departments and provision of social amenities driven by other state organs; lack of effective public transport; and slow planning and approval processes, among others.

We need human settlements that speak to recreational facilities for our children, safe neighbourhoods, schools, churches. Where we live should be where we play, pray, recreate and socialise. History will not absolve us if we are missing in action, and not marching in unison. As women contractors, you do not have the luxury of being silent on these critical issues that will improve the quality of household life.

I end by wishing this ground-breaking Indaba fruitful deliberations, constructive discussions, and most importantly recommendations and resolutions that we will all take collective ownership of and implement energetically.

I declare the Indaba open.

Malibongwe!

Igama Lamakhosikazi!

Ndiyabulela

I thank you.