

Opening Remarks by Minister of Human Settlements at the Consultative Workshop of the Department of Human Settlements and the Portfolio Committee, 28th March 2018, in Hermanus, Western Cape.

Deputy Minister Zou (in absentia)
Chair of the Portfolio Committee (Hon. Mafu)
Members of the Portfolio Committee
Officials of the Department of Human Settlements
Leadership of our Entities
Special Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director,

I hope the choice of time to host this consultative workshop on the eve of Easter is a subconscious symbolic message for setting up for new beginnings.

Part of the symbolism Chair, is that we come to a Hermanus that at this very second, is a hotbed of challenges and opportunities for Human Settlements as I am sure you will have heard from the news.

Indeed our arrival here coincides with the essence of what our line of work is about. Therefore this workshop is fitting and I see its role as vital in fostering a positive working relationship between the executive and legislature. It provides an opportunity for the legislature to engage with policy and delivery frameworks of the Department and also inform their direction. This proactive

approach ensures that the Portfolio Committee is empowered with the most relevant information and it empowers the Department to receive feedback to consider in the implementation of our mandate.

I am convinced that all of us have the service to South Africa and her people as our foremost concern. Our Department needs to positively perform on Outcome 8 as articulated in the NDP, the most basic passage to the dignity of our people lies in our hands, shelter.

Programme Director, we know that shelter is built on land, and with the debate of “expropriation without compensation” taking root firmly in the hearts of our people, the Department of Human Settlements has a unique opportunity to place itself in the driving seat of encouraging active citizenry. As law makers and custodians, we need to take leadership so that people have the faith in us to carry this process through in a rapid but legal and orderly manner. It is important that all of our stakeholders including the media work cooperatively for clear and coherent messaging to the public.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have about 12 months remaining till the end of term for this Administration and the 5th Parliament. We need to realistically

target important milestones in these 12 months and set the tone for the next Administration of 2019 to 2024 and the 6th Parliament.

We need to urgently resolve the problems of non-delivery, cooperate strategically with sister departments that are key to our mandate such as Public Works, COGTA, Water and Sanitation, Transport as some of their entities hold large tracts of land, etc. We also need to extend the conversations to include robust engagements with banks and the housing market at large on helping us achieve national priorities. Internally, we need to tighten our relationship with MECs and municipalities, share capacity and expertise, avoid confusion and duplication, we call on our entities here to come on board in a huge way.

Programme Director, as a rapidly urbanising country, it is clear to me that the land question in South Africa has moved to the urban areas. This is important as the land debate has long been characterised by rural land reform but now people are speaking for themselves and putting housing first. Soon we will need urban land tribunals or other related mechanisms to help charter an orderly manner that will complement the court rulings on housing. I repeat, clear and coherent messaging is vital to this process and all of our communication.

Within these 12 months Chair, we are prioritizing the transfer of Title Deeds and Provinces have a huge role to play. We would like to host a Land Assembly with all the relevant stakeholders to chart

a way forward. The Portfolio Committee has an important role to play here as its members will take Parliament to the People, clear and unified messages are vital. This consultative workshop provides us the first opportunity to put our heads together towards mapping these plans out. I have no doubt that this relationship is most important to ensure that delivery is met. Those who do not perform must be held to account and the Department must take action on the advice of the Portfolio Committee amongst other considerations.

Thank you all and I will form part of the discussions even though I will take leave later to address the community of Zwelihle.

I thank you.