



**MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**CLOSING REMARKS BY MINISTER MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI AT THE HUMAN
SETTLEMENTS NGO AND CSO SUMMIT HELD AT BIRCHWOOD HOTEL IN
GAUTENG ON 30 NOVEMBER-1 DECEMBER 2023**

Programme Director, Ms Busisiwe Ndzo

Deputy Minister Pam Tshwete

MEC of Limpopo, Bioskopo Makamu

Members of Parliament

Chairpersons and CEOs of Human Settlements Entities

Leadership and Representatives of SALGA

MMCs of Human Settlements present

Councillors present

Representative of Chapter 9 and 10 Institutions

Members of Ministerial Advisory Panel

Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start by appreciating the presentation by the COO in the Public Protector's Office, Advocate Nelisiwe Nkabinde.

It is a great an honour to be closing this two-day Human Settlements NGO and CSO Summit, which has been enriched by robust engagements. As Tata Madiba said when we adopted the Constitution in 1996, "the new constitution obliges us to strive to improve the quality of life of the people. In this sense, our national consensus recognises that there is nothing else that can justify the existence of the government but to redress centuries of unspeakable privations, by striving to eliminate poverty,

illiteracy, homelessness and disease. It obliges us, too, to promote the development of independent civil society structures”

Tata Madiba was mindful of the fact that government can only justify its existence, by making good on its obligations and we should remember that the people we serve, have suffered for many years and they are looking to us to give them hope and a fair chance at a better life. It shouldn't take the involvement of the public protector for us to deliver on our mandate in a fair, just and transparent manner.

We cannot continue to waste the much needed and constrained public resources fighting in the courts, defending the indefensible. We must improve and correct our mistakes rather than drag matters in courts and disputes while the people continue to wait and their dreams getting deferred. Tata Madiba was also telling us that without civil society, government will not succeed in its effort to build a new and better nation. Our Constitution places emphasis on an all whole of society approach to resolving societal challenges.

I was very pleased to observe that in all our deliberations which were robust, heated and emotional, what stood out was how the people were placed at the centre. There was emphasis on a people-centred approach. As I said during my opening, we are all driven and motivated by the desire to change the lives of the poor and vulnerable for the better. And this I believe, was demonstrated in yesterday's deliberations. I think we have been able to sufficiently respond to the question on how we can forge a stronger collaborative relationship and the areas in which we can practically do this.

I was also encouraged by the fact that ours were not just mere theoretical debates about policy and what should happen, important as that maybe, but they were discussions of practitioners who are impatient with slow or lack of implementation. The practical insights that you shared with all of us will inform the way we implement our programmes going forward. We have made a commitment to embrace the principle of continuous improvement, and your inputs and suggestions will help us to practically implement this principle. I want to assure you that we are a government that listens and our discussions in these two days, will find expression in our policies and our implementation strategies.

Issues that have been raised sharply are as follows, though we will not be able to respond to all:

- ❖ Matter of consultation of White Paper Policy: we will gazette the paper next week and the deadline for comments will be by the 25th of January, which is more than the 30-days required by law - taking December holidays into consideration. We invite all of you and those that are not here, to participate in this process. The conclusion of this paper, as it becomes policy, will be a significant shift of policy in the sector and it is important that South Africans make their voices heard in this shift.
- ❖ The plight of people living with disabilities came through sharply, especially around implementation. I commit to paying attention to this matter and put it on the agenda for 1st MINMEC (Ministry Meeting with Human Settlements MECs) in the new year. This is more on implementation weaknesses rather than policy, including on set asides.
- ❖ Ekurhuleni as a Metropolitan Municipality, came to the core of discussion in numerous issues, especially on compliance with Norms and Standards. As a matter of urgency, I will convene engagements with the Metro and the MEC for Gauteng to pay closer look and address the issues raised.
- ❖ The matter of evictions for bonded houses: this is not an easy matter as what we cater for in terms of policy, will be those with a household income of below R3500, being cognisance of the fact that we have limited resources to respond to all needs. Maybe as we amend the law, a consideration of a protection fee/insurance that will cover a particular percentage if a person loses a job after paying a bond e.g., if he/she paid for 19 years and is left with a year on bond repayments.
- ❖ On the matter of beneficiary list manipulation and possible fraud: we are looking at the introduction of digital platform that is more transparent and will increase accountability. In this regard, no beneficiary list is -controlled by councillors.
- ❖ On the matter of opportunities for Civil Society: mainstreaming the spending through allocation or the grant framework review or other mechanism.
- ❖ The issue of opportunities for women: we set aside 40% of the budget for women beneficiaries and many provinces are doing well in this area and others

are coming along. Same with youth set aside, the challenge is with implementation. As we celebrate these achievements, we also need to be cognisant of the plight of women in urban areas. Rural areas differ, which means that we might need a differentiated approach on how we intervene. We will pay attention to this as highlighted by Advocate Nelisiwe Nkabinde from the Office of the Public Protector.

- ❖ On compliance: we do at times as the National Department, pick up areas non-compliance with Norms and Standards in the provision of services, especially what we call human rights services such as water and sanitation. In relation to the issue of chemical toilets, we have given instruction to all spheres of government that they should be stopped as they are non-compliant with grant conditions. More safer and hygiene-friendly service must be provided and safety considerations must be made on location of these toilets for protection of women.
- ❖ The issuing of title deeds remains important to protect even senior citizens who are faced with unceremonious evictions from their homes by their children and grandchildren. It is only through title deeds that we can protect these vulnerable members of our community.

The roadmap that has been outlined by Deputy Director-General, Dr Nana Mhlongo, will form the foundation upon which a new working relationship between us and yourselves will be built. As I said yesterday, we need to build a functioning ecosystem that will ensure that our collaboration is impactful and sustainable over time.

Special appreciation to all the participants and delegates, I heard you when you called for a better coordination and collaboration that is not ad hoc, but involves all three spheres of government. Special appreciation for all our panellists and facilitators for their work in enriching the discussions for this two-day Summit; and most importantly to the programme directors, who have done a sterling job. Moreover, I would like to express appreciation for the support and commitment from both Deputy Minister Pam Tshwete and Limpopo MEC Bioskopo Makamu, who sat in this Summit throughout the two days. As you know this is our norm. We sit and listen to inputs so that when we go back, we can monitor the implementation of the outcomes of this Summit.

Lastly and most importantly, a word of appreciation to the Ministerial Advisory Team, especially Dr Michael Sutcliffe, for the hard work in ensuring this becomes a reality. I am starting to feel the impact of the team's work since their appointment. Chairperson, Mr Gobagev Matshitiso, it means I can safely expect more.

To the organising team and the leadership of the Department of Human Settlements and all entities that played a role in ensuring this is successful, thank you for pulling this together. I push you to the edge and to the most uncomfortable areas and you respond.

We have our work cut out for us. I thank you.