

**SPEECH BY HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MINISTER CONNIE SEPTEMBER  
AT THE 11<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**EMPERORS PALACE**

**15 NOVEMBER 2013**

Programme Director  
Business Leaders  
Invited Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening, thank you for affording me the opportunity to address you this evening.

I wish to congratulate everyone who has been nominated in the various categories, recognition at this level is an important means of showing confidence not only for the business sector but for Brand SA.

As we approach the twentieth year of democracy in our country we look back on the strides we have made as a nation. Yes, some of the time we have faltered but the general consensus remains that we have much to celebrate.

The consensus is also that business, like government still has a bigger role to play in our country's development. As Minister of Human Settlements, I know that our department is heavily reliant on the private sector to assist in delivering on our mandate.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am therefore pleased that this ceremony brings together the public and private sector. It is in spaces such as these where collaborations must start that can deal with the challenges facing us as a nation. As the Minister of Human Settlements my first question would probably be, "how are you assisting your employees in becoming homeowners?".

Ladies and gentlemen, those who know my background might think I am yearning back to my unionist days and have starting the bargaining process! The reason I posed this question was that we have several programmes as government that can assist people, who have never been able to, to acquire their own homes.

I would admit that the reason for the slow uptake of assistance programmes is that as government we are often weak at communicating very crucial information to our communities. It is here where you, as business can assist. Through your HR functions you can assist us in giving this information to employees.

One of these programmes is the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP). Through FLISP, an equitable contribution can be made by government and employers for employees who are earning too much to qualify for government subsidised houses but too little to qualify for a bank mortgage. This is but one of the many ways in which we can form partnerships in order to expedite housing delivery in our country.

We do have examples where business have, as the saying goes, “come to the party”. Recently Lonmin, donated fifty hectares of land, to the Provincial North West Department of Human Settlements and the Municipality of Rustenburg. On this land, the government will be able to build a different mix of housing opportunities not only for miners but for the greater community of Rustenburg. This is exactly what we mean by effective partnership in the delivery of human settlements.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know that there are businesses here tonight that can equal or even better what Lonmin has done. My office door is open for, especially those who can better the offer!

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no denying that South Africa is a better place today than what it was pre-1994. This is not just us beating our own drum, it is the international community as well. Recently, Goldman Sachs launched their report on our country's progress over the past almost twenty years.

However, a major challenge is the issue of unemployment, especially of young people. Young people need an opportunity to gain work experience and it is to the private sector that Government is looking to be creative in absorbing the large groups of unemployed matriculants and graduates. I would like to know if business is up to the challenge.

We have a plan for our country, that will take us to 2030. I wish to appeal to you to embrace this comprehensive plan that will assist in creating the type of country we wish for those that must still follow.

Honoured guests, I am also going to ask business to look carefully at the recent Cabinet's decision in terms of exercising fiscal restraint. I along with Cabinet colleagues have surrendered credit cards and will undertake a series of other cost cutting measures. The official cars I chose were Toyotas, proudly made in South Africa and I do not stay in hotel suites, in fact, while waiting for an official residence in Pretoria, I take over my grandchildren's bedroom. I am awaiting their court order to evict me!

I am positive that there are many "perks" that management can surrender for the greater good of all employees.

Ladies and gentlemen, Government values the contribution you are making towards creating a better South Africa and a better Africa. We thank you for being our ambassadors to the world.

I thank you