

**ADDRESS BY L N SISULU, MP, MINISTER OF HUMAN  
SETTLEMENTS, AT THE ANNUAL GOVAN MBEKI  
AWARDS  
13 AUGUST 2015, CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL  
CONVENTION CENTRE**

---

**Programme Director**

**Ministers and Deputy Ministers**

**MECs and MMCs of Human Settlements**

**Executive Mayors**

**Chairpersons and Members of the of the Portfolio and Select  
Committees on Human Settlements**

**His Majesty, King Toni Mphephu Rabulana**

**The family of Mme Ruth Mompoti**

**The family of Mama Ivy Gcina**

**Chairpersons and Board Members of all Human Settlements**

**Institutions and Agencies**

**Honourable guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Last year at the Govan Mbeki Awards I was buoyant and exuberant about the prospects that we faced. The future was full of promise, I had thought, and I had great expectations. I understood that we had had a downward spiral in the delivery of houses over the past couple of years, but that did not concern me much. I reasoned then that we would put all the building blocks in place and we would soon be able to deliver as we delivered at the height of our productivity from 2006 to 2009.**

**This past year I had a rude awakening. Our delivery statistics remained as dismally low as the previous few years, despite all the goodwill and effort put into it and I have resolved to be as blunt with you as I was with my top management a few weeks ago.**

**It will not go on like this, not in my time. It is shocking and unbelievable that over the past six years, one of these years being in my time, we have delivered almost half of the number of houses that we delivered at the height of our delivery. I have done some soul searching and though I cannot find an answer, I have taken some deliberate steps to rectify the situation. Everyone in my institutions will sign a pledge to recommit themselves to work harder.**

**I want to send a strong message to all of us, especially our officials and our contractors that, unless we change our attitude at all levels of government and entities, there can be no radical delivery on what we have promised. There can be no radical transformation of the economy as it affects the ordinary person. A house is not only a right to dignity, it is an essential asset for the poorest of us to have a foothold in the economy. The asset value of a house can take the poorest of us out of destitution. This country boasts a residential property value of R3 trillion. We are ranked number 1 in the world and our people, for whom we fought, our people who had for years been driven of their land, the victims of forced removals, evictions and influx control, own a dismally low share of this huge economy.**

**The truth of the matter is that we are all responsible for this shocking, steady decline in housing delivery that we have seen; we as politicians, our officials, the developers and the communities. When we have achieved so much in the past, we should not now be in this position. I am keen to establish what precisely the challenge is. I have taken steps to ensure that MinMec quickly gets to grip with what is at the core of our challenges so that we can resolve it.**

**I cannot overemphasise to all of us here, the economic value of a house. And unlocking this potential is in our hands. For, as long as we continue to work at the pace at which we are working, it will lie heavily on our conscience that the radical economic transformation for the indigent will not be realised, because of our lack of commitment. We have made promises and that is the least we can do - to live up to those promises. However, the best we can do is to triple our efforts and produce more than we have promised and take millions of our people out of poverty.**

**This can come very easily, if all of us have a burning passion for the poor, they who sit in hope and wait for us. If anyone of us here does not have love for the job, then they are in the wrong job, because nothing less than passion works in this environment. However, here is a good story to tell. Flowers that bloom in winter are a very special sight, because they bloom in a very stark environment. Despite our lacklustre delivery over the past few years, there are some who have distinguished themselves by their hard work, their commitment to and passion for the rights of the**

poor. And to these we want to dedicate the night, to honour them and thank them for being the light, even in our darkest days. And we are not talking about load-shedding.

We are gathered here tonight to bestow honours and awards on individuals and companies that have distinguished themselves in the arena of construction, so that they may be an example to others. Tonight is their night and our programme is dedicated to them. In particular I am glad that we have three people in the Category of Life Time Awards. They have inspired us over the years, they continue to inspire us and they will be our conscience every day. On their behalf, we recommit ourselves today to be worthy of their sacrifices. We are going to recommit ourselves tonight that we are going to work harder. We are going to be worthy of their sacrifices and we will earn the trust that people put in us to deliver to the them, their dignity. First we are going to prioritise the military veterans. Their plight is a sad one that does need to be repeated here. In view of the extreme insensitivity that is very easily attached to the delays that have been experienced by our military veterans, I would like to indicate, on behalf of government, that we care very deeply concerned about their plight. The delay has not been deliberate, but I have now taken a decision that we will prove our worth to them.

The Deputy Ministers of Military Veterans and Human Settlements and I have met with various groupings of military veterans in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal and I have taken the decision that we will complete the more than

**5 000 houses for military veterans who are on our database in the current financial year. The Military Veterans Housing Programme will be a national Ministerial programme. It will be coordinated by the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements as a national project, resources for the project will be ring-fenced and the military veterans themselves will appoint a national task team, through the Deputy Minister of Military Veterans and who will work closely with the Deputy Minister of Human Settlements. It is my intention that by March 2016 there should be no military veteran on our data base who is not housed through our intervention.**

**The successful contractor appointed to construct the houses for military veterans will have to work seven days a week, because we have already committed ourselves that this project should be over in a year. Contractors will sub-contract military veterans to work on their own houses, where possible. We apologise most sincerely for the long indignity that you have suffered. But we are here now and want you to believe in us, and work with us.**

**Last year we had a very successful Human Settlements Indaba and most of you here this evening would have signed the Social Contract. It evoked great expectations from our people and we have an obligation to work tirelessly to meet their needs for shelter. Next month we will be hosting our Developers Conference at which we will be hearing from our developers what impedes delivery and what challenges are experienced from the administration at all three government spheres. We will explain our plans in detail, especially around the catalytic projects. These 77 catalytic projects**

**will be rolled out as of the end of September 2015 and the contracts that will be signed with the contractors will have very specific timeframes attached to them. They will be penalised for every day they go over the deadline.**

**Our intention is to ensure that whatever work is assigned, it is supported by a proper administrative environment, because my timeframes are in line with the expectations of our people. I need to emphasise that at the Developers Conference we will need an undertaking from contractors that they will stick to the timeframes agreed upon in their contracts and that they will provide us with quality work. Details of the Developers Conference will be made public in due course.**

**We have started rolling out the Youth Brigade and we expect to have a youth brigade for every major project we implement. We will start with the training of 200 youths in the Western Cape to work on the N2 Gateway Project and in the Eastern Cape as part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro's housing projects. I have a special message to those under the age of 40 years, to join the youth brigades where possible. There are plenty of opportunities for them to get accommodation within our subsidy range. This and many more will be communicated through our regular messages.**

**We have established a war room, which amongst other things will track every human settlements project across the country. Technology makes it possible for us to track progress without leaving our offices. The Heads of Department will be accountable,**

**not only to their respective MECs, but also to all MECs as a collective. The MECs. Deputy Minister and myself will work as a collective, because it is only when we work as a collective that we will achieve our goals.**

**We will ensure that where Provinces or Metros are unable to use all the resources allocated to them, these resources will be shifted to provinces and metros that can use it. We will not allow any rollovers or any under spending.**

**We are gearing up our communications. We are now on air with the Breaking New Ground programme and we urge you to watch it and send your comments to us, so that we can improve our messaging. We are also on radio every week and will be calling on MECs to take a slot and communicate the message of Human Settlements. We have an agreement with Independent Newspapers to publish a supplement that educates our people about what our policies say. It will also educate them about the illegality of selling their BNG houses before the expiry of the prescribed period. We have an industrial theatre that will further educate our people about their rights and our obligations towards them.**

**Communications and outreach programmes are part of our frontline services to ensure that the correct and common messages reach our people. In order to reduce the perceived social distance between ourselves and our beneficiaries, I have appointed a National Rapid Response Task Team that will be our feet on the ground, interacting with our communities. This, we believe will**

lessen the tension that always arises when there is a human settlements development. The Task Team will also assist us understand where there is a problem and allow us to rapidly respond to problems as they arise. They are already doing very good work in our communities, but are not eligible for any awards tonight, so don't bother to nominate them.

Our gathering today is a simple exemplification of what it takes to do more than is required. Our gathering today also serves to give us hope and renewed inspiration at the real possibility of meeting our housing challenges. Each time we hold these awards they remind us of what is possible and attainable through hard work. Our winners and runners up have put in extra effort, showed care and compassion in their work, pushed boundaries and least of all enjoyed the journey and reaped the results in the end. Our nation is endowed with great human beings who, if they can pull harder together, will out-do our detractors. So, in a practical sense we need a change of mind and a change of heart to rise to the higher levels of human success.

In this women's month we honour all women in construction and specifically Mme Ruth Mompoti and Mme Ivy Gcina who worked very hard to improve the living conditions in our communities. We will hear more about their contributions during the awards section of this evening's programme.

To the nominees and the winners accept my congratulations and I hope your awards will motivate the rest of the industry to

**work even harder. Success is not attained by sudden flight but by toil and hard work.**

**In closing, I would like to thank the Chairpersons and members of the Portfolio Committee and Select Committee in Parliament for their support, as well as the Chairpersons and members of the Human Settlements Boards and Councils. I have been very demanding on their time, but I cannot, unfortunately promise that it will be better next year.**

**Thank you for joining us and please enjoy the evening.**