



MINISTRY

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

SPEECH

BY

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**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SOUTH AFRICA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE DEBATE AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

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Honourable Chairperson of the NCOP, Mrs Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane

Honourable Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, Mr. Les Govender

Honourable Members

Ladies and gentlemen

Good day!

Thank you so much for the affording me an opportunity to participate in this important debate. We enter this debate as the Human Settlements family to give a detailed account and muse on the progress made in creating integrated Human Settlements to redress the legacy of apartheid spatial settlement and ensure that the people of South Africa have access to housing.

Honourable Chairperson

This timely debate coincides with the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter since its crucial adoption in Kliptown in 1955 by the people of South Africa and it succinctly articulates the hopes and aspirations of our people.

It made a laconic expression that there shall be houses, security and comfort!

One of the defining tasks of our democratic developmental state is to systematically undo the legacy of apartheid spatial settlement, a legacy that continues to exclude the majority from opportunity, mobility, and dignity.

For decades, poor and working-class South Africans have lived on the margins spatially, economically, and socially disconnected from jobs, education, health care, and social services.

As reaffirmed in the White Paper for Human Settlements (2024), we are committed to building inclusive, integrated, and sustainable human settlements that restore spatial justice and enable people to lead better lives anchored on the theoretical perspective of the Freedom Charter.

Spatial transformation is not just about building houses it is about reshaping space, unlocking potential, and advancing equality.

A bold and strategic intervention in this journey has been the declaration of 136 Priority Development Areas (PDAs).

These PDAs are aligned to the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) and municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and represent a national commitment to spatial targeting and transformation.

These are:

- Geographic zones of focused public and private investment, selected for their potential to drive urban integration and inclusive growth.
- Designed to confront the fragmented, racially segregated, and inefficient urban form inherited from our past.
- Spaces where we will restructure towns and cities, transform townships and mining towns, and revitalise inner cities.

Through the PDAs, we aim to Consolidate spatial investment through integrated planning, coordinated infrastructure, diverse housing delivery, and quality public amenities.

Enable compact urban form, support functional land markets, and foster mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhoods.

Honourable Chairperson

These areas were identified using rigorous spatial analysis to ensure they reflect high housing demand and low supply and they require infrastructure and service integration.

As the White Paper affirms, PDAs are not about housing alone. They are strategic spatial instruments to catalyse transformation, promote resilience, and advance sustainable development.

The alignment of Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG) and Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG) funding toward PDAs is essential.

While this alignment is still lower than desired, progress is visible as provinces begin to prioritise PDAs in their resource allocation and planning frameworks.

This shift from fragmented projects to area-based investment ensures that we are creating well-planned, complete, and connected neighbourhoods, rather than isolated housing products.

Honourable Chairperson

The Housing Development Agency (HDA), an entity of the Department, in collaboration with Provinces and Municipalities, is driving the identification, acquisition, and release of land within or near PDAs.

This targeted approach enables:

- Compact and connected urban form.
- Improved access to economic opportunities.
- Long-term sustainability and efficient infrastructure use.

In line with the White Paper for Human Settlements, we consider well-located land as not just a technical issue, rather a human rights and equity imperative.

Recognising that spatial dynamics are constantly evolving; a national process is underway to review and update the PDAs.

This review is guided by recent development trends and updated spatial data.

Strategic policy shifts, including the White Paper's emphasis on integrated, climate-resilient, and digitally enabled settlements.

Our aim is to ensure that PDAs remain relevant, catalytic, and responsive to the changing needs of our people and cities.

Planning within PDAs must integrate municipal infrastructure investment frameworks deal decisively with issues of Transport and mobility corridors, ensure there is public service delivery platforms and as the White Paper emphasizes, multi-sectoral and intergovernmental collaboration is vital.

Notably, partnerships with the private sector, non-profits, and communities amplify state investment and foster inclusive co-development.

Honourable Chairperson

Addressing the apartheid spatial planning is central to Department's 2024 – 2029 MTDP commitments. These mainly include the following:

- Development of masterplans or comprehensive plan by the Metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities. Our key focus will be on the 23 districts that encompass intermediate cities. Such approach work will assist us to enhance both the District Development Plans and the Integrated Development Plans.
- Other initiatives of the Department included advancing a focused approach on specific spaces that would be renegotiated with municipalities and sector departments for human settlements development.
- The Department is further putting a spotlight on issues of lack of bulk infrastructure for human settlements projects, as well as promoting integration of social and economic aspects thereby yielding dividends in terms of spatial planning, community services and broader quality of life of our citizens.

Honourable Chairperson

As I conclude, let me hasten to indicate that the White Paper for Human Settlements gives us a strategic, forward-looking policy foundation to ensure that our plans include safeguard that our people are decently housed, and that they can bring up their families in conditions of comfort and security. In this case, we uphold the PDAs as one of our key instruments to drive spatial transformation that is embedded on aspects of integration. In the same pace, funding, land, and partnerships remains our levers of change we aspire to achieve.

Our firm commitment is to prioritise legislative and policy amendments to intensify implementation, scale up innovations, and close the delivery gap. Central to this commitment is that we are advancing to strengthen our intergovernmental collaborations and oversight on the outcomes of the sector.

Let us move forward boldly — with unity, focus, and urgency — to create integrated, inclusive, and future-ready human settlements that restore dignity, foster opportunity, and rewrite the spatial legacy of our past.

I thank you.