



MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY DEPUTY MINISTER TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA, MP, DURING THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES POLICY DEBATE ON BUDGET VOTE 33:
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

09 JULY 2025

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces

Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces

Honourable Minister of Human Settlements, Thembi Simelane

Honourable Chairperson, Albert Seabi and Members of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements

Honourable Members

DG, DDGs of Department of Human Settlements

Fellow South Africans

MANDINIBULISE NGALENJIKALANGA

Honourable Chairperson

"Access to adequate housing is not a privilege. It is a right, and a foundation for restoring human dignity." These powerful words by Joe Slovo, South Africa's first Minister of Housing, continue to shape our mandate three decades into democracy.

Honourable Chairperson

Thirty-one years ago, in October 1994, Joe Slovo, laid a foundational milestone in our democratic journey by signing the Botshabelo Housing Accord. The accord was a crucial agreement in a post-apartheid South Africa aimed at addressing the severe

housing crisis and committing to build a significant number of new houses, upgrade existing informal settlements, and to ensure access to basic services. This marked the beginning of a coordinated national effort to tackle the country's housing backlog and uplift the living conditions of millions of South Africans.

Honourable Chairperson

On the 26th of June 2025, we commemorated seventy-years (71) of the Freedom Charter, a historic document adopted in Kliptown, which has since shaped our democratic dispensation.

The Freedom Charter boldly declared, "There shall be Houses, Security and Comfort" Enshrined in Chapter 2 (Section 26) of the South African Constitution, sub-section 1 is the right to access adequate housing for everyone. Sub-section(2) places an obligation on the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.

Honourable House Chairperson

We gather today with our minds still recovering from what supervened the Eastern Cape Province in June 2025. Lives were lost and families displaced. Once again, this revealed the scale of work ahead of us to provide adequate shelter to those in need. We acknowledge the intergovernmental efforts deployed in Mthatha and Butterworth and further thank the various first responders and stakeholders who lent a helping hand to the affected families

We wish to extend a special appreciation to Gift of the Givers, who provided relief for the victims and have consistently shown up for our people. A few days ago, the Gift of the Givers also showed up in Khayelitsha to provide relief to flood victims.

House Chairperson

We are reminded that with limited resources at our disposal, we can fully deliver on our constitutional mandate through meaningful collaborations, partnerships with business, public private partnerships, communities, and non-governmental organisations. Over the last few months, we travelled across the country handing over houses and title deeds, affirming our call of housing the nation, a clarion call the progressive democratic government has made over the last thirty-one years.

The Department of Human Settlements has registered great strides in providing decent shelter to senior citizens, persons with disability, women, child-headed homes and military veterans. We commend provinces that have prioritised these vulnerable groups. The stories on the ground are loud and clear.

House Chairperson

The people of South Africa have been waiting to be decently housed for many years. The joy that we are met with when we are handing over these title deeds and houses is unmatched. We are met with tears of joy, fulfilled dreams, and renewed hope in a caring government that serves the people.

Military veterans remain a priority in our housing programme, and many have already received houses. We recognise them for their service to our country. However, challenges such as outdated or inaccurate beneficiary lists, untraceable applicants, and non-qualifying individuals continue to hinder progress. The Department of Human Settlements, and the Department of Military Veterans are working together, to verify and update the database to ensure that all qualifying veterans are provided with dignified houses.

House Chairperson

We recognise the struggles of the missing middle. In 2024, we shared insights from the Home Loan and Mortgage Disclosure Act report, covering the period from 2018 to 2022. It revealed barriers that continue to hinder access to home ownership. These include delays due to incomplete documentation, confusion around eligibility, criteria, and long waiting period for subsidy payments.

Most concerning was the limited access to bonds for those earning below ten thousand rands per month, even when supported with the First Home Finance subsidy. To respond to these challenges, over the 2024 to 2029 Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), we will disburse one hundred and forty thousand subsidies and loans through First Home Finance. We call on the private sector, especially financial institutions, to partner with us in providing more affordable housing stock near economic and social amenities.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, just over R4 billion in contracts were awarded to enterprises owned by women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. While we welcome this progress, we acknowledge that the participation of persons with disabilities and military veterans remains low. Provinces and entities are now required to report on inclusive procurement and implement concrete transformation measures.

Honourable Members

We are driving bold change through the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority. The establishment of a Property Sector Transformation Fund will support black-owned businesses with market access. Strategic partnerships with REMAX and Rawson are creating opportunities for emerging black estate agents and entrepreneurs. In April

2024, Rawson launched the Rawson Transformation Franchise programme, which has already established 6 new black-owned franchises and created 47 jobs.

We also commend the Community Schemes Ombud Service for transforming from a fully grant-dependent body to a self-sustaining regulator. CSOS is currently developing a national database of community schemes and aims to register 20 000 new schemes this year. The amendment of its founding legislation is underway to address previous gaps and further support transparency, education, and enforcement.

During the youth month commemoration, we reiterated our commitment towards tackling youth unemployment through targeted programmes. The department will continue to implement the Internship Programme and award bursaries to deserving students. We will also engage SETAs to secure support for learnerships and skills development.

House Chairperson

As we celebrate the life and legacy of former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela this month, we are reminded of his commitment to women emancipation. In his closing address at the 1995 UN Habitat II, African Housing Ministers Conference in Kempton park, when he said I quote “the success of our housing programme - of any housing programme - is directly related to the extent to which women are directly involved.”

He reminded us that, when we talk of people-centred development, we should place women at the heart of our efforts. Their lived experiences, their resilience, and their ability to hold families and communities together make them essential partners in building sustainable human settlements. Housing is not just about shelter it is about restoring dignity, protecting livelihoods, and ensuring that women are not left behind in our developmental agenda.

House Chairperson

Not long ago, we visited an elderly, wheelchair-bound woman in Khayelitsha whose home had burnt down. She told us how decades of memories vanished in minutes. That encounter reminded us that for many South Africans, a single disaster can undo a lifetime of struggle. With the NHBRC, we assessed the situation, and reconstruction is now underway.

This story reminds us that women like the elderly grandmother in Khayelitsha are not just passive recipients of government programmes, they are at the heart of the housing story. Their lives, struggles, and resilience embody the very essence of people-centred development that President Nelson Mandela spoke of. When we prioritise the needs of women in our human settlements' agenda, we do more than build houses, we

restore dignity, preserve memory, and honour the generations that have carried our communities through adversity.

House Chairperson

In closing, it is now our collective responsibility to translate these plans into concrete action. We must work together to streamline housing delivery processes, leverage technology to build more efficiently, and ensure that our policies truly benefit all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable among us. We must move forward with a renewed sense of purpose, guided by the principles of social justice and human dignity.

I, therefore, urge all members to support the initiatives we have tabled today and work towards a future where everyone has a place to call home.

Honourable Chairperson, I Tandi Mahambehlala (MP) recommend that this House support Budget Vote 33 for Human Settlements.

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