



**MINISTRY**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THEMBI SIMELANE**

**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MP**

**ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE INVESTMENT NETWORKING SESSION OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY**

**28 MAY 2026**

**RADISSON COLLECTION HOTEL, WATERFRONT, CAPE TOWN**

Programme Director,

Honourable Deputy Minister,

Chairperson and Board Members of the Housing Development Agency

Director- General of the Department of Human Settlements

Chief Executive Officer of the Housing Development Agency

DDGs and Staff of Department of Human Settlements

Representatives of the investment community and financial institutions

Leaders from the private sector and development finance institutions

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening,

It is my privilege and honour to address you, this evening. As you know, this year marks an important milestone in the history of our country, we commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the adoption of our progressive constitution.

Section 26 of the constitution provides that; everyone has a right to have access to adequate housing.

You would also know that the Bill of Rights in our constitution was largely inspired by the Freedom Charter which was adopted as far back as 1955. It was the Freedom Charter that first declared and called for 'housing, security and comfort'.

That clarion call by the Freedom Charter has now become our constitutional and legislative mandate.

The democratic government has been working to breathe life to these progressive ideals.

Since 1994, we have delivered more than 5 million housing opportunities that have benefited an estimated 13 million people. While we are proud of this achievement, we fully recognise that there is still a lot of work to be done, to address the housing crisis.

The recent release of 2025 General Household Survey by Statistics South Africa indicate that the proportion of households living in formal dwellings increased from 73,5% in 2002 to 84,2% in 2025 demonstrating improvements in living standards.

We have the biggest challenge of the availability of land, persistent natural disasters, and lack of resources. The reality of the matter is that the housing crisis is too complex and multi-layered, and will require collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including the private sector. The state alone cannot solve the problem.

As we invite none-state players to partner with us to ensure that every single citizen has a decent roof over their heads – those of us in the public sector must lead by example and do our best.

We should be prudent in the utilisation of resources at our disposal. We should also be effective and efficient.

We also must be innovative.

It is through innovation that we can be able to achieve far more with less.

Through innovation we can achieve resilience.

Colleagues,

This gathering takes place a day after we tabulated Budget Vote 33 of the Department of Human Settlements in parliament under the theme: **“Restoring dignity through sustainable human settlements.”** However, it is important to underscore that our budget continues to shrink.

The budget reductions will have a significant impact on the achievement of our MTDP targets. This means, going forward, we will have to do more with less and become more innovative in how we deliver human settlements.

The scale of South Africa’s housing and spatial transformation challenge cannot be addressed by the state alone. We are therefore appealing to the private sector to walk this journey with us and help us to deliver on our constitutional mandate. Public–Private Partnerships (PPP), when responsibly structured and effectively governed, offer a powerful mechanism to align capital with impact and unlock shared value for all stakeholders.

As government, we remain committed to advancing the constitutional right of access to adequate housing while simultaneously driving inclusive economic growth, spatial transformation, and sustainable urban development.

We do this mindful of the fact that the United Nations projects that the proportion of the world’s population living in urban areas will rise to approximately 68% to 70% by 2050 and increasing housing backlog.

The Housing Development Agency continues to play a strategic role in supporting our human settlements perspective. Through land acquisition and release, project preparation, catalytic development support, and

coordination across spheres of government, the Agency has become an important partner in accelerating integrated human settlements delivery in South Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I have said earlier, the housing challenge facing our country requires bold partnerships and innovative thinking. Government alone cannot meet the scale of infrastructure and housing demand. The participation of the private sector, financiers, institutional investors, and development partners is therefore essential if we are to unlock sustainable and large-scale delivery.

Human settlements are not simply about building houses. They are about creating viable communities with access to economic opportunities, social amenities, transport networks, and public infrastructure. They are about restoring dignity and overcoming the spatial inequalities that continue to affect many South Africans.

Investment in the human settlements sector must therefore be viewed not only as a developmental responsibility, but also as a strategic economic opportunity. Infrastructure-led development stimulates economic activity, supports industrial growth, creates employment, and contributes to long-term economic resilience.

We are encouraged by the growing interest from investors and development finance institutions in supporting catalytic projects and innovative financing mechanisms. Through partnerships, blended finance approaches, and collaborative infrastructure investment models, we can unlock greater value and improve delivery outcomes.

Programme Director,

Government remains committed to strengthening governance, improving project preparation, enhancing planning coordination, and creating an enabling environment for investment. We recognise that investor confidence is built on transparency, accountability, policy certainty, and the ability to implement projects efficiently and sustainably.

In this regard, the Housing Development Agency continues to serve as a critical implementation partner in unlocking strategic land and facilitating integrated development programmes that can attract investment and drive transformation.

The Department has also advanced consultations on a revised housing model that enables ownership and rental opportunities in areas of economic opportunity, including engagements with both domestic and international stakeholders.

Our cities hold immense untapped potential, and through partnership, we can unlock catalytic investment that transforms communities while generating sustainable economic returns.

Together, we can reshape our cities, restore dignity to communities, and build human settlements that truly support South Africa's social and economic transformation.

Working together, we can accelerate delivery, unlock economic opportunities, and ensure that human settlements become a catalyst for national development and social cohesion.

Allow me to thank the Housing Development Agency, our developer of choice, for convening this important engagement and all stakeholders present for their continued support and partnership.

Let us continue the partnership, working together to ensure sustainable and integrated human settlements.

I thank you.