



**MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI,
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS WOMEN INDABA, KIMBERLEY, NORTHERN CAPE - 20
AUGUST 2023**

Programme Director

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malibongwe!

Thank you for your participation, your inputs and commitment to ensure that we chart the way forward not only for ourselves but also for future generations. I must upfront apologise for the sub-sector that felt left out on the panels such the NGO sector and Conveyancers who felt we didn't deal in detail with issues that are affecting them.

I have said this before and I want to repeat here, our basic premise is that women emancipation and women empowerment in the context of economic transformation is non-negotiable. The struggle for freedom will never be complete until women enjoy equal status as their male counterparts.

As Michelle Obama said "No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half of its citizens"

The discussion in these two days has been a reminder that our policies on women empowerment as government are still not being implemented. women entrepreneurs face

an uphill battle when starting or growing their businesses. They still face challenges such as:

- Lack of access to finance
- Gender Bias or Gender Discrimination of Women Entrepreneurs
- Lack of Education and Training
- The expectation that women are the only member of the household that should be balancing work and family life and often to their disadvantage.
- Women are not able to break into the support networks that share their understandings and goals

Collectively, these challenges have placed women at disadvantaged economic status. The role of women in economic transformation should be centred around breaking these barriers.

Last night, one of the trailblazers who narrated her story of her struggles in this sector made a very important point about kicking open closed doors. She said that she has been deeply hurt but not discouraged, she has been frightened but she has not forgotten how to be brave, she finds strength working in the company of other strong women and she is willing to face the loneliness that is demanded by the road to achieve gender equality.

In these two days, I have learnt a lot about the shackles that still hold women back in the human settlements sector.

During discussions at this Indaba, one of the participants made reference to the R500 million allocation of the grants that should go to women, but I was asking myself where this number comes from. Our grants that include Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG), the Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) and the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant (ISUPG) amount to approximately R29 billion. This means that 40% of our grants is close to R 11 billion and this is the actual number that we should be speaking about. This is a clear demonstration that we are not playing but mean serious business when we talk transformation.

The implementation of the 40% set side by all provinces must speak about reaching that R11 billion procurement spent for women. There are provinces that are implementing this

policy directive well and others are still lagging. Through monitoring, we can be able to see where the money is being spent.

As we embark on a policy review for the sector , we will establish a task team to work with and to report on by March 2024. We request the nomination of one woman per sub-sector to sit in the task team next week Friday as we agreed that this gathering is not a talk shop.

When we meet in March next year, as committed at this Indaba, all entities must tell us how they have spent their 40% on women. We want reports and not plans and we will insist on provinces to constantly give us those reports at the Ministerial Meeting with Members of Executive Committees (MINMEC). We will soon, in the spirit of transparency and accountability, begin to publicise this data on our platforms.

As a sector, we must pay attention to being transparent and honest to each other and in that regard, it is important to highlight that, part of why we have disasters is because people place themselves in dangerous areas. During my recent visit to Mpumalanga, I found people having erected shacks in high mast currency. Overtime we have come to discover that they deliberately place themselves there in the hope that they will assisted first when disaster strikes and that is deliberately jumping the queue. There are some of the challenges we find ourselves dealing with in informal settlements.

Recently, we announced the allocation of more resources for the prevention of disasters in informal settlements across the country, following a decision MINMEC resolution.

The MINMEC agreed to reprioritise 5% of the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant, to specifically go towards a community-led process of reblocking or repositioning densely built informal settlement into clusters instead of the current improvised order of these ever-growing settlements. These resources will help open pathways and roads for emergency vehicles and other services including the provision of water, electricity, and sewerage.

In terms of emergency and disaster interventions in informal settlements, the reblocking will help to proactively deal with disastrous fire emergencies in provinces and municipalities, which often lead to loss of lives and the complete destruction of property - almost daily.

Provinces have been asked to set aside 5% of the HSDG and allocate it for reblocking these informal settlements and we might not have all the money to reblock those.

The Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, which should be reviewed to strengthen laws against land invasion and illegal occupation, also makes it difficult to move people once they have settled – mostly in urban areas. However, the reality is that, 80% of people in informal settlements do not qualify for housing and hence the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) is tasked to increase capacity in the social housing rental spaces.

One issue we will respond to as sector is Alternative Building Technology for carbon emissions reduction. I appeal to all delegates here today to start looking at partnership to help you manoeuvre this space. Build partnership and joint ventures and prepare yourself to move towards that direction.

I have pronounced previously that going forward, we will enhance our response and that we will no longer make use of Temporary Residential Units for emergency interventions. We are in favour of more permanent solutions like Alternative Building Technology (ABT) and women need to locate themselves in that area of work. We will set a target in terms of percentage spend on innovative building technologies for our grants. We will open doors, but I must caution that you need to do your part as no one will get anything served on a silver platter. We must be frank and honest so that we can further develop ourselves as pioneering business-women and entrepreneurs.

There is hope for this country because of women like you. For me, it is like all of you are holding the candle and let's light the way for others. Go out there and share the experiences, knowledge and roadmap that we have agreed to here today so we encourage other women. As women gathered here, you represent the women out there who aspire to grow their businesses and become active participants. In essence, you are holding a candle that is shining bright against all odds and be passed on to others for a brighter tomorrow.

I want to commit that we will adhere to the resolutions as outlined by the Director-General following robust participation and would like to conclude with a quote by Harriet Tubman,

a social activist born into slavery, who later escaped and went on to free many slaves and she came to be known as the “Moses of her people”. This is her message to women and girls. She said **“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”**

I thank you