

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS HON. MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI, MP  
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, CAPE TOWN  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS VOTE 33  
10 MAY 2023**

**House Chairperson**

**Chairperson for the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Hon. Semenya  
and Members of the Portfolio Committee**

**Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, Pam Tshwete**

**MECs of Human Settlements**

**Chairpersons and Members of Boards and Councils of Human Settlements  
Entities**

**Acting Director-General of Human Settlements, Ms Sindisiwe Ngxongo and DDGS**

**CEOs of Entities**

**Honourable members**

Today marks 29 years since Former President Nelson Mandela delivered his inaugural speech at the Union Buildings as the first president of a democratic South Africa. On that momentous occasion, he said amongst other things: “We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender, and other discrimination.”

We remember, the day vividly as it signified freedom to a black child, hope to a coloured man, friendship to a white woman, and unity to an Indian senior citizen. It is a day all of us across, gender, race, class and age understood that it meant a new leaf of life but equally, we ventured into the unknown which was a democratic society. As we reflect on this journey travelled since 1994, there are good stories to tell, lessons learned we must carry into the future but most importantly the need to continue to uphold our democratic principles to build a prosperous society. We dare not fail

We believe that service delivery to our people is an instrument by which the freedom we attained in 1994 finds meaning amongst the majority of our people. Added to this is the enabling of economic empowerment, through property ownership which our people require to meaningfully participate in the economy and improve their well-being. Throughout these years that we have enjoyed freedom, our people have been patiently waiting for our government to make good on its promise that said: “there shall be houses, security and comfort for all”. We are grateful that our people are still hopeful and willing to give our government the opportunity to make good on this promise. Indeed, as Human Settlements, we are saying “a promise made is a promise kept”. It is in this context that we have adopted an approach that demands, without exception, that the actions of all human settlements departments and all its entities must be devoted to achieving and fulfilling this promise.

Admittedly, the human settlements delivery system has and is experiencing numerous challenges, however, the work we have been doing to improve and stabilise the portfolio is starting to yield positive change. We made a commitment that we will continually improve our policies, the mode of operation and human capacity and the tools required to deliver on our mandate so that human settlements can take its rightful place as a primary instrument for creating a better life for all.

### **Stabilizing the portfolio and building capacity**

As part of stabilizing the Entities, during the 2022/23 financial year, all Board appointments were finalised and most executive appointments were concluded, especially at CEO level and a process to fill the vacant post of CEO at the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and CSOS will also commence soon.

In the Department, we have appointed the Chief Financial Officer and two Deputy Director-Generals (DDGs) and other SMS members to ensure there is leadership to deliver on our plans.

### **On Informal Settlements**

With regards to the Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme (ISUP), in the medium term we have set a target of 1500 informal settlements for upgrading. Thus far, a total of

1269 informal settlements are at various phases of upgrading process. This programme has immense challenges which we plan to overcome by entering into social compacts with communities and ensuring that suitable land parcels are acquired to build houses for our communities. In the process, the Department will continue to provide support to both provinces and metros to ensure that our target is achieved. We are mindful that the number of informal settlements is on the rise and equally, our resolve to improve the lives of the people in informal settlements remains.

The involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to improve people's lives is an absolute imperative. In this regard, we have initiated conversations with NGOs such as Abahlali baseMjondolo and many others who are willing to collaborate with us to tackle disaster response, social facilitation, reblocking and consultation with informal dwellers when projects are introduced. I express my gratitude to the NGOs like the Gift of the Givers and **Al-Imdaad** that continue to assist communities with immediate relief essentials. These organisations joined us as we handed over building materials and other necessities to bring immediate relief to households affected by the fire at the Dakota Informal Settlement in eThekweni and have been assisting in many other areas.

Our government hosted an international meeting with United Nations Habitat (UN-Habitat) in October 2022, to launch a framework for a Global Action Plan on Slums and Informal Settlements. The Global Action Plan Framework on Informal Settlements and Slums is a necessary tool for the world to achieve SDG Target 11.1 which is to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums”. In June this year, I will be leading a delegation to the United Nations Habitat Assembly in Nairobi for the tabling of a Global Action Plan for adoption. Once adopted, the Global Action Plan will create a platform for countries to coordinate, collaborate, and strengthen their partnerships in eliminating slums and informal settlements and building sustainable cities.

South Africa was an active proponent of the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal 11 in Agenda 2030 and ensured that the issue of informal settlements and slums was adequately addressed, even in the New Urban Agenda. We are also utilising our

membership of Cities Alliance, whose management Board is chaired by our very own Professor Thuli Madonsela, to intensify our fight against urban poverty, hunger and deliver sustainable development.

### **On blocked projects**

Unfortunately, blocked projects continue to deny our people the opportunity to get their houses. For this reason, we have placed blocked projects as part of the priorities by allocating financial resources and provision of technical expertise in provinces and municipalities. Crippled by instability and lack of technical capacity, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality was one of the worst performing municipalities in Human Settlements - which I mentioned in my budget speech last year. Through the intervention of the National War Room, several projects were unblocked, and the municipality is well on its way to meet its targets. In March 2023, I handed over more than 270 houses in Polar Park and Qaqawuli housing projects as result of the intervention.

### **On transformation**

Transforming our economy, especially the property sector, remains a priority for our government. In terms of the Property Practitioners Act, the PPRA had to establish a Property Sector Transformation Fund. I can report Honorable Members that this work is being implemented and the Fund Manager has been appointed from 1 April 2023, to oversee the implementation of the empowerment and transformation program. The Deputy Minister will highlight the work we do in empowering women in the sector.

### **On Policy changes**

The human settlements sector must be responsive to the ever-changing human needs, which is made possible by creating an adaptive policy environment. In line with our promise to ensure security and comfort, we have taken a policy position to improve the lives of the qualifying beneficiaries by changing the Norms and Standards. These changes are aimed at responding to the economic changes, especially the rising cost of living, energy poverty and security needs for the vulnerable. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2023, **we have decided that all subsidised houses that are being build will be provided with solar panels, and rainwater harvesting devices especially in rural**

**communities. For persons with disabilities, the houses will be fitted with burglar bars to improve security.**

We have therefore decided to increase the subsidy quantum by 29.7% for the 2023/2024 financial year, mainly to address the increasing building costs. The adjustment will ensure that we speed up the pace of delivery and ensure that the quality of houses we provide to beneficiaries does not deteriorate. More importantly to ensure that contractors don't abandoned sites due to unaffordable costs.

Effective from April 2023, in real terms, our housing programmes were adjusted as follows:

- BNG services and top structure- R286 364
- House for persons with disabilities -R307 166
- Military veterans house – R348 069
- First Home Finance - R169 265
- Social housing – R460 984

### **Grants, provincial plans and budgets**

For the financial year 2023/24, the Department's budget allocation amounts to just under R35 billion, of which R19,2 billion is allocated to provincial grants, R12.5 billion for municipal grants, R520 million for emergency housing response and R1.7 billion will be transferred to Human Settlements entities.

### **On disaster management**

We have decided to embrace Innovative Building Technologies so that our solutions are sustainable and of good quality, with efficiency and cost effectiveness, being the primary drivers of our disaster response. Accordingly, our primary method of response to disasters will no longer include Temporary Residential Units, instead it will prioritize Alternative Building Technologies. In this way, our immediate intervention will provide a permanent solution and do away with double expenditure on temporary accommodation and then afterwards, a permanent solution.

Here are the proposed interventions for disaster response:

- Alternative Building Technology
- Building material supply
- Homeowner managed repairs through the voucher system

Climate change is a reality, and we have to put measures not only to respond but to take preventative steps working with COGTA ,such as evacuations of families and removal of communities who have built their homes in low lying areas.

Indeed, building structures that are climate change resistant has become a fundamental strategy. Central to this new housing development path is the National Home Builder Registration Council (NHBRC) which must make sure every house in every project is of good quality. Of great concern, we have been inundated with various complaints across the country in places wherein houses built for the elderly and the poor, have been found wanting and are a disaster waiting to happen. This is one of critical area that is being addressed by the Housing Consumer protection bill that is currently before the NCOP.

### **On First home finance and partnerships with the private sector**

It is a self-evident that government alone, without other societal stakeholders, will not be able to deliver the country's housing needs. In this regard we are calling on the private sector to join in this important journey of housing the nation.

The National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC) has also signed a memorandum of understanding with New Kleinfontein Goldmine (Pty) Ltd, to speed up the implementation of employer-assisted housing schemes. This partnership will assist mine workers with their housing needs, using First Home Finance.

In this current financial year, the NHFC and the Government housing Employees Scheme will work together to implement the housing scheme programme for government employees across the country, as part of the agreements made with labour.

## **On title deeds**

Amongst those who plead with us to give them title deeds are child-headed households who, without ownership, risk losing their homes; widows and elderly women who live in precarious conditions of abuse and intimidation; and beneficiaries of houses who wish to use their property to empower themselves.

Security of tenure, although enshrined in our Constitution, remains an elusive privilege for many poor families in South Africa for several reasons. Some entities of State have not released the land on which many housing developments are located, others are holding on to property portfolios emanating from the pre-1994 dispensation, which should have long been transferred to the families that have been occupying these properties through 99-year lease contracts.

It is for this reason that I have initiated the MAWIGA Ministerial Project to transfer almost 14 000 title deeds of which 8 000 will form part of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of this project. This is to ensure ownership for a community that has struggled for 30 years to obtain formal title to their properties. These properties are currently held by the North West Housing Corporation and the City of Tshwane.

## **On land and spatial transformation**

Our Government will not rest until we achieve land justice in this country. Breaking the apartheid spatial development requires acquisition of land in well located areas that will bring our people closer to their place of work. It is heart-breaking to continue to see people who are on the underside of a very unequal society, spending close to 70% of their income on transport alone. In this respect, for the 2022/23 financial year, 539 hectares of land has been released in various provinces by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to the Housing Development Agency (HDA) for Human Settlement development and this process will continue in this financial year. In addition, a further 1500 hectares of publicly and privately owned land is in the process of being acquired.

Our efforts to break the apartheid spatial development will include a combination of programmes; namely social housing, urban renewal, first home finance, informal settlement upgrading and provision of serviced sites amongst others.

I am pleased to report that over the past year the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) has successfully completed the construction 14 social housing projects. The investment into the sector has led to more than 7 900 job opportunities being created.

### **The Eradication of Asbestos**

Asbestos, which is a health hazard, is an apartheid relic that still weighs heavily on the health of poor households. We must eradicate asbestos as a matter of priority. The number of asbestos roofs that have been removed in the past financial year include 1500 roofs in Seshego and 2100 roofs in kaNyamazane.

The department is committed to the eradication and correct disposal of asbestos roofs and walls in old township properties across all nine provinces. In the current financial year, a total budget of R220 million has been allocated to the provincial Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG) business plans in the EC, FS and KZN to implement 27 projects across the provinces to remove asbestos roofs.

### **Eradication of Mud houses**

Mud houses whose structural integrity is compromised and those that are found in pieces of land that are unsuitable for settlement, collapse under the weight of heavy rains and floods. Most people in the rural part of our country are increasingly finding themselves homeless as more mud houses collapse.

Since last year's pronouncement on the prioritisation of the eradication of mud houses, five provinces have implemented the programme to eradicate mud houses. In the past financial year, a total of 8 262 mud houses were eradicated. Seven (7) Provinces have planned to eradicate 11 791 mud houses with a budget of R1.7 billion in this financial year.

We will introduce the use of remote sensing through satellite technology and other modern technology applications to help us locate and get a total count of all mud houses across the country. This means we will have to acquire the skills to capacitate our department to be able to utilise these technologies.



## **On capacity building**

Human settlements development by its very nature is a highly technical sector which requires very specialised type of skills such as civil engineering, town planning, geoscience and many more.

As announced by the President during one of his questions and answer session in Parliament, we are currently embarking on a Skills Audit as a Department so that we close the gap on the skills shortage to deliver on our mandate. We will relentlessly pursue excellence and performance improvement, by applying a strict framework skills allocation system without exception.

## **IN Conclusion**

Amartya Sen, in Development as Freedom said that “Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms, is constitutive of development.”

Unhabitable human Settlements is one of these unfreedoms that should be removed. As human settlements we are committed to the covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, irrespective of race, gender and age, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their right to human dignity.

Before I seat let me acknowledge Lufuno Tshivhase, Sanelisiwe Dzanibe, Nokwazi Sibande and Mpho Mokhele, who are staff members who won an innovation competition and therefore are also my guest at the budget vote and related activities.

Honorable members

I hereby table Human Settlements Budget Vote No. 33 for your consideration and approval.

Ndza Khensa