



HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TO : ALL MEDIA
ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/PR WIRES
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**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MINISTER
MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI, OPENING OF WEF URBAN TRANSFORMATION
SUMMIT, 22 OCTOBER 2024**

The built environment is a huge contributor to carbon emissions. Cement alone contributes around 8 to 10 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.

This means that, without changing the way on how we build new structures, and on how we preserve and retrofit existing structures we will not achieve the crucial carbon dioxide goals.

Building material and system innovations to reduce embodied carbon and other embedded environmental impacts on the life cycle of building materials have also seen a huge leap over the past decade.

A vibrant and thriving innovation ecosystem can only make the desired societal impact if it brings together all societal stakeholders, which include government, business, labour and communities.

Each of the stakeholders must play its role in ensuring innovative products and services find expression in the lives of ordinary people in communities.

In South Africa, our government through one of our state-owned enterprise, the National Home Builders Registration Council, we have established the Eric Molobi Housing Innovation Hub.

The Eric Molobi Housing Innovation Hub is a response to the challenges faced by the housing sector. Namely, to better the lives of the most vulnerable by providing affordable and quality homes and contribute to better housing delivery.

Activities at the Hub reflect the interrelationship of functions that contribute to enhancing the quality of the standard of building work.

In order to assist the public and private sector to promote quality, the houses are complemented by a Training Centre, where dialogue and training can occur, as well as the Construction Testing Laboratory, where material testing and related skills development can take place.

The main purpose of the Construction Testing Laboratory is to provide facilities that will enable the improvement of structural quality and technical standards through the physical testing of building materials and products as well as to support the development of home builders.

We are mindful that to build sustainable communities by introducing circularity in the built environment will require us to pay attention to cost, public education, change of cultural attitudes and adaptability of these technologies to various context or environments.

Your conference should help us to address these issues so that we can move faster in building sustainable human settlements.

The training centre at the hub was created precisely to conduct and facilitate construction related training especially on innovative building technologies.

In our country, the adoption of new building material and alternative technologies will be gradual in the beginning because such a change has to be sensitive to the environment, both in terms of climate and culture.

In South Africa, brick and mortar is a preferred technology and a change to other technologies will require public education.

We are confident that with public education the pace of adoption will grow over time especially when more people realise the benefits of alternative and innovative technologies.

Our experience has shown that alternative technologies are more costly than the technologies that we are currently using.

Faced with the challenge of providing decent housing for many poor households cost is a very important aspect of our decision making.

To build sustainable communities by introducing innovative technologies will require us to pay attention to cost, public education, change of cultural attitudes and adaptability of these technologies to various context or environments.

Other factors that need to be addressed for innovation to take centre stage in our work include the following:

- Governments must provide more support to research and development in green building technologies
- A strong link must be forged between researchers and innovative entrepreneurs to increase the commercialisation of innovative ideas and technologies.
- Private sector must play a larger role in driving innovation
- Government must create a conducive environment to enable innovation and bring down the cost of new technologies
- Government must create innovative strategies to procure innovative technologies in other words government should become early adopters of technology

We live in a world where technological changes are getting more rapid every day and for us to harness the advantages of these technologies we need to forge a closer stakeholder working relationship. Together we can do more.

I thank you

**Issued by the Ministry of Human Settlements of the Republic of South Africa,
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