



MINISTRY

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

CLOSING REMARKS BY THEMBI SIMELANE

MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MP

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INNOVATIVE BUILDING TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT ON
4 FEBRUARY 2026**

HELD AT NASREC EXPO CENTRE, JOHANNESBURG

Programme Director;

Honourable Deputy Minister, Tandi Mahambehlala;

MECs responsible for Human Settlements;

Chairpersons of Boards and Councils of Entities of the Department;

Executive Mayors and MMCs of our Metropolitan Municipalities;

Chief Executive Officers of the Entities of the Department;

Members of the Human Settlements family;

Representatives of the academia, industry and civil society;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

As we conclude this inaugural historic Summit on Mainstreaming Innovative Building Technologies (IBTs), we do so with a deep sense of clarity, purpose, and renewed collective commitment. Over the past two days, we engaged robustly across government, industry, academia, civil society, and the financial sector.

We have engaged in candid, comprehensive and substantive dialogue, anchored in evidence, enriched by diverse perspectives, and focused on identifying practical solutions that can reshape the trajectory of human settlements delivery in South Africa.

Undoubtedly, the conversations have been honest, evidence-based, forward-looking, and most importantly, solution-oriented.

This Summit has affirmed a shared understanding that South Africa cannot achieve accessible, affordable, and sustainable human settlements at the scale required unless we decisively embrace and mainstream IBTs across the entire value chain, from research and manufacturing, to funding, regulatory alignment, construction, and community acceptance.

We can attest that there was intertextuality between the discussions which took place during this Summit and the policy framework succinctly

articulated by the 2024 White Paper on Human Settlements on Innovative Building Technologies.

The scale of our housing demand, the urgency of climate resilience, and the imperative of inclusive development require us to adopt Innovative Building Technologies not as an alternative, but as a central pillar of our national approach to human settlements.

Allow me to reflect briefly on the key outcomes that have emerged from this important gathering.

Through inputs from research institutions, regulators, certifiers and the construction sector, the Summit has confirmed the need to streamline our regulatory environment, enhance quality assurance frameworks, and accelerate approval processes. We leave here with a unified resolve to strengthen coordination across all spheres of government so that IBTs can move from pilot initiatives to mainstream implementation.

Our academic partners have presented compelling evidence of technological advancements capable of addressing both cost pressures and environmental vulnerabilities. These insights reinforce our commitment and resolve to embed sustainability, energy efficiency, and climate resilience at the heart of our human settlements value chain.

Inputs from community-based organisations have highlighted the importance of ensuring that beneficiaries are active partners in the IBT transition. We acknowledge that public awareness, education, and

community-centred planning are essential to securing the long-term acceptance and success of these technologies.

This Summit has underscored the centrality of economic inclusion. We are committed to expanding the participation of emerging contractors, supporting youth and women innovators, and creating pathways for enterprises owned by persons with disabilities. IBTs must become a driver of broader economic transformation.

The rolling out of the IBTs will be underpinned by our policies on transformation so we don't leave anyone behind and promote inclusivity.

Our engagements with development finance institutions, the banking sector and international partners have affirmed the need for innovative financing mechanisms that reduce risk, stimulate supply, and unlock private-sector capital. We now have clear direction on strengthening investment instruments tailored to the IBT ecosystem.

Through shared experiences and demonstrations, we have reconfirmed that IBTs hold significant potential for our disaster response and climate mitigation. We will continue to draw on global expertise and international best practises while building strong local capabilities.

A defining milestone of this Summit is the adoption of the IBT Summit Social Compact, which commits government, industry, research institutions, financiers and communities to working collaboratively to accelerate the mainstreaming of IBTs.

This Social Compact will guide our implementation efforts, strengthen accountability, and ensure that our actions remain aligned with national priorities, and as President Cyril Ramaphosa posited yesterday, this Compact represents a shared national commitment to move innovative building technologies from pilot projects and demonstrations into the mainstream of South Africa's human settlements.

As we bring this Summit to a close, let me express my sincere appreciation to all participants, speakers, exhibitors, partners and the IBT task team who have contributed to its resounding success. Your leadership, insights and commitment have been invaluable.

We depart with a shared purpose, a consolidated vision, and a renewed determination to ensure that innovation becomes the cornerstone of our human settlements' agenda. Let us move forward with urgency. Let us work in partnership. And let us ensure that every South African household benefits from the dignity, safety, and opportunity that sustainable human settlements provide.

Your invaluable contributions will shape our path forward.

I thank you.