



**MINISTRY**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ADDRESS BY MS. THEMBI SIMELANE, MP, MINISTER OF HUMAN  
SETTLEMENTS ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE  
BOARDS AT PROTEA HOTEL, OR TAMBO INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT**

**21 FEBRUARY 2025**

Programme Director

Deputy Minister, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala

Director General, Dr Alec Moemi

Deputy Directors General (DDGs) present

Chairpersons of the Boards and Members

Staff of the Department of Human Settlements and the Entities present

Ladies and gentlemen

Good day!

It is indeed my profound honour and privilege to interact with you this morning at this momentous and consequential meeting. I am happy to see the faces of our newly appointed Board and Council members.

Let me also reiterate the words of welcome from the Programme Director and express my sincere gratitude to all the colleagues who have made time to join us in this important meeting.

I requested the Director-General and the Team to facilitate this meeting, firstly as a meet and greet, and secondly as a platform for me to outline our expectations as the Department from you as Board and Council members.

Our expectations are premised on the work that we should collectively execute as **Team Human Settlement**. As you know, at the core of this mandate is the task of housing the nation. This is both our legislative and constitutional mandate.

Our philosophy as the Department of Human Settlements is underpinned by a strategic vision of ensuring that we have a nation housed in sustainable human settlements.

I would want us to pull together as we facilitate the creation of sustainable Human Settlements. We need to hard to ensure improved quality of household life, so that we can jointly push back the frontiers of apartheid spatial design. This is a mandate at our disposal, a mandate I invite you never to forget or to betray.

We have a duty to guarantee spatial justice to the historically marginalized South African citizens. In this case, we will be reaffirming the Freedom Charter's eloquent expression that: **The Shall Be Housing, Security and Comfort!**

Let me also convey my special message of appreciation to the previous Boards and Councils for the work they carried throughout their term of office. I thank them for their commitment and professional service. In know that in most areas there is a firm foundation that has been laid, thanks to the tireless efforts of all those who came before us.

For our Entities to perform their service delivery functions and for them to serve as effective tools of transformation, they will require stable Boards and Councils to provide proper oversight and support. This will, in return strengthen the Department's ability to discharge its overall strategy and achieve its targets.

As a Shareholder Representative, it is my wish to preside over an environment characterized by collegiality, dedication and unwavering commitment to our various tasks and responsibilities.

My expectation from you colleagues is that your work must be underpinned by cooperation as a collective and ensure that bickering between Boards and the Executive Management is avoided at all costs.

I am aware that you already undergone a mini induction which took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025. I am told a further induction, facilitated by the School of Government will be held in the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

I would not regurgitate what the Director General and the Team responsible for Entity Oversight have already said, I will just reemphasize some of the salient points as matter of principle and emphasis.

That said, it's important to reemphasize the centrality of good governance and ethical leadership as we execute our collective responsibilities to ensure stability. The Department adopted the conclusion of a Shareholder Compact Agreement between the Executive Authority (Minister) the Accounting Authorities (Boards) of entities as a good governance mechanism for effective governance, compliance oversight, as well as the strengthening of entities' accountability in respect of their service delivery mandates.

The Boards and Councils have a responsibility to ensure that all our Entities double their efforts in the implementation of the audit action plans and work towards the achievement of clean audits as an expression of the sector's commitment to prudent financial management and good corporate governance – this will greatly assist to raise confidence of our strategic partners in our products, especially with investors and the private sector and other social partners.

Given our fiscal constraints, it will be important that we ensure there is prudent spending such that we avoid unnecessary risks and that every cent counts.

Colleagues, as far as the policy debate around Alternative Building Technologies (ABTs) is concerned, it is my expectation that our Entities become actively involved in shaping its direction working together with research institutions and industry partners, this has a greatest potential to accelerate reduction of the housing backlogs.

I am told there is already a concept document framework.

As you all know, there are three priorities arising out of the Government of National Unity (GNU) which underpins the work of the 7<sup>th</sup> administration and subsequently informed the Medium-Term Development Plan.

The MTDP translate the three priorities of driving inclusive growth and job creation; reducing poverty and tackle high cost of living; and building a capable, ethical and developmental state into a detailed plan and interventions that government will implement over the next five years.

Meanwhile, the President recapitulates that the National development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 remains the defining blueprint for South Africa's growth and development, and the GNU's programme is in line with that vision.

The Human Settlements Outcome targets for the 2024-2029 MTDP are currently being finalised.

In his State of the Nation Address of 2025, the President indicated that we need a state with leaders who are prepared to serve our people with complete dedication, and public servants who are ethical, skilled and properly qualified.

To this end, the members of the Boards and Councils are expected to ensure that the public entities where they have been appointed to serve, deliver on their mandates, and support the achievement of the strategic objectives of the state.

We are at a critical point in time where the strategic plans of all public institutions for the next 5 years are being finalised for implementation.

The priorities of the Department of Human Settlements will also pivot around this strategic vision as encapsulated in the 2025 State of the Nation Address.

The President enjoined us as a Department working together with the Entities to ensure the provision of subsidies for first time home buyers who are left out of the market, this is through the Finance Linked Individual

Subsidy Programme (FLISP) now known as the **First Home Finance** (FHF) Programme.

This is a great and an incredibly important initiative which must be supported and make sure it gains the necessary traction to reach the targeted people out there.

It might have not been adequately marketed and it is the responsibility of the NHFC to make sure the programme is well communicated.

Surprisingly, after I mentioned this programme during the SONA debate a lot of people started making enquiries about it, we will therefore have to lift our messaging in this regard.

This will in earnest address the issues of limited housing finance for the missing middle.



It will also contribute to the noble efforts of the transformation of the property market and enhance the government's participation in the housing finance.

As we expand the horizon of access to the first time House Finance Scheme, we must expedite the process of ensuring the Human Settlement Development Bill is passed and the establishment of the bank to lead housing finance in the country.

Colleagues, we must fast track the issue the audit of old abandoned and hijacked buildings from the metropolitan municipalities and we will be expecting a report as early as the first quarter of the new financial year.

The Expropriation Act is now in place, and it is our duty to use this legislative provision effectively in addressing the housing backlog, especially in the Metros where there is a phalanx of hijacked buildings.

Through our Entity, the Housing Development Agency (HDA), the Department must actively acquire inner-city buildings for the conversion into mixed-income rental housing mainly within Johannesburg, Cape Town, Kimberley, Mangaung, and eThekweni, thus supporting urban regeneration and inclusivity.

We are expected, as the National Department of Human Settlement to table regulations on the expropriation and repurposing of buildings for housing purposes.

Undoubtedly, this will help reduce increased rental and social housing stock and reducing rental prices, especially in metropolitan municipalities and city decay.

We must address the spatial legacy of colonialism and apartheid which perpetuates inequalities in land access and homeownership, with most people living in concentrated, poverty-stricken areas with limited access to social and economic amenities without security of tenure.

Notably, we made a commitment that we will deliver 237 000 housing units for households earning less than R3,500 per month, prioritizing well-located land near economic opportunities and social amenities.

Breaking New Ground (BNG) houses and Catalytic Projects are being implemented to integrate housing, transport, economic activities, and social services.

Colleagues, to achieve all these efforts will require that we work together as the Department and ensure that you as the Boards and Councils play your crucial role of oversight and support to ensure efficiency.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that there are sustainable human settlements, and we help to transform the spatial legacy of apartheid and build an inclusive society in line with the priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> administration as earlier articulated.

We must use the legislation and other empowering provisions at our disposal to restore the dignity of the historically disenfranchised.

Our Entities must work together with our Branch responsible for Informal Settlements and intensify the programme of the upgrading of the informal settlements to ensure the provision of essential services and adequate shelter.

We need to urgently develop a strategy and plan to address the proliferation of informal settlements across the country with a special focus in the big cities and metros.

We have another cyclical crisis of student accommodation which requires our urgent attention.

Colleagues, the issue of blocked projects is a serious problem besetting the Department and its Entities, we must accelerate and ensure the unblocking of blocked projects and transfer of housing units to their originally intended beneficiaries.

It is obviously impossible for me to take you through all the expectations today in this short meeting and as earlier indicated, the Director-General

and the Team had an interaction with you colleagues during the induction and covered a wide range of issues pivoting around our mandate and the priorities of the current administration.

Colleagues as I conclude, there are vacancies at Executive and Management level of entities that must be attended to in order to achieve stability at a strategic management level.

And once again, thank you very much for affording me this rare opportunity to make remarks in this important meeting and I wish you all the best as you execute your tasks as members of the Boards and Councils.

We shall indeed meet from time to time to assess progress on tasks assigned to us in line with the objectives of the Shareholder's Compact Agreement.

I thank you.