



**MINISTRY  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI,  
SONA DEBATE, 15 FEBRUARY 2023**

**His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa**

**Deputy President David Mabuza**

**Presiding Officers**

**Cabinet Colleagues**

**Honourable members**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good Afternoon**

Boekemo bjo bogolo bja rena go sa kgathalege gore ke mohlobo mang, goba bong, goba kgolo, o swanetse ke go humana bodulo le boeketlo. Ka bjona boekemo le karolwana ya 26 ya Molaotheo wa Afrika Borwa ye e hlalago melawana ya tsa mengwako ya mmuso wa Afrika Borwa. Re e kemisheditse go beya bahloki le batsofadi ka pele mo lenaneong la kabo ya mengwako ya mmuso.

Tshalelo morago ya mengwako ke e kgolo, eupsha re tshepisha gore kabelo etla dirwa ka lebelo. Batho ba borena ke kgale ba letile mengwako ya bona, le ge ba bangwe ba setshe ba e humane. Mmusho wa rena o mekamekana le ditlhohlo tse dilego gona, seo elego lona lebaka lagoba le Tshepo.

[Our guiding principle is our belief that all of us regardless of race, gender and creed, deserve a decent shelter and comfort. It is this principle, together with the constitutional injunction on Section 26, that informs the housing policies of the ANC-led government. The poor, the elderly and the vulnerable are the priority target of our subsidized housing programme. The housing backlog is huge and the pace of provision of new houses can be greatly improved. However, our determination to provide decent houses remains unshaken.

Many of our people have been waiting for their houses, many have already received houses. Our government is equal to the challenge, that is a good reason for those who are waiting to keep the hope alive].

I think we can all draw inspiration from the words of Michelle Obama when she said: “You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world’s problems at once but don’t underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own”.

Similarly, Martin Luther King made an important observation which is still relevant today when he said: “three hundred years of humiliation, abuse, and deprivation cannot be expected to find voice in a whisper.”

Housing for the ‘missing middle’ or people who earn too much to qualify for fully subsidized homes but do not earn enough to afford debt-financed homes, remains a serious challenge. A revised First-Home-Finance scheme, formerly known as the Help-Me-Buy-A-Home program was revised in this financial year, amongst others, to allow for the funding of households who hold “Permission-To-Occupy” certificates in communal land. This is particularly important in relation to the extension of credit and funding to households in rural areas. It will allow the ‘missing middle’ to start acquiring economic assets without which they struggle to meaningfully participate in the economy.

Honorable Malema, yesterday you said to Mr President that it is irresponsible for a man to be on top and do nothing. I totally agree with you, however you certainly have got it all wrong, our President has not been doing nothing. Under your leadership Sir Mr President:

We have acquired buildings in the inner-city areas such as Sea Point Cape Town and two ESKOM buildings located in Braamfontein, Johannesburg and Kimberly for social housing purposes. There is a development potential of 1200 units for Braamfontein and Kimberly. These are efforts to build inclusive cities through our Social Housing Programme and to alter the apartheid spatial planning and this has gained momentum. In the coming weeks in addition, we will be launching a number of social housing projects which have been concluded and these include:

- Tshwane-Marabastad project which has a total of 1200 units. It was developed by a 100% black and 60% women-owned developer, a true demonstration of our commitment to transformation.
- Mohlakeng Project with a total of 1020 units in the West Rand in the Gauteng Province.
- Hope City Project with a total of 114 units located in the Nkangala Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province. The developer of this project is 100% black-owned and 29% women-owned.
- John Street Project which has 385 units located in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in the Eastern Cape. The developer is 63% black-owned and 29% women-owned.
- Maitland Project in the City of Cape Town, with a total of 204 units that will be completed by the end of March 2023.

Honourable Steenhuizen, yesterday said that instead of leading us cross the rubicon at SONA, the President has told us to turn around. I am glad Mr President, that you did not cross Honourable Steenhuizen's rubicon because it would mean disaster for the majority of the working class and the poor that we mainly represent as the ANC. And it is for this reason Mr President that:

Our attempts to integrate the poor and working class into urban communities has faced serious pushback and resistance. I am speaking here of a group in the urban rich that we can call 'not-in-my-neighbourhood'. These are well-resourced groups whose sole purpose is to ensure that the poor and the working class families remain in the outskirts of our cities. This group is motivated by a mixture of racism and a disdain for the poor and

the working class. They regard the poor in the cities as refugees who must be rounded up and shipped back to rural areas.

Every time our government acquires land for human settlement for these families, this group stands up to say very loudly “not-in-our-neighbourhood”. They utilise all sorts of tricks to resist, including the courts causing long delays for these families to receive shelter. The only crime these poor and working-class families have committed to receive this abominable treatment is that they are the descendants of the victims of apartheid and they were born without means. All freedom loving South Africans irrespective of race & class need to stand up to these bullies.

Honorable Members, a title deed in the hands of an elderly woman who has never owned a property in their life means the world to them. It is for this reason that this government decided to fast-track the release of title deeds as an important instrument of economic empowerment.

Working together with Operation Vulindlela, the Department of Human Settlement will expedite the provision of title deeds for subsidized houses. As President Ramaphosa observed in his speech last week, “The current backlog in processing title deeds is over 1 million houses, which amounts to an estimated R242 billion in assets that should be in the hands of South Africa’s poorest households.” Over and above this, we are working around the clock to unblock the title deeds issuing across provinces. We are working with the communities of MAWIGA in Gauteng to unlock 14 000 title deeds of houses that they were never allowed to own by the apartheid government. We have established a steering committee with the community to ensure accountability and transparency of the work done.

Honorable members,

Access to land for urban settlement is one of the most critical factors for human settlements development programs. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has earmarked 14 000 hectares of State land for human settlements and to date, 2 689 hectares has been transferred to HDA. We also have an additional thirty-two (32) land parcels measuring 10 350 hectares to undertake preliminary human settlements planning.

In excess, 64 000 housing opportunities are planned from the released land parcels and will contribute significantly to the attainment of the prescripts of the Freedom Charter that says there shall be houses, security and comfort.

Honorable members, there are 2 700 informal settlements in South Africa and counting. We have made significant progress in upgrading these settlements such that there are 1 284 informal settlements at various stages of upgrading throughout the country. The process of upgrading includes the provision of basic services such water, electricity and sanitation and security of tenure. When an informal settlement is upgraded, it means it has gone through the process of formalisation, such that title deeds can be issued for individual stands. In the last financial year, about 24 671 stands were created through the informal upgrading process.

By intensifying the upgrading of informal settlements, it means that we are addressing some of the recent shocks caused by floods and fires in various parts of the country.

With climate change, natural disasters are becoming more frequent and most of our infrastructure was not designed to be resilient. In the past five days, our country has experienced devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. In the past few days, we have also seen numerous fires here in the Western Cape, especially in informal settlements. For an effective response to these disasters, we need land, we need South Africans to embrace each other in integrated communities and political parties that don't play politics at a time when families are homeless, vulnerable and distressed. Going forward, we also have begun to reconceptualize how we develop human settlements so that we can incorporate climate change resilience in the infrastructure we provide.

Ours is a determination and commitment to ensure that there is housing, security and comfort for all. We shall not fail our people.

In conclusion, let me quote Mama Winnie Mandela when she said: "I'm not ashamed of anything I've ever done in the name of fairness and justice for my people".

We will disrupt the apartheid spatial planning; we shall redistribute land in the interest of the majority of the people of this country with the boldness it deserves.

***Na Khensa!***