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DEPUTY MINISTER ZOU KOTA FREDERICKS

SPEECH

GRADUATION CEREMONY OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS OFFICIALS, WITS UNIVERSITY

Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand
Vice Chancellor
Members of the Senate
Head and Director of Wits school of Governance
Council Members
Students and the University community at large
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and privilege to address this congregation today, just a day before we celebrate Human Rights day on 21 March. We also recall that it has been 55 years since the brutal massacre of thousands of our people in Sharpeville on that fateful day.

However, we have come a long way since then. It is during this month that the mortal remains of our beloved comrades Moses Kotane and JB Max were repatriated. The comrades were given a heroes send off and reburial that they deserved and to also bring closure to their families.

We are also deeply grieved as a nation, mourning our loss of one of our struggle heroes and compatriot Minister Collins Chabane. Programme Director this is indeed an important occasion where we are celebrating our grandaunts for their achievements. We are gathered here to celebrate perseverance, dedication and commitment.

We have great expectations that the graduates today have acquired skills and competencies that will enable them to go back to their various places of work to impart and share their newly found knowledge to deepen understanding of the work at hand and to encourage lifelong learning within the organization.

South Africa is today in need of critical skills and competencies in order to address issues of poverty, unemployment, job creation and infrastructure development.

We therefore need to have a cadre of officials that excel in the public development space in order to respond to the service delivery needs of our society.

The challenges that my department is facing are well documented, hardly a day goes past that there isn't a headline that talks about the failure of human settlements to deliver, corruption, shoddy workmanship, the poor attitude of the frontline officials and managers who are not accountable to the public.

The challenges are historical in nature and can be attributed to population growth, urbanization and increasing poverty. However, the main reason for the paralysis in ensuring that there is accelerated service delivery is the lack of capacity to allocate resources and efficient utilization thereof.

There is an increasing demand from prospective beneficiaries and communities for service delivery. Communities especially those poor and vulnerable need access to information and are clamoring for more involvement in human settlement issues, they are saying "nothing about us without us" and we need to improve dialogue and partnerships with the communities and our stakeholders at large.

The department has made many strides in addressing these challenges and needs the officials sitting here today, to address the said challenges through relevant skills development.

Hence the Department entered into the partnership with the Wits School of Governance to ensure that a learning programme that addresses human settlement issues is developed and implemented.

A programme that will sketch the historical background of housing whilst moving into the human settlements arena in a service delivery oriented manner.

I am glad to say that this programme has contributed positively to capacity development in my department with 215 officials from all three spheres of government having completed this programme since its inception.

It is a clear indication that we are headed in the right direction as we empower officials with the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them to perform optimally.

A lot of progress has been made in my department in capacitating communities, councilors and officials through various skills development programmes however a lot of work still needs to be done to reach the skills levels that we require to perform as a well oiled machine that we should be.

The role of all spheres of government cannot be emphasized as one cannot function without the other. Programme director, the vision for my department is that by 2030 all South Africans will be housed in sustainable human settlements.

Congratulations to all the Students present here today.

I thank you

End.