

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, HON. ANDRIES GAMEDE DURING THE
GOVAN MBEKI AWARDS. EHLANZENI DISASTER CENTRE.
NELSPRUIT, 02 MAY 2013.

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Executive Mayors

Councillors

Head of Department, Mr S Mtsweni

Government and Municipal Officials

Business Representatives

Contractors and Stakeholders

Members of the Media

All Distinguished Guests

Let me begin by thanking all of you for your coming tonight and grace this important session in the department's calendar. We are assembled here to honour all role-players who played a meaningful part in the delivery of quality services to our communities.

This ceremony has been made possible by the department since 2006 and was named after Govan Mbeki.

Oom Gov as he was affectionately known was a revolutionary, an educator, a publicist, organiser and leader of our people over many decades.

Throughout his life, Govan Mbeki brought with him qualities of maximum proportion. True indeed, qualities of selflessness and sheer devotion to the cause of the oppressed and the exploited were displayed by him.

These awards are – named after Oom Gov – are meant to motivate all stakeholders in the human settlement space to harness the human and other resources in accelerating delivery.

Through the awards the department hopes to achieve amongst others:

- Profile efforts in achieving the mandate of providing integrated and sustainable human settlements
- Showcase and recognise the exceptional work done by the department,
- Honour the role players in the housing value chain, promote best practices and create healthy competition amongst participants,
- They are also a tool that is used to monitor service delivery with special emphasis on Outcome 8, which focuses on procurement strategically located land, delivery of

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affordable accommodation, improving access to basic services and upgrading of informal settlements.

Beyond this healthy competition, participants must bear in mind that the programme is not only about accolades, but sets more emphasis on partnership with all stakeholders towards the realisation of proper development.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to collectively deal with the huge demand for accommodation in the province through various programmes in the department, business, and private sector partnership.

Let us be mindful of the huge backlog and limited resources that are a bleak reality facing the province, and invariably the country.

As we are all aware that South Africa inherited a skewed development outlook with the apartheid legacy of separate development enforced by non-democratic prescripts. (Group Areas Act, 1950).

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, substantial gains have been made by this government and this department in particular in the delivery of much needed services.

Over the last 19 years, the department has delivered more than 173 thousand houses benefiting millions of households in the province.

As a department we have made significant improvements in improving the lot of our communities, however, more work still lies ahead.

The shift from housing to human settlements as pronounced by the President Jacob Zuma in 2009, gave credence to the ideals of the Freedom Charter.

The Freedom Charter of 1955 charges that - ***“There shall be Houses, Security and Comfort, all people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed and to bring up their families in comfort and security. Unused housing space to be made available to the people. Slums shall be demolished and new crèches and social centres”*** ! This is exactly what the department in partnership with you seated here tonight must ensure that we jointly achieve.

In our quest to build this country and deliver sustainable human settlements, we have to venture in reversing the legacy of homelessness and addressing apartheid planning. Beneficiary identification and approval plays a vital role in the provisioning of Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements. We must prioritise this area of our work and do things differently as a department.

During his recent State of the Province Address, Hon. Premier DD Mabuza emphasised that – ***“Integrated human settlements embody our national vision of promoting non-racialism and prosperous communities”***.

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True indeed, through the delivery of various housing typologies, provision of social and economic facilities, rental stock, amongst others - we shall all realise and witness our dream of unifying communities.

Sequel to the new approach, all hands are on deck in trying to come of the old way of doing things and in the process drive to perfect the system.

Distinguished guests, as we speak processes are underway to ensure that the department with the guidance from the Provincial Administration develops a bigger human settlements plan that will take care of all the development in the province.

Programme Director, I must indicate that it will take our collective efforts to deliver decent human settlements for a better tomorrow.

The blemishes of apartheid that are a constant feature in our communities leave much to be desired.

Having said that we – all of us - seated here tonight have an opportunity to redress this phenomenon and give birth to a new and better society.

Let me warn service providers and some officials that continue to conspire and deliver shoddy work.

Their wicked ways will be uncovered.....and their days are numbered.

The department is tightening its systems and improving its monitoring tools to ensure the realisation of quality products – meant for scores within our communities.

As a department, we are given a mandate to beautify the province, bring about integration and sustainability. It is therefore befitting that I urge you to assist government in this colossal task.

It may seem an insurmountable mission but believe me, with dedication and commitment - it is achievable. **'Together, we can do more'**.

Human Settlements is not about brick and mortar, but more on bringing communities together, stimulating the economy, create social cohesion, and development.

It is against this context that we all have a huge task to ensure that the settlements we deliver have educational, health facilities, churches, and places of leisure, decent houses and other required amenities.

Programme Director, the department likes to acknowledge those service providers who delivered the service with exception and improved the lives of ordinary citizens. This is your night..... (PAUSE)

As different nominees are being honoured tonight, the focus should not be on winning – rather on how do we all improve in our quest for bettering our communities.

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Tonight's event must go beyond just receiving honour, rather transcend to exhibit excellence. With that spirit, the realisation of quality services will not be a remote delusion, but a certainty.

Whilst the awards seek to acknowledge good work by contractors and other stakeholders, they also assist the department to meet its plans as outlined by government's delivery plans.

If all our stakeholders play their part, the future looks certain and the ideals that Oom Govan stood for can be realised and felt.

The late revolutionary had a vision on the preservation of human dignity and provision of human settlements for all.

In all his work, he distinguished himself as a scholar, a disciplined cadre, a builder and a teacher.

His students remember his distinctive, interactive and encouraging style of teaching, using methods which were well ahead of time.

Sure indeed, he was a man with rare qualities of selflessness and utter devotion to the cause of the oppressed and the exploited millions.

Programme Director, as I will be presenting my Budget Vote (2013/14) on the **28th May 2013** at the Provincial Legislature – a clear focus for this financial year will be outlined.

Come join me on that day as I will be mapping out plans for the current financial year.

Let me appeal to all of you that our interaction should go even beyond tonight's glittering ceremony.

Once again, Congratulations. Enjoy the rest of the evening

Ngiyabonga.