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**Press release  
23 March 2015**

**DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO CURB INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS**

Nearly 3500 government's low income houses have been built by the Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements during the 2014/15 financial year to upgrade informal settlements in the province. This laudable achievement was driven by the Department's commitment to eradicate inadequate infrastructure, poor access to basic services, unsuitable environments, uncontrolled and unhealthy population particularly in the Gert Sibande and Nkangala District Municipalities where majority of job seekers move to.

The Department has a mandate to maximise the upgrading of informal settlements by reaching out to as many uninhabitable communities as possible which is in line with the national goal of upgrading these settlements. Rapid urbanization and inadequate capability to cope with housing needs of people in urban areas have contributed to the mushrooming of informal settlements.

The Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme seeks to facilitate the structured upgrading of informal settlements and enhancing the concept of citizenship, incorporating both rights and obligations, by formalising the tenure rights of the residents in the informal settlements.

Informal Settlements are typified by the absence of formal planning and incremental unplanned growth. Municipalities act as a developer and projects are undertaken on the basis of a partnership of cooperation between the relevant municipality and the Department. The initial target for the Department under this programme was 2713 during the same period.

During the recent State of the Province Address, Premier DD Mabuza indicated that the Department will undertake to deliver projects in a coordinated and systematic manner. ***"Our approach to the roll-out of integrated human settlements will be coupled with the development of an urbanisation strategy that seeks to foster a shared understanding of how urbanisation should best be managed to address the goals of economic development, job creation and improved living conditions of our people"*** charged Premier Mabuza. More plans for new projects will soon be announced by MEC Violet Siwela during the 2015/16 Budget Vote Speech.

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