



**Press Release
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DISASTER VICTIMS BENEFIT HANDSOMELY

A heavy storm ravaged household can breathe a sigh of relief following a hand over of a fully furnished low cost house by the Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements this week. 58-year old Mr Piet Sibuyi, wife and two children were among 97 beneficiaries who benefited during a project hand over by MEC Violet Siwela and Mayor, Cllr Renius Khumalo. The beneficiaries benefited through the delivery of Emergency Housing Assistance and Rural Development Programmes valued at over R10 million.

The family of six (husband and wife with two children and two grandchildren) previously stayed in a mud house that had its roof blown away during a hail storm in 2012. They are all unemployed and survive through government's grant child support grants. Delighted Sibuyi could not have asked for anything better than this by saying, "I am pleased to know from now on I will be able to wake up in a proper house of my own. The honour of having a proper house is certainly great to us, we were too swamped up and living in that house was becoming too risky every day. All the walls had cracked we could even see the outside while we're sleeping".

The Sibuyi household enjoy access to water and electricity, whilst a pit toilet is still under construction. Their new house comes as a result of the intervention by the provincial government to improve communities. "I am happy today that finally the people who were affected by the 2013/14 rainstorms were relieved by receiving their new and sustainable houses. These beneficiaries form part of the 55 victims who were left homeless during that time. The department has also provided shelter to at least 42 other households through the Rural Development Programme," explained MEC Siwela.

The department is currently delivering nearly 700 housing units in the municipality through People's Housing Programme (PHP), rural, disaster and military veterans, of which 550 of them have since been completed. Much as the policy dictates that eligible beneficiaries may satisfy the qualifying criteria, the department has taken a conscious position to prioritize mainly the elderly, people with disability and child-headed households. "The department has depicted a huge success rate by improving the lives of the less – fortunate and people living below the bread line" concluded Siwela. The handover came a day before President Jacob Zuma visits to assess water and sanitation delivery at the municipality

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