



**Press Release
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HOUSING BENEFICIARIES TO PRACTICALLY MONITOR PROJECT DELIVERY

Practical and constant project monitoring by government low cost housing beneficiaries could prove vital in tackling illegal occupation of houses and realising quality projects. This is a view by Mpumalanga Human Settlements MEC, Speedy Mashilo who addressed a joint high level meeting between the department and the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality during an oversight programme called taking the Legislature to the People (TLP) currently underway in the municipality. The week-long TLP visit enhances public participation and oversight on government's work.

MEC Mashilo who visited several projects in communities within the municipal jurisdiction stressed that the relentless problems caused by illegal invasion or occupation of houses, poor quality of units, abandoning of projects and inept beneficiary management should not be tolerated. He views these as pertinent challenges bedevilling the rapid delivery of human settlements projects and other services such as title deeds. "We are of the view that beneficiaries should be engaged and showed their sites way before their houses are built, to enable them to monitor the building progress of their houses, thus eliminating illegal occupation and untraceable beneficiary challenges", he stressed

Notwithstanding great strides made in human settlements delivery in the municipality, Mashilo acknowledged that there were still underlying problems the department was grappling with. Poor living conditions and illegal invasion of land are pertinent threads at Doorenkop and Somaphepha settlements where people still live appalling conditions. "Despite these challenges, we are happy with the progress government has have recorded at the multi-year Rockdale Integrated Human Settlements project. We have planned to bring more developments to Rockdale just like we have done at the ideal Klarinet at eMalahleni where we bring serviced sites, various housing typologies and socio-economic amenities such as community halls and day-care centres, amongst others to relieve the beneficiaries from traveling distances for a mere clinic," assured MEC.

Furthermore, Mashilo pointed out, "There are plans in place for the Department to fight these acts of illegal invasions. We have resolved to start with our beneficiary list, ensure that when a house has been approved, from that very moment the processes of title deeds should also begin. The Department has a clear mission to service sites before the actual commencement of the entire project can start. We have taken a decision to allow every beneficiary to see their houses from the initial processes of construction to the last stage where the Department officially hands it over," charged Mashilo.

Executive Mayor, Cllr Mike Masina confirmed that there is an earmarked portion of land in Somaphepha that the municipality is willing to bring mega developments to and also create more job opportunities for the locals. He added that though their plans needed to be intensified to ensure that they do not lose the land due to invasions and other opportunistic reasons, maintaining a good working relationship with the department remains pivotal. The Rockdale Integrated Human Settlements project is delivering 311 low cost housing units including for military veterans and 745 serviced sites during the 2016/17 financial year.

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