



**Press Release
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MEC MASHILO PUTS EMPHASIS ON PROPER PLANNING

The mushrooming of informal settlements in townships has become a thorny subject that impedes proper development in society. Newly appointed Mpumalanga Human Settlements MEC, Mr Speedy Mashilo told councillors during his first MuniMEC meeting at Mbombela City about proper planning to avert such trends. He emphasised that the Department's mandate is create integrated human settlements and settle people at projects with proper services such as water, electricity, sanitation, social amenities and houses.

Mashilo met with various Human Settlements Councillors (MMCs) and Executive Mayors from across the province to discuss issues pertaining to the mushrooming of informal settlements, availability of land and proper beneficiary management. The allocation of houses to beneficiaries remains a challenge owing to alleged nepotism, fraud and corruption. "Informal settlements are a huge problem. Our mandate is not limited to building houses but to also put in place proper infrastructure, water, accessible roads and the sewer systems. However, when people decide to invade the space such services are difficult to install," highlighted Mashilo.

He further questioned the method in which beneficiaries are being identified in order to receive government low cost houses (RDPS) saying that it seems not to be serving the purpose for which it was meant to achieve. "It is embarrassing that in this 22 years of democracy we still have old people living without decent houses, many of our beneficiaries today are young people who in the main, do not qualify for these houses. Emakhazeni Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Clr Thomas Ngwenya called for municipalities to develop and enforce municipal by-laws to ensure that informal settlements are dealt with every time they are being erected.

There was consensus amongst the representatives that proper planning, cooperation with traditional leadership and development of strong policies could be solutions to service delivery challenges, especially in human settlements. "We have orphans and people living with disabilities, but it is disappointing when the middle income earners who are capable to build for themselves or buy are found in the same controversy of owning government subsidised houses," queried MEC Mashilo.

While mentioning that the availability of land must be arranged to benefit such people, he warned against selling and renting out of government houses by people who appeared to have a need whereas they don't, instead they are using them as an income generating scheme. Mashilo concluded that municipalities must play a role in identifying land and also ensure that areas are proclaimed for the Department to fast-track the issuing of title deeds to the beneficiaries.

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