



Press Release
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NEW FORUM TO PRIORITISE UPGRADING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS ESTABLISHED

A forum to tackle the ever increasing informal settlements in Mpumalanga has been established. The National Department of Human Settlements is on a country-wide roadshow to assist provinces establish and understand the National Upgrading Support Programme Provincial Forum (NUSP) to prioritise upgrading of informal settlements in a bid to facilitate structured development. The forum has been established with the support from the National Department of Human Settlements, Housing Development Agency (HDA) and municipalities.

The purpose of this forum is to share knowledge and disseminate information on informal settlements in the Province. Department's Director for Integrated Human Settlements Planning, Ms Buyisiwe Zuma highlighted that this is a continued session emanating from the Human Settlements Technical MINMEC on Informal Settlements Upgrading workshop held in George in September last year in the Western Cape Province. "The main purpose of the workshop was, amongst other things, to explore the scale and status quo of the complex problem of informal settlements in the country as well as to reach consensus on enabling approaches, processes and practices (i.e. policies, funding, capacity development instruments, technical and project management etc.). This was done with the intention to accelerate the scaling up of informal settlements upgrading," said Zuma.

Subsequent to that workshop, the Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements invited officials from all municipalities to attend the establishment of the first NUSP on the 3rd October 2016. A number of proposed measures to upscale the implementation of Upgrading Informal Settlement Programme (UISP) were agreed upon at the workshop and amongst the establishments, were the National Project Steering Committee to monitor the implementation of UISP and prioritization of informal settlement upgrading projects into Provincial Business Plans to expedite implementation.

Informal settlement upgrading is a key agenda item for the creation of sustainable human settlements and restoring the dignity of millions of South Africans who reside in slums. Human Settlements' NUSP coordinator, Mr David Morema said, "Municipalities should have proper Informal Settlements Upgrading Plans in place in order to manage existing and prevent new informal settlements". The National Department has developed the NUSP as a tool to assist municipalities and provincial departments to achieve the Medium Term Strategies Framework targets towards upgrading informal settlements.

Some stakeholders indicated that most people who reside in informal settlements do not want to be relocated to formalised settlements because of various reasons, such as paying rates, livelihoods etc. The session agreed that a Provincial Informal Settlements Strategy that will deal precisely with the perpetual challenges pertaining to informal settlements be developed as a matter of urgency. Informal settlements remain a challenge at the province's economic municipalities of eMalahleni, Msukaligwa, Steve Tshwete and Lekwa.

ISSUED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE
MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
CONTACT PERSON: FREDDY NGOBE – 013 766 6014 / 082 859 4630/ flngobe@mpg.gov.za
