

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MR SIPHOSEZWE MASANGO TO THE
GOVAN MBEKI HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AWARDS, EHLANZENI
DISTRICT DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE.
NELSPRUIT, 08TH MAY 2012

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Executive Mayors

Councillors

Head of Department, Mr D Dube

Government Officials

Municipal Officials

Business Representatives

Contractors and Stakeholders

Members of the Media

All Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen we are gathered here this evening in order to celebrate the Govan Mbeki Human Settlements Awards. These awards are named after Govan Mbeki who was a warrior – a revolutionary, an educator, a publicist, organiser and leader of our people over many decades. A man who has brought with him the rare qualities of selflessness and utter devotion to the cause of the oppressed and exploited millions of our country.

These awards are therefore meant to motivate all stakeholders in the Human Settlement space to harness the human and other resources in accelerating delivery. The awards provide an opportunity for sharing information, lessons learnt, the strengthening of existing and the development of new partnerships and the replication of successful initiatives.

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The awards also honour role players in the human settlements value chain, including developers, building contractors, banking sector, community based organisations, mining sector, building materials suppliers, professional associations that have committed to partner with government in building sustainable human settlements and making the millennium development goals achievable by 2014.

As we are all aware that we have inherited a South Africa with the apartheid legacy of separate development which was enforced amongst others by the Group Areas Act that was passed in 1950.

After 1994 our first Minister of Housing in our democratic South Africa was Mr Joe Slovo who endeavoured to reverse the legacy of homelessness so as to advantage previously disadvantaged black communities and paralysing the fallacious intentions of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

Whereas housing needs of the majority of South Africans was now addressed, it did not address the need for integrated human settlements. In 2009 President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation Address, renamed the Ministry of Housing and named it Human Settlements.

Subsequent to that, in his 2009 State of the Province Address, the Hon. Premier DD Mabuza followed suit by renaming our department the Department of Human Settlements with a new mandate. This is what the Premier said **“Honourable members, our approach to building cohesive and sustainable communities will focus on the development of integrated and de-racialised human settlements. The development of socially inclusive settlements with economic and social infrastructure is essential in fostering social cohesion and racial harmony. The task of building a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society is a social transformation imperative that we will continue to pursue”**.

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Pursuant to achieve the above new mandate, in November 2011 the Provincial Department of Human Settlements convened stakeholders within its space to ponder on better ways to deliver the new mandate of sustainable integrated human settlements.

Under the theme – **“From Housing to Human Settlements”** – all stakeholders gathered to deliberate on important issues affecting the delivery of the Department’s new mandate of delivering sustainable human settlements.

Since 2009, the Department took a new approach on how it should champion the establishment of human settlements in the Province.

Such a drive is directed by Outcome 8 of the 12 as agreed by government to be the key focus areas and delivery between now and 2014.

Each of the outcomes has a Delivery Agreement which involves (most cases) all spheres of government and a range of partners outside government. Combined, these agreements delineate government’s delivery and implementation plans for its foremost priorities.

Outcome 8 being - **“Sustainable human settlements and improved quality of household life”**- simply refers to human settlements as well managed entities where economic growth and social development are in balance with a carrying capacity of the natural systems on which they depend for existence and result in sustainable development, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and equity.

Key resolutions were taken at the Indaba – which all stakeholders within the construction and development sectors must abide by.

The broadened mandate which dictates the shift from housing to human settlements compels the Department to move away from just dotting vacant land with housing units, but decent settlements. The mandate of the defunct Department of Housing was too narrow making it impractical to create sustainable human settlements.

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Subsequent to that, there has been and continues to be stakeholder engagements such as municipalities, professional bodies, traditional leadership and sister departments to mobilise them towards comprehending and embracing the new mandate.

These engagements we believe will help us develop a long term human settlements delivery plan that will focus on the future of our Province.

Programme Director, I must indicate that it is all of us seated here tonight who have a responsibility as to what type of society we are and want to create for our future generation.

The scars of apartheid are still showing in the way people were settled along colour lines – and the services given to them left much to be desired. This phenomenon has to come to an end and very soon.

Therefore we have the responsibility of clothing the country in a better way. I therefore call upon all of you to assist government in achieving such a dream.

Minister Tokyo Sexwale often says, this Department must create settlements where people must be able to sleep, play, and pray. And that responsibility is put on us to ensure that the settlements we deliver have churches, recreational facilities, decent houses and other required amenities.

We have programmes to deliver on this requirement. All we need is cooperation and a will from all partners to realise this noble idea.

Programme Director, let me emphasise that all we need to do is to take into account the new direction government has taken in developing the various pieces of land in municipalities.

That is why the House of Traditional Leaders is important towards proper delivery, particularly on the management and usage of tribal land.

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Land allocation ought to be in line with government's thinking as guided by planning processes such as Integrated Development Plans (IDP).

Through the Govan Mbeki Human Settlements Awards, efforts by stakeholders within the Construction and Development sectors are honoured and recognised.

The awards honour all partners within the built industry in partnering with government to deliver proper human settlements as defined by the broadened mandate of the department.

As different nominees are honoured tonight, the focus should not be on winning – rather on how do we all improve in our quest for better service delivery.

Tonight's event must go beyond just receiving accolades, rather by show-casing and demonstrating excellence by all participants. With that in mind, the delivery of quality and much needed service to our communities will not be a distant dream – but a reality.

Let me also indicate that the delivery of service is in the main for government, however, the private sector, business community, community based organisations, and individuals have a role to play in this regard. This is in line with the Each-One-Settle-One Campaign.

As a Department we would like to acknowledge all stakeholders (contractors) who go an extra mile by delivering more for the community. This is done through the donation of houses, and other structures after construction. Together, we can do more – even better.

We believe that all nominees are victors tonight and we would like to call on others to join the party and assist government to deliver services. I know and remain resolute that it is possible.

Programme Director, the Department is currently consulting municipalities to ensure that planning for the various pieces of land bought in different municipalities are done in a joint manner.

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New settlements have to boast of all required amenities and elements of decent and sustainable human settlements.

Distinguished guests, our mandate compels us to transform cities and towns into cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with easy access to work and social amenities. Collectively, we must and have to deliver on that.

The delivery of the much desired settlements will require the cooperation and inputs by all role players. We recently launched the Klarinet Integrated Human Settlements Project at eMalahleni with the Minister, Mr Tokyo Sexwale and other Provincial Human Settlements MECs.

The community and everyone cannot help it, but laud the project as one of its kind in the Province. I therefore want to challenge everyone of us tonight to join hands to emulate the good work and partnership by the Province, eMalahleni Local Municipality, and Absa Dev-Co and deliver other Klarinets all over the Province.

Whilst the awards seek to acknowledge good work by contractors and other stakeholders, they also assist the Department to meet its objectives as set out by Outcome 8.

If our Human Settlements Institutions continue to deliver on social housing – the demand for accommodation at our cities such as Govan Mbeki, Mbombela, Steve Tshwete and eMalahleni will be alleviated.

Municipalities and traditional leadership have to assist each other in the allocation and usage of land to ensure sustainable delivery as informed proper planning.

Yes, we agree there is a huge demand for houses and other services in the country. The Province has a housing demand of just over 200 thousands.

To satisfy this demand, the Department will require billions of rands and about 25 years, provided **NO** new applications are received.

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In all honesty, that seems like a tall order or impossible. The need for houses and other services is growing daily.

The President, Honourable JG Zuma in his State of the Nation Address announced that the Department will set aside R1 billion guarantee fund to cater for people who fall outside the subsidy bracket.

There are people who do not qualify for a government low cost house and at the same time cannot receive funding for mortgage bond from financial institutions. This set fund is aimed at intervening in this regard.

The Province will soon process legislation that will deal with elimination of informal settlements. Our communities are also urged to engage on proper channels when there service delivery challenges, rather than resorting to illegal means such as land invasion, burning of government and people's property, and at some instances resorting to violence.

Programme Director, as I will be presenting my 2012/13 Policy and Budget Speech on the **22nd May 2012** at the Provincial Legislature – a clear focus for this financial year will be outlined. Come join me on that day as I will be mapping out plans for the 2012/13 Financial Year.

Our efforts and interaction are continuing, even beyond this awards ceremony, to ensure the delivery of sustainable and integrated human settlements. Government needs you in achieving such a vision.

Let me commend the oversight work and support displayed by the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs under the leadership of honourable member, Mr SPD Skhosana. Your inputs are very important as they guide the Department in executing its mandate in an effective manner.

Once again, I would like to thank all participants, sponsors, guests, and the organising committee under the leadership of the HOD, Mr David Dube. Thank you for your attendance and the delivery of this event.

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Congratulations to all the winners tonight. May I wish all the overall winners success as they continue to go and represent the Province in the four categories at the National Awards Ceremony to be held on the 31st May 2012 at Gallagher Estate, Gauteng Province.

Go hoist our flag high and represent the Province of the Pioneering Spirit!

Let me conclude by drawing your attention to the ever enduring words of wisdom of Thomas Sankara, former President of Burkina Faso: “***You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. We must dare to invent the future.***”

Enjoy the rest of the evening.

Ngiyathokoza.