

MEDIA BRIEFING BY MEC SIPHOSEZWE MASANGO
MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS:
ERADICATION, PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF INFORMAL
SETTLEMENTS BILL, 2012
NELSPRUIT, 15 AUGUST 2012

Head of Department: Mr. D Dube
Chief Directors and Directors
Officials from the Department
Members of the Media

Let me welcome everyone of you gathered here today at this press briefing.

When the current administration took office in 2009, the then Department of Housing which had a narrow mandate of delivering and focusing only on houses – irrespective of how un-coordinated they were delivered - ceased to exist.

The old approach permitted the Department to construct houses and spend money for beneficiaries without necessarily considering development patterns, planning guidelines and extensive stakeholder engagements such as the private sector and other government departments.

Since the advent of the redefined mandate, the Department had to reconsider its approach of delivering service in an integrated and sustainable manner.

The new name – Human Settlements – was not just a change of name, but a reconfiguration and expansion of the mandate to ensure the creation of proper, habitable, sustainable and integrated human settlements.

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In November 2011, the Department convened a Human Settlements Indaba with a number of stakeholders within the construction sector to ponder on strategies to deliver better settlements.

Ideas were shared and resolutions arrived at as to how best the Department, academic bodies, professionals, municipalities, traditional leadership, non-government organizations - amongst others deliver integrated and non-racial human settlements.

Sequel to that, a series of municipal engagements with municipalities ensued and continues to take place with a view of developing a Human Settlements Delivery Master Plan.

Sinuous from the new mandate, it is necessary to promote the establishment, development and maintenance of socially and economically viable communities and of safe healthy living conditions.

Given the rural nature of the Province, the Department is pulling every stop to ensure that such a noble idea is realized and the mushrooming of informal settlements is prevented and controlled.

To put this into action, the Executive Council in its sitting at Dr Pixley Isaka Ka Seme (June 2012) approved the publication of the Mpumalanga Eradication, Prevention and Control of Informal Settlements Bill, 2012.

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This Bill - in the main - seeks to provide the following:

- The systematic eradication of informal settlements,
- Prevention of the emergence and re-emergence of informal settlements, and
- Upgrading and control of existing informal settlements in the Province.

The phenomenon of land invasion or grab has and continues to bedevil our Province at various areas such as Msholozhi, Thembisile, and eMbalenhle – to mention just a few.

I therefore call upon all municipalities to pass and enforce by-laws that will arrest this practice. Upon the passing of the Act, the Province will have powers to take legal action and evict illegal invaders of land.

Members of the media, I remain convinced that the correct application of the Bill will enable the Department to realize its vision of delivering a non-racial, integrated, and sustainable human settlements.

The Department has purchased pieces of land in strategic areas with a view of establishing integrated and sustainable human settlements as espoused by the redefined approach.

Now that the Bill has been approved for public comment, a series of engagements with various stakeholders ranging from municipalities, public, focused groups and professionals will ensue.

I thank you.