

REMARKS BY HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MEC, HON. VIOLET SIWELA,
DURING TITLE DEEDS HAND OVER CEREMONY AT FRANCE
COMMUNITY HALL, MKHONDO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.
GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, 23 JUNE 2015.

Programme Director:
Executive Mayors: Clr BH Mtshali (Mkhondo Local Municipality)
Councillors
Head of Department, Mr. K Masange
Municipal Manager
Social Cluster Members
Business Representative
Private Institutions
Officials from the Department and Municipalities
Members of the Media
Distinguished Community Members

Greetings to everyone in this event as we conclude Youth Month (June)

I want to thank the local leadership and the residents of Mkhondo Local Municipality for welcoming us.

Our visit comes when the country is at the end of the commemoration of the struggles waged by the youth of 1976.

That historic year brought some shift in the country's political geography.

Students all over the country's townships including Umjindi resisted the past unjust system of teaching at schools.

Their course appeared negligible at that instant – but looking at the collision it brought up to this day – a lot can be said about their resilience.

At face value it was a fight against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, but ultimately it turned out to have emancipated the country at large.

At present we are free. This can be attributed to their relentless efforts and never die attitude towards oppression.

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As protected by the Constitution - today we have a freedom to gather, associate, congregate and express ourselves – thanks to a democratic government led by the African National Congress.

Even as we are converged here to issue Title Deeds, it was not too be possible without the efforts of those before us and lost lives in the struggle.

Early this morning we visited some households around the township to give them title deeds. This is a delivery which gives full ownership to property.

Such a delivery is in line with the convictions of the Freedom Charter which committed that everyone has a right to housing, comfort and security.

From today - that dream to the families we visited this morning and hundreds gathered here today has been fulfilled.

As you may be all aware, the department goes beyond at just delivering houses, but ensuring that people live in an integrated and sustainable manner.

All people shall have the right to live where they choose and to live in decent houses, to bring up their families in comfort and security.

We are gathered here in the spirit of Service Delivery to all of you, the beautiful people of Mpumalanga – **The Place of the Rising Sun.**

This government remains caring and committed in making the lives of you the people far much better than we were 21 years ago.

During the previous government, people did not have full security of tenure to their properties or houses. This government is on a serious mission to restore dignity to people.

After all, there is no government without its people – for the people and with people.

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The Department has committed to deliver ten thousand Title Deeds during this financial year.

This campaign started in Msukaligwa in April, moved to Steve Tshwete, eMalahleni and Umjindi Local Municipalities.

Today – Mkhondo beneficiaries are receiving over 600 title deeds as part of this government's delivery machinery.

This delivery is certainly not the last for these two and other municipalities. As houses are being delivered and registered in the deeds office – communication will be intensified with municipalities to engage them in bringing yet another delivery in the coming years.

Security of Tenure means that, you the beneficiary have a guaranteed permanent right to occupy your house. "FOREVER IN YOUR HOUSES" - is that not good?

A Title Deed is proof that you - **beneficiaries** - have a guaranteed permanent right to occupy your house. These Title Deeds cannot be photocopied.

Once you temper or photocopy the Title Deed – then become null and void. You must keep them safe and store them properly.

Our celebration today is the realization of government's efforts of restoring dignity and giving full home ownership to these beneficiaries has finally come to an end.

Hundred of beneficiaries of low cost houses are now rightful owners of their houses built few years ago in this region.

Our gathering here marks a great achievement in the history of the municipality and its communities.

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It is not only a commendable feat for the municipalities, but a substantial improvement to the over **600** beneficiaries of governments' low income houses.

From today, all the beneficiaries seated here will have their dignity restored and livelihoods improved.

The issuing of title deeds forms part of government's bigger plan to improve the lot of ordinary citizens.

A Title Deed is not just an ordinary piece of paper, but legal document that ought to be valued by every beneficiary – for it is important.

The ruling ANC is very clear that there must be great focus on human settlements as another priority for government.

The focus on this important portfolio is to rid the country of informal settlements and squalor.

Given this marching order by the ruling party, what is then required of this department is to improve its planning and deliver on this requirement.

The mushrooming of informal settlements and scarcity of land can be attributed to the 1913 Natives Land Act. The Act meant that Blacks were deprived of their rights to shelter.

As a result, the majority became homeless - a situation which forced them to go work in mines, domestic work, and generally inferior jobs.

Over the last 100 years, this situation deprived people of better opportunities and compounded their lives by breeding more life disparities.

The huge housing backlog that we see today is as a result of the introduction of the Act in 1913, which immediately declared all Africans to be homeless.

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IMPORTANCE OF TITLE DEEDS

According to the country's Constitution - every person has a right to decent housing, clean water, health and education.

On shelter – as one of the basic human rights - that can only be realized through the acquisition of a title deed.

Houses should at all times be viewed as economic assets as ownership encourages investments through renovations and expansions.

This in turn triggers business opportunities in the household and the area.

Ownership further allows beneficiaries to use their houses to leverage their economic circumstances by making additional income.

Title Deeds are important as they allow beneficiaries to access finance from financial institutions for renovations and funding for business opportunities.

Acquiring a title deed enables a beneficiary to have the house as an asset, offer sense of pride and belonging.

From the municipal perspective, property ownership compels the owners to pay municipal rates and services received, thereby contributing to its ongoing financial viability and economic sustainability.

Beneficiaries will now be able to use their title deeds to improve their dwellings, to acquire household's goods and make use of capital borrowing against their properties and to start small businesses.

In essence, their households can also be used as an asset to build wealth.

Furthermore, houses are social assets in a sense that they can be transferred to descendants, they offer a sense of pride to owners and a sense of belonging to communities.

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The Department's mandate is to create integrated human settlements and improve households' life.

Beneficiaries will use the title deeds as a legal document that reflects the ownership of their properties.

CONCLUSION

This year marks a new era for the fifth administration to accelerate service delivery.

The ANC led government is still committed at improving people's lives by tackling the three social ills of **poverty, unemployment** and **inequality**.

As the 2016 Local Government Elections looms, it is important that all understand government's role in society. Equally so, communities ought to be responsible and pay services as provided by municipalities.

And I believe that none of you seated here are defaulters when it comes to payment of services.

To all beneficiaries go out there and be responsible citizens.

Today's delivery is not the last though; more services by this government, especially this department are still coming here and elsewhere.

"Together Moving Mpumalanga Forward"

I Thank you