

PROGRAMME TO EMPOWER WOMEN LAUNCHED

In a quest to empower women and honour their contribution in service delivery, the Department of Human Settlements launched the Women in Construction Programme last Friday. The Department has dedicated 30 percent of its budget towards this programme to be undertaken by women contractors by delivering housing opportunities and other required services to communities. This undertaking follows Minister Lindiwe Sisulu's pronouncements during her Budget Vote in Cape Town this year.

The programme requires provinces to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the women's charter and celebrate the women's march to the union building against pass laws. To this end, the Provincial Human Settlements Department launched the programme by symbolically building and painting houses at Dwaarslop, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. To this end, over R300 million has been allocated to 35 women contractors to deliver projects throughout the province during this financial year.

Since its inception, the democratic government has introduced a number of policies and programmes which have contributed to the development and empowerment of women for them to play more meaningful role in the society. It is this backdrop that government aims to meet its constitutional responsibility of ensuring that every South African has access to permanent housing that provides tenure, privacy, protection from the elements, and access to basic services.

This programme will go a long way in addressing the needs of the vulnerable and marginalised groups through the policies outline in the National Housing Code with a specific emphasis on the participation of women in the mainstream economy. This is due to the fact that men's issues have been highlighted to the exclusion of women's issues. In August 2008, the Department met with South African Women in Construction (SAWIC) at the National Women's Build held in Kimberly where the Department committed to work with SAWIC in ensuring that women contractors are afforded an opportunity to deliver housing. The framework to empowerment and enable women participation in human settlements delivery was approved by MINMEC in July 2014.