

SPEECH BY HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MEC, HON. VIOLET SIWELA DURING THE
HAND OVER OF TITLE DEEDS AT SCHOEMANSDAAL COMMUNITY HALL,
NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.
24TH JUNE 2016.

Programme Director: Cllr M Shongwe

Executive Mayors: Cllr TS Khoza (Nkomazi Local Municipality)

Cllr L Shongwe (Ehlanzeni District Municipality)

Other Executive Mayors Present

Members of the Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Councillors

Head of Department

Municipal Manager

Cluster Members

Business Representatives

Government Officials,

Title deeds Beneficiaries, and

Members of the Media

Introduction

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and warm greetings to you all for honouring this event.

Our gathering here today comes against the backdrop of ongoing elements of criminality in Tshwane, Gauteng where some members of the community are running riot apparently on the announcement of one seasoned comrade, Ms Thoko Didiza as mayoral candidate for the city.

As the ruling African National Congress we strongly condemn the barbaric acts which are taking place in that part of the country.

We say unequivocally that such acts have no place in the ANC and its alliance partners.

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The Provincial ANC leadership under the stewardship of Premier DD Mabuza would like to join the ANC, Women's League and other partners to strongly condemn the ongoing looting, and chaotic elements which have engulfed the metro over the last few days.

Having consulted branches and allowed all processes to unfold regarding the nomination of councilors to man our municipalities after the August 3rd local government elections, the ANC deemed it fit to nominate comrade Didiza to lead the metro.

But off-course, some foreign elements are showing their ugly heads and seemed poised at disturbing the party in running its affairs whilst improving the lives of ordinary people.

The ruling party remains confident in comrade Didiza's political acumen and our national leadership that the matter is receiving serious attention.

As you may have all seen on the media ugly visuals of people looting shops, burning and vandalizing property – we are saying no matter how communities are aggrieved – the ANC has clear channels and structures to raise issues of discontent.

Fellow people, this is a country we fought for and certainly cannot afford to burn it down.

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Siyahlola Presidential Monitoring Programme.

Having said enough about the challenges in Pretoria, this government is unwavering in its track to deliver services to its citizens.

At the beginning of the month President Jacob Zuma visited Thembisile Hani Local Municipality during his Siyahlola Presidential Monitoring Programme.

The Programme provides an opportunity for the President to assess progress in governance and service delivery around the country.

His recent visit at Nkangala, President Zuma assessed service delivery at KwaMhlanga Hospital, water purification projects and handing over 160 low cost houses to deserving beneficiaries, amongst others.

This programme brings government departments and agencies together to interact with communities on service delivery challenges and mitigation plans to better their situation.

Programme Director, whilst the President has the Siyahlola Programme, the province undertakes Executive Council Outreach where MEC's and account to the public on their respective portfolios.

All forms of community engagements are not just public relations or lip service exercises, but fundamental in ironing out stumbling blocks on the ground.

In our interaction with the communities of Bushbuckridge late last year and Thembisile Hani early this month, it became evident that

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the provision of water and sanitation remain a challenge for these municipalities and the province at large.

Having witnessed these challenges on the ground, one can confidently inform the people of the province that the Provincial Government has made a number of interventions through Rand, Tshwane Water and MEGA in mitigating such impediments.

Over the last year, we have been hard at work to deal with a number of aspects that are proving to be challenges to the Department.

Besides the units we provide, Nkomazi will be among four municipalities to benefit from a total of R12 million to install high mast lights.

State of Human Settlements Delivery in Nkomazi

Our mandate is to facilitate the delivery of integrated sustainable human settlements in the Province. This simply means the delivery of key projects encompassing all required social, economic amenities, mixed housing typologies, basic services and title deeds.

To this end, resident of this municipality will benefit from a budget of R49 million to deliver 523 housing units planned for this financial year.

These units will be rolled out through the People's Housing Process (PHP), Rural Development, Emergency Housing Assistance and Military Veterans interventions at various parts of the municipality.

In line with this mandate, Nkomazi will be among the four to benefit from the R12 million set aside to provide high mast electricity lights planned for this year.

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The other municipalities to benefit from this budget include Bushbuckridge; Chief Albert Luthuli; and Mbombela.

The enhanced mandate compels the Department not to only focus on housing provision, but ensuring that sustainable human settlements are coordinated and delivered through the involvement of key stakeholders.

The new approach advocates for the delivery of social and economic facilities, such as schools, clinics, police stations, and crèches and roads, electricity, and serviced stands, amongst others.

Since the advent of democracy, the Department has delivered nearly 200 thousand housing units to deserving beneficiaries in the province of which over 13 000 units were delivered in Nkomazi alone.

Furthermore, a total of 312 stands and a community hall and a day care centre were delivered in Nkomazi in the last few years.

The country's Constitution states that every person has a right to decent housing, clean water, health and education. And this is exactly what this government is doing.

Importance of Title Deeds

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.

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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.

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

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Such a delivery is in line with the principles 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 and some who will still benefit from government services will be fulfilled.

Correctly encapsulated in the Constitution, 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.

Ensuring that this becomes a reality the Department has brought a total of 509 Title Deeds to be handed over here today. Today's delivery which is mainly for Ehlanzeni is broken down as follows:

- Nkomazi 194,
- Bushbuckridge 113,
- Mbombela 42, and
- Thaba Chweu 160 (All totaling 509 title deeds)

During the 2015/16 financial year, the Department delivered a total number of 5 152 title deeds in the province and we have planned to issue 15 000 of such legal document this financial year.

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

As the local government elections approaches, we are all urged to be clear in our minds and embrace what is right.

By right I mean choosing a correct party that has brought about the freedom we all enjoy today.

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As we will be concluding the youth month, the Department will host a graduation ceremony for the Youth Brigade Programme at Dr JS Moroka Municipality next week.

Once again on behalf of the ANC and government, let me commend the good behavior by our people here in Nkomazi and the province at large for cooperation with government in its endeavor to improve people's lives.

“Together Moving Mpumalanga Forward”

I thank you