

eTshumelo

Black property developers in affordable housing to be supported



MEC Lebogang Maile in support of black property developers

By Mary-Jane Sidambe

The entry and development of black property developers within the affordable housing residential sector is of an urgent need. This was expressed by the MEC for Human Settlements, Urban Planning and COGTA Mr Lebogang Maile during the launch of the Bixowise Rehoboth Hills affordable housing development in Germiston, Ekurhuleni this week.

"We want to facilitate the entry and development of black developers within the affordable housing residential sector specifically. We want to assist in creating an enabling environment, support mechanisms, funding options and the regulatory framework for smaller black developers to enter the space and not just compete, but be able to become significant, even industry-leading players," said MEC Maile.

This week the MEC together with the Executive Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni, Mzwandile Masina launched the Bixowise Rehoboth Hills affordable housing development and Bravo Enterprises GPF Projects in Ekurhuleni and noted that the launch of the two projects, Rehoboth Hills and Bravo Enterprises, showcased the innovative and entrepreneurial work done by the Gauteng provincial government, through its entity, the Gauteng Partnership Fund (GPF).

This, he said was done through "facilitating spatial transformation for the benefit of historically disadvantaged individuals and families in providing much needed accommodation for the citizens of Ekurhuleni, in areas where they are more integrated within existing communities that are close to transport, work and other amenities."

The MEC congratulated Dr Dumani Kula, for his dedication and perseverance for his project and as a black private property developer. He expressed his desire to scale the project up for greater impact as part of socio-economic transformation.

MEC Maile pointed out that black ownership within the R6 trillion property sector sits at less than 7% and black developers continue to be constrained by the lack of access to finance and the lack of access to land.

In his remarks, Mayor Mzwandile Masina advised that strong management is required in the housing sector, and for the owner to be strict regarding rules and regulations. "Without rules, this beautiful building can turn out to be something else," he said.

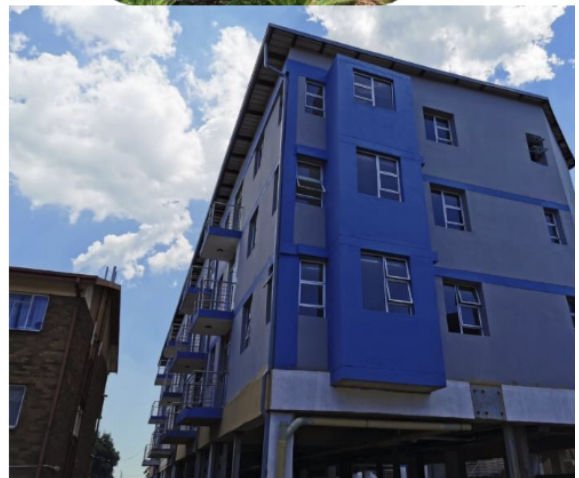
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Dr Kula articulated that this was a momentous day for the project as it finally came to completion after several years of issues, such as objections regarding the stand and certain approvals. He expressed his gratitude to the MEC and Mayor for their support as government as well as GPF for funding and his wife for her support in the realisation of his dream.

The projects were being launched under the ambit of the GPFs Entrepreneur Empowerment Property Fund (EPPF), an incubator programme that was established in 2010 to encourage emerging black property developers to participate in the affordable housing residential property market. Since inception of this incubator programme, 36 projects have been completed, yielding 1736 livable units.



Rehoboth Hills in Ekurhuleni offers affordable housing



MEC MAILE TSHUMELO FOREWORD FEBRUARY / MARCH 2021

One of the seven pillars undergirding the Batho Pele principles of government is access, and our Ikageleng Rapid Land Release programme is anchored on giving people access to land and home ownership. Access to land remains a big challenge for Gauteng residents, particularly for purposes of agriculture, human settlements, economic production and re-industrialisation.

The issue of access to land is important, in light of the South African Land Expropriation Bill, which is aimed at providing redress for those who lost their rights to land and property owing to the colonial conquest and apartheid. The Bill, which will be set to effectively implement Section 25 of the Constitution and includes provisions for expropriation without compensation for the purposes of the public good, is a critical part of government's plan to improve and increase access to land for impoverished individuals and communities, who often experience insecure land tenure.

It is within this broader context that our Ikageleng Rapid Land Release Programme must be seen, as we look to improve and increase access to land, specifically for housing delivery, by availing fully serviced stands for self-build and also capacitating beneficiaries of these serviced stands to be able to build for themselves.

Those who receive land through the Ikageleng programme will be expected to secure funding to build for themselves within 18 months and will have a period of five years to complete building or return the land back to government. The serviced stands will come with various options of building plans for beneficiaries to choose from and the land received by beneficiaries is locked in for eight years, meaning that they cannot sell the land until an eight-year period has lapsed. If they do decide to sell the land after eight years have lapsed, government will have first right of refusal.

For the 2020/21 financial year, our target is to release 10 000 stands as part of the Ikageleng Rapid Land Release Programme and we have been setting things in place so that once we launch the programme, we will be able to rapidly deliver serviced stands to those who want to build for themselves. This initiative has the potential to accelerate housing delivery within the province and to bring about a new paradigm within the housing delivery process, with individuals and communities not seeing themselves as passive recipients, but rather active participants and partners within the housing delivery process.

It is part of an approach to housing delivery and spatial transformation best captured by the words of SA literary great H.I.E Dhlomo *"We must begird ourselves like men and fight for the Dawn. The artist must rise and shine, for there is no one better placed and equipped than he. ... A whole nation in the throes of transition and rebirth, contending against both internal weaknesses of timidity, docility and ignorance, and the external forces of oppression and frustration - what rich material for creative living art! ... Cry not "Frustration", shout, "What an Opportunity!"*

Although Dhlomo is talking about art and the artist here, it is the same outlook, the same attitude that we want to see within our communities as we partner together to address issues of land access, decent shelter and spatial transformation. It is this type of thinking that informs our Ikageleng Rapid Land Release Programme, with its massive potential to transform the housing delivery landscape.

Lebogang Maile, MPL

Member of the Executive Council (MEC) Gauteng: Human Settlements, Urban Planning, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

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People living with disability get own houses in Devon

By: Amanda Khoza

In efforts to restore the dignity of vulnerable groups, the Gauteng Department of Human settlement together with Lesedi Local Municipality allocated houses to beneficiaries living with disability in Impumelelo, Devon.

The new houses are enhanced and modified with features to accommodate people living with disabilities such as an entry ramp for smooth access with a wheelchair, grab rails fitted in the bathroom, lever taps, lever flush on toilets and kick plates on doors, as well as plugs and lights fitted at a lower height in order for a person living with a physical disability to reach easily.

Forty-nine-year-old Olga Kunene who is wheelchair-bound is one of the beneficiaries who were over the moon with joy after being allocated a new home that fits her needs.

"I am very happy; I couldn't sleep last night. I was looking forward to the break of day because of the excitement, so I can finally see my house.

I'm very happy with the house, the bathroom is spacious fitted with grab rails that I will be able to bath without slipping and falling. I love my house," said Kunene.

Another beneficiary is 57-year-old Paulinah Mahlangu. Mahlangu suffered a Spinal Tuberculosis when she was aged 17-year-old which left her wheelchair-bound. "I feel happy to have gotten this house because living in a shack with broken windows and waterflooding everywhere is not nice. I would really like to thank Government for their good deeds," she said.

Impumelelo Mega Human Settlements project started in 2018 and has so far yielded over 1 536 housing units.



Currently, the project is in the second phase of development in Impumelelo ext 4. On completion, Impumelelo ext 4 will yield approximately 6000 housing opportunities consisting of low-cost housing, accommodation for Military Veterans, elderly and child-headed families.

In addition, an official responsible for beneficiary admin, service delivery and allocations in the Sedibeng region in the Department, Kehla Gwebu said that the beneficiaries handed over houses were identified in the system when we were busy with the beneficiary administration specifically for this area.

"In this project, we had completed houses built for people with special need. And because there are wheelchair-bound they have special needs that the department has built these special houses with features that accommodate people with special needs, completed and ready for allocation," he said.

Moreover, the project has also opened up economic opportunities for local SMMEs and sub-contractors, as well as skills development and employment for locals.

MEC Maile cleans up the Rot in the Department

By: Sithembiso Mkhize

The anti-corruption strategy being implemented in the Department is not about punitive and reactive measures but is also about taking preventative and pro-active steps to stop the rot.

The MEC for Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, Lebogang Maile recently announced that measures have been put in place to clean-up and fight fraud and corruption in the Department. He said that the Department has put together, approved and are implementing an anti-corruption and fraud strategy, with policies on fraud, corruption and ethics in place, with the intention of inculcating a culture of clean governance and accountability within the Department.

"The Anti-Fraud and Corruption unit has concluded investigations into various officials accused of corruption and money laundering, illegal sales of houses and stands, as well as theft and misappropriation of funds, and has handed these matters over to the relevant law enforcement agencies, where there have been findings and evidence of fraud and corruption," said the MEC.

"The cases are at different stages of the legal process, with some suspects having been charged and released on bail, other cases still under further investigation from law enforcement agencies and some at the trial stage, as we seek to criminally prosecute all those who commit acts of malfeasance," said Maile.

"As part of clean governance, cases of all officials who have failed to submit their financial disclosure have been referred to labour relations for consequence management and disciplinary cases have been continuing in the particular matter of the former Acting CFO," said MEC.

He said charges have been combined and we are in the process of appointing a new counsel. We took a decision to dismiss the former DDG Corporate Services, as part of consequence management for persistent governance failures which went unchecked under his watch.

"To show our seriousness about fighting fraud and corruption, we have acted against former Director: Facilities, Logistics and Security Management, who was dismissed for gross misconduct, in terms of Section 17(2)(d) of the Public Services Act. A junior official who was stealing from the Department is no longer with us, with the matter now resting with the Hawks" said Maile.

Time for transformative action on women's issues



Time to salute and empower women especially in the build sector

By Zandi Gamedze

This year's International Women's Day is a perfect moment to fight for transformative action, especially around issues that affect women. This was said by the United Nations (UN) Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka during the International Women's Day commemorations.

Mlambo-Ngcuka who is also the country's former Deputy President noted that this year's observance come when the whole world is facing adversities and gender equality is still a thorny issue that needs addressing. She also pointed out that it is time to salute women and young people for their relentless drive for gender equality and human rights.

"Our focus is on women's leadership and on ramping up representation in all the areas where decisions are made - currently mainly by men - about the issues that affect women's lives. The universal and catastrophic lack of representation of women's interests has gone on too long.

"As we address the extraordinary hardship that COVID-19 has brought to millions of women and girls and their communities, we also look ahead to the solid opportunities of the Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalitions to bring change," said Mlambo-Ngcuka.

The Generation Equality Forum is a civil society centred, global gathering for gender equality convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France. Kicking off in Mexico City, Mexico and culminating in Paris, France in the first half of 2021, the Forum will launch a series of concrete, ambitious and transformative actions to achieve immediate and irreversible progress towards gender equality, according to the forum's website.

In addition, Mlambo-Ngcuka said the world was still continuing to see a rise in gender-based violence even through the Covid-19 pandemic. "During the pandemic, we have seen increased violence against women and girls and lost learning for girls as school drop-out rates, care responsibilities and child marriages rise. "We are seeing tens of millions of more women plunge into extreme poverty, as they lose their jobs at a higher rate than men and pay the price for a lack of digital access and skills," she said.

Moreover, Mlambo-Ngcuka said that gender-based violence, inequality and other issues women face cannot be solved by men alone - Women representatives who actively and intentionally advocate for these issues should be supported and be part of the solution.

"No country prospers without the engagement of women. We need women's representation that reflects all women and girls in all their diversity and abilities, and across all cultural, social, economic, and political situations. This is the only way we will get real societal change that incorporates women in decision-making as equals and benefits us all," said Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Human settlements stakeholders commit to women empowerment

Courtesy of SHRA

Stakeholders in the human settlement sector have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) committing themselves to women empowerment.

The Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA), South African Women in Construction (SAWIC) and Built Environment (BE) signed the agreement on Monday during International Women's Day.

The agreement aims to advance the transformation agenda within the social housing sector, through empowering women to lead and manage accredited Social Housing Institutions (SHIs) and Other Delivery Agents (ODAs).

SHRA is one of the Department of Human Settlements entities, responsible for subsidised rental stock for low to medium income groups earning between R1 500 and R15 000.

Human Settlements Minister, Lindiwe Sisulu welcomed the signing of the MoU, and reiterated that the department's ultimate goal is to ensure that women are supported to rise and succeed.

"Over the years we have strived to embark on initiatives aimed at unlocking the value chain and ensuring that our grants are gender friendly to encourage broader participation of women in the human settlements sector and built environment.

"I implore women across racial lines to progressively contribute towards building the country's economy; women need to step up and make an equal contribution in industrial production as well as in the corporate workforce. Seize the economic opportunities presented in the social housing value chain," Sisulu said.

The Minister also called on the parties to ensure that the MoU is fully implemented and does not become another document that does not yield any tangible results.

Other organisations that committed their support towards the successful implementation of the MoU, include the National Empowerment Fund, Women of South Africa, Black Business Council and the Human Settlements Development Bank.

Last month, Sisulu called for more private sector investment into social housing projects to assist government's efforts in meeting the demand of social housing units.

Currently the SHRA has 52 projects in the pipeline which are expected to yield 21 000 units. This would require debt investment funding of R3, 6 billion.

"As the world commemorates International Women's Day, let us all take up the heavy cudgel and fight against all forms of discrimination, chiefly violence against women and economic exclusion. Let it be in our lifetime that we made good on the baton passed on to us by our forbearers to transform and empower the lives of women and [the] girl child," Sisulu said.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Interim Board Chairperson of SHRA Bathabile Dlamini warned against the empowerment of a few women controlled companies at the expense of the majority of other women.

"The opportunities are for everyone, let us not be greedy and only think for ourselves. As women we are known for caring and nurturing and let us put that into action through this MoU," Dlamini said. - [SANews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)



Call for more women to be empowered

Department supports back to school programme

By Boitumelo Thema

Ready for teaching and learning were the three schools visited by the officials of the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements and COGTA early in the year.

The Tshwane Regional Head, Mr. Lesiba Sekele speaking on behalf of MEC Lebogang Maile, noted that it was important that learners were ready to learn, teachers were ready to teach and learning materials were available at the three Tshwane schools visited.

"The Gauteng Provincial Government has taken up the national initiative to promote the Back 2 Basics programme which essentially calls for effective collaboration among role players in the delivery of basic services.

"The provision of basic education must therefore be developmental in approach as espoused in the Back 2 Basics principles of Bathopele, that is delivery of basic services, good governance, sound financial management and building capacity. This implores all schools to ensure that everything is ready and on track right from day one, to kickstart the 2021 school programme," he said.

Mr Sekele noted that it was important that the Back 2 Basics initiative is supported by all the stakeholders and in the same breadth, the Back 2 School message emphasizes the right to basic education for everyone.



Tshwane Regional Head, Lesiba Sekele



Ga-Rankuwa learners ready and safe for school

"As we all know education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world, and to quote our first democratic President Nelson Mandela "The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation."

The Kgatoentle Secondary School Principal Joshua Mpete, assured officials that the school was ready for teaching and learning and expressed his gratitude for the new furniture and learning materials they had received. "We acknowledge that Covid -19 is part of our lives and we cannot use it as a scapegoat not to perform, hence we are aiming for a 100% pass rate for this matric year," said Mpete.

According to a statement issued by Department of Basic Education, Minister Angie Motshekga said "these COVID-19 circumstances require the entire nation to support its children and indeed cooperate and support schools on a sustainable basis."

Residents enlightened on their housing rights



Official Eliza Ramakgopa (Left) talks to beneficiaries of their housing rights and responsibilities during a Consumer Education Roadshow

By Gopolang Leepile

Residents across the province are now enlightened on various government housing programmes, policies and processes, as well as their housing rights. This comes after the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements conducted a Consumer Education roadshow across the province in efforts to inform and ensure that its beneficiaries are kept in the light of its programmes and how they can assess these them.

Eliza Ramakgopa, an official from the Department's Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Development Unit, said that the Consumer Education Roadshow "aims to empower housing beneficiaries to understand their housing rights, responsibilities and the advantages or disadvantages of their housing needs. It is also aimed at encouraging residents to participate in the development of their communities."

"Our absolute objective of the Consumer Education Roadshow is to also clarify the qualifying criteria and the documentation required to apply for various housing programmes," said Ramakgopa.

The Consumer Education roadshow informs residents on topics including the Finance Linked Subsidy Programme, Housing Demand Database, Title Deeds, Law of Succession and the Rental Tribunal. In addition, residents are also informed on the products and services of the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC) which protects the interest of the housing consumer and regulates the home building industry.

The roadshow has visited areas including Drieziek in the City of Johannesburg, Chief Mogale in Mogale City and John Dube Village, Thinasonke and Greenfields in the City of Ekurhuleni, as well as Mohlakeng in the Rand West and Khutsong in Merafong.

Dan Tloome Mega City benefits working class

By Luzuko Pongoma



Dan Tloome RDP flats with solar geysers

Close to 30 years after his death, the name of fierce unionist Dan Tloome, continues to usher a better life for the working class. His exceptional contribution to the struggle for workers' rights and selfless contribution to the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa.

Farm worker, Diape Skhosana, was 13 years old when Tloome died. The 42-year-old mother of two, this week became one of the first residents to move in the Dan Tloome mega human settlements projects in Randfontein in the West of Gauteng.

Skhosana said that the conditions she lived under in the farm were bad. "The shack we lived in had holes, it was like we were living out in the open, because when it rained, we got really wet."

She said she paid R450 to rent the shack and sometimes had to work for no pay when there was no money for rent, as a form of payment. Expressing deep gratitude Skhosana said she was very happy as her children now have a place to call home: a home that belongs to them.

When completed the Dan Tloome mega project will have 22 101 mixed houses typologies and various social amenities. The house typologies will include RDP Flats, social rental units, bonded and Gap market houses as well as student accommodation.

Social amenities will include 13 schools; community centres; various retail and shopping centres, Dan Tloome Industrial park – 25Ha; Urban Farming 25Ha; Proprietary Edible landscapes; churches; filling stations; hospital, clinics and other medical facilities; creches; Dan Tloome Precinct Area.



Diape Skhosana is grateful for a place to her and her children



Ms Shibale Ditsweke 80 happy she will spend her twilight years in her own home



Official, Doctor Nkosi oversees the allocation process

Dan Tloome was born in Bloemfontein in 1919 where he schooled and graduated from the Modderpoort Anglican Teachers' Training Institute as a teacher.

When he moved to Johannesburg to be near his family, Tloome was deeply moved by the exploitation which he saw all around. He gave up teaching to become an organiser for the Milling Worker's Union of which he was later elected Secretary.

Tloome's leadership saw him rise through the ranks of worker organisations. He became a key organiser of the great miners' strike of 1946 in which nearly 100 000 mineworkers participated. He also became a key figure in the organising of the historic Defiance Campaign of 1952.

Tloome was a pioneer trade unionist who dedicated his life to realise the ideals of a non-racial trade union movement and freedom.

He was awarded The Order of Luthuli in Silver for his exceptional contribution to the struggle for workers' rights and selfless contribution to the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa.



Source: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za>

Call for building better greener cities

Trends and strategies for post-pandemic urban safety and sustainable development

By Mary-Jane Sidambe

We have been living in awfully trying times since the year 2020 with the advent of the COVID-19 which disrupted the whole world and touched our lives in a way we would never have imagined.

We were forced to take refuge in our homes from an unseen and unrelenting enemy and a call has been made for the building of better green cities.

On the 15th of January 2021, the Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS) held a webinar on the theme International Green Model City "IGMC Initiative: Calling for Stronger Actions Towards Healthy, Resilient and Carbon-Neutral Cities".

GFHS Secretary General Mr. Lu Haifeng in his opening remarks noted that five trends will be seen in the development of cities in the post-pandemic era: decoupling, decarbonization, decentralization, digitalization and globalization.

"We need to learn from nature and live in harmony with nature, and rethink, re-evaluate, redesign and reshape the current cities, for the purpose of achieving harmony between urban development and the natural ecosystem, and ensuring ecological balance and security," he said.

1. Decoupling, This means to decouple urban development from resource consumption and build circular metabolic cities. This is a fundamental way to improve urban safety, health and resilience, alleviate conflicts and realise harmony between man and nature. Resolutions from the GFHS advises that redesigning urban infrastructure, developing circular economy and organic agriculture, and implementing sustainable consumption and production, resources can flow in a closed loop within the city or between the city and the countryside, with recycling of materials, nutrition and energy.

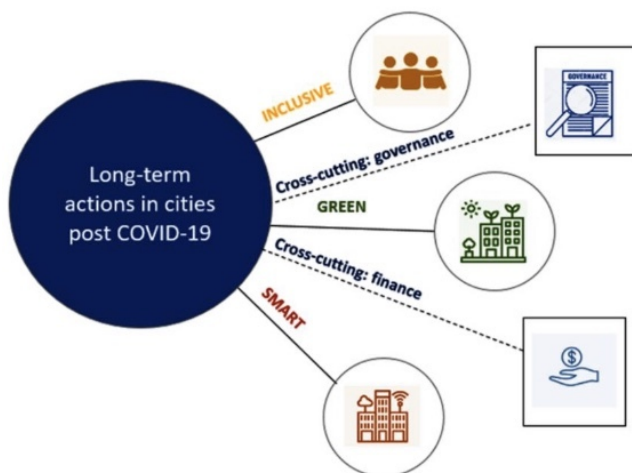
2. Decarbonisation -The process of reducing carbon emissions, achieving carbon neutrality, and developing carbon neutral or zero carbon cities.

3. Decentralisation - This is the building of self-sufficient cities with distributed infrastructure and a network-based economic model. An interconnected network is characterised by self-organisation, flexibility, evolvability and strong resilience. It is recommended that green cities should also be an organic cluster system with a distributed model, featuring greater adaptability and resilience, where resources are provided and waste is disposed of locally, and consumers are also producers.

4. Digitalisation - The development of smart cities with intelligent city management.

5. Globalisation - This refers to the integration of universality and personality to develop cities of identity. The pros and cons of globalisation have always been the focus of debate around the world. According to the GFHS forum, the most suitable practice is to localise it, making use of its advantages and avoiding its disadvantages according to the local condition, climate, and culture.

These trends reflect on the logic and law of nature. The trends are forward-looking, go with the times and the rules of the nature and assist in the acceleration of green transformation and innovation for healthy, resilient, and carbon neutral and better green cities.



Lanseria Smart City: A reality in the making

By Zandi Gamedze

The much spoken about Lanseria Smart City is more than a dream; it is a near future reality in the making.

Speaking recently in his State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa said that the first new city to be built in a democratic South Africa is now a reality in the making and would be home to more than 400 000 people in the coming years.

Gauteng Premier David Makhura this week, alluded to the city being a certainty, with a master plan that has been signed off by all stakeholders, including the private sector, the four municipalities involved and the DBSA, which is funding the bulk infrastructure without which the project will not succeed.

In his State of the Province Address (SOPA) the Premier said that "the Gauteng provincial government and municipalities are tackling all issues that will improve the ease of doing business and enhance the attractiveness of our City region as the preferred destination for domestic and foreign direct investment.

"As the Gauteng City Region government, we are marshalling resources to fund bulk infrastructure to unlock social and economic development in our five corridors and districts. We are also cutting red tape to fast-track development approvals," said Makhura.

The Lanseria smart city was designed to be a mixed-use residential development and business district providing for commercial activity as well.

Water Issues

By Boitumelo Thema

This year's water day commemoration is significant as it comes at a time when we are still under the dark cloud of the COVID – 19 pandemic. Water is more important now more than ever before and must be treated as the precious commodity that it is.

In the 'new normal' we have to use more water as we have to wash hands on a more regular basis to prevent the spreading of the Coronavirus. However water is still a rare commodity and requires that we are mindful and intentional about how we use it.

The theme for this year's World Water observance is "Valuing water" and aims to understand how people value water whether it is economically, socially, culturally or in other ways as well as how it plays a role in their lives.

In 1993, the United Nations designated 22 March as the World Water Day with a focus on the importance of fresh water and to raise awareness of the billion people living without access to clean and safe water. This day is about acting to decisively deal with water challenges facing the globe – Water is a basic Human Right for all, but we have a responsibility of valuing it which means using it accordingly and most importantly saving it.

Some water saving tips

- Take a shorter shower of not more than 5 minutes
- Turn the tap off while brushing your teeth and shaving
- Recycle laundry water and dishwater to water your garden
- Fix all the water leaks in the house such as toilets, taps and pipes
- Use water tanks to harvest rainwater

Source: <https://educonnect.co.za>



Government restores dignity through title deeds

By Sithembiso Mkhize



Gogo Nyanese Maswanganye



David Nhlapho

Human Rights Day celebrations would not have come at a better time for the many people of Chief Mogale township in Mogale City Local Municipality, Krugersdorp. Many years people have been denied ownership of the land of their forefathers, while access to land and shelter is the most basic human right that should be afforded to every South African.

Land ownership goes hand in hand with restoration of people's dignity and providing a security of tenure. When people are given a title deed, it is not a title deed for the house, it is a title deed for the land in which the house is built on.

The land act which dispossessed the large majority of South Africans and benefited 87% of the land to white people which is the legacy of landlessness bequeathed by apartheid is still haunting us even today.

It is for this reason that the Department is embarking on the campaign to restore the dignity of people across the province by giving them title deeds. Title deeds are a proof of ownership of the land that is allocated to you.

The Department of Human Settlements issued just less than 400 title deeds to the citizens of Chief Mogale township. This is in line with Department's commitment to collaborate with the deeds office to ensure that they restore the dignity of the people of Gauteng.

Some of the beneficiaries who received their title deeds on the days were an 80-year-old, Mzikabani Khoza who received his RDP house six years ago and Oupa Nhlapho who is wheelchair bound and he received his house 5 years ago.

Both Khoza and Nhlapho were very excited to receive their title deeds. "This is the proof that we are the rightful owners of the houses we reside in. Government has done very well we do not think any of us were expecting title deeds so soon, we are very grateful indeed" said the beneficiaries.

A 42-year-old Margaret Miya, who is partially blind said this is her child inheritance, "This does not only restore my dignity, it also provides a security of tenure for my family" said visibly excited Miya.

Government to launch Ikageleng programme



By Sithembiso Mkhize

Gauteng government will soon introduce the much anticipated Ikageleng programme to alleviate housing challenges that are faced by people of the Province. Ikageleng, which means build for yourself, is a land release programme that is aimed at providing land to citizens who can build houses for themselves. These are the people who fall within the gap-market; earning too high to qualify for a housing subsidy not enough to qualify for a home-loan.

Beneficiaries for this programme will be drawn from the National Housing Needs Register and it will be people who have not benefitted from government before.

Through the Ikageleng program, government will provide serviced stands aimed at halting the mushrooming of illegal informal settlements. Government through this programme provides the land with basic services such as electricity, water, sanitation, and roads. Individuals who are interested in participating in the program should ensure that they are registered on the National Housing Needs Register or may go to the Department's nearest Customer Support Care Centre to be registered for the program.

Gauteng residents ready to build their dream homes

By Gopolang Leepile

Thousands of qualifying residents across the province are ready to build their dream homes amid the release of serviced stands through the Rapid Land Release Programme. This comes in the wake of Gauteng Premier David Makhura's announcement during the 2021 State of the Province Address that the provincial government has identified over 9 000 sites to handover to beneficiaries willing to build for themselves.

Jane Nhlapo, a 33-year-old mother who lives in Katlehong in the City of Ekurhuleni has longed for a home for her children but could not afford a home loan. She is now eagerly waiting to make her dream a reality.

"It has always been a dream of mine to have a house of mine where my children will live and know that their mother left them with a legacy. I am over the moon over the release of serviced stands as I will be able to achieve my dreams," said Nhlapo.

Nhlapo, who like many other Gauteng residents does not qualify for an RDP housing subsidy because she earns more than R3 501 a month. The release of serviced stands will see her build a house for herself over a period stipulated by government, giving her time to raise funds to finish the structure.

"This programme is really what a lot of people who have felt excluded from government housing subsidies have been waiting for. Who does not want to build for themselves? I cannot wait to be allocated a serviced stand so I can say 'bye-bye' to monthly rental fees and landlords with their endless rules," jokingly said Nhlapo.

The provincial government had planned to launch the programme and release thousands of serviced stands during the 2019/2020 financial year, however, the process was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, 42-year-old Mokgadi Mulaudzi who lives in Khutsong near Carletonville in the Merafong City Local Municipality plans to build a home for her children so that they can finally have a place called home.

"Earning a little bit more than the minimum salary required to qualify for an RDP house and less to qualify for a bond loan has, for many years, made it difficult for me as a parent to provide a home for my children.

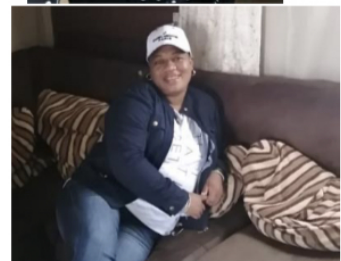
"The possibility of being able to finally build a home that is mine warms my heart and shows how government is fulfilling its promises to the people. It is true indeed that Rome was not built in one day, and the release of stands shows that our government is a progressive one," said Mulaudzi.

MEC for Human Settlements, Urban Planning and CoGTA, Lebogang Maile said that the release of serviced stand will significantly reduce the housing backlog in the province.

"The innovative Mega Human Settlements projects are a response to high demand for housing. We will be able to alleviate the housing backlog through the provision of service stands for those able to build for themselves," said MEC Maile.

Moreover, 42-year-old Sabata Teka who works in the retail industry as a Receiving Clerk is also over the moon about the release of serviced stands said that he has always been hopeful that government will fulfil on its promise.

"I am currently living at home with my siblings and two nieces. The situation is not ideal for me as I am older and sometimes need my own space. It is exciting that I will soon be to build my dream home," said Teka.



Decent housing: A basic human right

By Mugabe Ratshikuni

Through the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights law recognises the right to decent housing as a basic human right. It is viewed as an economic, social and a cultural right, which is enshrined in our post 94 constitutional order as a country.

With this in mind, government has a duty to deliver houses to ensure that all South Africans can have decent shelter and live in dignity with their families, but what of the other side of the coin, responsibilities? Rights come with responsibilities and in fact, rights and responsibilities are two sides of the same coin. What is the responsibility of citizens within this right, to ensure decent living conditions for themselves? With growing demand for housing and a backlog that reaches back decades in terms of housing allocation, what is the role of citizens in helping to address this?

My preferred mode of knowledge acquisition is what they term the Socratic method, so you'll have to excuse the questions. Paulo Freire, in his acclaimed book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, makes the following salient point, about any struggle for emancipation, which should hopefully guide us in our quest to respond to the questions raised above, "Libertarian action must recognise this dependence as a weak point and must attempt through reflection and action to transform it into independence. However, not even the best-intentioned leadership can bestow independence as a gift. The liberation of the oppressed is a liberation of women and men, not things. Accordingly, while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others. Liberation, a human phenomenon, cannot be achieved by semi-humans. Any attempt to treat people as semi-humans only dehumanises them."

The point Paulo Freire makes is that the liberation of the people can never be truly attained if they are seen as passive objects in the process to liberate them. However, true liberation only comes when the people are active subjects and co-actors in the process that liberates them. How does this relate to the quest for decent housing and living conditions for all South Africans? Well, if the people are only dependent on government for meeting this right, without seeing themselves as partners and co-actors in addressing this right, then we have a dependency syndrome which, as Paul Freire highlights, reduces them to semi-humans, incapable of acting in their own interests and addressing their need for housing.

A critical element of addressing the growing housing backlog in the country, entails breaking this dependency syndrome and beginning to see communities, people as active participants and not just passive recipients of development. We need to move away from a service delivery paradigm which sees poor communities as passive recipients within the service delivery process, who can't do anything for themselves and are completely disempowered to the point of being in a permanent state of inertia, to finding a balance, common ground where poor communities are active participants within the service delivery process and can do some things for themselves. Of course, a developmental state will train, empower and equip them to do so. We need a new ethos within communities, in line with the words of the popular 1980s song *Now or Never* by the group Sankomota, "Heyi wena Afrika

Kgale o dutse hae
Tsamaya lo ipatlela tsa bophelo
Tsoha o iketsetse."

Tsoha o iketsetse should be the message that is reverberating around our communities when it comes to housing delivery and the quest for decent shelter and dignified living conditions. It should not be something that is left to government to resolve, but communities should be finding ways to help address this issue and create partnerships with government, the private sector and other stakeholders to be able to tackle it. A liberated people are after all, not passive objects within the process of liberation, but rather, they are active subjects and co-participants within that process, in line with Paulo Freire's thinking.

I can already hear all the humanitarian reasons why this is an unfair expectation. They are too poor. They don't have money. They are unemployed. I hear you and don't dispute that but... Let me take you to a very poor, impoverished community in Muldersdrift, Mogale City here in Gauteng to show you that this "tsoha o iketsetse" is very possible for housing delivery within Gauteng and the rest of the country for that matter. This is a community of 1 302 low-income families from the informal settlements of Muldersdrift. The community has over the years been on the receiving end of poor working and living conditions. This did not stop the community from coming up with innovative, self-driven solutions in order to address the poor living conditions and need for decent housing.

Through a community-based organisation called Umnotho, founded by young people within this community, they started organising themselves as families within the informal settlements of Muldersdrift to collectively buy land for housing. The objective was to mobilise the community to take pro-active action to house themselves through self-help means, rather than wait on government to provide them with free housing. From 2011, the community started to make monthly contributions towards the purchasing of land, because most of the informal settlements in Muldersdrift are erected on invaded land with no possibility of being developed into housing. The desire was to achieve decent housing with dignified toilets and access to basic services. In 2015 this community, saving a minimum of R150 per family per month, managed to raise R4.5 million to purchase 28 hectares of land. It took the community years to finally purchase the identified land.

In May 2019, Umnotho was granted a banking license and registered as a Co-operative Financial Institution by the South African Reserve Bank as per the Co-operative Bank Act No. 40 of 2007. The community bank is a platform where families collectively save towards building material and can later access building loans. The ultimate objective is to advance the social and economic welfare of the members by easing access to banking and financial services.

This is a wondrous example of a community who are amongst the poorest of the poor, doing it for themselves and government, across the various spheres, is partnering with them for bulk infrastructure, top structures and other related services. It is a model of true empowerment that should be replicated around the province and the country, in order to address and accelerate housing delivery. It is the "tsoha o iketsetse" spirit that Sankomota sings about and that should be imbibed by all communities within the province.

This is all in line with provincial government's Ikageleng Rapid Land Release Programme, through which, qualifying beneficiaries will be given serviced sites to build houses for themselves. We should be seeing stokvels and cooperatives within communities rising up to take advantage of this initiative to build houses, decent homes for their members, availing finances and other resources in order to enable them to do so.

It is such initiatives, such partnerships between individuals, communities and government that will enable us to guarantee the right to decent shelter and living conditions for all and break this "false charity paradigm" that is so prevalent within our society. Paulo Freire talks about this false charity, "True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the 'rejects of life,' to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world." It is the spirit, the attitude of Ikageleng, of "tsoha o iketsetse" that will enable us to move away from false charity and collectively address the basic human right of decent shelter and living conditions.