



human settlements  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# TaseKHAYA

Department of Human Settlements

Official External Newsletter

First Quarter Edition 2021/22



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## Editorial Comment



**Mr Freddy Ngobe**  
Head of Communications

Greetings and welcome to yet another insightful instalment of the Department's quarterly newsletter, TaseKhaya an external version that seeks to keep you up-to-date with departmental activities, projects and all programmes as we strive in our bid to create sustainable human settlements development across the province.

Recently the department delivered its Budget Vote for the 2021/22 financial year at the Provincial Legislature where

MEC Speed Mashilo announced the total sum of R1 557 402 000 to progress and succeed the plans and mandate of the department for the financial year. We remain resolute that despite the hard challenging times in the face of a plunging economic stretch – sustainable integrated human settlements remains the focal point of the department and will be realized.

It was still pleasing to witness the positive fortitude by colleagues to withstand all hardships as they reaffirmed their desire to deliver on the Departmental mandate and made positive strides to continue to bring agreeable service delivery to the needy. Recently the Department led by MEC Speed Mashilo carried-out an outreach programme across the corners of the province to assess and address the underlying and inexorable challenges of service delivery which mainly stemmed from infrastructure, water and electricity as well as adequate delivery of houses to the needy.

The programme/Outreach proved conceivable results as the MEC was able to interact with affected stakeholders and municipalities in a bid to rectify the apparent defies.

This commendable feat was carried-out in an all-embracing approach which included the handing over of title deeds to legitimate owners of government's low cost houses.

Meanwhile, the MEC encourages all members of the society to denounce any acts of illegal invasion and selling of RDP houses. This shameful norm has the ability to disrupt government's plans to provide adequate services to the neediest and deserving beneficiaries.

The country continues to make efforts to curb the spread of the deadly contagion, Covid-19. Now with the new variant that has already overwhelmed us, let us all be encouraged to get vaccinated and stand a better chance to prevent ourselves and others from this invincible enemy. Perhaps through this audacious effort we may overcome and get back to living our normal lives again soon in the future so well anticipated. Let's strive to beat our misgivings and most probably take a leap of faith, South Africa could be saved.

Enjoy your happy read.....

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## KEEPING TO THE MANDATE, DESPITE ODDS



**POISED:** Department remains committed to ensure the delivery of integrated human settlements.

The Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements is set to continue with the spatial transformation of communities with a view to advance the delivery of integrated services in priority development areas whilst ensuring inclusive residential property markets. MEC Speed Mashilo made this bold undertaking during this year's departmental policy and budget vote, which saw a slight reduction in its overall budget from R1, 558 billion in the 2020/21 financial year to R1, 557 billion in the 2021/22.

Owing to COVID-19 challenges and general sluggish economic growth, MEC Mashilo made optimistic announcements which sought to keep up with the department's mandate. "The following projects are under planning processes in the current financial year while others are already undergoing implementation.



Nkosi City Project and Dingwell in the City Mbombela; SEZ Smart City in Komatipoort in Nkomazi, Retiefville in Mkhondo and Rondebosch in Steve Tshwete as well as Secunda Ext 75 and Ext 76 in Govan Mbeki Local Municipalities,” said Mashilo. These multi-year projects will yield different housing typologies, socio-economic facilities, and other related services that will deal with historical skewed spatial planning.

Mashilo also acknowledged the challenges of informal settlements and cited the need for focus to upgrading informal settlements. “The nature of the location of the informal settlements presents a serious challenge in terms of connecting them to bulk water and bulk sewer existing infrastructure. A total of 3 759 sites/stand in informal settlements is planned for upgrading”, he said.

A budget of R259 million will be directed towards the upgrading of informal settlements throughout the province. Furthermore, the department plans to deliver 3800 serviced sites/stand under the integrated human settlements, during the course of the current financial year, seven bulk infrastructure and sanitation projects



**PROPER PLANING:** An ideal approach to ensure land is properly serviced.

and three social economic facilities will be delivered. An amount of R25 million is allocated for bulk infrastructure work in the Parliamentary Village; whilst R95 million is allocated for schools and community related infrastructure. In other delivery outputs, 2 890 fully subsidized houses will be delivered, owing to shift to provision of more serviced sites than houses.

This move will allow self-built by beneficiaries and increase in rapid release of land. To ensure security of tenure and foster sense of dignity and property ownership, 7 865 title deeds will be issued to beneficiaries of government subsidised houses. The budget vote was generally accepted by stakeholders.

## FORMALISING BRANDEN VILLAGE INTO A TOWNSHIP ON THE CARDS



**RESCUE:** GMLM Executive Mayor, Cllr Nhlakanipho Zuma, MEC Speed Mashilo, Village Administrator, Ms Yvette Louise, Land Acquisition Manager, Mr Thembinkosi Selowe and Acting HOD, Ms Hazel Zitha.

The Gert Sibande District is one region that boasts agriculture, mining and energy sectors within the province and by extension the country. Gert Sibande (until 2004 known as the Eastvaal District Municipality) is one of the three districts of Mpumalanga province of South Africa. The seat of Gert Sibande is Ermelo. The majority of its 900 007 people speak IsiZulu (2001 Census).

In 2004, the municipality changed its name from the “Eastvaal” (Afrikaans: Oosvaal) to “Gert Sibande” District Municipality.

This municipality is bordered by the Ehlanzeni and Nkangala District Municipalities to the north, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State to the south, Swaziland to the east, and Gauteng to the west. The main economic

sectors include manufacturing (49.4%), agriculture (38.1%), transport (31.4%), trade (29.2%), community services (26.9%), construction (26.6%), electricity (26.1%), finance (23.8%), and mining (23.3%). The area continues to rely on mining and continues to do so even today. Until recently, a small mining settlements called Brendan Village just few kilometres north-west of Evander near Secunda thrived through the sector.

Throughout the years, the village which was well thriving housed employees and families of a local mine. Just in the life of any mine, the operations continued for years feeding the families and surrounding communities. Life was normal and all was going according to plan. Until recently, the mine closed down – as it is always a case – with mining operations. A common threat when a business – mine in this instance – shuts down, the livelihoods of many who depended on its existence suffer. Imminent and real challenges are evictions, loss of income and all sorts of disparities. Like many mining towns - Branden Village – was not spared. The mine closed and some inhabitants moved out, others remained and new ones came in to occupy the houses which used to the mine’s.

Complex as it is – the situation – brought about some uncertainty and a bleak future to all and sundry. There are no economic



activities to continue sustaining the households and at worse the settlement is not properly proclaimed into a township to be part of the municipal space. It is a case of a double blow to both the residents and the municipality in that there must a sense of livelihood going on and municipal services ought to be paid. To this end, several engagements were undertaken between the department and the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality to try and better

manage the settlement. In his ongoing municipal outreach programme to assess the level of service delivery, tackling challenges and crafting interventions, MEC Speed Mashilo met the municipal authorities on this and other matters. The interactions explored several proposals at trying to revive the village and bettering the lives of the residents there. The village is a farm portion which needs to be proclaimed into individual stands. Mashilo advanced

that, "This move will enable stands to be sold to the current occupants or interested people and allow the municipality to generate revenue through collectable rates and taxes". It is believed that the move will further address the housing backlog faced by the municipality. If successfully revived, the establishment will be a shining example in the area on how mining houses and municipalities should handle similar cases.

## DISABLED NEEDY QUESTION LACK OF SERVICE



**SEEKING SERVICE:** Beneficiaries in attendance during the Round-table discussion summit in Nkomazi.

The livelihood of people living with disability in the areas of Nkomazi, Mpumalanga Province leaves much to be desired as far as government services and programmes of development are concerned. This outcry recently grabbed the attention of many and sundry during a round table discussion programme organized by the Department of Human Settlements to help discuss issues pertaining to the development and life changing interventions for persons living with disability in the build sector.

Various sectors including the Human Rights Commission, Human Settlements' Supply Chain management as well as the Housing Subsidy Scheme formed part of the key presentations to enlighten all beneficiaries of the services they need to expect as well as how to access such from government, particularly in the Department.

One of the concerned residents Ms Thobile Ndlovu criticised government for

providing minimal opportunities for the latter group and revealed that only a few get considered to construct houses as well as to participate in other business ventures such like catering for events. "This is so discouraging for us. We have seen people being chosen right before us and given all the opportunities to actively participate in the build sector while we are being overlooked," cried Ndlovu.

Despite failing to be considered in many such programmes, Ndlovu condemned and questioned the department's method of registering beneficiaries to get the low cost houses. She complained that she has since applied for her RDP house four years ago and to this day she has not yet been responded to. "We continue to live in dilapidated houses while our applications are piling up in those offices of government, this is so painful because we don't even get any feedback or an update of some sort."

Sharing the same sentiments, Mr Oupa Zitha argued that in his area there's currently a regional transversal office where they would normally submit their issues and grievances however, this has never assisted them in any way possible: "It appears to me that there's no synergy between the two offices. I don't think we would be struggling like this if our local offices were working together with the department."

Acting manager for the department's transversal unit, Ms Lucrecia Nkambule assured the beneficiaries that their issues will be taken into consideration and vowed to submit all grievances to the Housing Subsidy section of the department that deals mainly with the issues of beneficiary management for a swift response. "We are confident that the round-table discussions went well. It is through such gatherings where we get to interact with our beneficiaries and find amicable ways to respond to their needs."



## SIGNIFICANT STRIDES TO DELIVER OVER 300 TITLE DEEDS

In pursuit of the Department's mandate to restore dignity and provide security of tenure to deserving owners of government's low cost houses, the MEC Speed Mashilo accompanied by Lekwa Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Lindokuhle Dhlamini issued over 300 title deeds to low cost subsidized housing beneficiaries.

This life changing milestone took place recently during Mashilo's roadshow drive at Standerton Extension 8, Lekwa Municipality. The MEC also

Mashilo acknowledged that restoring dignity will be in vein and incomplete if the issue of integrated human settlements that includes also bulk services is not addressed. "Security of tenure and access to safe drinking water are complimentary services in ensuring dignity to our people.

"We deliver these title deeds notwithstanding challenges of water in this municipality, we are aware there is a challenge with the local reservoir and we will resolve this challenge," vowed Mashilo who confirmed that the technical

exercise and was received with open arms by the mayor who welcomed the approach and believed that this will bring the solutions the community has been anticipating for years: "We are however calling on all beneficiaries of these title deeds to not only be proud to have become legitimate homeowners but to never sell their houses to unscrupulous people who only plan to rent out these properties," said Dlamini.

The mayor excitedly expressed himself as saying that there never would have been a better honour to Mama Charlotte Maxheke than to restore the dignity of the people through providing adequate services to them. Among the beneficiaries who received their title deeds were Nomkhithiko Mnisi and Masibulela Khanye both 78 years old living in Extension 8.

Mnisi lives with her grandchild and, Khanye with her husband. They both shared their equal joy and thanked government for giving them the assurance to be legal homeowners. "This is a long life dream for me. I am grateful for your efforts and intervention because from now on I would know to live in peace without the fear to be illegally evicted from my house," expressed Khanye with a huge smile of contentment. Property ownership allows beneficiaries to use their homes to leverage their economic circumstances by making income. Houses can also serve as an economic asset as it encourages investment through renovations and funding for business purposes. The Department has the target of issuing 4109 title deeds during the 2020/21 financial year.

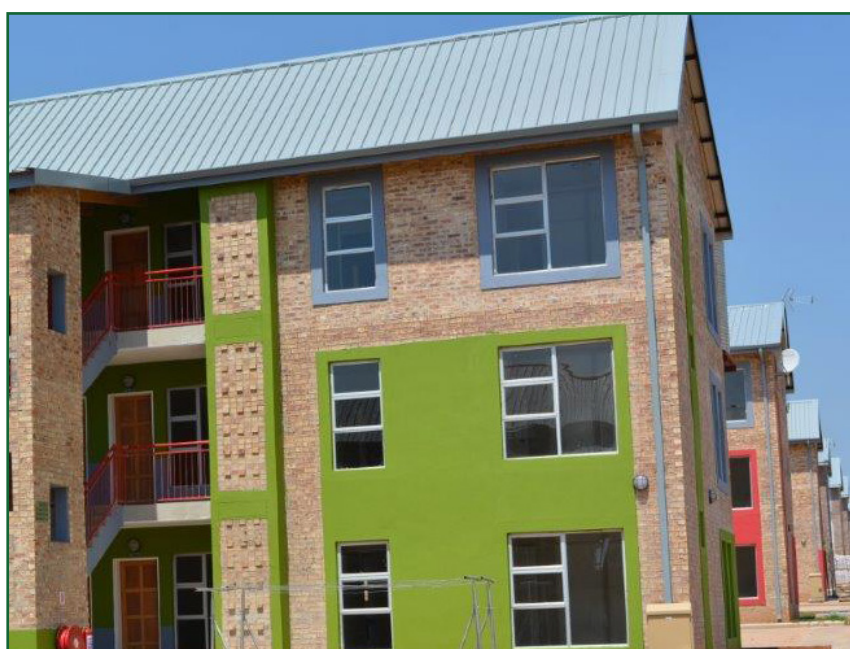


**OWNERSHIP:** MEC SK Mashilo and Lekwa Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr Linda Dhlamini handing over a title deed to Ms Masebulelo Khanye.

visited housing and water projects for assessment of challenges and general progress of the project in the municipality.

team will be established to deal with issues of water in the municipal jurisdiction and other areas. The visit was a pleasing

## IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS SOUGHT IN THE RENTAL SECTOR



**ACCOMMODATE:** The Ntokozweni Community Residential Units at Emakhazeni Local Municipality.

Property owners and landlords have expressed high level of optimism about improving business in the rental sector. This sense of enthusiasm emanated from a two-day roadshow held in the City of Mbombela and eMalahleni Local Municipalities earlier this year as the National and Provincial Departments of Human Settlements were soliciting inputs to improve the Rental Housing Regulations with stakeholders.

The public information sessions were organized with the view to

make amendments to properly regulate the relationship between tenants and landlords by ensuring that there is an amicable dispute resolution mechanism in the rental sector. The Amended Act emphasises that the landlord must make sure that his or her property has the basic services water, electricity and proper sanitation.

It also states that landlords and tenants must be well familiar with their rights and obligations. Deputy Director for Rental Housing Tribunal from the



National Department, Mr Ronald Mukhombo said that the Rental Tribunal must host roadshows to create more awareness on the programme and involve local municipalities since they are key in the space.

"I am pleased that we are addressing the Rental Housing Tribunal champion province in the country which makes our work much easier and the massive attendance and participation from the stakeholders". One of the agent from LA GRACE Properties, Ms. Blessing Sunday welcomed the opportunity to discuss rental tribunal issues which the Department. She mentioned that this will be beneficial to many as compared to the problems they have encountered in the past ranging from their fidelity funds certificates and improving relations tenants.

"We are grateful with the support we get from the Rental Tribunal making sure that both parties get the best solution. We encourage landlords and

tenants in the Province to make use of these services provided by the department to be able to foster their relations without mistakes," said Ms. Sunday. The tribunal provides its services freely and caters for Mpumalanga tenants and landlords.

Mukhombo urged that stakeholders must attend these information sessions so that they can be knowledgeable with all they need to know in the rental sector. "We are still in consultation with other provinces for their inputs and the public so that we can firm up all inputs to come up with something suitable for all parties."

The existence of the Rental Housing Act 50 of 1999 is an answer to all the challenges faced by both landlord and tenant. This legislation was passed by Parliament for landlords and tenants in terms of residential dwellings in each province. Similar roadshows are being carried in other provinces throughout the country.

## MUNICIPALITY ADVISED TO ADDRESS SANITATION CONTESTS



**HOUSE:** An informal settlements project delivered at Breyten, Msukaligwa Local Municipality.

The Msukaligwa Local Municipality in Mpumalanga has been urged to address sanitation challenges as it remains a hindrance to the successful completion of the 500 units informal settlements project currently being delivered in KwaZanele, Breyten. Human Settlements MEC Speed Mashilo made this remarks when he was accompanied by the Local Executive Mayor Cllr. Joseph MkhaliPhi recently to visit the project and assess progress on human settlements delivery in the municipal jurisdiction. This visit included the unearthing of persistent challenges and finding amicable interventions in some of the local and underlying community disputes which has affected the smooth construction of a sewer pipeline.

The project is internally reticulated, sewer pump station upgraded and 341 units are already completed with others at various stages of construction. "The project is proving to be a success. However, the disruption of the construction of the sewer pipeline threatens feat story of this project. The significance of sanitation cannot be contravened as it is at the core of human dignity and health," complained Mashilo.

On this very note, Executive Mayor MkhaliPhi assured Mashilo that the municipality obtained a valid and enforceable servitude and they will be meeting with the private owner of the land in which the sewer pipeline construction is happening. "We have the valid servitude and in law

allowed to have that sewer pipeline passing through that land. Thus, we will be meeting with the owner of that land to discuss this," undertook Mayor MkhaliPhi.

The conceiving of the project is aimed at de-intensifying the nearby informal settlement - Breyton Extension 4 - (Ward 14) as such most of the beneficiaries will be coming from that area. One of the beneficiaries who has already taken occupation of her house is Ms Thandi Nkosi (59) who used to stay at her uncle's house in Extension 4 now enjoys comfort of her home with her daughter and grandchildren.

"I took occupation of the house in April this year and I'm happy, for long time I have always wanted to own a home and government has made it possible," said Nkosi. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the current financial year. MEC Mashilo's visit to the area is an extensive outreach and roadshow programme in the district as many municipalities continue to face service delivery challenges that have also sparked protests.

The meeting between the MEC and Gert Sibande Human Settlements regional staff office preceded the project visit, wherein the MEC called on inspectors, project managers and monitors as well as beneficiary management officials to safeguard the integrity of the projects by extension the integrity of the department in service delivery.





## HISTORICAL WATER AND INFRASTRUCTURE TRIALS TACKLED



**INFRASTRUCTURE:** Another water infrastructure project delivered at Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality.

The development of infrastructure and improved water services continues to play a pivotal role in rural and farm areas. Human Settlements MEC Speed Mashilo asserted these sentiments earlier this year when he vowed to tackle infrastructure and water challenges faced by the community of Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality in Wakkerstroom during his last project visit in the area.

Mashilo who was joined by the local Executive Mayor, Cllr Vincent Malatsi visited the Waste Water Treatment Plant

in Amersfoort to get a sense of what was the problem and a serviced site project at Vukuzakhe. The department has completed the servicing of 250 sites with water, sewer reticulation services, and internal gravel and storm water management systems in the area.

“We are aware as government that some people need stands to build for themselves, in this project, stands will be available for sale through the municipality and we will also build government low cost houses,” said Mashilo. Whilst at that Mashilo continued to handover 200 title

deeds to government low cost houses’ beneficiaries including senior citizens.

Amongst the beneficiaries was gogo Seraphina Hlengetwa (103). Gogo was so excited to finally receive her title deed. “I never thought I will see this day. I’ve had lost hope of getting my own title deed. Today I will sleep peacefully and my grandchildren will not suffer when I am gone,” said Hlengetwa waving her title deed with joy. Executive mayor Cllr Malatsi, thanked the department for its effort to restore dignity to the local community and the positive intervention made on infrastructure, water and sanitation. “The people of Pixley will benefit from this projects and it will also create more job opportunities. I am grateful for the department for always including us in their budget plans,” appreciated Malatsi

Mashilo emphasized that it is the responsibility of the council to discuss and consolidate a beneficiary list that is in line with the categories prioritised by the department - older persons, people with disability, child-headed families and military veterans. The MEC will continue his project visit to other local municipalities to forge ahead with more amicable solutions to infrastructure and water sanitation.





## MASHILO VOWS TO MEND KLARINET INFRASTRUCTURE



**SUSTAINABLE:** The Klarinet integrated project is one of the successful integrated delivery in the province.

The seemingly persistent infrastructural issues in Klarinet, eMalahleni Local Municipality will certainly be a thing of the past as the Department of Human Settlements has doubled its efforts in ensuring adequate roll-out of infrastructure and necessary amenities, whilst working close with local municipalities. This is an undertaking by MEC Speed Mashilo as he kick-started his community engagement road-show to visit municipalities with the view to assess human settlements challenges and make appropriate interventions.

As part of the visit, Mashilo handed over more than 500 title deeds to low cost government houses' beneficiaries at

Klarinet earlier this April and later visited Siyanqoba BNG project in eMalahleni. While noting the infrastructure challenges at Siyanqoba, Mashilo lamented the everlasting challenges of water and electricity and committed to engage with Minister for Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation Ms Lindiwe Sisulu.

"The challenges of water and electricity are not exclusive to Siyanqoba BNG Project, but common challenges in the municipality. I will therefore arrange a meeting with the Minister in order to solicit her intervention on the issue of water in particular," stated the MEC. He called on people to refrain from illegal occupation of houses and vandalism.

The handing over of title deeds was met with warmth as expressed by the local Executive Mayor, Cllr. Linah Malatjie who mentioned that as a municipality they are indeed grateful to receive these title deeds and believed that they will address the main purpose they are intended for – which is to provide security of tenure to rightful owners: "This will go a long way in ensuring our people's dignity restoration," appreciated Malatjie.

One of the recipients of the title deeds is Mr Bongani Mathebula (41) from Klarinet Ext 8: "I am out of words now that I am the legal owner of my house. I will keep this title deed for my children so that even if it happens that I am no longer there, they would never be harassed by any unscrupulous people looking to rob them off the house," His words of gratitude were shared by another 57 year-old widow, Ms Sibongile Khanyile also from Klarinet.

The MEC will continue with his road-show visiting municipalities across the province as he closes the week off with the visit at Lekwa Local Municipality. The Siyanqoba project has a total of 5177 units with 4486 units already been completed. Mpumalanga has nearly 250 000 people who are in need of houses. The Department's new approach is to focus more on rapid release of land by servicing sites to enable people to buy and build for themselves.

## CYCLONE ELOISE DISASTER VICTIMS TO GET RELIEF

Disaster victims of the much recent Cyclone Eloise would from now heave a sigh of relief after the Department of Human Settlements made an approval of the total sum of R41 million to be channelled as part of the emergency housing programme intervention following the devastating damage caused by the storm that wracked havoc in the province earlier this year.

The said funding which comes from the National Department of Human Settlements is meant to provide for emergency and short-term assistance to households affected or impacted by the disaster this would be through the provision of temporary shelter, temporary relocation of households to safer accommodation and/or shelter as well as repairs to damaged houses.

MEC Speed Mashilo welcomed the intervention and said that this will go a long way in providing not only relief but

bring hope to the victims that would have lost so much due to the rainstorm and its aftermath. "It is important that we hit the ground running in assisting all those affected by the storm and we must be appreciative of the availed and approved funding. We must however, note that this is a conditional grant as we are only expected spend the maximum of R64 441 on repairs per house," he said. Mashilo added that indeed after conducting assessments and the verification of affected households, the Department could record the 640 damaged houses.

The affected houses were found in the following municipalities: Mbombela, Bushbuckridge, Albert Luthuli, Mkhondo, Msugalikwa, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Thaba Chweu. The MEC explained that Non-RDP houses will only be considered if the beneficiaries are low-income earners and can prove to the satisfaction of the Department that they are not able

to repair their own houses. "Beneficiaries in affected mud houses and shacks will have to be screened and thereafter, fill the application form for subsidized low-cost houses (RDP)."

The following groups or criteria is used for the determination of those qualifying for assistance. In certain cases, households or persons with a monthly income exceeding the maximum income set for subsidisation as approved by MINMEC may also apply for assistance under this programme, households headed by minors; persons without dependants as well as persons who are not first-time home-owners.

The programme will also benefit all affected persons who are not able to address their housing emergency from their own resources or from other sources such as the proceeds of house insurance policies.



## CONVERGING AT A POINT OF DEVELOPMENT

“Efforts to focus on infrastructure delivery”



**TAKING STOCK:** MEC SK Mashilo on an ongoing municipal roadshow campaign in municipalities.

Serious bulk infrastructure interventions and coordinated planning between government spheres are critical to ensure the delivery of integrated human settlements project in Mpumalanga Province. This is an assertion by Human Settlements MEC Mr Speed Mashilo as he continued to reach out to municipalities across the province in a drive to address human settlements challenges, which among others relate to infrastructure deficits.

He recently visited Nkomazi Local Municipality to attend to issues ventilated at a forum of MEC's and councillors responsible for human settlements and development in municipalities (MuniMEC), which established infrastructure challenges at the Komatipoort Extension 18 and Malalane Extension 21 BNG Projects. Both projects require further upgrade of bulk infrastructure, storage tanks and access point respectively.

Accompanied by the Local Executive Mayor, Cllr. Johan Mkhathshwa and senior officials from both the institutions

and Water and Sanitation Department, Mashilo learnt that there is a land dispute in one of the land parcels of Komatipoort BNG project. The disputed land belongs to Ingwenyama Simhulu Trust; the matter is now a subject of litigation. However, he noted the imminent detrimental effects of the litigation processes will have on the delivery and called for social and stakeholder engagements on the matter.

“It is good that we have the agreement with the Trust, but if there is a misunderstanding we must first seek engagements, thus I will be meeting the Trust, the municipality and other stakeholders to find a solution on this matter,” said the MEC. Another critical matter was the issue of capacity in services and bulk infrastructure which Mashilo has undertaken to engage the national Department of Human Settlements to mobilise funding for more cash injection. “The issue of capacity is serious, I will therefore engage the Minister on this matter and

bring her here in Nkomazi because it is attainable that rural municipalities require more government investment or interventions,” he charged. Concerning the issues of access to Malelane Ext. 21 project along N4, Mayor Mkhathshwa reported that discussions have started between the municipality and South African National Roads Agency that robots be installed.

The department has completed the servicing of all 500 sites at the Malelane Project which will have a CRU, housing units, child care centre, and community hall. The Komatipoort BNG Project the department sets itself to start and complete the servicing of 1002 sites in the current financial year.

Furthermore, the same project's gravel internal roads is nearing completion. The two mega projects are estimated at a combined value of R172 million which is hoped to completely transform Nkomazi Local Municipality's development outlook.



## GOVERNMENT CONDEMNS LAND INVASION

The Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements has condemned individuals or communities that resort to illegal forms of acquiring land and other services provided by government. This in its view, undermines and deters government's efforts of co-ordinated planning.

A recent incident saw the people from GaNala formerly known as Kriel in eMalahleni Local Municipality attempting to invade land and demanding houses. MEC Speed Mashilo swiftly intervened by engaging the disgruntled group or community to find a lasting solution to their plight. "The urgent need for land cannot be over emphasised, however, illegal acts of land invasion hamper our planning and the general drive for eradication of informal settlements", stressed Mashilo.

The MEC invited the general public or potential beneficiaries to register their needs for stands and houses with their respective local municipalities. Saying that this will help government to have the actual backlog for stands as well as improve its planning and land acquisition priorities. Part of the intervention saw Mashilo advising the community that in responding to their needs for stands, the Department has received Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) approval for Farm Ruitkuil 559 IS. "This means that the township establishment has been approved and general plans must ensue. Illegality and violence is not a sustainable response

to access suitable and habitable land. The Department has already finalised township establishment processes and the township has been proclaimed," charged the MEC. It is anticipated that the said township will see a yield of at least 5000 stands, which brings a lot of relief in the backlog of stands and housing needs in the area.

In its continued efforts for acquisition of suitable land and release thereof, for settlements purposes the Department had planned to acquire 13 pieces of land over

the Medium Term Strategic Framework 2019 - 2024. Thus far, eight pieces of land have since been purchased by the Department for human settlements purposes.

They include among others: Zandfontein in Govan Mbeki; Outshoonstroom and Burhrmanns in Msukaligwa; Esparado, Karino, Farm Biggar in Mbombela; and Loueville in Nkomazi. The Department's new approach is to focus on rapid release of land by servicing stands to encourage self-built by beneficiaries



**PREVENT:** Illegal invasion of land leads to the mushrooming on informal structures.

## MINING TOWNS REVITALIZATION ON COURSE

Mining towns continue to attract employment hopefuls, thus these towns remain a focal point for delivery of integrated human settlements in the province as they continue to battle with deficit of infrastructure and surging need for housing. This is the position of Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements as articulate by MEC Speed Mashilo during his visit to Govan Mbeki Local Municipality to track and assess progress on human settlements delivery in order to enjoin all role players to find lasting solutions to challenges gnawing the municipality.

The municipality has been dealing with the challenge of sewer spillage due to insufficient or dilapidating bulk infrastructure. Withstanding that fact MEC noted the work the Department has done in sewer spillage in the various areas. "We have completed our sewer spillage projects in both Leandra and Embalenhle, while at that we have already started with

upgrading of Embalenhle Pump Station and the construction of bulk sewer outfall line in Kinross Ext. 30," noted the MEC.

Whilst The Local Executive Mayor Cllr. Nhlakanipho Zuma pleaded for more projects he welcomed the intervention by the department and projects that are completed and currently underway. "We have a momentous task of addressing our infrastructure challenges, we are need more from the Department, we must however welcome the recent developments in addressing the spillages in our township," said Zuma. He added that the municipality would work with the Department to quantify the number of incomplete houses.

Both principals also visited ongoing projects and handed over 891 title deeds to low cost subsidized beneficiaries from various villages and regions. Whilst the title deed restores dignity, also bestows security of tenure and sense of ownership,

which also enables access to finance. Among those who received title deeds is Sikhunana Ngodlwana (79) and Thokozile Mzinyane (70) both from Lesley who both expressed gratitude and pride for restoration of their dignity. "We are happy to have finally become homeowners, our lives will surely change for the better", said beneficiaries.

The Department has allocated over R651 million since 2014/15 to 2021/22 financial years to deliver 2207 low cost housing units, servicing 3069 sites and the construction of 4558 informal settlements in various areas of Govan Mbeki as well as infrastructure projects. The MEC will continue with his road-show visiting municipalities across the province. The Department's new approach is to focus more on rapid release of land by servicing sites to enable people to buy and build for themselves.



## PLANS AFOOT TO COMPLETE UNFINISHED HOUSES

Hands are on deck as the Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements sets to complete all unfinished houses throughout the province. This follows MEC Speed Mashilo's call at the recently held forum of MEC and politicians responsible for human settlements and development in municipalities (MunMEC) to urgently deal with all incomplete houses that adversely affect the department's constitutional mandate to provide access to adequate housing.

The Executive Mayors, Members of Mayoral Committees (MMCs) and senior managers attended the virtual session earlier this May 2021 which aimed at taking stock on persistent challenges and outline new direction the department is taking in the year and beyond. The incomplete houses are understood to be those abandoned by the contractor or terminated in different milestones.

With this understanding, MEC Mashilo recounted Executive Council Lekgotla decision to have all houses completed. "EXCO Lekgotla took a resolution in June 2019 that Department of Human Settlements must develop a programme of action to address all the incomplete houses from the previous years," detailed Mashilo. He further noted that the status stands at the tally of 48 incomplete houses to be completed at the close of the second quarter.

The consolidation of the list sourced from municipalities reported 1191 incomplete houses however, upon physical verification by the Department the number drastically dwindled to 59 houses. Moreover, on further beneficiary verification on the Housing Subsidy System (HSS) and technical assessment, only 48 houses qualified for completion.

"Most of the 1 191 houses listed by the municipalities were not necessarily incomplete houses but rather houses not built for waiting beneficiaries; still under construction; with pending issuance of title deeds; without external service connections; or with maintenance related issues," explained Mashilo.

The Department planned to deliver 31 324 housing units over the MTSF period, however has to navigate pertinent challenges such as the slow economic growth, the Covid-19 pandemic to mention but the few. It is again worth mentioning that the Department has downscaled on the delivery of top structures and moved towards more delivery of serviced. Thus, over the last seven financial years there has been a steady decline (69%) in housing delivery targets.



**CONSOLIDATE:** Department ensuring the completion of unfinished houses at various localities.



## MASHILO CALLS FOR PRESERVATION OF WATER RESOURCES



**SCARCE:** The Mkhombo Dam is one of the biggest water reservoir at the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality.

Human Settlements MEC in Mpumalanga, Mr. Speed Mashilo has urged municipalities to use their water resources optimally and give sense of collaborative responsibility with communities. Mashilo made the call when addressing stakeholders at the recently held Dr. JS Moroka Water Summit attended by various role players ranging from government, private sector, farming, traditional to community representatives. The municipality is one of the severely draught stricken and water scarce localities in the province. Adding to the woes, the municipality has had incidents of theft and vandalism of water infrastructure in the recent past.

“The municipality has over 200 boreholes and 30 operational water tankers to the service all affected villages, the question is how do we use and allocate these resources, we must therefore use these resources optimal”, charged Mashilo. He added an earnest consideration for creation of water catchment and harvesting Mkhombo Dam

must be pursued to prevent loss of water. In dealing with vandalism MEC Mashilo has labelled these heinous incidents acts of sabotage and that the matter will be elevated to the level of the Provincial Commissioner.

These challenges in water engulf the municipality at these desperate times of COVID-19 pandemic, thus undermine the efforts to combat the spread of the virus. This was well noted in the address by the Executive Mayor of Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, Cllr. Roda Sazi Mathabe who also bemoaned vandalism and invited communities to jealousy protect their infrastructure. “Vandalism of water infrastructure is rife in this locality, we therefore call upon communities to be responsible and protect their infrastructure”, she said.

During the discussions, it transpired that community responsibility and collaboration as well communication must be strengthened to ensure preservation of

water. One community representative from ward 10, Mr. Peter Shile urged that constant communication and awareness should be at the centre of dealing with vandalism and water deliveries. “Communication and community awareness are of critical importance if we were to deal with these challenges, delivery of water must be reliable, timeous and well communicated”, charge Shile.

The summit recommended that all resolutions must not remain a token of lip service but be implemented. In view of illegal connections, management must devise a strategy of combating this trend as it burdens the municipality. Both the informal and formal businesses must be engaged further on water usage and preservation in their respective businesses. The summit also reflected on progress made since the last engagements of Water Indaba held in 2019.





#### VISION

Integrated sustainable human settlements and improved quality livelihoods

#### MISSION

To coordinate and facilitate the creation of integrated sustainable human settlements through:

- Servicing of sites, construction of houses, issuing of title deeds, resolution of rental disputes and other socio-economic facilities for poor communities
- Collaboration with other state department in delivery public facilities
- Collaboration with the private sector and other government agencies

#### VALUES

The values of the Department rest on Batho Pele principles.  
The Department is committed to maintain the following values:

#### CORE VALUES

Equality  
Integrity  
Accountability  
Professionalism  
Value for money

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