

# Address by Local Government and Housing MEC Maite Nkoana-Mashabane at the Official Hand-Over of Houses Donated by Developers

**25 January 2006**

Programme Director;  
Honourable First Lady of the Province, Ms Ramokone Moloto;  
Esteemed Executive Mayor of the Capricorn District Municipality, Councillor Motalane Monakedi;  
Honourable Mayor of Molemole Municipality, Councillor GJ Mothudi;  
Our partner in good governance and delivery at grassroots level, Kgoshi Manthata;  
The contractors who have heeded our call and rushed to the plight of our people – especially Ntlaletseng, MPPJ, Indlovu, Fikile and Try Developers;  
Respected representatives of our people, all the ward councillors here present;  
And lastly, our friends from the media:  
Dumelang!

Programme Director

I want to express my greatest pleasure as I initiate this unique partnership with our housing developers today. I believe that this new way of doing things will ensure that we intensify our war against poverty and provide as many of our people with decent, quality housing.

Four months-or-so ago, my Department had a productive meeting with the majority of our housing contractors. The aim of the meeting was to find ways that the Department could work better with developers in meeting the housing needs of our people. It was also intended to ensure that we, as a Province, completed building the houses that were allocated to us by the national government during this financial year.

At the end of that fruitful meeting, I made a plea to our housing partners about the plight of several families who were, despite their vulnerable situation, still not being attended to as quickly as they should have been. As many of you know, as a government, we have made it quite clear that we will place the most vulnerable members of our society high on our priority list when we allocate houses and also when embarking on other forms of social interventions. The most vulnerable members are those who are destitute, orphaned, sickly or living with disabilities.

However, in instances it is problematic to place the most vulnerable members of our society high on the allocations list as our people sometimes do not indicate their vulnerable positions when applying for houses. This then forces them to be treated as any other housing applicant, despite being in a more desperate position than others. We have to correct this – even if it means embarking on awareness campaigns to teach our people how to apply properly for houses.

Programme Director

As a government, we have also stated it quite categorically that it will be impossible for us to meet the needs of all our people by ourselves. We have to enter into sustainable partnerships with all stakeholders if we are to mount a serious challenge against poverty and unemployment.

It was thus extremely heart-warming to see the positive response that many of the developers at that meeting had for my request. In fact, I was awed by the immense compassion that our partners showed to those who were so destitute and desperate for adequate shelter. Before leaving the venue of the meeting, my staff had already informed me of no less than three developers who had responded to my Department's call and committed themselves to building houses for the poor. To them I say: keep up the good work.

Programme Director

In June last year in Kliptown, Gauteng Province, our people gathered in their numbers to celebrate and commemorate the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter. The Charter, which has been the blue-print for the foundation of a new democratic society based on respect for human rights and equality for all peoples, was also an important step in the setting up of various partnerships aimed at building a free South Africa.

It was during the processes of gathering information on what the wishes of all South Africans were back in 1955 that various peoples -- of all races and religions found in this country -- rejected the divisive apartheid philosophies of the Nationalist Party and boldly declared that all of us: black, white, brown and yellow had to be partners. We all had to be partners in developing and taking our country forward. It was realized then that no single race or entity could build the South Africa that we all aspired towards without the involvement of other groups or entities. As the Charter stated, "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, both black and white".

Accordingly, the task of developing the country then belongs to all of us, whether we are public officials or private citizens. Even if we are poor, we can still do something to make our country a better place for all our peoples. And if we are affluent, we can do more than a little something to change the lives of our compatriots for the better. What our developers have done in this municipality, and in six others around the Province, is show that all of us can play a role in shaping the Province we all want to live in. We want a Province where all have access to decent shelter, with running water and all the other amenities in proximity. Without inputs from our partners, this goal will be very difficult to achieve.

Programme Director

Some people may be baffled about why I choose to speak on the Freedom Charter today when the anniversary took place some seven months ago. But I believe that the unique partnership that we are launching here today – the partnership between my Department and our development partners, the housing developers, is based on the Freedom Charter. In the Freedom Charter, we, the people of this country, said that "there shall be houses, security and comfort". By we, I mean all patriotic South Africans who have a commitment to making this a better country for all. We committed all partners to doing away with the legacy of apartheid. This partnership with our developers shows clearly that that commitment was not just a pipe dream.

Programme Director

With this partnership, only seven families will benefit in the short term. While others may say that that number is too small, we believe that we should rejoice if we manage to provide anyone with decent shelter, especially if those houses are to complement our normal housing allocation. What it means to us is that we have one less family living in squalor in our Province and I believe is reason enough for us to have smiles on our faces.

Programme Director

Although we will be giving one family, the children of the late Ntate le Mme Seanego, a home today, this partnership will benefit six other families. These families come from all corners of our Province and are all, in one way or another, living under difficult conditions. From the people of our Province, I want to thank the developers for their good work and hope other capable individuals and organizations will take a leaf from their book.

Ke lebogile.