

Budget Vote on Human Settlements

UCDP : Hon IS Mfundisi

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OAC, 16:45

There is consensus on the existence of huge backlog in housing. But human settlement is not only about housing, its about holistic livelihoods of the people. Even if we were to meet the required number of houses, houses on their own do not translate into decent livelihood. Without schools, playfields, clinics, community halls etc, human settlements' mandate would not be achieved.

Section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, states that everyone has the right to have "access to adequate housing". It is the government's duty to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of this right. Provincial legislatures and local government share responsibility with the national government for delivery of adequate housing.

That Mrs. Grootboom died even before the constitutional court order to provide her with shelter was never realized is an indictment that will haunt the government for a long time to come. To make up for this, government should put up good houses that will enhance the dignity of our people. We complained about the incommensurable matchbox houses that were "goed genoeg vir hulle" that were built by the then government, but nowadays we notice sprawling of settlements of tin houses and decrepit contraptions across South African landscape.

The note that the issues of sanitation has been brought higher up on the priority list by government. Let us hope that in the near future no residential

place in this country will still be using buckets for the night soil removal. Abantu bakruqkile yimigqomo engathwalwayo xa kuqhankqalazwa ngabantu. Nangaphandle kwalonto asiyonto entle. Consideration has to be given to providing serviced sites so that those able to build can do so. It is a common sight nowadays to have a high rise two storey mansion dwarfing RDP houses in a place meant to serve the poorest of the poor.

Most of the black townships and squatter settlements lack the basic infrastructure and services of water, sewage, and electricity. Efforts to solve South Africa's housing problem must focus not only on construction, but on servicing current and prospective sites by building roads and providing electricity, sanitation, and water.

While the UCDP supports the budget vote, the department should be awake to corrupt practices among the ranks of those dealing with housing as evidenced by what happened when GaRankuwa and Mabopane were incorporated into Gauteng. We hope the Ombuds office will be handy in this.

I will not belabour the matter as I have sought an appointment with the Minister since 22 February 2012. We shall take it up from there.