



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT BY THE MEC FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND PUBLIC WORKS IN RESPONSE TO A MISLEADING STATEMENT BY THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 31 MAY 2022
SUBJECT: SUFFERINGS OF COMMUNITIES MUST NOT BE USED TO SCORE POLITICAL POINTS
ENQUIRIES: NDABEZINHLE SIBIYA / MBULELO BALOYI

Archie Gumede Conference Centre: My office is receiving calls from journalists requesting my comment following a misleading statement issued by the Democratic Alliance in the province. After having studied the statement, we wish to caution against using the sufferings of the people to score political points.

From the onset, we wish to reiterate our commitment towards working with all leaders of political parties and communities across political lines to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of floods.

We appreciate the guidance and constructive criticism from genuine leaders, political parties and ordinary members of society. In them, we see true patriots and who are committed towards advancing the agenda of nation building. We will always value their guidance without any reservation.

Equally, we will not hesitate to expose those with double standards and uncontrolled desire to hog media headlines. These are elements who have been riding on the sufferings of Africans, who for years, have remained nothing but their cheap labour.

Yesterday we issued a comprehensive report that we presented before the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements last week Thursday. In our presentation before honourable members – we were honest about the challenges we are facing as the department. We also detailed progress.

On top of the list of our challenges is the unavailability of suitable land to build temporary residential units and houses for the victims of floods – including those living in riverbanks.

We have stated that we have encountered resistance from some ratepayers associations who have flatly refused to allow the department to build Temporary Residential Units (TRUs) and houses in state owned land.

Critically, we hope that when the spin doctors, propagandists and strategists of the Democratic Alliance do a post analysis of the impact of their statement, they will be frank to admit that it is an ill-advised gamble and cheap gimmick to accuse the department of doing nothing when their organization has done nothing to address the issue of ratepayers who are against the building of TRUs and homes for affected communities.



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It is actually surprising that some residents who belong to ratepayers associations are happy to use certain communities as cheap labour but do not want them to live nearby – in decent houses we want to build.

The people of this country can attest to the fact that thousands of victims of floods lived in informal settlements, some adjacent to their workplaces. We have witnessed people who built on hills and land slopes towards their homes. They lived in inhumane conditions.

Our history tells us that townships and hostels were created not for human settlements but to accommodate Africans who were regarded as cheap labour. Millions of people were deliberately denied access to economic opportunities - had no running water and electricity.

They were prevented from accessing recreational facilities and social infrastructure such as decent hospitals, libraries and academic institutions in areas where they lived.

Through our Social Housing Programme, we are ensuring that low income households in urban areas have easy access to economic centres. The focus is on the restoration of human dignity and ensure stability of our communities who were divided along racial lines. We want to see children having access to quality education, recreational facilities and all other amenities. We want to see economic growth as a result of the workforce that is motivated and skilled.

We reported weeks ago about a meeting attended by myself, Deputy Mayor Cllr Philani Mavundla, Speaker of eThekweni Thabani Nyawose, Head of Department of Human Settlements Mdu Zungu, Acting City of Durban Musa Mbele, City of Durban Chief Financial Officer Sandile Mnguni, Deputy City Manager - Human Settlements, Engineering and Transport Authority at eThekweni Municipality Ms Beryl Mphakathi-Khanyile and other senior officials representing three spheres of government.

In this meeting we discussed and agreed on the conversion of dilapidated buildings and state properties into social housing units.

A report was also presented pointing out that all spheres of government had identified hectares of land to be used to build houses for the victims of floods.

Fast forward, we reported to the portfolio committee last week Thursday that 38 land parcels from National Department of Public Works & Infrastructure, KZN Department Public Works and eThekweni Municipality had been identified totaling 78 hectares. Detailed assessments on the 38 recommended properties are complete. These sites will be released by Public Works through Power of Attorney.

Of the 64 mass care centres which have been used to temporarily house affected families, 38 have been linked with possible land parcels. All in all, about 3385 people who were affected by the floods will be accommodated through the identified land parcels.

Physical verification of 199 serviced sites within eThekweni Metro has been completed and 65 sites were found to be suitable for development of a permanent housing solution.

Necessary assessments are also to be conducted on privately-owned land with a potential total yield of 1 172 houses.



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A social facilitator is being attached to each mass care centre to identify affected families who have their own sites available to construct houses. In addition, the department is ready to issue orders for building material vouchers for other residents who want to rebuild their houses on their own.

Critically, the Office of the Auditor-General and Provincial Treasury are conducting real time audits of each transaction.

On the other hand, we continue to meet with the Commissioners from the SA Human Rights Commission to ensure the integrity of the process.

We invite the people of this province to join hands with us as we usher in a new era of prosperity for all not a selected few.

Statements that seeks to sow divisions must be rejected by all.

ENDS

Issued by the MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works Jomo Sibiya

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