

**MINISTER HANGANA'S ADDRESS.  
THE LAUNCHING OF THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT  
HANDBOOK**

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In the apartheid South Africa only white people had a right to have access to adequate housing, in a democratic South Africa the opposite is the case. Section 26 of our constitution clearly stipulates that "everybody has a right to adequate housing, and that the state must take reasonable legislative measures, within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of this right"

In dealing with this horrible past, which unfortunately, still exists even in our present, it is crucial that we put it into its right historic context. The Influx Control, Migrant Labour and Group Areas Act are entirely to blame for the existence of the informal settlements.

The apartheid advocates only needed a few blacks to come and work in their factories, and housing them was the least of their worries. After the repealing of the influx control, it's then that our people got a chance of freely moving around their country, going wherever they thought could they find employment, which of course, were the urban areas.

The majority of those who moved to the cities could not find decent employment because of their low skills profile. The only accommodation these poor people could afford would be a shack in an informal settlement.

On the basis of international experience, the process of eradicating informal settlements will still haunt us for at least the next two decades. I however, would like to believe we could hasten this process if we all ganged up against it.

The sad thing is, because of the continuous lack of employment, the growth of the informal settlements is faster than the province's capacity to provide formal housing opportunities.

At the moment, the province can only create plus or minus 21 000 housing opportunities per year. I must admit, this delivery pace does not do sufficient damage to eradicate informal settlements, which should ultimately reduce this huge backlog the province is facing.

One of the major things that this handbook does, is answer a list of questions in as far as who are responsible for the upgrading of informal settlements is concerned. One disturbing argument has it that municipalities do not share such a responsibility and that this responsibility rests solely with national and provincial departments of housing.

Meanwhile people outside these three spheres of government can debate this question; it would be irresponsible of any of these spheres of government (national, provincial dept of housing as well as local government) were to buy into this argument.

Section 1.4 of this handbook clearly stipulates that the responsibility for the upgrading of informal settlements lies with whoever is responsible for the provision of housing and functions related to it, especially all structures and levels of government.

This handbook is also an attempt to discourage the perception that residents of informal settlements are somewhat 'uninvited' guests who have invaded the cities of the white people.

If we acknowledge that South Africa is for all those who live in it, we should equally so, acknowledge the need to make a paradigm shift, and accept that the informal settlements are an integral part of our community, and that they cannot be wished away during the planning of our towns and cities.

It however, does not condone illegal occupation of land. The handbook is a user-friendly resource to which we can all refer when faced with a wide range of issues regarding the informal settlements.

It is also meant to be a living document to which we can add as we go along. In this regard, users are invited to make comments and give input drawn from their experiences so that the document remains a relevant resource to all its users.

My sincere words of thanks go to my department officials, who together with the City of Cape Town officials and specialists in the field from the private sector were responsible for the compilation of this handbook. Without being biased, I would like to single out Mr Lionel Esterhuizen and his team for a wonderful work done.

Although the state cannot give everybody a house immediately, with a bit of dedication and cooperation from all stakeholders, as sure as the sun comes up tomorrow, we can improve the quality of life in these communities by giving them access to basic domestic services and incorporating them in all our future planning.

After all, it is our constitutional obligation to see to it that the plights of the residents of informal settlements receive government's best attention.

I thank you.