

Mobilising Call for Human Settlements 2030

21 April 2010

Cape Town — Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale has called on South Africans to harness the same energy that went into the build-up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup to "turn South Africa into one large construction site for human settlements developments".

He made the call during his Budget Vote speech in Parliament on Wednesday, labeling the initiative "Human Settlements 2030".

Sexwale - who is a FIFA representative on the Local Organising Committee for the 2010 World Cup - said questions had already been asked about what would propel the South African economy beyond the global tournament.

"Undoubtedly, the World Cup will be a resounding success. South Africa has constructed massive highways, iconic stadiums, world-class airports and state-of-the-art technology platforms," he said.

"The target for Human Settlements ought to be nothing less than an enhanced vision, driven by a similar energy and passion to World Cup 2010 - this time round, Human Settlements 2030."

Sexwale said it was important for South Africans to think creatively about large-scale human settlements as "the 'stadiums', 'airports' and 'highways' of our people".

"To that end, we must explore the possibility of marshalling resources in a similar fashion to the way we impressed the world with preparations for the World Cup.

"Many of our people, who still live in depressed conditions, should also be impressed."

He stressed that the mobilization of human, capital, financial, logistical, construction and project management resources should not dissipate after the final World Cup whistle.

"The potential exists for the whole country to be turned into one large construction site as we build sustainable human settlements in various localities," he said.

(Source: <http://allafrica.com>)

Judicial rulings worry Sexwale

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Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale has expressed concern over "the legalisation of illegality" which had resulted from a number of judicial rulings on matters within his portfolio and which he warned could result in the "collapse" of government plans and budgets.

Justice and Constitutional Development Minister Jeff Radebe had been mandated by the Cabinet to assist him in resolving this matter, Sexwale said in his budget vote speech in Parliament yesterday.

He said the unintended consequences of the rulings had been a negative effect on the mandate of his department and in some cases the forced amendment of human settlements policy “with severe and unplanned budgetary consequences”.

Unlawful behaviour was legitimised by a series of court rulings, he said.

The most recent far-reaching ruling was that against the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality whereby the city was ordered to pay rent to a private property owner on behalf of illegal occupiers until alternative accommodation had been found, hence the reference to the legalisation of illegality.

Sexwale said service delivery protests around the country could be partly attributed to the slow pace of progress in dealing with the huge housing backlog. Since 1994, more than 2,3- million housing units have been made available for nearly 11-million people but the number of informal settlements had ballooned to more than 2700.

(Source: www.businessday.co.za)

Housing sting nets 1 500 corrupt state officials

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More than 1 500 corrupt government officials have been nabbed for housing related corruption since November last year and R38 million has been recouped by government.

Housing Minister Tokyo Sexwale said during his budget vote speech on Wednesday that collaboration with the Special Investigations Unit to root out officials involved housing fraud had netted 1 570 government officials who were abusing the low income housing subsidy scheme.

He said of those nabbed, 1 189 had been charged and convicted and government had been able to recoup about R38 million in the process.

“Corruption has become endemic in our society and needs to be rooted out. This much must be clear: we are undeterred in our resolve to eradicate this plague, which is so debilitating to society at large,” he said.

He told MPs that five lawyers had been struck off the roll for housing related corruption and he expected other corrupt lawyers to suffer the same fate.

Sexwale said the Special Investigations Unit had been working in partnership with the Auditor-General’s office and national and provincial departments to identify and root out corrupt officials across the country.

“The team is hard at work tracking down those responsible for corruption, abuse and malpractices,” he said.

Sexwale also announced that since he became minister, his department had saved a combined R120 million by cutting down on travelling, advertising and on freezing posts that are not considered critical.

A number of cost-cutting measures were introduced after his appointment including a

ban on business class travelling and scaling down on the number of officials who can travel.

An initial assessment of the 2009/10 expenditure showed that the department had managed to save R53.2 million in operational expenditure, including R20.6 million saved through trimming down on travelling and on substance allowance for travelling officials, a R24.4 million saving by cutting down on advertising and R3.3 million saved in administrative fees.

(Source: www.busrep.co.za)