**Speech on Vote 33: Human Settlements  
By ACDP Leader, Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP**

ACDP says the socioeconomic well-being of most South Africans is in ruins because of the failure of government, and the Department of Human Settlements

“House Chairperson,

Covid-19 has sharply brought to the fore acute deficiencies of the Department of Human Settlements in fulfilling its mandate as prescribed by the Constitution and Housing Act of 1997.

The key indicators that demonstrate the failure of the Department of Human Settlements are the following:

1. Our people still have no access to adequate housing.

2. The State has failed dismally to facilitate sustainable housing development in all three spheres of government.

3. Whereas housing is a basic human need and should be a key sector of national economy; South Africa is nowhere near facilitating access to descent housing to fulfil this key mandate.

4. The socioeconomic well-being of most South Africans is in ruins; this because of the failure of government and the Department of Human Settlements for the last 26 years.

5. Human Settlements has failed to become an agent for positive change.

Chairperson, the reality on the ground is that the conditions under which five million South African shack-dwellers are forced to live under are unbearable, and in some places inhuman. They are forced to manage without electricity, proper sanitation, safety and reliable security, refuse collection or real access to emergency services. Fires are an ever-present risk and in some places, up to 100 people have to share a single communal tap. Being told to comply with lockdown regulations becomes impossible when even their shacks are not socially distanced from their neighbours.

The ACDP has chosen to heed the advice of a group of nearly 100 experts consisting of economists and researchers who have sent a warning about the adjusted budgets. They have even called on Parliament to reject the Supplementary Budget delivered by the Finance Minister on Wednesday 24 June 2020, calling it “economic suicide.”

The initial 20/21 Human Settlements budget of R35,1 billion has been reduced by R2,3 billion to R32.8 billion. This means that a reduction of R2,3 billion will weaken the department’s ability to deal effectively with the housing backlog and other challenges, and will further increase the vulnerability and health risks of those who live in congested and overpopulated informal settlements, in particular.

The ACDP will therefore not support this proposed adjusted budget.”