

MINI PLENARIES (BUDGET VOTES)

Vote 33: Human Settlements

Hon. Xolani Ngwezi, MP

21 July 2020

Honourable Speaker,

The IFP has consistently been raising the problematic implementation of agreed projects by this Department. It is very disturbing to see the lack of attention paid to people's living and housing conditions. The lack of implementation and lack of accountability has been exposed by the current lockdown regulations and the requirements to keep our people safe from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The consistent failure to meet targets is not a new thing and South Africans must not be fooled into thinking that failure to reach targets are as a result of covid-19. For example, in KwaZulu-Natal, I recently conducted my own research. I found that in areas like Nongoma, Ulundi, Mhlatuze, and uMlalazi under King Cetshwayo District, to name a few, people were still waiting for housing since 2012.

This is not a short-term delay, as there was no Covid-19 Pandemic since 2012. We note that even though implementing agents have been appointed, people are still waiting.

The suspension of the Housing and Urban Settlements Development Grant will not be accepted as an excuse from this Department, as these projects were approved long before the world even knew about a Covid-19 pandemic.

It is now time to call for accountability and demand answers from the Department on what happened to the money? Has it been stolen? And by what date will the Minister - as head of the Department - commit to these housing projects being finalised and delivered? The IFP calls for an urgent report by the Minister regarding her plan to address the housing crisis in the above-mentioned areas.

While we await a response by the Minister, we note the funds allocated to the Title Deeds Restoration Grant, have seen a 66.8% decrease.

This decrease is very worrying, as there is still a major backlog of title deeds that need to be issued. We have reports that people have died waiting for their title deeds, which additionally complicates the process afterwards, as a dispute then arises regarding who should now receive the title deed. The previous and current pace at which the Department is working is unacceptable. We call for this title deed programme to meet all its targets and put this issue to rest over the next two years.

We believe it is within the capacity of the Department to do so. The reduction of funds for this programme should not be a reflection on the government's willingness to deliver on promises of title deeds in this regard.

As the IFP does not believe that the adjusted budget has directly affected the abovementioned historic problems of housing and title deeds, we support the budget.

I thank you.

Contact:

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