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### MEDIA STATEMENT

**To : All Editors and Journalists**

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#### ***Department of Human Settlements promise to fast track housing delivery***

The North West Department of Human Settlement has promised to address the current housing backlog they are currently faced with. This includes ensuring that all blocked projects are unblocked, contractors are back on site, and contractors who abandoned site are reinstated or new contractors are appointed. The department was responding to questions from the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs during their oversight visit to housing projects in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality recently.

The committee visited projects in Maquassie Hills, Ventersdorp, Kanana and other areas to assess progress made on blocked and other departmental projects. During the visit, the committee noted some dissatisfactions on the progress made on the construction of houses and called on the department to fast track the process of delivering houses in the province. The committee further urged the department to implement consequence management on officials and contractors who continue to abandon projects and not do their work as expected.

Moreover, the committee expressed mixed feelings on several projects, however acknowledging progress made in unblocking blocked projects and completing other projects. The committee also expressed satisfaction on the level of delivery, quality and processes followed by the department in prioritising, the elderly, women, people with disability, child headed households and other vulnerable groups.

In some of the projects, the committee was informed that contractors had abandoned site mainly because of administrative challenges facing the department such as the serious budget cuts, the hike in material prices and the old housing quantum. The acting committee chairperson CJ Steyl, called on the department to ensure that it follows proper processes in liaising with the national department and provincial treasury to request extra funds to resuscitate blocked projects and appointing contractors in most of those that have been abandoned.

According to Steyl, the department must work around the clock in making sure that beneficiaries receive houses and that contractors are paid on time in 30 days as directed by the provincial treasury. “It is critically important that we ensure that the department delivers houses. We are also responsible to make sure that we conduct oversight, to ensure that government funds are spent appropriately and that the department is delivering as according to its mandate. We therefore need reports from the department, about its plans in addressing the serious challenged the department is faced with,” said Steyl.

Acting Head of Department, Dr Ben Bole who was joined by Director in the Office of the Head of Department Dr Makhosana Nyamanzane and Acting Director for Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality Mr Neo Mokoma acknowledged some of the challenges raised by the portfolio committee and committed to work closely with the Provincial Treasury and the National Department of Human Settlements in ensuring that they deliver houses to communities as per their mandate.

“As the department, we are aware of the challenges raised by the portfolio committee to further improve the department’s performance. As such, we will work with other spheres of government to find workable solutions to ensure we deliver adequate housing to our beneficiaries,” said Dr Ben Bole.

However beneficiaries like Bertha Modibe are some of those that expressed happiness as government managed to give them houses. She said that she stayed in an inhabitable environment and ever since they moved into their new homes, life has changed for the better. She further expressed her gratitude toward government and the municipality for ensuring that houses are delivered as promised.

**Ends#**

**Issued by the Department of Human Settlements (North West)**

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