

**STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF THE
MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NORTH WEST
HOUSING CORPORATION AND MIDVAAL WATER COMPANY,
MAHIKENG, 20 MARCH 2024**

Good morning, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen!

Dumelang!

Today marks a historic epoch in our forward march to provide decent housing for the citizens of the North West province. It has been a long, difficult but fulfilling journey to be where we are.

Some three years ago the North West Housing Corporation (NWHC) embarked on a journey to conceptualise the concept of mega and smart cities in our province. Supported by our provincial government, our dream of providing the state-of-the-art houses of different typologies and catering for diverse needs propelled us to craft a concept that takes into cognisance and the mainly rural nature of our province without deviating from the key principles of the mega and smart city, We adapted the concept to our objective conditions that obtains in our province but maintaining the high standards expected of a mega or smart city.

Members of the media, allow me to provide a context to these ground-breaking developments prior to dealing to what has brought us together today. Mega city is a mixed housing development consisting of a mix of affordable housing, low-cost housing, rental stock and up-market (mortgage) housing. The development also has various social amenities including clinics, schools, recreational areas, churches, early learning facilities, shopping malls and even light industries that enables residents to easily walk to and from work.

The new developments will break away from old patterns and significant progress will be made in retrofitting existing settlements. In rural areas, targeted investments and institutional reform will drive a revival of rural South Africa towards 2050 in working proactively with people.

The Mega Projects strategy was conceptualized to primarily facilitate socio-economic transformation through the provision of access points to economical hubs and job

opportunities, something that was glaringly lacking during the apartheid era of racial spatial planning patterns. The Mega Projects will be designed and located in such a way that they promote social cohesion and integration and cut travelling costs as they will be closer to places of work.

The Mega Cities project is in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) objectives of, amongst others, eradicating informal settlements, building integrated urban settlements and fast-tracking housing provision by providing diversity in housing products and finance options. These Mega and Smart Projects are large and complex infrastructure projects and the entire programme is valued at over R3 billion.

The implementation of the Mega Cities project by the North West Housing Corporation – a Department of Human Settlements (NW) entity - is fully supported by provincial government of North West. This unequivocal support has energised us to work with the requisite speed to not only conduct a scoping exercise, feasibility study and even get these projects to the shovel-ready stage. At the very onset we invited partners in the public and private sectors to join hands with us to achieve this noble objective of providing decent, quality and modern shelter to those in need. It has always been and remains a win-win arrangement that would ensure that we deliver this ambitious project.

Without belabouring the point, we have concluded feasibility studies, market studies and bankable business plans for our Smart and Mega Cities programme. Our projects have complied with the shovel readiness matrix. The land availability agreements are in place and reputable developers have been appointed through an open and transparent process. In short, these projects are viable and will cater for the diverse needs of house-seekers in different LSM levels especially given that our province is positioning itself as a new hub for international trade and investment.

The unwavering government support for our mega and smart cities programme and its backing of our envisaged partnership with strategic role players and stakeholders is a major shot in the arm for our efforts. The stability of our provincial economy, business-friendly policies and our strategic location as a province are factors that also contribute to the viability of these projects.

The expected economic impacts are in line with priorities set at national, provincial, and local government levels. More than our mega and smart cities programme

meeting the housing needs of house-seekers, the programme offers a myriad of opportunities and spinoffs such as practical and symbiotic economic dividend, aimed at growing the economy, social upliftment, economic growth, and secured business growth and infrastructure development that will be a catalyst for economic growth, job creation and entrepreneurship. These will lead to improvement of millions of lives and significant economic return and social returns.

The Mega and Smart Cities project will also contribute to lowering unemployment levels as thousands of temporary and permanent jobs are going to be created. These projects will also foster inter-industry linkages between the sectors whilst meeting the distributional effects caused by demand for housing services. The focus will be employment for the youth, women, and people with disabilities.

There will be ten (10) Mega and Smart Cities in different parts of our province. There will be the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, Brits/Lanseria, Mogwase, Marikana, Madibeng, and Taung Mega Cities. There will also be a Student City/Village in Mahikeng to cater for the accommodation needs of the ever-growing student population in our capital city. These mixed use housing developments will yield close to 30 000 housing units of different typologies including Breaking New Ground (BNG)/RDP housing, Multi-Storey BNG/RDP (for densification), Community Residential Units, Social Housing, Affordable Housing and the Military Veterans housing units.

Given that the Mahikeng Campus is the second largest of the North West University's three campuses and admits thousands of students from over 24 countries, the proposed development will be strategically located for these students. This development aims to provide 1500 much needed beds. There is high demand for accommodation as the current enrolment is over 13 000 students with only 3 200 accommodated on campus.

Having outlined this context, this then brings us to the purpose of today's ceremony. The North West Housing Corporation and the Midvaal Water Company are signing a cooperation agreement, This exercise is a culmination of discussions that have been ongoing for several months. The imperative to not only build structures but also ensure that there is guaranteed, continuous supply of clean, drinkable water is top of mind. The residents of our Mega and Smart Cities and surrounding areas need and expect to have access to potable water at all times.

Subsequent to investigations made to evaluate the capacities, capabilities and competence of water service authorities and water service providers in our province specifically, the North West Housing Corporation initiated discussions with Midvaal Water Company to explore cooperation and collaboration options to ensure that our Mega and Smart Cities are successfully implemented and the water needs of the residents, workers and businesses in and around these human settlements are adequately met.

Today's signing of the Cooperation Agreement marks a major milestone in our ongoing journey to provide decent shelter to those in need. The agreement spells out roles and responsibilities of the affected parties and will act as a framework that governs the envisaged relationship between the North West Housing Corporation and Midvaal Water Company.

For completeness and in brief, the agreement aims at cementing a formal agreement on the provision of the overall management and the implementation of housing and property projects, facilitation and raising of funds for the projects, the management, implementation and rollout of bulk infrastructure projects; the provision of bulk potable water to the projects, servicing, operating and maintenance of the infrastructure; and provision of water related services, including laboratory services.

It is envisaged that the agreement will contribute to the successful implementation and upkeep of these projects given that the two entities possess the requisite knowledge, experience, capacities, capabilities and wherewithal in housing, property, water and related services. With support of our government, we commit to the delivery of these projects within the stipulated timeframes and budgets.

As the North West Housing Corporation and Midvaal Water Company, we are delighted to be partnering to embark on a trailblazing journey of developing the Mega and Smart City Programme in our province. Throughout what promises to be an enjoyable, exciting and rewarding journey, we will be continuously communicating the progress we are registering towards realising this noble dream.

Thank you!

Re a leboga!

Biographies

North West Housing Corporation

Midvaal Water Company