



**Address by Public Protector Adv Thuli Madonsela during the
Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue outreach event in Cala, Eastern
Cape on Thursday, July 19, 2012**

**Programme Director, Adv Mthwakazi Thomas
Speaker of the Eastern Cape Legislature, Hon. Fikile Xasa
Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Prince Zolile
Ncamashe;
The Mayors that are here;
Housing delegation led by HOD, Mr Sharpley;
Transport delegation led by HOD representative Mr Dinte;
CEO of the Public Protector SA, Mr Themba Mthethwa;
Commissioner Loyilane of the Commission of Gender Equality;
Representatives of the SIU;
Representatives of the Legal; ;
Representatives of the Public Service Accountability Monitor;
Representatives of the Construction Industry Development Board;
The Public Protector team;
Members of the media;
Ladies and gentlemen;**

Thank you all for deeming it fit to grace this occasion with your presence. For my team and I, your attendance means that you consider the issues we are raising matters of national importance.

As you are aware, we are in town this morning as part of the third annual Public Protector National Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue. This year's dialogue incorporates public hearings on two systemic investigations we are doing on RDP houses and on the conversion of panel vans into taxis.

The theme for our dialogue is ***“Joining hands to end maladministration and ensure responsive service delivery: Focus on RDP houses and regulatory gaps on the illegal conversion of panel vans into taxis.”***

Of the 2 956 complaints received in this province in the last financial year, 118 related to RDP houses. Twenty-four of the 118 cases were finalised that year while 94 were settled this year. Since April this year, we have received only 11 complaints relating to RDP houses, one of which has been finalised.

My team and I were in Cala yesterday and residents there raised quite a number of important service delivery grievances worth sharing with you. Our visit yesterday coincided with Madiba's birthday and the 67 minutes campaign. This was great because our efforts are in line with Madiba's warning that

On RDP houses complaints raised include long waiting periods, illegal sale of houses, leaking roofs collapsing houses, houses that are not disability-friendly, houses allocated without any waterborne sewage system, small houses (they call them vezinyawo), illegal occupation of houses and contractors that have rendered poor workmanship but paid in full, wasting government funds due to the fixing poorly built houses.

There are those that claim they were given keys to incomplete houses and asked to complete the construction themselves. Sewage infrastructure was on the list of virtually all those who spoke. There were also allegations of corruption in the delivery of RDP housing, with specifics cited including the hiring of incompetent companies, payment for shoddy work and lapses in the quality assurance by inspectors that approved "completed" projects.

On the issue of regulatory gaps in the illegal conversion of panel vans to taxis, a local taxi owner told the meeting that taxi owners were opting for cheaper converted panel vans over purpose built passenger transport minibuses due to the fact that the latter were expensive.

Our participants in Cala said government told them to give up their cars as part of the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme, which they did, only to find that they need R60 000 deposit to buy the vehicles authorities recommended and pay R10 000 monthly instalments. He decried the fact that minibus taxis, unlike buses, are not subsidised by government.

The community however had a litany of public transport complaints. These included bad roads, including bridges resulting in no school days when teachers and learners cannot go to school on rainy days. The community also complained that many learners were not being provided with learner transport resulting on the use of unsafe bakkies. There were also complaints about the adequacy of bus transport. Deteriorating road infrastructure and lack of roads in some of the villages were also mentioned several times.

Other problems experienced by locals included lack of pre-school facilities, lack of police responsiveness, lack of medicine in clinics, inadequate social workers, lack of youth development, and farming challenges, with fields lying fallow and lack of stock farming facilities, general development in the area and surrounding communities was raised as a major concern.

We are going to give all of you an opportunity to relate your own experiences regarding RDP housing and the conversion of panel vans to taxis. You are also allowed to tell us about other systemic service delivery concerns that affect groups or communities.

Perhaps you may want to know what a systemic investigation is and how it is linked to my office's mandate. A systemic investigation is just like any other investigation. The only difference is that it goes beyond just addressing individual complaints by ensuring the underlying systemic problems that lead to the status quo are addressed to avoid a recurrence.

Such investigations are pursued as part of fulfilling the mandate of strengthening and supporting constitutional democracy. As I indicated earlier, we do this by investigating any conduct in state affairs, or in the public administration in any sphere of government, that is alleged or suspected

to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice; report on that conduct and take appropriate remedial action.

To achieve this, we employ various pieces of legislation including the Public Protector Act, Executive Members Ethics Act, Promotion of Access to Information Act, Protected Disclosures Act, Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act and Housing Protection Measures Act.

I look forward to hearing about your experiences on RDP housing problems and the illegal conversion of panel vans into taxis.

Thank you.

Adv TN Madonsela

Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa