



**Address by Public Protector Adv Thuli Madonsela during the  
Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue outreach meeting in Kroonstad,  
Free State on Monday, July 30, 2012**

**Programme Director, Mr Morgen Mashinini;  
Mayor of Moqhaka Municipality, Cllr MJ Mohadi;  
Speaker of Moqhaka Municipality, Cllr ACWD Nakedi;  
The Public Protector team;  
The community of Kroonstad;  
Members of the media;  
Ladies and gentlemen;**

I bring along warm greetings from the entire Public Protector team. My team and I would also like to thank you very much for responding to our call to meet here this morning.

Most of you are probably aware that we have been visiting provinces as part of the third annual Public Protector National Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue, which we launched on 12 July.

We are here to listen to you as you tell us about your experiences and challenges with regard to the delivery of RDP housing. If you have something to say about taxis that are said to be panel vans that were illegally converted, we want to hear your stories too.

If you have no problems regarding RDP houses and panel van conversions, we are eager to hear about any other public service delivery complaint you have that affects the whole community or a group. The process of soliciting your views is part of the public hearings that we are holding nationally. On Monday we were in Bloemfontein and while there we visited Botshabelo and a new taxi rank in Bloemfontein that taxi drivers have been complaining bitterly about. Before then, we have been in Pretoria where we launched, in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

We are gathering information as part of two systemic investigations. The one is on RDP houses in response to a flood of complaints we receive every year, every month and every week on RDP houses. The other is on panel vans conversions into taxis following one complaint, which suggested that the issue may be affecting large groups and communities.

We conduct systemic investigations as part of my office's oversight role, which is to strengthen constitutional democracy by exacting accountability in the exercise of state power and control over state resources.

Section 182 of the Constitution gives the Public Protector powers to investigate 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.

The Public Protector has additional powers that derive from several laws. For example, the Public Protector Act, which gives me powers to resolve maladministration matters, including abuse of power and state resources. The PPA also powers to resolve public grievances through conciliation, mediation and negotiation.

Under the Executive Members' Ethics Act, my office oversees the ethical conduct of all members of the Executive.

The office is also one of the institutions protecting whistle-blowers under the Protected Disclosures Act and has an anti-corruption mandate under the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act.

The office has the power to review the decisions of the Home Builders Registration Council under the Housing Measures Act and is one of the information regulators under the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

Turning to the main reason we are here, I have already indicated that we are in the middle of our third annual National Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue.

Theme for the broader dialogue within which we are having these public hearings 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.”***

We have chosen theme because we believe maladministration is a key factor behind bad service delivery. We also believe that if we all join hands to root out maladministration, service delivery by government, including in the area of RDP housing, will improve significantly.

I said we are conducting the public hearings as part of our a systemic investigations. What is a systemic investigation and how does it differ from other investigations? A systemic investigation is a complex investigation that goes beyond addressing individual complaints and targets the root courses or systemic deficiencies that give rise to the complaints. It is based on a systems approach to recurring problems. The outcome of a systemic investigation includes redress for individual complaints and remedies for the root causes of the complaints. This ensures that no one else suffers the same fate in future.

In this province, we received 2 129 complaints from Free State residents in the last financial year. Of these, 264 related to the plight of RDP housing beneficiaries.

Since arriving in the province on Monday, we have had an opportunity to engage organised stakeholders and the leadership of the provincial government, including Premier Ace Magashule, MECs, Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Mayors, Municipal Speakers, and the House of Traditional Leaders on the same issues that we are going to discuss with you today.

On the issues of RDP problems, people's complaints included waiting for a house since the

90's, incomplete houses, poorly built houses, lack of water and ablution facilities, corruption, fraud and related complaints. They were also concerned about a conflation of politics and state and discriminatory service delivery due to this. On the taxi issue, the taxi rank I mentioned earlier was their main concern.

The provincial administration on the other hand acknowledged the problems but explained that most of them had been inherited. They also complained that political battles were undermining public service delivery and accountability.

To get in touch with us for purposes of lodging service or conduct failure complaints against the state, take note that we have 20 walk-in offices across the country, two of which are in Bloemfontein and Phuthaditjhaba. We are also reachable through our toll-free line (0800 11 20 40), online through our website ([www.publicprotector.org](http://www.publicprotector.org)) and on email ([registration2@pprotect.org](mailto:registration2@pprotect.org)).

Further details on how to get hold of us including addresses and phone numbers are on the marketing material distributed to you this morning. Also important to note is the fact that our services are free and we strive to resolve complaints as promptly as possible in order to deliver swift justice. Beyond your service delivery complaints, you may also report suspected corrupt practices and other forms of maladministration.

Tell us your side of the story. What have been your experiences on RDP housing? Do you have anything to share on the illegal conversion of panel vans into taxis? We also want to hear about other community wide problems regarding public service delivery. By airing your views in this process, you are joining hands with us in pursuit of an accountable state that operates with integrity and is responsive to the needs of its citizens and residents. Ultimately this will ensure that the rights promised to all people of South Africa by the Constitution are enjoyed by all.

Thank you.

**Adv TN Madonsela**

**Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa**