

HOUSING

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Access to housing is an integral part of government's commitment to reduce poverty and improve people's quality of life:

- ▶ Since 1994, 1.9 million housing subsidies have been approved and 1.5 million housing units constructed;
- ▶ the ANC-led government has provided secure tenure and safe homes to more than six million people;
- ▶ since 1999 government government has taken a number of steps to further improve the quality of houses built;
- ▶ much work has been done, in addition, to provide rental housing.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Since 1994 parliament has passed a number of laws to ensure people have access to quality houses

These laws are:

- ▶ **Rental Housing Act (1999)**, ensures that more houses are provided for rental purposes. It also protects housing tenants from being abused by uncaring landlords and provides for Rental Housing Tribunals to mediate between landlords and tenants.
- ▶ **Home Loan and Mortgage Disclosure Act (2000)**, which provides for monitoring of financial institutions that provide housing credit needs to communities. It promotes equity and fairness in lending by financial institutions for housing purposes and prohibits discriminatory lending patterns
- ▶ **Housing Consumer Protection Measures Act (1998)**, which obliges house builders to register with the National Home-Builders Registration Council (NHBRC) and enroll all new houses under the NHBRC's Defect Warranty Scheme. It aims to protect new house owners from getting poor quality houses built by unscrupulous house builders. House builders are expected to comply with minimum housing standards, including that houses must be at least 30m² in size.
- ▶ **Housing Amendment Act (2001)**, which empowers the Minister of Housing to determine a procurement policy on housing development and restricts the sale of state subsidised housing.

PUBLIC SECTOR HOSTEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The ANC-led government approved the Public Sector Hostel Redevelopment Programme Policy in 1994. This programme provides for:

- ▶ The funding of redevelopment initiatives to create humane living conditions in hostels and involve the hostel inhabitants in these initiatives;
- ▶ the upgrading of dilapidated complexes and the redevelopment of hostels into family units or a combination of single sex units on a rental or ownership basis;
- ▶ a funding limit per family or single person to finance redevelopment initiatives in line with subsidies.

Pilot projects totaling R12 million were conducted in Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, Western Cape and Free State. This programme is currently refocused on creating a policy framework for the creation of

sustainable rental housing stock. This complements government's new emphasis on providing medium density housing stock and rental housing options.

HOUSING SUBSIDIES

The Department of Housing has developed the following housing subsidies:

- ▶ **Project linked subsidies**, which give individuals the opportunity to own houses in approved projects.
- ▶ **Individual subsidies**, which affords people access to housing subsidies to acquire ownership of an existing property or a property in a project not approved as a project-linked subsidy project.
- ▶ **Consolidation subsidies**, which are granted to people who want to upgrade a top structure in a serviced site.
- ▶ **Institutional subsidies**, which are made available to institutions which create affordable housing stock to allow eligible people to live in subsidised residential properties with secure tenure.
- ▶ **Discount Benefit Scheme**, which promotes home ownership among tenants of state financed rental stock, including formal deed of sale of housing and serviced sites.

HOUSING INSTITUTIONS

The National Home Builders Registration Council

This council administers the Housing Consumer Protection Measures Act of 1998. The act obliges all homebuilders to guarantee that:

- ▶ Any home will be fit for habitation; will be built in a work-like manner; and will be built according to plans and specifications approved by the relevant municipality and in accordance with NHBRC's technical requirements;
- ▶ The builder will rectify at their cost any defects occurring within 90 days; any roof leak occurring within 12 months of occupation caused by a failure in design, workmanship or materials; and any structural defects occurring within five years of occupation.

National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC)

The NHFC was established to search and find better ways to mobilise finance for housing from sources outside the state, and in partnership with the broadest range of organisations. More than two million people have benefited from the efforts of the NHFC.

National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency (NURCHA)

The NURCHA is a Presidential Lead Project established to facilitate low-income housing projects. Its mandate is to speed up the delivery of houses in the short to medium term for low-income households. It carries out this mandate through:

- ▶ Providing guarantees to lenders who then advance credit to developers and contractors for the purposes of housing developments on approved projects;
- ▶ Providing guarantees that are linked to small loans taken out by low-income families, enabling them to increase a housing subsidy and buy or rent a better home.

PEOPLE'S HOUSING PROCESS

The new housing policy assists poor people to obtain access to technical, financial and administrative support to build their homes on an individual or collective basis.

The Department of Housing has established a People's Housing Partnership Trust to provide training for all levels of government, non-governmental and community-based organisations and communities to support the people's housing process.

RURAL HOUSING LOAN FUND

Formed in conjunction with the Department of Housing, the fund is a world class rural housing wholesale lending institution that operates with a partnership to create new financial arrangements and opportunities for rural families (especially rural women) to improve their housing, economic and living environment. This programme has enabled rural people to maximise their housing choices and improve their living conditions with access to credit from sustainable retail lenders.

CHALLENGES FOR HOUSING DELIVERY

The ANC government has made strides in fighting poverty through providing houses. The lives of six million people has improved for the better as they now have their own houses.

While the government has made impressive successes in providing houses more still needs to be done. We must work with government to ensure that people get houses that are habitable.

The government and the people as a whole must ensure that we do away with apartheid settlement patterns and build non-racial communities.