

Zimbabwe: Housing association launched

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The National Association of Housing Finance Organisations, an organisation that is meant to regulate the operations for housing development trusts and protect home seekers, has been launched.

The housing community development association seeks to complement Government efforts to provide low-income earners with decent accommodation.

It targets to develop at least 50 000 housing units in the next five years.

Officially launching the association, its president, Mr Energy Mutodi, said the organisation also seeks to bring sanity in the housing sector where hundreds of home seekers were being swindled by unscrupulous housing trusts.

"We established this organisation in the aftermath of Operation Murambastvina in a bid to complement Government efforts to provide homes to low-income earners.

President Mugabe called upon the private sector to come in and assist Government in the provision of affordable decent accommodation and we established this association," Mr Mutodi said.

He said their programmes aim to also complement Government's Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle, a massive construction programme, which provided homes to hundreds of Zimbabweans.

He said the organisation's main aim was to regularise operations of housing trusts and protect home seekers from being duped by bogus estate agents and land developers.

"We have witnessed a number of cases of people losing their hard-earned cash to bogus organisations and individuals who sell them non-existent stands. So the purpose of our organisation is to regularise operations of housing trusts to bring sanity in the housing delivery sector," he said.

Mr Mutodi said as an association of housing trusts, they would speak with one voice and lobby Government collectively to acquire land for housing development.

"Through this we can be able to combat corruption and protect the public from being swindled," he said adding that they would also work with police to weed out unscrupulous housing trusts and ensure they are severely punished.

Mr Mutodi said the association was currently working with at least 12 registered housing trusts and has targeted to develop 50 000 housing units by 2016.

"Our aim is to help our people and develop at least 50 000 housing units in every five years. This will also help our country attain the Millennium Development Goals which specify shelter as one of the major development goals," Mr Mutodi said.

He also outlined the challenges faced by housing trusts including an acute shortage of land in Harare and high prices and non-availability of some building materials such as sewerage reticulation pipes because of monopoly in the sector.

The launch was attended by Bulawayo housing director Mr Isaiah Magagula, Harare chief planning and research officer Mr Nyasha Gumbo, other directors of housing from Marondera and Chitungwiza and Kingdom Housing Trust and National Housing Trust representatives.