Limpopo: Housing is on track

Mpho Dube
www.thenewage.co.za
25 March 2011

Limpopo province has handed over 10 235 houses to beneficiaries in the 2010/11 financial year, with more approaching completion. And its on-the-ball department of local government and housing has also scooped one gold and two platinum awards for good governance.

In doing so the department has under MEC Soviet Lekganyane continued the brilliant performance legacy of the former MEC, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, now Minister for International Relations .

The department was rewarded as the best performing department at Premier Cassel Mathale''s service excellence awards at the Meropa Casino and Entertainment World in Polokwane.

Under the leadership of Nkoane-Mashabane, the provincial department of local government and housing in Limpopo won the National Govan Mbeki Housing Award as the best provincial housing department in 2008.

Earlier this year, the department received R131m from the National Department of Human Settlement, which will be spent on engineering work.

The money came days after the department announced that it was withholding R463m in housing grants meant for the Free State and KZN, due to their poor performance.

A total of R263m was to be moved from the Free State and R200m from KZN.

Some of this money has been re-assigned to Limpopo and the Northern Cape. The latter is receiving R182m for the construction of 2070 new houses and the upgrading of 350 units in informal settlements.

Premier Mathale said the R131m allocation would go a long way towards fast-tracking the provision of houses in the province.

Spokesperson for the department for local government and housing, Tseng Diale, said the money would be spent on contractual commitments and the rest on engineering work.

Limpopo wanted to deliver 15249 low-cost houses in the 2010-11 financial year.

"We have delivered over 10000 units to date, while the rest are in the final stages of development and will be completed on or before the end of March, marking government''s financial year end," said Diale.

In celebrating the award for being the provinces best department of the year, MEC Lekganyane promised: "We shall toil ceaselessly in pursuit of excellence and innovation, in the use of information and communication technology, to enhance public service delivery."

During the state of the province address, premier Mathale said: "We have already completed and handed over 10235 houses to beneficiaries in the 2010/11 financial year.

"It is worth noting that, for two years in succession, we have been able to exceed our projected targets.

"It did not come as a surprise when we received additional funding of more than R131m from the national government to fast-track the delivery of houses, in recognition of our achievement. This achievement has never happened before," said Mathale.