



**Republic of Namibia**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HON. DEREK KLAZEN, MP**

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON OCASSION OF THE**

**OFFICIAL LAUNCH AND BRICK MAKING EVENT OF 23 BUY-A-BRICK  
HOUSES AT ARANOS, 19 FEBRUARY 2020**

- *Director of Ceremonies Honourable Esme Isaack, Governor of Hardap Region*
- *Cde Jarson Jars, Aranos Constituency Councillor*
- *Your Worship Cllr. Eldin Kuhanga, Mayor of Aranos*
- *Aranos and Stampriet Local Authority councillors*
- *Standard Bank Chief Executive and your Management*
- *Members of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia*

- *Staff members of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development*
- *Members of the Media;*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen;*

Good morning,

I am humbled to join the community of Aranos this morning to celebrate yet another milestone in the provision of decent housing to our people. In December last year my Ministry launched the construction of thirty two (32) houses in Rupara in the Kavango West, and handed over forty six (46) houses at Otjiwarongo to the members of the Shack Dwellers Federation of which my Ministry and Buy-a-Brick funded the houses for the families. I am made to understand Rupara has made good progress with the construction of their houses.

As the Ministry responsible for housing, and on behalf of Government, We express gratitude for this sincere, selfless and humanitarian gesture from our corporate entities and other organizations.

Housing, or rather the shortage thereof in our country, is a very emotive subject. Hundreds of thousands of our people are living in deplorable conditions and we are working harder to find resources to ensure that all Namibians are owners of decent houses.

As recently as two weeks ago, our Head of State, President Dr Hage Geingob had the pleasure of hosting the President of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), Her Excellency Gabriella Baron, in Windhoek. They discussed a number of issues, but key among them was the issue of housing.

At that occasion, President Geingob again reiterated, as he always does, the Namibian Government's commitment to eliminate informal settlements countrywide.

**Director of Ceremonies;  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I therefore join our President in repeating that commitment today to continue fighting for our people's dignity through the provision of proper decent housing.

We welcome every effort, big or small, to assist the Government in its quest to eliminate informal housing structures. We are mindful of the fact that it is not an overnight exercise, nor is it easy. We are therefore grateful to the private sector for holding hands with Government to fight this challenge jointly.

The Buy-a-Brick Project, initiated by Standard Bank is a very welcome addition to the fight for decent housing in Namibia. As demonstrated in the past, this is indeed a game changer. It is an initiative that has already changed people's outlook on life. For some people, these houses are nothing but for people who have lived with no shelter for the better part of their lives, these houses mean a lot.

I am also proud that the business sector has taken on this project in support of Government's agenda for proper housing for all its citizens. I have always advocated for all stakeholders to hold hands and work together towards the common good for all. This Buy-a-brick housing initiative really pleases me to see how much we are able to accomplish if we work together and put our resources in causes that benefit a greater part of society. Our resources as Government will never be enough to address all of society's needs. Coupled to that, the priority list of Government is so long and we would not be able to address it sufficiently if it were left to us as government alone to ensure that we provide what is required.

Therefore, my sincere and humble appreciation goes out to the Standard Bank Chief Executive, Vetumbuavi Mungunda, for mobilizing the business sector around the Buy-a-Brick initiative that has also now attracted attention of our brothers and sisters in Africa.

The Government, through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, believes in and will continue to support the work of community based organisations such as the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia who have demonstrated their commitment and ability to contribute to the national drive towards providing affordable housing and proper sanitation to our people especially those in the ultra-low and low income categories. The Shack Dwellers Federation's solution to housing is unique and worth supporting in that it is a case of the community itself taking action to address its own developmental needs. This is a clear testimony of sustainable and people-centred development, and I hereby pledge our continued support.

**Director of Ceremonies;  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

As a demonstration our trust in the work of the Federation, we have been providing financial support to boost the housing provision efforts of the Federation. To date, the Government's financial support amounts to sixty eight comma five million Namibian dollars(N\$68,5 mill) that was used to construct two thousand five hundred and thirty five houses countrywide.

We must continue to be our brothers' keepers as demonstrated by the Buy-a-Brick initiative. This is an example of the Public Private Partnership that we as government continue to advocate and we must ensure that it expands from just the housing initiative to other sectors where our people also need assistance.

I also call upon the beneficiary communities to continue their assistance of this initiative by lending their time and energy in digging the trenches and laying the foundations that are required to construct these houses.

With our own efforts, we are able to reduce input costs and ensure that the collected funds directly benefit the people who need houses.

It is for this very reason that the Government has long ago decided to include the provision of housing in its National Develop Plan. Those who have read and understood the 5<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (NDP5) would have observed that there is a specific chapter on the provision of a specific number of housing.

NDP5 requires us to accelerate housing delivery through stakeholder involvement and development of alternative construction models.

In conclusion, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Buy-a-brick initiative for their hard work and success so far and to wish them well for the future. They need all our support to make dreams possible. I now declare the construction of twenty three (24) houses as officially launched and build more houses, I also invite you all to join me in making bricks.

I thank you all for your kind attention and let's build Namibia for a better today and the future.