

TTRI opening address by Dan Mashitsho

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Mogale City

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Programme director/ Facilitator, representatives from Treasury , DBSA as well the South African City's Network.

Officials from COGTA

Delegates and participants from all over the country.

Honourable guests from private and public sectors.

All protocol observed:

It is my privilege to welcome you to Mogale City as we host this prestigious occasion together with Treasury, the DBSA and SA City's Network.

There is no doubt that the initiative to train and build capacity of the incumbents on issues relating to Township regeneration is indeed a noble one.

The challenges relating to township development and regeneration in South Africa are vast. One of the objectives of the Democratic government was to **redress the pre-democracy (Apartheid) township planning and broader spatial land use development patterns.**

It can however be strongly postulated that this objective is not yet achieved. Instead we have seen some levels of deterioration of townships notably in those areas that used to be under the jurisdiction of the so-called Bantustans and the TBVC states e.g. Mabatho, Thohoyandou, Umtata, Bisho etc.

The deterioration of such townships under the Democratic government is a stark testimony of the fact that there was no viable alternative to the Apartheid Planning and development patterns in those areas. Nonetheless the Post Apartheid development of some townships like Soweto have been exemplary at least from the township renewal viewpoint. However the renewal of townships like Bekkersdal and Alexandra in Gauteng still leaves much to be desired especially as they were given a prestigious title viz: Presidential Projects!

The **Human Settlement** patterns also seemed to have perpetuated the Apartheid settlement patterns as most RDP houses were built as extensions of the old township far from workplaces. Needless to say, the **Local Economy** is stifled when human settlements are not integrated with industrial and commercial development where the local people can be economically active thereby alleviating poverty and unemployment.

Land availability in upmarket (prime) areas should be managed in such a manner that those who are not rich should not be excluded from such areas due to land price as this may amount to the new influx control based on economics and not race as it used to be.

The management of interface between the **built and natural environment** is of crucial importance. To this end the cities need to adhere to their **Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF's)** ensuring that township development is led by the relevant authorities and not by the developers as the latter have in the past contributed to urban sprawl.

EIA's should continue to be a crucial part of township development and regeneration to ensure that the natural environment is protected in line with the Kyoto Protocol and the millennium goal in this regard. In the pre-Democracy era the development of townships was done without due cognisance of environmental imperatives. To this end there were townships that we established on wetland as well as dolomitic land e.g. Khutsong where 90% of the township is on dolomitic land that is not suitable for human settlement.

Further **Research and Development** needs to be encouraged to explore best practices in townships regenerations and development. In Gauteng Province the Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) plays a crucial role in this regards collaborating with the OECD.

In conclusion I would like to wish all the participants especially the trainees, a rewarding and exciting learning experience.

I thank you!