



**Ministry of Human Settlements and
Public Works**

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

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The Programme Director

Professor A Adebayo, Head of School, School of Architecture, Planning and Housing, University of KwaZulu-Natal

The President of the South African Council for the Architectural Profession, Mr P Mashabane

Members of the Academia and Distinguished guests

Delegates to the conference

All protocol observed

It gives me great pleasure to be part of this conference where we have gathered for a common purpose. To focus on issues of creating sustainable human settlements that encompasses open spaces (parks and recreation areas), schools, creches, hospitals, clinics, a transport and road network and infrastructure that allow for communities to be self sustainable and co-dependent and not reliant on one sector for their existence . A sustainable city or eco-city as Richard Bester describes it is a city designed with consideration of the environmental impact, inhabited by people dedicated to minimization of required inputs of energy, water and food, and waste output of heat, air pollution- carbon dioxide, methane and water pollution. A sustainable city can feed itself with minimal reliance on the surrounding countryside, and power itself with renewable sources of energy.

In 2009 with the emergence of the new government under President Jacob Zuma, the Department of Human Settlements came into being, previously known as the Department of Housing. This new department focuses on building sustainable human settlements that redress the legacy of housing built by the apartheid government.

We often hear about the ‘architects of apartheid’ and I must mention that today we are talking about the architects who design, shape and build our landscapes to be one that is significant of the government of the day.

I wish to add that there is a direct correlation of architecture versus the political landscape which we find ourselves in. Resplendent in the architecture of the Western Cape, are the Cape Dutch style of homes and buildings significant of the early Dutch settlers in the cape. Likewise British colonialism in many countries is evident in the design of the buildings and gardens in the major cities. The late Queen Victoria has left her mark in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya and certainly India. One only has to look at the type of buildings in these countries to feel the imperialistic dominance that once prevailed. The Union Buildings in Pretoria is a marked example.

South Africa is not without its challenges and the debate continues whether the RDP houses and low to middle income housing development projects are changing the face of our beautiful landscape to one of monotony, where all houses are the same squares built in a row. The debate is whether the circumstances of all these people who live in these houses are the same and therefore should be given the same houses. I am now going to ask, was it not some architect who has designed these houses for our people to live in? Are all these families the same with regard to their socio-economic status, the number in their families, are they unemployed, do they have enough land around their home to extend when their family increases, is there a park nearby for their children to play in? Are all their hopes and aspirations the same? When an architect/developer was commissioned to design these developments were these points taken into consideration.

This brings me back to the sustainable city concept. A sustainable city is one that can feed itself with minimal reliance on the surrounding countryside, and be able to generate its own energy. The aim of this concept is to not to interfere /damage the ecology of the environment and to produce the lowest quantity of pollution possible, to efficiently use land for the majority and to recycle and reuse materials to combat waste and to convert waste to energy and thus the city's overall contribution to climate change will be minimal.

It is estimated that 50% of the world's population live in cities and urban areas. These large communities provide both challenges and opportunities for the environmentally conscious developers. The current economic and environmental climate necessitates that buildings are designed and constructed according to green principles and practice. I am pleased to announce that the KZN Department of Public Works which I am also responsible for has plans afoot to build the first green government project in Sisonke District. This is a mixed development with an office and residential blocks which will be built in phases. What was previously unheard of is going to happen on a government project? A water strategy has been designed that uses water-efficient appliances and fittings and recycles grey water and rainwater which has the potential to save 70% of the building's water consumption. Solar voltaic panels on the workshop roof to generate electricity from sunlight, solar collectors use frost resistant glycol and a heat exchanger to heat water for the

under floor heating system will be erected. There is also an exposed concrete ceiling which radiates stored heat in winter and is cool in summer. A wetland pond which collects the runoff water from the roof and provides a wildlife habitat is part of the design to ensure that birds and wildlife which are dominant in this part of the province continue to be part of this development and are not threatened.

The Department of Human Settlements has recently announced the Cornubia Housing project which is a mixture of low to middle income housing situated on a vast open green space, is one such project where the concept of providing sustainable human settlements will be put into practice. Currently there is an existing pond which will remain as a water feature to encourage the continuity of birdlife in the area. These measures counter the “heat island effect” caused by the use of tarmac and asphalt. This development will have housing units, in close proximity to the highway, near the bus/taxi route, has shops and sufficient land to enable the residents to start home gardens thereby being able to feed themselves. This project is due to start in.....

In this conference I hope that issues pertaining to urban and rural spatial and building planning are addressed. What we are currently seeing are high densification of living areas in and close to the cities? This is a problem the world over. Naturally an influx will occur where people move closer to their places of employment or where employment opportunities are present. This has seen the emergence of informal settlements surrounding the periphery of urban areas. Notwithstanding the peripheries, there is also the emergence of informal dwellers living under bridges, in the market place and gardens within the cities. We need to look at integrated settlements and mixed housing developments where we reduce the use of concrete and, cement, look at alternative building methods, where we attempt to changing the current designs of the houses we build, ensure that electricity, piped water and flushable toilets are provided in a cost effective and energy efficient way.

We need to say something positive about our housing developments or refute - Dr Pauline Adebayo study on Low Income Housing Assets and the mystery of Capital in Post Apartheid South Africa: Potential or myth? Will search the net for the study. By saying that our housing is dead capital, is questionable - need to read her research. Will do so today and will send you the points.

