



THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CHANGING LIVES OF FARM DWELLERS AND FORMER LABOUR TENANTS

The brand new homes that have been built for former farm dwellers and labour tenants, which feature modern amenities have brought renewed hope to the poor and destitute in the rural community at Emakhazeni.

"A dream realised"

When Mrs Martha Mahlangu lived in an informal dwelling built from mud and grass, she never thought that she would ever own a home. After spending all her adult life in the dwelling, which had a leaking roof, was without electricity, indoor plumbing, and was structurally dangerous for human habitation, the 84-year old grandmother received the gift of a lifetime, when she was handed the keys to her very own home on the Paardeplaats farm at Emakhazeni, in Mpumalanga.

Mrs Mahlangu's family was among 35 households of former farm dwellers and labour tenants, who received three-bedroomed houses built by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). "I am very happy that this day has finally arrived I now have my own house and it is beautiful. I am thankful to the department for helping us," she said.

DALRRD Deputy Minister, Mcebisi Skwatsha, who handed over the homes to the families at a ceremony on 26 March 2022, said he shared in the community's joy and also praised the department for fulfilling the government's promise of giving support to the farm dwellers and labour tenants of the Paardeplaats and Rietfontein farms.

The deputy minister told the community that it was fitting that their homes were officially handed over to them in the month of March, which is dedicated to commemorating Human Rights in our country. He added that the homes represent the department's commitment to restoring the dignity of farming community members, who suffered hardship and poverty as a result of being forcefully evicted from farms by unscrupulous farmers.

In 2017, the department made an undertaking to purchase the two farms, which totalled 377 hectares of land, for the labour tenants and farm dwellers for purposes of settlement, grazing and crop farming.

Through the department's Rural Development Branch, the construction of 35 houses measuring 64m² each, comprising three bedrooms, one bathroom, and an open plan kitchen and lounge area, was completed. Basic services have also been provided in the form of 4.5 Kva off grid energy solutions and solar geysers, an off- grid sanitation solution and water supply and reticulation.

Lettie Maredi, beneficiary and chairperson of Mtsweni-Letswalo Communal Property Association (CPA) in Emakhazeni, recalled the time when officials from the department came to inspect their living conditions in 2016, and concluded that their dwellings were in a dilapidated state and unsafe for habitation.

Echoing the sentiments of Lettie Maredi was an equally elated Elifas Maseko, who is also one of the beneficiaries. He expressed his excitement while detailing their journey working with the department. "I'm very happy to have my own home. We appreciate the change; we have been upgraded to modernity by the department. We are pleased the government has heard our cry, our mud houses were falling apart, and it was difficult for us during rainy seasons," added Maseko.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is committed to ensuring equitable access to land for all South Africans.



**agriculture, land reform
& rural development**

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**STAY
SAFE**

VACCINATE TO SAVE SOUTH AFRICA

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT CORONAVIRUS