

The National Housing Symposium, 28 May 2009, Mandel Training Centre, Harare, Zimbabwe¹

'Towards an integrated approach to sustainable housing and social amenities delivery in Zimbabwe'



The purpose of the National Housing and Social amenities symposium was to energise the housing stakeholders around a new institutional framework (The ministry)

The specific objectives of the symposium focused on:

- Identifying and reflecting on issues affecting delivery
- Informing the Ministry on status of delivery
- Inputting into policy review and formulation
- Broadening stakeholder participation
- Preparing for the National Convention due to be held later in the year

¹ Tafadzwa R.Muropa from Swedish Co-operative Centre(SCC), and the author of this article attended the symposium



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Outcomes

- To ensure that all stakeholders had a broader understanding of housing than just putting a roof over someone's head, as housing is more than building houses, but also encompasses the environment and habitat related matters
- to have a common understanding of the housing delivery status and share information
- to address a number of constraints in relation to housing delivery- addressing the bottlenecks towards housing delivery
- proposals around policy related issues articulated
- broadening the participation of various stakeholders in issues related to housing delivery

The symposium was held at Mandel Training Centre, Harare, Zimbabwe, where about 70 participants from the local government, civil society, the private sector and the donor community actively took part in the proceedings. The special guests who officially opened and closed the symposium were the

² Official group photograph with the Vice President Joyce Mujuru, seated in an orange outfit

The Vice President Mrs Joyce Mujuru and Mrs Theresa Makone (on behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr Morgan Tsvangirayi).The Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities, the Permanent secretary of the National Housing and Social amenities, senior government officials, UN Habitat, UNDP and World Bank representatives as well as other representatives from the donor community were also present at the symposium.



Key thematic papers were presented in plenary session during this symposium and covered the following themes :i) Policy and legal framework, the role of construction companies in the housing sector, the role of local authorities, land and housing related issues ,the role of financial institutions in the housing sector, the role of community based organization in housing provision ,

After the papers had been presented, key issues were discussed in a plenary session and these included the following:

- i) The need for all stakeholders to indentify the relevant policies and laws that address the current housing issues and identity the gaps that exist in the housing policy

³ Honourable Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities, Mr Fidelis Mhashu, being interviewed by the state media

- ii) Government needs to resuscitate the functions of the Guarantee and Housing Fund
- iii) Smart partnership between the public and the private sector in the delivery of housing infrastructure
- iv) Government support in accessing affordable serviced land for housing and social amenities by the needy
- v) Government to participatory put in place pro-poor housing policy with incentives for housing production by CBOs
- vi) Government support in accessing affordable housing finance
- vii) No link between global, regional and local-SADC protocol on housing does not exist.
- viii) Given the right policy framework, savings and taxes to facilitate housing development , building societies are ready to deliver
- ix) Urging the government to engage the World Bank and other financiers , especially in supporting the building of infrastructures

The afternoon session focused on group discussions based on the morning presentations. The feedback sessions were meant to guide the ministry in preparing for the National Housing

Convention which would be held later in the year



The key issues that arose from the feedback presentations included the following:

- i) On issues related to land and housing, the group noted that** since 2000 after the Land reform process, there has not been land for urban development. Thus there was need to have roles clarified between ministries who are involved in land redistribution
- ii)** The group also stressed the need for the ministry to cater for all income groups including the middle class as they have been slowly been pushed to the edge due to the previous economic crisis. In other words, they should be catered for in the land distribution for housing purposes
- iii)** The other key issues that arose from the remaining groups, had to with the need to address policy gaps including clarifying on policies related to land redistribution for agriculture and urban development, to factor in the gender and HIV & AIDS as well as the environmental dynamics when addressing housing and habitat related issues
- iv)** housing finance issues were also looked into where more innovative ways of lending and management risks were also encouraged by the symposium
- v)** the consensus of the symposium was the need for housing to be prioritised on the national agenda among other key social issues like health, education, etc
- vi)** smart partnerships were also encouraged between the government , private sector as well as the community based organizations
- vii)** Appropriate housing technology was also advocated for by the symposium especially being aware of existing and traditional housing technology
- viii)** One of the best practices that can emulated is the health relationship between the local authorities and the housing co-operatives in the city of Harare,

- ix) Community development funds should be supported by the government- through policy formulation
- x) Housing policies needed to be harmonised as well as taking into account the need to ensure that the constitutionalization of local authorities is also prioritised by the government
- xi) need to promote various forms of housing models including rental models
- xii) best practices- need to come up with a social contract with various stakeholders(based on results, results, results,e.g South Africa, community participation is very important in housing issues



Conclusion of the Symposium

The facilitators of the symposium informed the delegates that they would be receiving the consolidated report of the symposium in the coming 2 weeks of which the steering committee comprising the Ministry , UN Habitat and the facilitators would then use the outcomes of the symposium in preparing for the National Housing Convention due to be held later during the year. The official closing remarks were carried out by Minister of Public Works, Mrs Theresa Makone, who read the speech on behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr Morgan Tsvangirayi.