

1/5/84
DR D S HENDERSON

I MAY 1984

KEYNOTE SPEECH AT ONE-DAY SEMINAR ON SELF-HELP HOUSING,
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE 1820 SETTLERS MONUMENT
GRAHAMSTOWN ON TUESDAY 1 MAY, 1984.

MR CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE LAST OCCASION ON WHICH I SPOKE IN THIS VENUE, SOME THREE WEEKS AGO, I FOUND MYSELF DELIVERING THE OPENING ADDRESS AT A KUDU WORKSHOP. VICE-CHANCELLORS OF UNIVERSITIES, LIKE PRESIDENTS AND PRIME MINISTERS, ARE EXPECTED TO BE POLYMATHS, THAT IS, THEY ARE EXPECTED TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT EVERYTHING. LET ME

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THEREFORE PUT YOUR MINDS AT REST IMMEDIATELY: MY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HOUSING IS EVERY BIT AS PROFOUND AS IT IS ABOUT KUDUS.

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH FACE US IN SOUTH AFRICA TO-DAY, AND EVEN MORE ACUTELY IN THE EASTERN CAPE, IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT WE GET DOWN TO FUNDAMENTALS, AND CUT AWAY RUTHLESSLY AT ALL ENTANGLEMENTS AND EMBELLISHING DETAILS. WHAT ARE, AND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, THE MOST ESSENTIAL BASIC NEEDS WHICH EVERY PERSON, EVERY FAMILY REQUIRES MERELY TO SURVIVE? IT IS CLEAR THAT WE MUST IDENTIFY AN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION BEFORE WE EVEN CONSIDER ANY OTHER FACTORS, IMPORTANT THOUGH THEY BE, WHICH GO BEYOND MERE EXISTENCE, AND CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER LIFE.

SURELY WE IN THIS HALL WOULD RAPIDLY AGREE THAT AMONGST THE PRIME NECESSITIES OF LIFE ARE FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER. WITHOUT PROVISION FOR THESE THREE NO HUMAN BEING IS GOING TO SURVIVE FOR VERY LONG. THESE FACTORS EVEN TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER HYGIENE, EDUCATION AND TRANSPORT. THE URBAN FOUNDATION IS THEREFORE TO BE CONGRATULATED ON ARRANGING A SERIES OF REGIONAL SEMINARS ON ONE ASPECT OF THE THIRD NECESSITY, SHELTER OR HOUSING, NAMELY SELF-HELP HOUSING. WE TO-DAY ARE GIVING OUR ATTENTION TO THE EAST CAPE REGION'S NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THIS REGARD.

IN TALKING ABOUT HOUSING ONE INEVITABLY FINDS ONE'S SELF FOCUSSED IN ON BLACK HOUSING, BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE THE MAJOR CRISIS LIES. I SHALL NOT ATTEMPT TO SUPPLY YOU WITH ANY NATIONAL STATISTICS, BECAUSE THE NUMBERS TEND TO BECOME SO LARGE THAT THEY ARE DIFFICULT TO GRASP

MEANINGFULLY. LET US RATHER CONCENTRATE OUR ATTENTION ON SOME LOCAL, E CAPE FIGURES. IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT THE PRESENT BLACK POPULATION OF PORT ELIZABETH IS IN THE REGION OF 300 000, WITH 26 000 PERMANENT HOUSES AVAILABLE TO THEM. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT AN ACCEPTABLE HOUSE OCCUPANCY LEVEL IS THE AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE OF 6,5 PEOPLE, SOME 46 000 DWELLING UNITS ARE REQUIRED TO HOUSE THE PRESENT POPULATION. THE SHORTFALL IS THUS 20 000 UNITS. IN OTHER WORDS THE SHORTFALL IS ABOUT 43% OF WHAT IS REQUIRED.

THE SITUATION IN Uitenhage IS NOT MUCH DIFFERENT. THERE 65 000 PEOPLE OCCUPY 7 000 HOUSES, WHEREAS 10 000 ARE NEEDED. I DO NOT HAVE THE EXACT FIGURES FOR GRAHAMSTOWN, BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE MUCH BEHIND THOSE QUOTED FOR Uitenhage.

THE FIGURES I HAVE MENTIONED REPRESENT THE PRESENT SITUATION, BUT THE NUMBERS DO NOT STAND STILL. ONE RESPECTED FORECAST PROJECTS AN 8,8% PER ANNUM GROWTH IN THE URBAN BLACK POPULATION FOR THE PORT ELIZABETH - UITENHAGE METROPOLITAN AREA. EVEN IF ONE TAKES A CONSERVATIVE GROWTH RATE OF 6%, HARDLY JUSTIFIED UNLESS THERE IS A MASSIVE IMPROVEMENT IN RURAL POVERTY LEVELS, THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES ARE ALARMING. SOME SIMPLE CALCULATIONS SUGGEST THAT A NEW HOUSE CONSTRUCTION PACE OF AT LEAST 7 300 HOUSES PER ANNUM, OR 30 PER WORKING DAY, IS NEEDED TO CATCH UP ON THE BACKLOG OVER 10 YEARS, AND THEREAFTER TO KEEP REASONABLE PACE WITH THE GROWTH. AS THIS LEVEL IS 10 TIMES THE LEVEL WHICH HAS PREVAILED OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SOME VERY SERIOUS EFFORT AND CO-ORDINATION WILL BE REQUIRED FROM ALL CONCERNED, THE INHABITANTS AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. CLEARLY, CONVENTIONAL AND TIME-HONOURED METHODS OF ATTACKING THE PROBLEM ARE GOING TO GET US NOWHERE.

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE FIGURES FOR INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND RELATE THAT TO THE AFFORDABILITY OF VARIOUS TYPES OF HOUSING A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION TO THE SITUATION IS APPARENT. I DO NOT WISH TO INUNDATE YOU WITH TOO MANY STATISTICS, BUT FROM THESE FIGURES IT IS APPARENT THAT NO SINGLE STRATEGY, BE IT MASSIVE LOW-COST HOUSING SCHEMES, SELF-HELP IN ITS VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS, OR EMPLOYER ASSISTANCE, IS APPLICABLE OVER THE WHOLE RANGE OF WHAT IS REQUIRED. A SENSIBLE COMBINATION OF ALL VIABLE TECHNIQUES MUST BE ENCOURAGED.

THE FIGURES IN OUR AREA ARE THAT:-

ONLY	4% COULD AFFORD FULL STANDARD CONTRACTOR-BUILT HOUSES
A FURTHER	5% COULD MANAGE FULL STANDARD BLOCK HOUSES

22% CAN RISE TO A MINIMUM STANDARD BLOCK HOUSE
24% WILL FIND ZENZELE-STYLE SELF-HELP HOUSES WITHIN
RANGE.

THE REMAINING 45%, WITHOUT ANY HELP BEYOND THEIR OWN RESOURCES, WILL BE UNABLE TO AFFORD ANYTHING MORE THAN A MORE OR LESS INADEQUATE SHACK. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SELF-PRESERVATION IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL, IF NOT THE MOST POWERFUL DRIVE IN OUR HUMAN MAKE-UP. ONCE THEY HAVE ACHIEVED MINIMUM SURVIVAL STANDARDS IN FOOD AND CLOTHING, FAMILIES WILL GO TO ALMOST ANY LENGTHS TO PROVIDE THE BEST SHELTER WITHIN THEIR GRASP. WE MUST LEARN TO WORK WITH THE GRAIN OF HUMAN NATURE, RATHER THAN AGAINST IT, IN THIS GREAT TASK THAT LIES BEFORE US. HENCE THE TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE OF THE SELF-HELP CONCEPT. WE IN SOUTH AFRICA OFTEN DISPLAY A PAROCHIAL TENDENCY TO IMAGINE THAT OUR PROBLEMS ARE

UNIQUE. OUR COMPLEX ETHNIC COMPOSITION, AND THE VARIOUS BRANDS OF PARANOIA THAT ARE INEXTRICABLY BOUND UP WITH IT, CERTAINLY DO NOT MAKE THINGS ANY EASIER. EVEN IF SOME MAGIC FORMULA WERE SUDDENLY TO EVAPORATE OUR SPECIFICALLY SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEMS LIKE THE MORNING DEW, THE HOUSING SITUATION WOULD CONTINUE TO STARE US IN THE FACE. EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHOSE LEVEL OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS COMPARABLE TO OURS DEMONSTRATES THIS BEYOND DOUBT. ALL OVER THE DEVELOPING WORLD PEOPLE FLEE FROM PERCEIVED GRINDING RURAL POVERTY IN THEIR TENS OF MILLIONS, AND ATTEMPT TO PACK THEMSELVES INTO ALREADY HOPELESSLY OVERCROWDED CITIES, WHERE THEY ASPIRE TO BETTER THEIR LOTS. THE SHANTY TOWNS, FAVELAS, BIDONVILLES, CALL THEM WHAT YOU WILL, ALL OVER THE WORLD BEAR ELOQUENT TESTIMONY TO THIS WIDESPREAD PHENOMENON. THE AUTHORITIES ALMOST INVARIABLY STARTED IN TO DEMOLISH

THE SHANTIES, ONLY TO SEE THEM SPRING UP AGAIN OVERNIGHT LIKE SO MANY MUSHROOMS AFTER RAIN. THEY HAD NO MORE HOPE OF SUCCESS AGAINST THIS FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN URGE THAN KING CANUTE DID AGAINST THE WAVES.

WE CAN OBVIOUSLY LEARN FROM THIS WEALTH OF WELL-DOCUMENTED HUMAN EXPERIENCE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT GOVERNMENTS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE TWO VERY VALUABLE ROLES TO PLAY, ONE NEGATIVE AND THE OTHER POSITIVE, LIKE TWO SIDES OF A COIN. IN THE FIRST PLACE RIGID ADHERENCE TO OUTMODED AND INAPPROPRIATE NORMS AND REGULATIONS IMPOSSIBLE TO ENFORCE, MUST GIVE WAY TO A NEW PARADIGON OF FLEXIBILITY THAT ELIMINATES ALL BUT STRICTLY NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS COVERING PERSONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND FIRE HAZARDS. WE ARE NOT ABLE FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME TO THWART PEOPLE'S BASIC NEEDS FOR SHELTER, ANY MORE THAN WE CAN PERSUADE THEM TO DO WITHOUT SEX.

STUDIES OF SHANTY TOWNS HAVE REVEALED SOME AMAZING INSIGHTS. BY AND LARGE THEY ARE NOT CONSTRUCTED BY THE UTTERLY HELPLESS AND DESTITUTE. A SURPRISINGLY HIGH PERCENTAGE OF SUCH PEOPLE HAVE SOME MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD. IN A COMPARATIVELY SHORT TIME THEY TAKE THE TIME-HONOURED PATH OF UPWARD MOBILITY, TO BE REPLACED IN THEIR TURN BY PEOPLE STILL A RUNG OR TWO FURTHER DOWN ON THE SOCIAL LADDER. SHANTYTOWNS AND SQUATTERS' CAMPS ARE GOING TO REMAIN WITH US FOR A LONG TIME TO COME, AND WE MAY AS WELL RESIGN OURSELVES TO THIS PHASE OF SOCIAL MOBILITY. IF WE MADE A SERIOUS STUDY OF THE HUMAN DYNAMICS OF THESE AREAS WE MAY FIND THAT THE ANSWERS ARE NOT AS DEPRESSING AS WE MIGHT ANTICIPATE.

LET ME HASTEN TO EMPHASISE THAT I AM NOT ADVOCATING THAT THE ONLY DUTY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IS TO GET OUT OF PEOPLE'S LIVES AND LET THEM GET

ON WITH MAKING THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS. JUST AS SELF-HELP CAN BE SERIOUSLY INHIBITED BY NEGATIVE BUREAUCRATIC ATTITUDES, THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN IS THAT IT CAN BE GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY A POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS. THE AUTHORITIES AT THE VERY LEAST MUST ENSURE THAT AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF NEW BUILDING SITES WITH MINIMUM NECESSARY FACILITIES KEEPS AHEAD OF THE POTENTIAL DEMAND. PROCEDURES FOR SURVEYING, RECORDING OWNERSHIP AND/OR OCCUPATION RIGHTS AND ACQUISITION FORMALITIES MUST BE DRASTICALLY SIMPLIFIED. TECHNICAL ADVICE AND THE FACILITIES FOR OBTAINING SUPPLIES OF BASIC MATERIALS MUST BE PROVIDED. ABOVE ALL, A SPIRIT OF INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MUST BE FOSTERED. THE TWO MAIN FACTORS FOR SUCCESS ARE TO MY MIND A CHANGE OF BASIC ATTITUDES AND FACILITIES FOR TRAINING. FOR TOO LONG

TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO BOTH PROVIDE AND REGULATE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING. THIS ATTITUDE ALSO SPILLS OVER INTO THE NEXT TIER OF SOCIAL SERVICES, SUCH AS HEALTH, EDUCATION AND TRANSPORT. INDEED, THE AUTHORITIES HAVE A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY TO DO WHAT THEY CAN FOR THE AGED, THE DISABLED AND THE TOTALLY INDIGENT. LET US REMIND OURSELVES, HOWEVER, THAT THE MAJORITY OF BLACKS WHOSE NEEDS WE ARE CONSIDERING ARE NOT AGED, DISABLED OR TOTALLY WITHOUT RESOURCES. THE MAJORITY ARE ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE AND WILL RESPOND VERY POSITIVELY TO CONSTRUCTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT. WE MUST SIMPLY MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO GET INTO THE ACT. WE TAKE IT FOR GRANTED AMONGST THE WHITE SECTOR THAT THERE SHOULD BE BUILDING SOCIETIES, ESTATE AGENTS, SMALL CONTRACTORS, MATERIALS SUPPLIERS, JOBBING TRADESMEN AND LANDLORDS WHO PURCHASE FOR

INVESTMENT HOUSES ADDITIONAL TO THE ONE'S THEY OCCUPY. ALL THESE CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE CONTRIBUTE MIGHTILY TO IMPROVING THE AVAILABLE HOUSING POOL. THEIR VIRTUALLY TOTAL ABSENCE AMONGST BLACKS IS A CAUSE FOR VERY GREAT ALARM. IN THIS RESPECT THE URBAN FOUNDATION IS TO BE CONGRATULATED FOR ITS PLANS TO HELP WITH THE TRAINING OF POTENTIAL BLACK ESTATE AGENTS. MARKETS ENSURE THE EFFICIENT DISTRIBUTION OF AVAILABLE PRODUCTS. WE MUST DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO CREATE AN ORDERLY MARKET IN BLACK HOUSING. OUR PRESENT OBSESSIONS WITH AN ALLOCATION, OR COMMAND, ECONOMY IN HOUSING MUST GO. WE SHOULD BE COMMITTING OURSELVES TO A MARKET ECONOMY. WE KEEP ON CONGRATULATING OURSELVES ON OUR COMMITMENT TO A FREE ENTERPRISE SOCIETY, YET ALL THE WHILE CONTINUING TO BEHAVE LIKE DEDICATED SOCIALISTS! LITTLE WONDER THAT FREE ENTERPRISE DOES NOT HAVE MUCH STANDING AMONGST BLACKS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN, DURING THIS SEMINAR WE SHALL BE GETTING DOWN TO SOME SPECIFICS AS TO HOW THE SELF-HELP APPROACH CAN MAKE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO OUR HOUSING CRISIS. WE SHALL BE INFORMED AS TO THE WAYS IN WHICH THE PUBLIC SECTOR, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYERS CAN FOSTER AND ENCOURAGE THIS CONCEPT. YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE FOR YOURSELVES HOW ONE SUCH ENDEAVOUR, THE GRAHAMSTOWN ZENZELE SCHEME, IS OPERATING IN PRACTICE. IN MY INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY AND AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN THIS CITY I FEEL PROUD TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SPEAK TO YOU THIS MORNING. RHODES UNIVERSITY IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED RIGHT NOW IN A PROGRAMME OF BUILDING 25 CONVENTIONAL AND 100 ZENZELE HOUSES WITH OUR EMPLOYEES. PLEASE NOTE THAT I HAVE SAID WITH AND NOT FOR OUR EMPLOYEES. I AM AWARE, PAINFULLY AWARE, OF ALL THE DIFFICULTIES,

FRUSTRATIONS AND PROBLEMS WE HAVE HAD TO OVERCOME OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS BEFORE WE COULD REACH THIS POINT. WE HAVE HAD TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ADVICE AND FINANCIAL GUARANTEES ON A MUCH GREATER SCALE THAN WE AT FIRST ENVISAGED, BUT IN THE PROCESS WE ALMOST UNWITTINGLY FOUND OURSELVES MAKING A COUNTRYWIDE BREAKTHROUGH. OUR ZENZELE SCHEME IS THE FIRST IN THE WHOLE OF SOUTH AFRICA IN WHICH BUILDING SOCIETIES HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO BOND THIS TYPE OF INEXPENSIVE UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSING. I AM THUS NO STRANGER TO THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES IN THIS FIELD.

LET ME CONCLUDE BY MAKING A PLEA THAT WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO THE WIDESPREAD INTRODUCTION OF SELF-HELP HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA, NOT AS THE ONLY PROCESS AVAILABLE, BUT AS ONE OF THE RANGE OF EFFECTIVE,

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS IN A ROBUST AND COMPREHENSIVE LOW INCOME HOUSING INITIATIVE.

IN PURSUIT OF THIS OBJECTIVE, I WISH YOU ALL A MOST FRUITFUL DAY OF DISCUSSION, AND I HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO EXCHANGE IDEAS, SOME OF WHICH WILL MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES FOR WHICH YOU FIND YOURSELVES RESPONSIBLE.

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO DECLARE THIS SEMINAR FORMALLY OPEN.

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I MAY 1984