

**TSUMEB COUNCIL CALLS ON PROPERTY DEVELOPERS TO COME AND MEET THE HIGH DEMAND FOR HOUSING AND BUSINESS PROPERTY AT THE TOWN.**

*"I am a house owner now and I am very happy. I used to rent at different places before and it was really difficult for me to be happy at other people's houses. Today I am paying towards my own house,"* said one of the content residents of the new neighborhood inaugurated at Nomtsoub suburb at Tsumeb on 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2008.

The 30 new houses built through the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia, SDFN at Tsumeb were officially opened by the Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, John Pandeni. During the same occasion, the minister also launched the building of twenty five (25) more houses in order to expand the housing development for low income earners at Tsumeb.

The Minister who declared the SDFN's houses as "*habitable*" called on the other community members not to despair but to take on the available opportunities by joining savings groups such as SDFN and build houses for themselves.

*"I do not believe in people who say I cannot do that....,"* the Minister stressed. He pointed out that the new home owners acquired their private houses because they have proven willingness to work towards them. Pandeni therefore advised people to stop asking the question of how when they need to do something and instead ask why they need to do it, and put up a plan of action to follow and implement.

Pandeni agreed that the dignity of people living in shacks is low but commended those who have stood up and changed their living situation.

He advised the residents at Tsumeb to always use their minds and come up with plans of actions in order to achieve anything they wish to pursue including building own houses. Pandeni said it is only through such an approach that others can recognize their efforts and offer some kind of help.

The minister said his ministry (Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development) will continue to assist the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia by committing a subsidy of one million dollar annually so that more houses are built for the under-privileged community members countrywide.

On that day, Holcim Namibia donated three hundred thousand Namibian dollars (300-000 N\$) towards the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia. "We continue to give encouragement to the members of the SDFN countrywide to continue saving, no matter how small the amount, so that they can one day, and sooner, have a home of their own" said the company representative, Nora Ndopu.

At the same occasion, Tsumeb Mayor, his Worship Cllr. E. Nawatiseb highlighted the municipality's continuous support to the efforts of the Shack Dwellers Federation.

*“Compared to other associations, the shack dwellers are providing housing at a faster rate and they are building capacity within the vulnerable groups by transferring building skills. Hence, I want to encourage all community members to join the Shack Dwellers Federation, especially those who are living in Soweto.”*

Nawatiseb however indicated that the town council was faced with the problem of land availability. He said on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008, council engaged Weatherly Mining to consider giving the municipality other pieces of land that can be used for housing provision and negotiations in this regard are still continuing.

In an interview, the Chief Executive Officer of the Tsumeb Municipality, Alpheus Benjamin urged residents especially the homeless at Soweto to join saving groups such as SDFN so that once land is made available the municipality can relocate them in a planned manner.

He said council does not support the establishment of shanty towns as it want to ensure that community members has decent houses they can afford.

*“I call on the homeless residents of Tsumeb to be patient, I know it is not easy to stay without a house but council is committed to get organized and make provision for more housing developments when land becomes available, said Benjamin.*

The Tsumeb municipality is busy with the resettlement program of Soweto, and so far, most households have been electrified with the provision of CENORED prepayment facilities. The oldest neighborhood at Tsumeb is also been provided with sewerage and waterlines and the project is scheduled for completion in May 2008.

The Soweto houses have also been provided with nearly fifty (50) individual toilets and the process is being fastened to add 200 more to ensure that each house receive a private toilet.

In the meantime, the TSUMEB MUNICIPALITY is calling on developers to come and engage council in order to cater for the much needed housing and business development at the town's current available land earmarked for such advancement.

Private investors who have bought land at Tsumeb are also advised to start developing them or otherwise sell them to those in urgent need of property.