

# **Elias Masilela - Affordable Housing In South Africa**

*www.property24.com. Oct, 1, 2012*

Section 26 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution enshrines a citizen's right to adequate housing.

According to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in relation to adequate housing, the article reads: "the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one's head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity."

The Government in an effort to realise this right for all South Africans has built over 3 million subsidised housing units since 1994.

Not only is this a constitutional requirement, it is just simple human dignity.

However, due to the massive growing demands, on the one hand and decades of degradation of housing conditions, on the other hand, the backlog remains difficult to eradicate.

Current estimates of the backlog stand at about 2.1 to 2.5 million units.

As at September 2011, it was estimated that approximately 12 million people were still without adequate housing.

Though consistent and reliable statistics on housing are somewhat patchy, according to the 2009 General Household Survey, 12.8 percent of South African households lived in a RDP or State-subsidised dwelling and 13.5 percent of households have at least one member of the household on a demand database or waiting list for State subsidised housing.

International human rights law recognises principles on basic housing.

According to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in relation to adequate housing, the article reads: "the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one's head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity."

The Department of Human Settlements has recognised that the backlog in South Africa is not being reduced fast enough and has committed to increasing the rate of delivery with a view to wiping out the backlog by 2030.

At current levels, over R16 billion is earmarked by Government for housing each year.

But still this is not enough and has led Minister Sexwale to say that *“We need all hands on deck to sort this problem out and to create a better South Africa for all.”*

Read more: <http://www.property24.com/affordable-housing-in-south-africa>

*Elias Masilela* is the chief executive officer of the Public Investment Corporation.