



## Appendix 7 of Annexure W of the UDM Constitution

### UDM Housing Policy Proposals

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### 1. Introduction

In any country an effective housing policy is important for both social and economic reasons. Access to decent housing is a tool in the fight against poverty. A functioning housing market influences, and is influenced by, the national economy. In the South African context housing was used as a political tool to implement and entrench apartheid. Therefore housing has great political and emotional significance.

The UDM's policy framework will meet the housing challenges in a sustainable, qualitative and developmental manner geared at providing adequate and decent housing for the nation. That means that houses without jobs are not acceptable, and one/two room houses are morally and socially wrong. In the long-term government should ensure that people have jobs and infrastructure is provided in communities, so that people can build or buy their own homes, therefore subsidised housing should not be a never-ending responsibility of government.

Job creation through housing construction must be part of any housing strategy.

Fairness, transparency and equitable distribution of resources will be the guiding principle in the UDM housing policy.

The UDM embraces the constitutional right of all South Africans to adequate and decent housing as enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

The UDM believes that the best way to combat homelessness is to avoid people being home-less in the first place. Therefore the UDM government will take proactive and comprehensive steps to ensure that poverty and homelessness is eradicated.

To the UDM poverty, unemployment and fragmented government policies are the three biggest causes or reasons why people are still homeless. For this reason this policy framework advocates an integrated approach whereby housing policy falls within a larger economic strategy to create jobs, in order to successfully combat and eradicate homelessness and poverty.

The quality and size of housing units is another area of serious concern to the UDM. Houses ought to be a shelter, large enough, to accommodate a family. The present policy of sacrificing quality, size and standards in the interest of quantity is not acceptable. People should be empowered to build their own houses so that they can cater for their needs in terms of size and quality.



The UDM recognises that all basic human needs culminate in a proper shelter. It is the cornerstone of service delivery. The UDM will promote ownership and the acquisition of collateral, leading to economic empowerment. Housing will thus restore the human dignity and pride to all South Africans by providing adequate shelter.

## 2. Housing strategy

This Housing strategy will be in line with the Planned Sustainable Development programmes proposed in the UDM Economic and Public Works policies which will be driven by government through the department of Public Works. This means that all housing settlements should occur within a broad economic development framework so that affected communities will be able to find jobs and access social services within their areas. This will make such communities economically viable and self-reliant. The aim is to create productive and safe environments and improve the quality of life of affected communities.

2.1. This strategy, as far as housing is concerned, aims to achieve the following:

- Stabilising the housing environment.
- Mobilising housing credit.
- Providing subsidy assistance.
- Supporting community house building programmes.
- Improve the institutional capacity of the Housing department.
- Facilitate the speedy release and servicing of land.
- Coordinating government investment in development.
- Provide rental accommodation of different types.

2.2. This strategy will entail the following:

- The setting of a minimum standard for the size of a housing stand, to provide for future expansion.
- Securing tenure or ownership of private property for all South Africans.
- Ensuring that homeowners, and future homeowners, all have access to capital or financing. The formal banking sector must come to the table to negotiate, instead of government forcing their cooperation through legislation.
- The size of the housing subsidy limits the choices of the beneficiaries. The poor can be assisted much better, by for example ensuring that they receive serviced plots, rather than structures without services.
- Integrating informal settlements and townships into urban areas, and giving attention to public transport, water, sanitation, schools, clinics, environmental issues and recreational facilities.

2.3. Current Housing policy can be accused of exacerbating poverty.

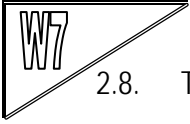
- New developments often take place on peripheral, relatively unstable land, far from job and other opportunities.
- Housing development is often isolated from necessary social services/facilities like schools and clinics.
- New housing development often entails relocation, disrupting existing social networks and survival strategies of the poor.

2.4. To deal with poverty the UDM proposes a Basic Service Subsidy to assist poor people to afford basic service rates.

2.5. The UDM advocates a harmonisation of urban and rural settings, modern and traditional communities, and cultural diversity. For example, the size of plots in rural areas must accommodate and cater for the traditional gardens or domestic small-scale farming. Any attempts to try and use urban specifications for size in rural areas, would inevitably be a recipe for disaster, and should be avoided.

2.6. The UDM will not settle people in an area with no prospects of job opportunities in their vicinity. People must be empowered by all available means to have sources of survival and income generation. That is the only way communities will be in a position to afford to pay for services rendered and to be economically viable.

2.7. The UDM favours a partnership approach between government, the private sector and communities in the creation of viable housing settlements.



2.8. The UDM proposes a shift from crisis management of housing to a more proactive approach.

### 3. Specific critical areas that will be addressed

#### 3.1. Housing backlogs and poor quality housing

The policies of separate development of previous regimes have led to enormous housing backlogs in the country. The fragmented policies of the present government are making matters worse, since most of the so-called housing units are of sub-standard quality, and worse if compared to those of the previous regime.

The housing backlog in the country runs into the millions (3 million units currently) and is growing at a rate of 178 000 units per annum. On the other hand, many houses that were built are falling apart.

There are more than 720 000 sites in urban areas that will need upgrading to meet minimum standards of accommodation. Another 450 000 hostel units may need to be converted into proper family units. Most of the backlogs are in previously disadvantaged areas, which are predominantly rural, or in township and semi-urban areas. Most township houses are already catering for more than one family.

3.1.1. Specific problems to address are:

- Inappropriate and small size of housing units.
- Differences in requirements between provinces.
- Special needs for women and marginalised groups.

3.1.2. The UDM proposes that in urban areas the state can provide housing units either for rent or for purchase at subsidised rates.

3.1.3. The UDM will support, where appropriate and practical, the conversion of Hostels into family units. This may go a long way towards restoring family and community values and create a stable social environment.

3.1.4. The nation must be empowered to house themselves by building their own homes.

### 4. Land tenure

The fragmentation, contradictions and proliferation of all of the laws, policies and ordinances on Housing and Land, create problems for potential beneficiaries. The legal intricacies involved in this web of laws and policies mean that often only lawyers and professional practitioners can understand and interpret them. The above has the effect of alienating the very people targeted for help and makes them vulnerable to abuse by unscrupulous consultants.

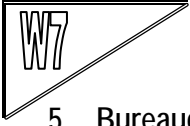
On the other hand, the slow pace of providing well-located land is hampering development and stifling housing delivery. Some private landowners deliberately demand exorbitant payments for the release of land to homeless communities. The process of providing well-located land for housing purposes is generally disastrous and too slow. The UDM proposes in its Land policy specific strategies to speed up the equitable distribution of land to address the failure of the current government to deliver.

Secure tenure to homeowners is fundamental to any housing intervention strategy. This will go along way in reducing the risk of evictions and the easier provision of essential services and care to communities.

The UDM further believes that recognition must be given to all forms of tenure, including communal tenure systems practiced in rural communities. We believe that there is indeed enough room, within the framework of the law, that provision can be made for individual title deeds within a communal land tenure system. Traditional leaders will be recognised in the process of reviewing communal tenure.

On the other hand rapid reforms targeted at urban and semi-urban communities must be urgently addressed. The government must speedily release land in its custody to house the homeless.





**5. Bureaucratic lapses, self-enrichment, discrimination and politicisation of housing delivery**

The present housing system is in shambles to say the least. Corruption and self-enrichment by officials are the order of the day.

- 5.1. Bribery and favouritism is widespread within many housing departments.
- 5.2. Politicians and officials are allocating projects to friends, family members and questionable developers.
- 5.3. In some areas, houses are being built without secure tenure and without proper consultation. People are even refusing to occupy the units built by government because they were never consulted properly.
- 5.4. In other areas fraudulent applications with fictitious names have been approved.
- 5.5. Many communities are reporting discriminatory practices along party political lines. Most local councillors are reported to be, not only biased towards their party political allegiances, but also along tribal and ethnic lines. Political bickering, tribal and ethnic undertones mar many housing projects.

The UDM government will take pro-active steps to ensure that all communities are treated equally. Every housing project will be delivered in a fair and consultative manner. Development as a whole will be separated from party political activities.