

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS FROM CITY OF CAPE TOWN

Brief description of the film

On the 22 March 2021, a demonstration was held in Sea Point, Cape Town to plead with the City of Cape Town to provide residents of informal settlements with basic services. The demonstration follows on from various other demonstrations (include at Parliament and the Civic Centre) around similar issues facing residents of informal settlements in Cape Town.

Issues that were raised at the demonstration include that residents feel are similar across informal settlements in Cape Town include: lack of access to clean toilets and sanitation, dangers faced (especially to women) when having to use shared toilets, lack of access to proper refuse removal, lack of proper roads and transport infrastructure, lack electricity and dangers associated with improper electrical connections, lack of healthcare as well as exposure to unhealthy living conditions that create health hazards. Interviewees also expressed frustration at having reported and protested to raise awareness of these issues, but not having had adequate response or solutions from the City of Cape Town.

It was reported that Mayor Dan Plato would address the demonstrators' concerns by the 23rd of March 2021, however reports suggest there has been no response to date.

Questions

1. Please provide any general comments on the demonstration event.
2. Please provide comments on plans to improve the lives of those residing in informal settlements and to ensure that basic services (in relation to the issues listed above) are provided?
3. Could you clarify and comment on the lack of response from Mayor Plato after suggesting to demonstrators that he would provide feedback?
4. Could you comment on previous reporting of and demonstrations around similar issues and lack of basic services (as listed above), and what kinds of solutions have/are being developed?

We would appreciate comment by 17:00 on Thursday 1st April 2021.

RESPONSE FROM THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

23 MARCH 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

Large-scale unlawful occupations driving demands for basic services

Last year, Cape Town experienced an unprecedented increase in especially large-scale, orchestrated unlawful land occupations during the Covid-19 national lockdown periods, many driven by criminal syndicates or so-called 'shack farmers'. Assessments of all new

settlements are under way, however, it is completely unreasonable to demand immediate services, especially in areas where human settlements were never meant to be formed, such as in nature reserves. Read more below:

- ***The majority of recent unlawful occupations have occurred in areas that were never meant for human settlements, such as road reserves, wetlands and water detention ponds and on nature reserve land where there is no bulk service infrastructure for basic services.***
- ***With the organised unlawful occupation of the provincial Driftsands nature reserve alone, more than 10 000 dwellings were established on land that was never earmarked for housing.***
- ***It is estimated some R200 million alone would be required just to service the newly unlawfully occupied areas where it is possible to do so.***
- ***Amid national government funding cuts, the City of Cape Town works with limited public funds, and a planned approach is required that does not jeopardise existing settlements at the expense of newly formed ones.***
- ***Service provision in Cape Town continues to be above national benchmarks, where possible.***

The City respects the right of groups to protest, but absolutely condemns violence, criminality, thuggery and the destruction of public property and disruption to residents trying to go about their daily lives. Such actions move us backward and civic organisations and political parties should not condone such behaviour.

Above national service benchmarks

- Almost **100%** of longer established settlements in City-supplied areas are electrified, where it is possible to do so.
- **Some 50 000 toilets** are provided to service residents in 181 000 households in informal settlements **across the city**, which includes the servicing of toilets and janitorial services, which has continued throughout lockdown.
- Where the City is not able to install full-flush toilets (the City's first choice), residents are provided with alternative sanitation solutions, including portable flush toilets (PFTs), container toilets, and chemical toilets, where possible.
- Approximately 20 000 portable flush toilets have been provided to individual households in areas where there are safety concerns related to using formal ablution facilities during the night and where accessibility for the other toilet types are a challenge for residents. PFTs are also suitable for people with disabilities and whose mobility is generally limited.
- **Approximately 8 800 taps have been provided city-wide** and the City will continue to provide taps, where possible.
- As part of the City's emergency Covid-19 response to provide temporary relief, **more than 180 million litres of water has been delivered via water trucks** to underserved communities due to settlements being on privately-owned land, newly established or where permanent services cannot be installed due to issues such as the suitability of the

land. The disaster declaration enabled the City to temporarily expand its reach to residents it would not ordinarily be able to service due to legislative and other constraints.

- In addition, the **majority of the 307 jojo style water tanks** that have been provided, were installed in Khayelitsha and are in the process of being progressively connected to the water supply network. In the meantime, communities who have tanks, will continue to receive water delivery via trucks. Interim stand pipes will also be provided, wherever possible, while work is under way to connect the tanks.

High spend, delivery on human settlements, water and waste

The Human Settlements Directorate spent 98% of its Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) capital budget in the 2019/20 financial year, despite the greatly negative Covid-19 and lockdown regulations' impact on its programmes and operations. Likewise, the Water and Waste Directorate spent 94% of its 2019/2020 USDG capital allocations. This shows the money is being spent on the programmes that it is meant to be spent on.

'The City continues to provide basic water and sanitation services, such as toilets and taps for water, to informal settlements across Cape Town, where possible.

'Providing services is a challenge when, due to unlawful occupation, residents settle on land that is not suitable for the installation of such services. The City is also not allowed to install services on privately-owned land without permission and in these instances, can only install services on the periphery, on City-owned land.

'The City will continue to work closely with ward councillors and informal settlement leadership structures to unlock additional opportunities for provision of basic water and sanitation, where it is possible to do so,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Water and Waste, Alderman Xanthea Limberg.

New settlements, new demands

Numerous newly established communities are demanding services, but currently, the City is unable to cater for these unplanned settlements as existing recognised informal settlements are prioritised on the basis of available resources, which are not limitless.

'Planned and budgeted projects are prioritised. Assessments of all unlawfully occupied areas are being undertaken and will continue to be undertaken across the metro. Noting that the far greatest majority of the settlements have been established on unsuitable land or land with great constraints for service delivery and land where the installation of bulk services for servicing was never planned.

'In general, in the City's existing settlements where the conditions make it possible and in City electricity supply areas, we are surpassing the national benchmarks for service provision. The

commitment is there from our side, but it must be possible and it must be done in a planned and ordered manner.

'Proactive measures are required to enable the City to pre-emptively protect land earmarked for community use, housing and bulk services; to enhance the safety of unlawful occupiers and surrounding communities; to increase affordable housing opportunities and to prevent a situation where earmarked projects and beneficiaries suffer as a result of the already limited funds being diverted to newly invaded areas.

'The City has drawn up an **Unlawful Land Occupation Framework** as a means of proactively managing the challenges of the large-scale unlawful occupations that have taken place. Unlawful land occupation is an illegal act, but the City will always endeavour to treat the human needs that underline this activity,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements, Councillor Malusi Booi.

Too much resting on the shoulders of local government

The City's response to unlawful land occupations is made challenging by the extensive responsibilities placed on local government to act as the final provider of all basic services and housing needs, without the supporting levers to fund or catalyse these undertakings. A response which is premised on the capacity of local government alone will not work.

Human settlements delivery is beset with challenges, including R1,3 billion in City housing projects under threat from ongoing orchestrated unlawful occupations, National Government budget cuts reducing the City's USDG, a weak national economy and regulatory red tape.

For more information, please see: <https://www.capetown.gov.za/Media-and-news/New%20framework%20seeks%20innovative%20solutions%20to%20manage%20informality>

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