

Mayor signs accord to better lives of the poor

Nadine Ford-Kritzinger

CAPE Town Mayor Patricia De Lille yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (Mou) to better the lives of the people at Vygieskraal.

The community organisation resource centre (CORC) and the informal settlements network (ISN) also put their signatures on the Mou.

This move came after months of preparation between the ISN, who are a grassroots network of community and civic organisations mobilising around an issue-based agenda for upgrading informal settlements, and its supportive NGO CORC.

Yesterday marked the event that recognises that what they have been doing is important for the people of the informal settlement when the memorandum was signed by them and the City of Cape Town.

The City's Human Settlements councillor Ernest Sonnenberg said: "Today, as a caring city, we are here to build on this relationship and make it stronger in the future".

"The department of human settlements is pleased to be here today and is looking forward with relish to continuing and strengthening our relationship with Corc and ISN".

Councillor Sonneberg said

there were six objectives for partnering with the ISN including: the creation of a shared community vision of the future, identification and prioritisation of key issues, support for community-based analysis of local issues, development of action plans for addressing key issues, mobilisation of community-wide resources to meet service needs, increasing public support for municipal activities and local understanding of municipal development needs as well as constraints.

De Lille reminded the community that the signing of the Mou as partners meant that they were now equal.

"The City treats you equally,"

said the mayor.

"We want to be of service to all and we as government take our obligations very seriously. Today is a lot of talk and signing, but the real challenge is to remain committed".

"The community needs to monitor and make sure that we keep to our word," added De Lille.

De Lille said there were 220 informal settlements in the Cape Town area and there was a lack of services in these settlements.

"It is not because we don't want to provide services, there are factors and reasons for these situations," said De Lille.

She said the city was not allowed to provide services on

private property as this was in breach of the country's laws.

"We are creating space for people and while we are doing so we are prepared to at least provide basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation services," said De Lille.

"This is not an empty promise."

Before signing the memorandum, the mayor informed the residents of the informal settlement that she will have an extended public works representative sent out today to visit the area and clean up the place which will also create employment for the local people who will keep the place clean and maintained.

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MARKED THE EVENT: Zwanele Zulu, left, Mayor Patricia de Lille and Bunita Kohler, right, signing the memorandum of understanding. Picture: ANWA ESSOP

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