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VULNERABLE WOMEN TO RECEIVE HOUSES

By Pule Lechesa

BRANDFORT – The department of Human Settlements’ annual Letsema project, known as Women’s Build, was officially launched on Sunday, August 1 in Brandfort.

Deputy Minister for the Department of Human Settlements, Zoe Kota-Fredericks, and Free State MEC for the Department of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Mamiki Qhabathe presided over the function in the small town which hosts the Winnie Mandela museum.

The two politicians accompanied by government officials planted a tree at beneficiary Memeng Elizabeth Obango’s house. This was followed by a brick- laying ceremony.

“This is one of our annual programmes that we use to raise consciousness about the construction sector and women’s role in this male-dominated sector. We should also like to promote women’s access to economic opportunities within the human settlements’ sector,” said the deputy Minister.

The programme will be coordinated by the national department of Human Settlements in partnership with the key sector stakeholders. It is a platform to accelerate human settlements delivery by building houses for vulnerable and marginalised women in commemoration of the 1956 women’s anti pass law march.

Qabathe exhorted women to take the centre stage in the development of the communities. “We are trying to empower women – as you can see, even a woman contractor has been employed to construct these house units.”

She added: “We are to build homes for targeted beneficiaries such as the disabled, child-headed households, the elderly, women and residents who are living under abject poverty.”

A total of 100 houses will be built in Brandfort, 55 of which are meant for the commemoration of the 55th anniversary of the 1956 women’s march. The closing ceremony will be held on August 18, and the minister of human settlement Tokyo Sexwale will be here to officially hand over the houses.

The Mayor of Masilonyana Local Municipality, Steven Koalane said that this is a continuation of his council’s push for better housing for the people.

In an interview with *Public Eye* one of the beneficiaries, Zamani Vikile could not hide her emotions. “I am happy that God has finally heard my prayers. I thought I was going to die (still living) in my shack,” she said, tears of joy streaming down her cheeks.

[source: <http://www.publiceyenews.com/2011/08/05/vulnerable-women-to-receive-houses/>]