

■ HOUSING

Sisulu comes to the rescue of collapsing construction sector

SIYABONGA MKHWANAZI

siyabonga.mkhwanazi@inl.co.za

THE Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Lindiwe Sisulu wants to meet the financially bleeding construction industry to enable it to work in major housing projects in a rescue effort.

The sector has over the past few months been financially distressed, with some of the companies on the verge of collapse.

The multibillion-rand industry is facing collapse as some of the big players are already in business rescue.

Sisulu told the media in Cape Town yesterday, before her budget vote, that the construction sector was key in her department.

Part of the work they will be doing is to ensure that companies are paid



Lindiwe Sisulu

within the prescribed 30-day period to prevent their collapse.

“Our law is clear that payment is

done within 30 days so that we don’t cripple our private sector companies,” she said.

“In working smarter we are committed to resuscitate our relations with the construction industry. I intend to have an indaba with the construction industry at the earliest opportunity...” said Sisulu.

“I’ll be proposing legislation that will give us the necessary power to restructure the environment in which we work and remove the frustrations of our construction industry.”

Sisulu also said they would push for the Expropriation Bill in Parliament to ensure that most of the expropriated land would be used to build houses.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is driving the Expropriation Bill, however, Sisulu said they would (not) be able to make comment on the bill.

She said there were large tracts of public land, some of it owned by state-

owned entities, that could be used to build houses.

However, the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation would also meet the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

The Land Reform and Rural Development Department conducted an audit on land ownership in the country.

Sisulu said the audit would help identify land that could be used to build houses.

She said they needed land that was closer to the cities to allow for commuters to be closer to economic centres.

Land reform is still to be dealt with in Parliament after the appointment of members to serve on the ad hoc committee on expropriation.