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The economic experience of the Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain bloc through the recent global financial crisis compared with that of SA has been well documented and discussed and the differences are clear. Perhaps less discussed is the political differences between the Arab/North African revolts and that of SA; on this score, Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale, in his opening address at the annual SAPOA convention in Cape Town, drew attention to one key difference: in a nutshell the Arab league remains largely voiceless whereas the poorest of the poor in SA are still 'merely' voicing their grievances around service delivery, etc. He is suggesting that democracy is at play and any fears should be allayed by the reality of SA's strong constitutional framework. That being said, SA's 2700 informal settlements remain plagued by the apartheid city form and the challenges that this poses for integrating society remains daunting; as per his department's 2030 vision, places of habitation need to permit people to 'love, pray, leisure and play'.

The private sector has a potentially massive role to play in this challenge and Sexwale reiterated the importance of bulk and social services in doing this delivery properly. Of course someone has to pay for this investment; however with the not-so-pretty global debt picture, further constraints to already low levels of capital expenditure in the economy, exist. To this concoction add the reality of soaring commodity prices, administered price inflation and existing production capacity, making the prospect for much meaningful economic investment and job creation, a poor one. Also, interest rate hikes will confront SA's monetary policy committee in due course: with households already suffering from relatively high debt to disposable income ratio, the prospect for a full household expenditure recovery buffer is waning.

If properly managed, SA's developmental challenges could well become a blessing in disguise, offering focus to delivery agents and hope to millions of people. Let's each play our part, no matter how big or small.

### MARKUS KAPS OF KEY PROJECTS COMMENTS:

Key Projects with its JV partners have recently secured the development rights to develop residential rental stock in the Western Cape. A unique model has been developed where private and public sector funding will finance the construction of rental stock targeted at lower income groups.

The estimated R523 million capital investment around PRASA owned metro rail stations at Nolungile and Lentegour stations includes both residential and commercial opportunities.