

## **Collective Statement of the Churches Supporting the Cloverdene Homeless People**

**Date: 06/05/2010**

As the Churches that have walked along the Cloverdene Homeless People in their fight for justice against their eviction and confiscation of their possessions, we welcome the judgement that was passed on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010 at the Benoni Magistrate court. The judgement instructed the Municipality of Ekurhuleni to give back and erect the tents they confiscated from the Cloverdene Homeless People earlier this year. This ruling made by the court has to be carried out within 12 hours of the judgement. The community was also granted permission to continue to occupy the piece of land that they are currently residing in. The ruling further prevents the Municipality, the Department of Housing, Metro Police and the Red Ants from taking any action against this Community while on this land. This ruling allows the Cloverdene Homeless People to erect shelters to protect their families during the approaching winter, and support their children as they continue their schooling.

While this is a victory that should be celebrated, we are aware that the struggle for this community is not about to end. The Cloverdene Community still remains without proper housing, water or sanitation. This community, like any other citizens of this country has rights to such critical basic services.

We further affirm the resistance shown by this community, who defended their rights against those who tried to marginalise them in their own country. As churches we pledge our unwavering support to this community as they continue in their struggle of fighting for their rights, protecting their dignity. We believe that justice has been served for the Cloverdene Homeless People who have suffered under the cold rainy weather of Johannesburg.

We affirm the dignity of the poor and proclaim that the God of Justice is with them. We also acknowledge the solidarity shown to the Cloverdene Homeless People during their eviction and court case both by churches, social movements and many others. We affirm that God is with the poor, and calls people of faith and justice to stand with them as they stand their ground.”

Though the judgement passed on the 05<sup>th</sup> May 2010 instructed the Municipality of Ekurhuleni to give back and erect the tents they confiscated from the Cloverdene Homeless People within 12 hours of the ruling, the municipality had not responded accordingly. We strongly condemn the sluggishness of the municipality and felt disappointed that it failed to lead by example in honouring the ruling of the court.

*Statement is collectively issued by the churches that have worked with ESSET (Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation) in support of the Cloverdene Homeless People. These are the Methodist Church in Southern Africa, the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, the Gauteng Council of Churches, the United Congregational Church in Southern Africa, the Lutheran Church of Southern Africa, the Outreach Community Church, and the Ekurhuleni Ministers Fraternal.*

This statement is endorsed by ESSET, the Church Land Programme (CLP), *Bishop Zipho Ziwa*, Rev Dr Jerry Pillay- General Secretary: *Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa* and Rev. Dr Vuyani Vellem: *Deputy General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.*