

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MEC OF AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT MR BASIKOPO MAKAMU DURING THE
AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION:
POLOKWANE, CAPRICORN DISTRICT**

19 February 2019

Programme Director

House of Traditional Leaders

Head of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

MEC Advisory Committee

Fraternal Departments

State Owned Enterprises

Organised Agriculture

Commodity Associations

Commercial Agri-Business

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

During the 2019 State of the Nation Address (SONA), the agricultural sector was again highlighted as the sunshine industry that can create jobs due to its labour intensity. Agriculture in South Africa is the major source of employment, income generation and foreign exchange.

Deducing from the SONA the role of agriculture cannot be overemphasised for a province such as Limpopo which though poor,

is well-endowed with agro climatic conditions and natural resources suitable for production of high value agricultural commodities.

The pivotal importance of agriculture as the primary source of livelihood of the vast majority of households in Limpopo underlines the centrality of the contribution of agriculture to food security.

Nationally it is estimated that 250 000 small emerging farmers are working the lands and need support to fully develop their businesses. It is well known that the majority of emerging farmers remain constrained by lack of access to production capital, adequate infrastructure and access to formal markets.

The call by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the SONA is for government to intensify support to emerging farmers to help them to participate in the formal economy.

Limpopo is strategically positioned to respond to the president's call and to contribute to the country's foreign earning owing to its competitive advantage in the production of export-oriented agricultural commodities such as citrus and subtropical fruits.

For Limpopo to claim its space and role, there's a need for the province to rally behind a common agenda.

This stakeholder engagement therefore comes at an opportune moment when there is a dire need for the sector to speak in one voice in pursuit of the common cause to grow and consolidate opportunities in agriculture to boost economic growth and create much needed jobs.

The recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in Vhembe, Mopani and Molemole Local Municipality in the Capricorn District hold

valuable lessons for the agriculture sector in general and Limpopo Province in particular.

In response to the FMD outbreak government, red meat industry and other relevant role players came together to craft a common platform to manage the disease. Out of this common platform clear messages have been issued to assure the country and international markets that the situation is under control.

The FMD approach resonates with today's stakeholder engagement as we shall hereafter elaborate and is borne by the programme that serves as our guide during the proceedings.

At the heart of the stakeholder engagement we are hosting today is the need to increase primary production with the aim to increase economic growth and job creation through agricultural development.

Among areas of potential identified in this regard include irrigation schemes, land reform farms, red meat cluster, grains and poultry units.

For this purpose we have brought under one roof, key stakeholders in agriculture to promote intergovernmental relations and Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to contribute to the Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-processing to contribute to the Limpopo Industrialisation Plan towards achieving goals of the National Development Plan (NDP) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP).

To avoid this stakeholders engagement session degenerating into just another talk show to vent and disappear back to our comfort zones, we have developed clear objectives against which to measure its success.

In broad terms the objectives of our engagement are the following:

- Consult stakeholders on the need to increase agricultural production.
- Share information on under-utilised agricultural resources and investment opportunities.
- Challenges in Land Reform Projects, Irrigation Schemes and unproductive communal land
- Potential partnership initiatives.
- Share principles for sustainable investment
- To explore the utilisation of blended funding.

These objectives will be a common thread that runs through the presentations and interventions that are going to be made during the course of the session.

One of the key interventions we are going to receive will obviously be on the Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-processing Value Chain (RAAVC) that is one of the Nine Point Plans adopted in 2015 through which economic growth and job creation will be driven.

Limpopo produces a variety of agricultural commodities, some of which have been identified by the Agriculture Action Policy Plan (APAP) for high growth potential and labour intensity, such fruits, nuts and vegetables which have been identified as catalysts for industries value chain.

There will also be presentations the on the agriculture stimulus

package. Commercial agriculture and other stakeholders will have their say as we genuinely seek solutions to agricultural challenges confronting the sector in the province.

During my First 100 days in office I set myself twin tasks of immersing myself in the business of the department and to engage stakeholders for their inputs on how we can best take agriculture to greater heights. One of their concerns was that they are not meeting with the Department to raise issues and give inputs to plans and programmes.

This stakeholder engagement is therefore borne of discussions and meetings with individual farmers and through their organised formations. In these discussions the need to engage broader was identified, and here we are in conference as stakeholders in agriculture. There will be further engagements in future to maintain the momentum of this initiative and ensure that nothing falls off the table.

As I said in the beginning of my address, this stakeholder engagement cannot be just another talk show. We don't enjoy the luxury of time and space to can engage in fruitless discussions.

Let's create the environment and space for government and the private sector to consistently work together to determine the future plans to expand production on under and unutilised land in the province.

On this note I declare the 1st Limpopo Agriculture Stakeholders Engagement Session officially open.

I Thank You

Limpopo Agricultural Stakeholders set the agenda to improve production

"For Limpopo to claim its space and role, there's a need for the province to rally behind a common agenda," Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) MEC Basikopo Makamu said in his address during the LDARD Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-processing Stakeholders Session at the Ranch Hotel near Polokwane on 19 February 2019.

This stakeholder engagement therefore comes at an opportune moment when there is a dire need for the sector to speak in one voice in pursuit of the common cause to grow and consolidate opportunities in agriculture to boost economic growth and create much needed jobs.

At the heart of the stakeholder engagement we are hosting today is the need to increase primary production with the aim to increase economic growth and job creation through agricultural development.

Generally, revitalisation of irrigation schemes and land reform farms was emphasised. Limpopo Agriculture's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Willem van Jarsveld preferred the strategic partnership models as the most working compared to others. He said the mentorship model for example, is likely to fail since mentors might see it as not their problem if the mentored black failed. Contrary, in the former model, both experienced commercial farmers and the assisted emerging farmers will strive to succeed. In case of downfall, both will take responsibility since they were partners.

Dr konanani Liphadzi
Resolution,
Emerging poultry farmers