

KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON THE YOUNG ASPIRANT FARMER AWARDS BY THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DATE: 2019 JUNE 19

TIME 18H30

VENUE BELA-BELA RESORT

THEME YOUNG PEOPLE RECLAIMING THEIR STRATEGIC POSITION IN THE MAINSTREAM OF THE SECTOR.

Programme Director

Executive Mayor of Waterberg District His Worship Cllr Morris Mataboge

Mayor of Bela-Bela His Worship Cllr Jeremiah Ngobeni

Our councillors.

Officials of the Department led by the HOD Mme Maisela and the Executive Management.

Various Sponsors.

Commercial farmers represented by their leadership.

Adjudication teams amongst ourselves.

Last year winners of the Young Farmer Award.

The print and electronic media

Our beloved ladies and gentlemen.

Good evening

Ndi madekwana

Riperile

Goeie nand

We gather here just a few days after His Excellency President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa visited our province to officiate during the June 16 celebrations. The President's visit and address also motivated our youth. This served as a reminder for what happened in Soweto in 1976.

As a province we are really happy for such an honour which came at a correct time. We were remembering the young men and women who were in the forefront of the school boycotts.

Programme Director: Some 43 years ago...thousands of students around the country...from Soweto to Kwamashu to Gugulethu; to Port Elizabeth to Makhado....eventually decided to rise up against the oppression.

It was important for me to lay out what happened those years ago as it laid foundation for days such as these. The Youth of today as we gather have a new role to play. The economy of the country relies heavily on Agriculture. That is where we locate Youth of today. Gone are the days when the blame is always on the past.

Around 2006 the Department started the Young Aspirant Farmer Awards. The main aim was to encourage the Youth to participate in Agriculture. This was mainly after it was realised that our young people were not showing interest in Agriculture.

In developing countries; Agriculture is likely to provide the main source of income. It is therefore important that our young ones should be connected to Agriculture.

Research has proven that most of the world's food is produced by older people. In this regard it is clear that older farmers are less likely to adopt to the new technologies which are needed to increase productivity.

The increase in productivity will for obvious reasons feed the growing world population while at the same time protecting the environment. This year's theme emphasises on reclaiming the position of the Youth and as a Department we are already doing that.

The competition through this Programme will help to address the gap of the Youth who are not participating in Agriculture. We have it on record that since 2006; the young people are starting to show interest in farming activities.

Programme Director I must remind everyone this evening that the Department of Agriculture; Land Reform and Rural Development started with the Young Aspirant Farmers Award in order to encourage and recognize the Youth who participated in Agriculture.

The participation of young people in Agriculture will ensure food security and thus business people who will ultimately be the future of our country.

Ladies and gentlemen...like in the previous years...Tonight we are recognizing and honouring the young farmers who participated in one of the following categories:

- a) Best farm worker.
- b) Top Primary schools in Agriculture.
- c) Top High School in Agriculture.

- D) Top producer assistance.
- E) Producer Small Holder.
- f) Top Processors.
- g) Top producer Commercial.

The prizes have been awarded to the top three in each of these categories. As a Political Head and mother...I need to emphasize clearly that although we are giving the awards to only the top three; all farmers who participated in this year's competition are equally important.

All young farmers are encouraged to participate in Agricultural activities since that will ensure that country and the nation is food secured.

In the Current financial year an amount of R6 million is allocated specifically to assist young farmers in acquiring AGRICULTURAL equipment's. This will assist the previous winners to remain focused.

Our youth face many challenges including having arable land in order to start farming. They also lack credit or Capital for farm Infrastructure.

Programme Director: We have a number of trainings aimed at improving agricultural skills for young people. We are also checking on how Madzivhandila and Tompi Seleka will assist with such training. A great achievement is that my Department is also partnering with other stakeholders like LandBank in order to assist young farmers in their Development. As always I must assure you that the unemployment rate will be reduced.

Programme Director; Ladies and gentlemen...like the true African tradition; I am therefore inviting everyone for dinner with both our new winners and the participants.

Thanks

Dankie

Hi a khensa

Ndo livhuwa

Re a leboga