

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MR RB MAKAMU ON THE OCCASION OF MEETING AND GREETING THE HEAD OFFICE STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT: DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH, POLOKWANE CITY, CAPRICORN DISTRICT

01 August 2018

“100 YEARS OF NELSON MANDELA: THE YEAR OF RENEWAL, UNITY AND JOBS.”

Head of Department

Executive Management

MEC Support Staff

Head Office Staff

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon

This is a highly eventful year for the country, though we are already in the third quarter. What however stands out this year is that the Father of Our Freedom and World Icon, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, would have turned hundred on his birth date 18 July.

The theme for the Nelson Mandela Centenary celebrations is, **“2018 Nelson Mandela Centenary: Live the Legacy.”**

Mandela Centenary Celebrations started with the dawn of the year when the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress issued the Annual January 8th Statement in the Eastern Cape. As per tradition the statement reflects the following:

- Celebrates the annual anniversary of Africa’s oldest liberation movement, the ANC.

- Reviews the Work of the Organisation and of its Deployees in Government.
- Make projections for the New Year.
- Remember those who died in the intervening years.
- Reward individuals and structures that have performed exceptionally well.

I am not going to go into details of the statement. The statement has been in the public domain and is easily accessible since January after its delivery. What I will do is to quote the concluding paragraph of the Statement:

“In recognition of the enormous responsibility we have to unite, rebuild and revitalise the movement and lead an urgent programme of economic growth, job creation and transformation, the NEC declares 2018 as **“100 YEARS OF NELSON MANDELA: THE YEAR OF RENEWAL, UNITY AND JOBS.”**

Of significance to the above quotation is that 2018 is among others, the year of jobs. When the ANC NEC issues the January 08th 2019 Statement it will be reporting on progress attained in 2018, this year. Among the reporting areas will be jobs.

The concluding paragraph of the Foreword of the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development to the 2018/2019 Annual Performance Plans reads as follows:

“The pro-poor trajectory adopted by the Department has ensured that Limpopo continues to be the bread basket of South Africa and Southern Africa as a whole. It is within this context that, given space to articulate on the 2018/2019 Departmental Annual Performance Plan, one does not hesitate to state herein that the Plan provides a road map through which the Department intends to consolidate the initiatives undertaken towards the achievement of our vision to create a united, prosperous and productive sector for sustainable rural communities. It is through this Annual Performance Plan that, as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, we envisage to make contributions towards the creation a better life for all South Africans. Together with our people, in particular our farmers, we move South Africa forward.”

What a profound statement of intent!

This statement inspires confidence in the people that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is on course to liberate them from poverty, unemployment and inequality.

It is common course that the Limpopo Province is largely rural with a huge agricultural sector. And with the looming restoration of land to rightful owners, the Department is envisaged to be the destiny of the province and by extension the country.

The mounting mandate of the Department and the expectations of the poor people of the province poses this question to all of gathered here this afternoon and others in our districts:

“Are we equal to the vision of the Department to create a united, prosperous and productive sector for sustainable communities?”

And there’s the looming added mandate to provide support to communities who are going to receive their lands. Have we considered this development and its impact on the Department, or we are waiting for that moment to arrive and only then plan for it!

What I am saying is that the impact of our vision, plans and budget will be measured in how we improve the quality of lives of the people of this province.

Since my deployment I have been busy readying myself for the full assumption of the executive authority of the Department. I have interacted with the HOD, Support Staff and NEHAWU. Safe for the engagement with NEHAWU which was substantive, the others were largely meet and greet encounters. The same as our encounter at this moment.

The HOD and I spent the whole of yesterday at the Office of the Premier undergoing induction to enable us to hit the ground running. There is no second to spare without thinking and serving the people. We are the people’s only hope, we can’t afford to fail them. For the people we are the difference between life and death. Let us bear this in mind in our sleep and in our wakeful moments.

The Induction Programme and the Handover Report have given me a bird’s eye view of the Department in terms of the following areas too many to mention all. I will pick and choose a few:

- Mandate of the Department.
- Vision and Mission.
- Strategic Priorities of the Department.
- Departmental Configuration.
- Strategic Projects and Progress on Implementation.
- Farmer Support Programmes.
- 2018/2019 Annual Performance Plan and Budget.
- Audit Matters for 2017/2018.
- SCOPA Matters 2016/2017.
- Challenges.
- Interventions.

I will acquire details with the passage of time. I am adequately empowered to steer the ship to the intended destination.

The Thuma Mina campaign that has come to define the tenure of President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa found its first expression during the 2018 State of the Nation Address. After quoting the late music legend Bra Hugh Masekela, President Ramaphosa went on to conclude the SONA with the following profound words:

“We are at a moment in the history of our nation when people, through their determination, have started to turn the country around.

“We can envisage the triumph over poverty, we can see the end of the battle against AIDS.

“Now is the time to lend a hand.

“Now is the time for each of us to say ‘Send Me.’”

“Now is the time for all of us to work together, in honour of Nelson Mandela, to build a new, better South Africa.”

When I met the MEC Support Staff on Monday I told them that they shouldn't look upon me as boss, the Afrikaans version is Baas and we know its historical connotations. Boss has a bad name and reputation.

I called on the Support Staff to look and relate with me as a colleague, that together we are Team Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

I reiterate that message. I am not your Boss. I am your colleague.

In conclusion I pay tribute to the line of MECs of Agriculture and Rural Development from Professor Tinnie Burgers to until her untimely departure Mama Happy Joyce Mashamba, May Her Soul Rest in Eternal Peace. They laid the foundation, it is our turn to contribute to the economic empowerment of our people.

I thank you