

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT, MME MAPULA MOKABA-PHUKWANA ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE MEC OUTREACH PROGRAMME TO MEET  
TRADITIONAL LEADERS AT JACK BOTES HALL IN POLOKWANE  
ON 10 OCTOBER 2016 AT 14H00**

**Program Director**

Allow me to pay tribute to my comrade and predecessor Mme Joy Matshoge by quoting from her speech delivered at the Bolivia lodge on 27 January 2016. She indicated that your presence here this afternoon confirms your commitment to the cause of freedom and equality for all and in particular the citizens of our beautiful Limpopo.

As provincial government, we earnestly acknowledge your determination to be an integral part of the struggle to overcome poverty, inequality and unemployment. It further confirms your commitment to advance the ideals of the Freedom Charter, which requires bold and decisive steps to eradicate the stubborn legacy of apartheid. We need to ensure that the ideals of the Freedom Charter are realised and enjoyed by everyone, especially our youth who have not as yet realised the wealth imbedded on land ownership and use.

The issue of land has been at the heart of the historic injustice of dispossession and the stripping the dignity of the African people. The majority of our people can mainly trace their suffering and deprivation back to land dispossession. This gathering is to among others come with ideas of attracting our youth into agriculture and by default the love for your country, its land, its sky, the sea, its vegetation and minerals.

**The District Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality**

**Our Mayors from Local Municipalities in Sekhukhune District,**

**Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders**

**All Councillors present**

**Head of the Department, Mme R.J. Maisela**

**Management of the Department of Agriculture**

## **Media Representatives**

## **Distinguished Guests**

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

## **Comrades and compatriots**

## **Programme Director**

It gives us pleasure to address this gathering of our esteemed traditional leaders from all over our province. This gathering is not only significant to us as the Department and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, but serves to offer a platform to interact for the first time with traditional leaders in our province in our new role as Member of Executive Council responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development.

This gathering is also significant in that it is taking place when we have just emerged from the recently held local government elections and therefore also offers us with an opportunity to engage with our newly elected councillors in our midst.

## **Programme Director**

It is a fact that both municipalities and institutions of traditional leadership occupy spaces upon which development trajectory of uplifting the plight of the people of towards a better life.

As a contribution towards the ideals of improving the lives of our people for the better, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has positioned itself towards creation of a united, prosperous and productive agricultural sector for sustainable rural communities by 2019/2020. We intend to achieve this vision by contributing to promotion of food security and economic growth through sustainable agricultural development.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

We have as a nation set out that in the five years from 2014 to 2019 together we will focus on the following priorities:

- Increasing small holder agricultural production (crops and livestock)
- Developing of agro processing and value adding enterprises
- Sustainable resource management

- Employment creation through upstream and down stream agricultural activities
- Supporting agribusinesses (agricultural cooperatives and agricultural enterprises) on finance and market access
- Provide veterinary regulatory services to reduce the impact of foot and mouth disease
- Extend and improve skills development and training in the agricultural sector
- Coordination of rural development programme for the integration of the rural areas, achieve successful infrastructure development ,job creation and poverty alleviation, and
- Good governance.

It is therefore our considered fact that as the people of Limpopo we need to join hands to ensure that by 2019 these priorities are achieved.

### **Programme Director**

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development operates mainly within local and traditional authorities. Our source and means of production are based in that space. Therefore, it becomes imperative that a synergy is forged between traditional municipal and other land owners.

Both traditional leaders and municipal representatives need to understand these linkages and effectively participate in the agricultural value chain. Their efforts should be linked to local economic development, integrated development planning and provincial development plans.

It is therefore not coincidental that in our bid to build a partnership that works we have in this gathering both traditional leaders and leadership of our municipalities. It is our firm belief that together with municipalities and traditional leaders we will be able to provide food security and create jobs for the people of our province and our land.

We firstly need to protect agricultural land in our jurisdictions. We cannot allow other state departments or individuals destroying our prime agricultural land in favour of ploughing informal settlements. Our historical heritage and municipal land use plans must be protected by traditional leaders and municipalities.

## **Programme Director**

It is a fact today that the planet we inhabit is faced by global warming as one of the challenges which continue to threaten the survival of current human species and threaten the future generations. We cannot therefore destroy and abandon our natural resources found on land for short cut housing solutions. As a result of this challenge we are currently faced with enormous drought threatening food security. We need to ensure that our future generation have land to cultivate and use for food security and protection of our indigent trees and animals.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has put up initiatives to ensure that our farmers survive the current drought cycle. However, it is our view that in order for our plans to work as intended, we need a participatory approach similar to the unity we always display as South Africans when faced with danger.

To be able to tackle these challenges, we need each other more than before. Agriculture as the food basket of a nation knows no colour as much as hunger affect everyone equally regardless of skin pigmentation or tribe.

We are confident that through unity our vision will be achieved as people acting as one to deal with these challenges.

Together we move South Africa Forward! We therefore make a clarion call to join hands and work together for the betterment of all our people!

We thank you.