



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LIMPOPO, Ms NANDI NDALANE ON THE OCCASION OF EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICE GALA DINNER HELD AT BOLIVIA LODGE ON 09 MARCH 2022

Programme Director

Head of the Department, Ms Ramatsimele Maisela

The Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Cllr John Mpe

Chief Director District services, Mr Lesiba Kola

Representatives from the National Department of Agriculture

Chief Directors and Senior Management present here

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening

It is with great sense of pride that today we are gathered here to appreciate and commend the great work of our extension practitioners in our province. In front of us tonight we have brave men and women whose dedication and great work continue to sustain agriculture production and development in Limpopo. It is through your daily activities that our relationship with our farmers be it commercial, emerging, small holder and communal continue to strengthen and importantly sustain production. Many of our people identify our department through your presence. Whenever you visit Agriculture establishments you are identified as the Department of Agriculture and that pleases us quite greatly. We are saying this with confidence and without fear of contradiction because the feedback we receive is heart-warming. You all deserve a warm round of applause.

Programme Director

I have been informed that this extension and advisory services conference is held under the theme safeguarding agricultural productivity and food security through adapted extension and approaches in the epoch of Covid-19 pandemic and climate change. Gathered here today we all know that the last two years our country and the global community were confronted by Covid-19 pandemic which gravely affected our economy. The Agricultural sector despite being declared essential was not spared by the pandemic. Our sector realised negative impact on food supply, access and stability particularly agricultural inputs markets as well as agricultural extension services. As a result of Covid-19 restrictions the provision of adequate agricultural extension services such as farmer trainings, agricultural input distributions, field visits, farmers and information day sessions were negatively impacted. This proved to be a difficult period especially because we were dealing with a phenomenon which we could not have adequately planned for. Despite these difficulties we can, however, collectively declare that we were able to overcome. It took men and women gathered here who spared no effort to ensure that Agriculture production does not collapse. It is pleasing to note that our country's economic recovery was to a large extent fuelled by Agriculture production an indication that we were able to hold the fort.

Programme Director

About three weeks ago I visited Kgoshi Nchabeleng who called us to conduct project visit to the community's irrigation schemes. While we were there we discussed a few Agriculture related matters, however, I believe it is important to inform you that both Kgoshi and the local farmers spoke highly about extension practitioners working under our District Director, Mr Maboja. I am also pleased to inform you that during our visit we were accompanied by extension practitioners who were fully glad in their beautiful uniform. We could easily identify them and while they were commended for a great job for me it was heart warming to see our extension practitioners fully glad in their uniform.

As I talk to you today the irrigation schemes in which we visited have been resuscitated and we are highly impressed. On the same token I have been advised to inform all extension practitioners that from now on each time you report for duty you must be wearing your full uniform. You cannot use your own discretion on when to wear it or not. While some of you may still be waiting for your uniform all those who have been provided with uniforms must wear it as instructed.

Programme Director

All extension practitioners are called upon to affiliate with the professional body, the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP). I believe you are all aware that the Natural Scientific Professions act (Act No.27 of 2003) requires all practising natural scientists to be registered in terms of sections 18 and 20 of the Act. I trust that those of you who are yet to affiliate will swiftly affiliate and comply. I must hasten to indicate that each extension practitioner must affiliate on their own. I have been informed that there is some expectation from some among you who expect the Department to affiliate for you. We must quickly dispel that notion but importantly encourage you to affiliate for yourself as you are scientists in your own right. I trust that you shall all affiliate and comply.

Programme director

While in the main tonight we are celebrating Extension practitioners, I am pleased to inform you that we would like to take this opportunity on this great occasion to launch producer farmer register. So far, we have register 27 thousand farmers in our database and for us this is a great milestone in our effort to improve and sustain agriculture production in Limpopo. This database will help us plan better in terms of our farmers and producers needs in general. I would like to thank the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for the support and further appreciate and thank the commendable work done by the extension practitioners in ensuring that we register our producers and farmers.

It will be injustice if I cannot thank and appreciate farmers unions who played a key role in encouraging our farmers to register. With this process we believe we will be in a better position to improve Agriculture production in province.

Programme Director

Much appreciated to the organisers of this event, and I trust that moving forward particularly with relaxed restrictions now our production will improve. Agriculture remains one of the most important pillars of our economy. It is men and women gathered here tonight who can ensure that Agriculture takes its rightful place in the socio-economic development of our province.

I thank you.