



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT DELIVERD BY THE MEC RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, Ms NANDI NDALANE ON THE OCCASION OF SHEP WEBINAR ON 16 APRIL 2021 HELD VIRTUALLY

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza

Acting Director General, Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi

Acting Deputy Director General, Ms Jermina Moeng

Head of the Department, Ms Ramatsimele Maisela

Chief Director responsible for district services, Mr Lesetja Kola

SHEP farmers present here.

Departmental officials present here.

Our dear listeners from various community radio stations

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the farmers who are participating in this very important event this morning. Due to restrictions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic we had to resort to this form of engagement and your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated. We meet here today to engage on this very important programme, of Smallholder, Horticulture Empowerment Promotion popularly known as SHEP. We are very pleased as Limpopo to celebrate the many achievements since the introduction of this programme in our province.

Many of you will be aware that prior to introduction of this programme many of our rural farmers in particular, were struggling to obtain sustainable markets for their produce. This in many instances led to devastating losses which ultimately affected revenue of many of our farmers. Today we can confidently celebrate the notable achievements made by our farmers as a result of this programme. I have been reliably informed that the 35 sites that have been assisted by the SHEP approach, to obtain the markets are now producing for big name reputable retailers such as Spar, Pick 'n Pay, RSA and Massmart, Frymax, Pepper Dew International and local as well as hawkers. These achievements provide irrefutable evidence that the SHEP approach indeed does work.

Programme Director

In Limpopo since the year 2019/2020 financial year SHEP is implemented in all districts. While the stages of implementation vary from district to district as the programme at district level did not start simultaneously, we currently have thirty-five (35) running projects with five hundred and seventy-one (571) beneficiaries. To mention but a few of the sites which implement the SHEP approach, in the Vhembe district we have Dzindi, Rambuda, Dovheni, Makumeke, Mangwele irrigation scheme. In the Capricorn district we have four sites being Ratanang Cooperative, Success irrigation scheme, Tseakgato vegetable farmers and Ramokgopa farmers. In Mopani we have Hleketani and Mamatlepa while Waterberg we have Baroka, Gagesho, Kanyane Masedi and Kolobe. These sites are indeed a testimony that SHEP does work much to the benefit of our farmers.

Programme Director

Through SHEP participating farmers are experiencing a reduction of loss of produce as many are now recognising farming as a business.

We are pleased that our farmers are now able to conduct market survey on their own and importantly their capacity to provide job opportunities is greatly appreciated. While we celebrate all these great news and achievements brought about by SHEP I believe it is only fair to reflect on some of the challenges faced by this programme. We have noted less than desirable speed of the implementation of SHEP due to officers engaged in other activities. In other instances, some farmers still expect material support even though SHEP does not provide such. Farmers not being able to meet market demands in terms of quantity and quality and of course the interruptions of planned activities due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Programme Director

Noting these challenges, we will work hard to ensure that we provide strategies confronting us in this the programme. Among strategies to mitigate these challenges include amongst others, training more officers to implement the programme, encourage farmers to increase their operational area through obtaining additional land from traditional authorities, as well as providing training on production principles of farmers' chosen crops. I wish each one of you a successful webinar and hope that out of this event we will improve as farmers and obtain more markets for our produce. Our fundamental mandate is to ensure that we obtain sustainable food security for the masses of our people. I have no doubt that men and women gathered here will realise that objective. As the Member of Executive responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development in Limpopo I pledge my support to the SHEP approach and hope that our farmers will greatly benefit from this intervention.

I thank you.