



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, Ms NANDI NDALANE ON THE OCCASION OF YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE INDABA HELD AT THE RANCH HOTEL ON THE 26-27 AUGUST 2021

Head of the Department, Ms Ramatsimele Maisela

Chief Directors Present here

Senior Managers present here

Officials from Leda

Officials from Standard bank

Our young people in agriculture

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good Morning to you all

Two months ago, in the month of June our county and province celebrated Youth Day while generally we commemorated the Youth Month. As all of you may be aware that these celebrations follow the sacrifices made by the youth of 1976 who laid down their lives fighting against the oppressive apartheid system. It was those brave young men and women who took a conscious decision to confront the apartheid government despite the obvious consequences. As fate would have it many died, however, it is through their blood and sweat that today we obtained democracy and freedom. Now the youth of today which comprise many of you gathered here who are enjoying the benefits of the 1976 sacrifices face a new monster. A monster of poverty, unemployment and in some instances underdevelopment.

Programme Director

The question therefore is what is it that these youth who are tormented by the harsh realities of unemployment and poverty need to do with the prevailing situation. I'm referring to the youth gathered here for the last two days.

How do we fight and win against these realities confronting us today? On Tuesday this week statistics South Africa released the official unemployment figures which stand at 34.4 percent which translates into 7.8 million people. Sadly, many of these unemployed people are our young men and women. It is my view therefore that Agriculture presents a viable opportunity and a credible option to create jobs and fight poverty affecting our young people. The National Development Plan, New Growth Path and other key government strategic programmes recognise the important role of agriculture in terms of growing the economy, creating jobs, reducing poverty and inequality. As a department we are determined to intensify our efforts towards attracting our young people into the Agricultural sector. We want to make farming among young people fashionable in Limpopo. We want to see Agriculture related hashtags trend in the social media and other social platforms led by our young people. I dream of a day where we will have hashtag farming is cool dominating our social media platforms.

Programme Director

It is a concerning reality that the farming sector in our province is dominated by aging farmers many of whom are affected one way or the other by chronic comorbidities. You will recall that during the hard lockdown Agriculture was regarded as an essential industry therefore farming continued. The fact that many of our farmers are senior citizens this poses a potential risk to food security during these times of Covid-19. In order to maintain food security during these Covid times young people need to take their place in Agriculture and its value chain.

The Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-Processing Value Chain (RAAVAC) master plan, presents broad opportunities for the increased participation of youth in Agriculture. The programme outlines the commodities the province has competitive advantage in. It further outlines different funding mechanisms by government and the private sector to support the farmers in the sector and creates more opportunities for young farmers and entrepreneurs. I hope our young people gathered here will take advantage of RAAVAC and benefit from this important programme of our department.

I trust that your interaction on this important occasion through amongst others sharing success stories, engaging on matters of smart technology and creative ways of going around challenges you face will impact meaningfully in your efforts to participate in Agriculture.

Programme Director

As part of attracting young farmers and encourage those who are already farming to perform optimally, we will recognise our young farmers who beat the odds during Covid-19 restrictions and ensured that food production persists. We will recognise young farmers with special reference to young female entrepreneurs as well as female entrepreneurs living with disability. We hope that those who will be recognised will help inspire their fellow young people to entrench themselves in Agriculture. The future of food production for this country and the province is in your hands. Failure is not an option because your failure means the demise of our society. We cannot afford that. However, I have no doubt that the young men and women gathered here will ensure that we maintain food security and, in the process, provide jobs and eradicate poverty amongst our young people. Our department has taken a deliberate vow to help our young people to ensure that they succeed in this sector. Working together we can ensure that our young people succeed in Agriculture.

I thank you