



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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OPENING REMARKS BY KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU AT THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY COMMEMORATION

DATE: TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2017

**VENUE: KWALUBISI, KWASITHAMBI SPORTSGROUND, OPONGOLA
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Programme Director: MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr
Thomas Kaunda,

KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Mr TW Mchunu

Inkosi, yesizwe sakaNtshangase, inkosi u LB Ntshangase

Mayor of the Zululand District Municipality, Cllr Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi,

Mayor of UPhongola Local Municipality, Cllr BC Nhlabathi,

Wonke amakhosi Present

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Religious and Community Leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Of all the public holidays we have in our national calendar, Human Rights Day is perhaps one that compels us as Government to evaluate how far we have come in addressing the challenges of our people, specifically the triple threat of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

We cannot just stand before you and commemorate the day, remembering the significance it has in our past, without asking ourselves, how far we have come

in ensuring that we achieve the basic human rights, enshrined in our constitution.

The number of people living below the poverty line continues to be overwhelmingly high in the country and the province.

In the community survey results of 2016, Stats essay revealed that 14.8% of households in the province had skipped a meal in the last 12 months, this is not acceptable. Section 27 of the constitution clearly states that: everyone has the right to sufficient food and water.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is then relevant to this day that I reiterate our commitment as a Department to ensure we achieve an inclusive, sustainable, and radical transformed agricultural sector that builds thriving communities in balance with nature, as transcribed in our Departmental vision.

Our focus on Food Security is a clear indication of how we as Government are committed to changing the face of poverty in this province, we are aware that agriculture has the potential to feed families, create employment and achieve equality.

Food Security is just one element of the work being done by the Department. We are embarking on an intensive campaign to ensure our people have access to water. We want our people to have water licences: Further, we want to ascertain that these water licences are biased to the poor and not the rich and those with land ownership.

My colleague the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr Gugile Nkwinti, this past Friday published the "Regulation of Agricultural Land Holdings Bill".

This Bill seeks to "reverse the legacy of colonialism and apartheid; and to ensure a 'just and equitable' distribution of agricultural land to Africans," Umhlaba kumele ubuyela kubantu.

Ladies and gentleman,

Under this Bill, all those who own agricultural land will be forced to declare how ownership was acquired and if it does not correspond with the legalities of purchasing land in this country, it shall be ceased by government, further, no foreign nationals will be permitted to acquire agricultural land in this country, only long-term leases will be given.

uHulumeni uyasebenze,

Premier Mchunu, last week as a Department we visited a farming project called Sivule Coop, also here in Pongola, I was excited to see that local communal farmers are showcasing such great enthusiasm for agriculture and the potential it has to prosper their community. Sivule Coop has been able to plant maize in 80 hectares of land. Bantu bakithi, "We need to make Agriculture our Culture."

Premier, we appreciate your continuous support for the Department and the initiatives it's making to take agriculture to our people, we look forward to your Remarks to commemorate this significant day of Human Rights.

I thank you,

The Honourable Premier, Mr T.W Mchunu