



agriculture & rural development

Department:
Agriculture and Rural Development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

TALKING NOTES BY MEC MTHEMBU FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN AND WORLD FOOD DAY AT PHUMZA HALL, KWAMACHI

16 OCTOBER 2018

Inkosi MN Machi

Inkosi Z. Jali

Inkosi BP Zungu

Inkosi MC Dlamini

Members of Portfolio Committees

Mr, Cllr MA Chiliza

Local Mayors, Speakers

All Councilors

EXCO members from DARD and DSD

KZN SASSA Regional Manager

KZN Home Affairs Regional Manager

All Government Entities

All Departmental Officials

Executive members of Farmers organizations

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great honor that I come here today to address the International Day for Rural Women and World Food Day events here at Ward 10, KwaMachi.

Yesterday on the 15th of October, we celebrated International Day for Rural Women which is an initiative by the United Nations, that recognizes the role and contribution of rural women including indigenous women in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improve food security and eradicating poverty.

According to the UN, rural women make up over a quarter of the world population and globally, 43 percent of the agricultural workforce are women. Ladies and

gentlemen, these rural women teal the land and plant the seeds that feed nations hence the role they play must never be underestimated. What is concerning is that when it comes to owning the land, accessing agricultural inputs and finance, rural women are left behind.

Today we also celebrate World food day, one of most celebrated days in the UN calendar. Under the theme **"Our actions are our future: A Zero Hunger world by 2030 is possible"** this campaign aims to promote worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and are in need of food security.

As the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in partnership with the Department of Social Development, we decided to combine these two events to engage with destitute communities and address issues of rural agricultural development, food security, poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Rural women play a crucial role in ensuring sustainability of households, improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being for rural communities.

Even though South Africa is considered as a country that is food secured, meaning that local food production and imports are adequate to feed the entire population, we still have at least 13 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition and majority of these people are rural women and children. This is why as the Department, we decided to prioritize women, youth and people with disabilities in order to empower and build them to be self-sustainable.

Earlier today we visited projects belonging to small-scale farmers. I was happy that one of these projects is run by a female farmer Ms Madiya, who plants vegetables and crops. Through her farming project Ms Madiya is able to create employment, help with food security and her produce is sold in various markets in and around Harding.

We also had an opportunity to visit Zamalawu Youth Cooperative that deals mainly with chickens and is run by local youth from KwaMachi. It is encouraging for us as government when youth takes initiative and creates their opportunities.

We were very pleased to see that the projects we visited are aligned with the mandate of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

A Non-Governmental Organisation called Youth against Suffering, wrote to the Department requesting assistance and we responded to their call and supported this NGO by planting one hectare of citrus fruit and peaches. This mini orchard will help sustain the NGO and also assist in fighting poverty and help reduce poverty and hunger. We have also agreed to allow this youth organization to utilize Department offices that were used by the Agricultural Advisor. We believe this decision will improve the NGO's administrative functions and bring the facility to optimum use while improving their staff well-being.

Last year during Operation Sukuma Sakhe organized by the Premier, I visited this Ward in KwaMachi and through engagements with the community, I saw a need for me to return to the area.

One thing we noted during our last visit, is that communities around border settlements like KwaMachi which are far from economic activities, need to be prioritized since people travel long distances just to get a pack of Maize Meal. Hence as the Department, we will be working towards developing a Mill in the area. Most small-scale farmers from KwaMachi plant maize and sell it to Ngeli Mills in Harding which is owned by white people. Once a Mill is built in KwaMachi, farmers will be able to participate in the next step of the value chain and eventually self-sustain.

As I conclude, ladies and gentlemen the first rains have come and the summer season will soon be upon us, let's head for the fields to plough and prepare for a good harvest next year. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will be returning to uMziwabantu Municipality at eMfundeni Sports ground, eNkungeni, to launch the Multiple Planting Season next week. To all the farmers in KwaZulu-Natal sithi Phez' komkhono!

I thank you.