



**agriculture
& rural development**

Department:
Agriculture and Rural Development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**TALKING NOTES FOR MEC MTHEMBU FOR THE 2018 LAUNCH OF THE
MULTI-PLANTING SEASON**

**VENUE EMFUNDENI SPORTS GROUND, KWAJALI, UMZIWABANTU LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY**

23 OCTOBER, 2018

Inkosi PHD Chiliza

Inkosi RS Shinga

Inkosi Z. Jali

Inkosi BP Zungu

Inkosi MC Dlamini

Inkosi Xolo

Other Traditional House of Leaders present

Mr MA Chiliza, Cllr

Locals and Deputy Mayors, Speakers

Councilors and Municipal EXCO Members

DARD EXCO and MACO Members

Government Entities

All Departmental Officials

Executive members of Farmers organizations

Organizers

All Protocol observed

"Making Agriculture our Culture" that's the message that we want to put across during this year's Multi Planting Season, as we call upon all subsistence farmers to join us this Multi Planting Season.

The Multi planting season is part of the outcomes of the strategic review of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development which was held in 2016 to enhance subsistence farming as well as food and nutrition programme. The term Multi Planting Season was derived from different planting seasons for the warm and cool parts of the Province. By having this strategic review, we were also able to promote commodities based on sustainability per planting season and enhance the capacity of farmers by supporting them optimize agricultural production throughout all seasons.

This year as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, we aim to plant at least 16 310 hectares of land and create temporary employment for over 500 people in various sectors within agriculture encompassing tractor operators, crop management and harvesting services. Through this Multi Planting Season we targeting at least 10 320 beneficiaries and majority of these will be female farmers.

We are launching this year's Multi Planting Season on a project run by a communal estate called Naseni-Mkhoba, which occupies over 70 hectares of land and over 50 percent of its members are female. They plant mainly maize sell to Ingeli Mills in Harding and local markets.

Maize is the country's most important crop which is a main source of carbohydrates; it is used as a dietary staple, a source of livestock feed, and an export crop which is used mostly in rural areas.

As the Department, we want to move away from only concentrating on maize and beans when it comes to cultivars that we launch for the Planting season. We looking at incorporating cultivars that produce other crops like potatoes and nuts.

During this Multi Planting Season, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will support both subsistence and small holder farmers using two methods of mechanization which are government owned tractors to give support to various districts throughout the province and contract service providers who will render ploughing and planting services to farmers.

Even though the mechanization has yielded positive results and contributed in improving food production in KwaZulu-Natal there have been challenges such as lack of technical skills, inadequate mechanization training facilities, uncoordinated approach to mechanization support and high incidence of breakdown of tractors and implements.

Balimi, we have heard your pleas about challenges you face when it comes to mechanization. We have started to address these challenges with the hope of finding a permanent solution, hence we will be working on a mechanization strategy that will assist us with distribution of seeds and other inputs that goes with it.

Although the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2015 started laying a foundation to work together with commodity organisations towards commercial production expansion and transformation. I am of the opinion that

there is much more to be done together and that the strengthening of relations must become our priority.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Stronger partnerships with commodity organisations can ensure a clear strategy for inclusive development of value chains and industries in KZN. This will provide the expertise to support the small-holder producer and commercial black producer to achieve their potential. This will be done through collaboration and commitment to transformation and inclusive development within the entire value chain of commodities, aiming to seek long term solutions to disparity challenges.

My Department will go forward from the interactions that have already commenced and will specifically pursue, with commodity organisations joint inclusive industry opportunities and models that will lead to a favourable agricultural sector dispensation.

Together, we can find solutions to the unique challenges that are faced by small-holder producers in respect of markets and beneficiation in the entire value chain.

We can and must jointly formulate adaptation strategies to mitigate climate change (improving production and profitability, drought management, efficient water use and crop protection through weed, pest and disease control)

I know there is a willingness from our partners to commit to real transformation, to commit to the facilitation of opportunities for youth and women and to serious future engagement with all stakeholders along the entire value chain, including suppliers, processors and retailers.

I will soon call a workshop with all commodity organisations to meet and interact as partners within one sector. During this session we will enhance our current interactions, we will identify further partnership possibilities and we will undertake collaborative planning towards a better agricultural sector for all.

Also as announced earlier this year during the Policy Budget Speech, I want to reiterate that we have started to launch the Big Five Projects and will be prioritizing Fencing, Boreholes, Grazing Camps, Dam Scooping and Dip tanks.

As I conclude, the Multi-Planting season which started this month is one of the important dates on the agricultural calendar and government. It is a pity that due to the model that we follow we are still missing the targets set for Multi-Planting Season but we are optimistic that this will all come to an end very soon after the introduction of the Master Plan and Agricultural advisory body where all issues relating to agriculture will be addressed collectively.

As the Department we are working tirelessly to solve all problems that have caused the planting season to be late, we call upon all various stakeholders to work together with us to defend the Department not to be used as a political and business football by unscrupulous people. We have been struggling with fighting

corrupt practices and capturing of the Department which has negatively affected the efficiency of service delivery, particularly the planting season. This could explain why we have been under attack by a well-orchestrated negative publicity to bring down the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

In the coming weeks we will be publishing contact details for all our offices across the Province and we urge our communities to get in touch with local offices and district offices near them to get assistance for their planting needs.

This launch is just a beginning; we will be visiting all districts in our Province to roll out the Multi-Planting season. Hence we call on all our farmers this Multi-Planting season, ukhuthi lethwese Ihlobo Phez' Komkhono! Masithathe amageja ethu siye emasimini, Ngiyabonga.