



agriculture & rural development

Department:
Agriculture and Rural Development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CLOSING REMARKS BY MEC MTHEMBU PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMIT HELD AT THE ROYAL SHOW GROUNDS IN PIETERMARITZBURG 16 NOVEMBER 2018

Programme Director;

Summit delegates

Management of the Department

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These last two days have been very important milestones for the agricultural sector.

It appears as we have been committing crime in not staging a summit of this nature. As government we promise that we are not going to fail you in all the issues you have raised here and inputs provided. These inputs will help the Department to understand the needs of the people on the ground.

We are proud that we have finally been able to honour the commitment the Premier had made in his State of the Province Address for the Department to convene this Provincial Agricultural Summit.

As we announced, the Summit was conceived to give shape to the future of agriculture in KZN in the form of an Agriculture Masterplan, which will serve as the blueprint for sector development.

It is important to emphasise that we are not starting from a blank slate. The Department does have policies and programmes that it is currently implementing. What we have identified as a weakness is the limited coordination amongst these programmes. That is what informed the call for the Masterplan which will lay out foundation for agricultural sector development.

The development of the agricultural sector in the province will be premised on the transformation and promotion of previous producers and their inclusion in the agricultural mainstream economy to achieve the following:

- Ensuring household food security;
- Increased production and productivity of small-holder producer;
- Promotion of competitiveness and commercialisation of agricultural enterprises (in particular for black Africans)

In order to safeguard the province's food security position, we must use the Masterplan to strengthen existing legal frameworks to preserve agricultural land and protect it from commercial developments.

The Department will create partnerships with people, commodity organisations, academic institutions and the Provincial Planning Commission. Amongst other things, we want to develop a joint Monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Masterplan and all our programmes.

The Summit had the pleasure to receive high level presentations from Professor Modi of University of KwaZulu-Natal-reflecting on the status of Agriculture in the Province and Ms Joemat from the National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on Operation Phakisa.

PARTICIPATORY AGRICULTURE

One of the most fundamental principles in an aspirational democratic developmental state and which defines good governance is full **participation** of all stakeholders in the process of development. In order to bring this to fruition, we are going to pursue the following activities.

Advisory Body

The Department is in the process to establish an Agricultural Development Advisory Body that will be comprised of representatives from different stakeholders representing the interests of farmers, organised agriculture, farm labourers and dwellers, academia and research institutions and financial institutions, to mention but a few. This will be a provincial structure that advises the MEC and the Department.

Ward Agrarian Development Committee

The Department also intends to establish Ward Agrarian Development Committees at the grassroots levels, which looks at issues of developing this sector in the locality. As a Department, we have a food security mandate and packages of support. However, we want to move beyond ensuring food security but also promote and give concrete support to people in all our wards to participate meaningfully in the agricultural development-moving through the value-chain. This is in line with our long term goal of ensuring that each ward has a dedicated extension officer / agricultural advisor focusing on supporting that community.

We are directing our agricultural advisors and research officers to undertake an assessment of available land for agricultural production - both crop and livestock

production. We want to know how much is currently utilised for agriculture as well as challenges / constraints at maximising utilisation of agricultural land.

Furthermore, this exercise must indicate the most suitable commodities to be produced in that particular area. It's critical that water endowment / availability is also included in this assessment to inform the irrigation infrastructure needs of the province. This is an area of significance as the NDP directs that we need to expand irrigated agriculture as the future direction of this sector.

This is the kind of bottom-up development we want to champion for agriculture. To ensure the success of this endeavour, we will make use of local structures, such as ward councillors, traditional authorities, the municipalities with all our local offices to ensure broad consensus of this process.

Farmers Register / Database

The agricultural advisors of the Department will be visiting communities to solicit information from farmers that will be used to establish a proper Farmer Register that will be on our database. This Farmer Register will also be used to provide producer support programme that is driven by DAFF.

RASET

RASET is an important programme of the provincial government, which we are committed to support fully. We want to emphasise that RASET needs to be people-centred and people-driven.

Census of Commercial Agriculture

DAFF, together with the Statistics South Africa, have embarked on a process to Census of Commercial Agriculture. We request farmers to participate in this process. This exercise is intended to provide accurate statistics on employment, production, finance and general information with regard to active commercial farming enterprises in South Africa. This is the kind of information we need as policymakers because it serves as evidence-base for decision-making.

Farmers Forum and Farm Tenants

The tensions that often arise between farmers and farm labourers / dwellers threaten social cohesion. These tensions can be so severe that they can be inflamed and have even resulted in deaths on both sides. Some opportunists have mobilised on these tensions to drive a narrative that there's a sustained farm killings or genocide of white farmers.

We reject this is wholly untrue and mischievous untruths designed to erode our social cohesion and our resolve for a united South Africa, united agricultural sector. It is thus our responsibility as government to ensure that we play a decisive role in mediating these tensions in the farming industry.

Our position remains firm. We have a responsibility to work together to ensure there's peace and prosperity. However, we have to insist that the prosperity be shared. An island of prosperity in a sea of poverty is not sustainable. Such an island should not exist in the agricultural industry. We want to reach a point where this dual agricultural industry-white commercial agriculture and black small-holder agriculture does not exist.

We want to emphasise that farm workers and farm dwellers are full citizens of this country and they must enjoy the rights that any other citizen of this country has under the prevailing constitutional order. They must not be treated as second class citizens in a fashion that evokes the ugly past of slavery and exploitation.

It's against this background that we intend to establish the **KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Land Rights Monitoring Committee that will serve as the** space to promote ongoing dialogue amongst these groupings to deal with issues as they arise. We will have a monitoring mechanism, which will help produce an Annual Report to the Legislature, reflecting on the relationship between farmers and farm workers / dwellers.

Audit of CPA and Trusts

- This is to ensure transparency and accountability.

Strategic Partnerships

It is important to emphasise the importance of strategic partnerships with the commodity organisations, farmer associations, persons with disabilities, young people and women in agriculture. We want enduring partnerships that work for all. Our programmes and projects must be prioritised and ensure that particular focus is given to those that are vulnerable in society.

Announcements

The Department launched the Planting Season at UGu Districts. We have also hosted a launch in Zululand. This month, we will visit Mtubatuba at UMkhanyakude and Alfred Duma at UThukela. All districts will be visited for the launches.

The Department will also host the following events:

- Agri-Parks Indaba
- Livestock Summit
- Indigenous Food Competition

Message of Thanks

I would like to thank the Honourable Premier TW Mchunu for his presence and address of this Summit yesterday.

My colleague, MEC for Arts and Culture, Mrs Sithole-Moloi who stepped in for me at the Gala Dinner last night.

Inkosi Chiliza, The Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders has been with us since yesterday, we thank him for his generous support.

All the colleagues in the executive and Heads of Departments that were present here.

I would like to thank all the summit delegates for the honour and privilege of your presence, participation and support.

We thank all the presenters and commission facilitators.

We are indebted to the Acting HOD for DARD, Acting DG in the Office of the Premier, the organising team from both Departments, without whom this event would not have been possible.

We now move to the last part of this gathering, the Declarations.

DECLARATIONS

We therefore declare the following as binding commitments of this 2018 Provincial Agricultural Summit:

1. The Department will roll-out the Agricultural Masterplan to all the Districts in KwaZulu-Natal.
2. Immediately after this summit, the Department will convene a media breakfast to communicate the outcomes of the deliberations of this gathering.
3. In order to ensure full ownership by KZN citizenry the Masterplan will also be published in Department website in English and IsiZulu.
4. The report of the Summit will be tabled in the provincial legislature.
5. The Department shall host the Summit every five years.