



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, HON TP KAMADLOPHA-MTHETHWA AT THE
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN SESSION
13 TO 14 NOVEMBER 2025**

DATE: 13 NOVEMBER 2025

VENUE: DRAKENSBERG, UKHAHLAMBA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Programme Director

Head of Department Mr. Z.N. Dlamini

ADA Management led by Mr J. Mfusi

The Board of Trustees led by Chairperson Mr S.L. Gumbi

HoM Mr J.A. Mngomezulu

Chief Directors

All other officials present

Good morning/Sanibonani

It gives me great pleasure to address you on the occasion of your Strategic Plan Session, one of the most crucial steps in realising your strategic objectives. This will surely serve as a barometer by which we will measure progress towards fulfilling the department's mandate that you carry out on a daily basis. It must be noted that you're serving at the behest of the department and as such your operations must always be aligned with the main strategic objective of the department. Improving food security and socio-economic conditions of the agricultural landscape remains our core line of function while being guided by the 7th Administration's strategic priorities in driving inclusive growth, and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling high costs of living and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

As ADA you should be seized with your primary function by concentrating on catalytic agricultural projects with high potential for contributing to economic growth and job creation. Your focus in



funding agribusinesses should be on scaling up smallholder farmers to a commercial level. A key aspect of your main function is to undertake strategic projects that can generate revenue for the entity and government.

ADA was created by the KwaZulu-Natal government to support the development of emergent black commercial farmers and agribusiness entrepreneurs as a way of redressing the economic inequalities in the agricultural sector in the province. Now the big question is, 'Are we on track to achieve this'? I will leave that question for you to internalise it and reflect on it. Having said that I still have full confidence in the board and the management of ADA. When I appointed the board last year I had high hopes that they will work closely with the management in taking the entity to new and great heights. As much as they are some challenges here and there, I am still pleased with their capabilities, expertise and top talent at their disposal which keeps on steering the agency to the right direction.

APPOINTMENT OF THE CEO

With the appointment of Mr. Mfusi as the new CEO, our expectations for a corruption-free and clean audit outcomes rest on your shoulders. You have a huge responsibility for restoring the agency to its former glory. Your extensive experience in public administration and management, combined with diligence and a determined spirit, would come in handy for the agency. While the accountability lies with Mr. Mfusi and the board, I am also pleading with the staff and senior management to work closely with him to achieve the agency's objectives and mission. As the executive authority and the department, we are committed to supporting your endeavors, in promoting the growth of enterprises owned and managed by targeted groups along agricultural value chains through strategic partnerships and driving transformation in the sector.

NTINGWE TEA ESTATE

With the amalgamation with the Ntingwe Tea Estate and Mjindi/Makhathini Irrigation Scheme, you have inherited some challenges, but I would like to say that those challenges are not insurmountable. Your responsibility will be to ensure entities such as the Ntingwe Tea Estate are revived to achieve profitability in the near future and that the production of one of the world's premier teas is revitalised. We know that there's are a few legal processes that will allow the department to fully take over Ntingwe and have it as project within ADA.



MJINDI FARMING

I was born and raised in the uMkhanyakude District, which is home to Mjindi, a vital farming project in northern KwaZulu-Natal with prospects making the area the breadbasket of the province. Throughout my life, Mjindi has relied heavily on the department. The question that has troubled me for years is why it has failed to become self-sustaining. Your role as ADA includes the provision of services to Makhathini farmers particularly water services whilst the function awaits Department of Water and Sanitation to take over. Our goal is to see this scheme become financially sound and not wholly reliant on government for support. To achieve this, we must address the financial and governance issues within the entity. But I must also hasten to warn that before expecting miracles in these entities, let's get the ADA house in order first. Getting qualified audits consecutively is a grave concern that needs all hands on deck. The department achieved clean audit findings in the 2024/2025 financial year. This was as a result of strong fiscal discipline and robust financial control systems. Yet its agency ADA received poor audit outcomes, which is an anomaly. This means there's a lot of work to be done to in strengthening of good governance, fiscal discipline, and tightening of internal control systems that's needed as of yesterday.

AGRIHUBS

On Fresh Produce hub, ADA should prepare a proposal to DARD on how it could operate the fresh produce hub once constructed. This must include a reflection by ADA on their current and future capacity. Based on their proposal DARD can consider the matter. Our farmers need access to markets and need our support. Such will will happen once these hubs are up and running efficiently.

I am now in my second year as the MEC in this department, yet I have not been taken on a project assisted by ADA. I call upon the management to ensure the construction of the Richards Bay AgriHub Fresh Produce Market is realised. Once completed it will ease the burden of many farmers struggling for market access and other agricultural activities, and this will complement the Farmer Production Support Units that we have in the province.



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WAY FORWARD FOR ADA:

In our efforts to seeing ADA as one entity as the department, we will champion the preparation of a business case for the rationalisation of Ntingwe and Mjindi entities. ADA should prioritise creating stability and championing good governance following consecutive poor audit outcomes. It's with great pleasure that the process of filling up of key vacant posts is underway and that thus will bring in stability in the agency.

I thank you.