



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

To all media houses

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PREMIER ZIKALALA ACTIVATES THE PROVINCE'S R90 MILLION MULTI-PLANTING SEASON COUNTDOWN TO 21 000 HECTARES OF HARVEST BY NEXT AUTUMN

Premier Sihle Zikalala says the commitment of the government of South Africa to plant one million hectares by 2024 has been initiated with the launch of the Multi-Planting Season's countdown to 21 000 hectares of land to be planted for harvest by next autumn, in KwaZulu-Natal.

Rolling out the R90 million provincial planting season's countdown with the unveiling of the first 400 hectares of planted maize seeds at the Nhlanguwini co-operative farm in uMzimkhulu, Zikalala stressed that the achievement of the national target depended on the work that KwaZulu-Natal will do to achieve the agricultural revolution that has evaded the province for over two decades.

Zikalala declared that the Multi-Planting Season marked the time to develop the vast tracks of underutilized land in the province adding that it will be followed by district campaigns led by MEC District Champions until the end of November this year. The aim being to rally the citizens' solidarity behind the planting so the province can achieve its target and have an abundant fresh and nutritious harvest by next autumn.

"We are launching the Multi-Planting Season countdown to provide much-needed assistance inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and chemicals to resource-poor farmers. It is time to roll up our sleeves, to unite with the land and achieve the agricultural revolution that our province has been yearning for over two decades," declared Zikalala.

He said the Multi-Planting Season campaign is a crucial driver in the food and nutrition security and economic recovery action plan to avert the province from falling too low below the breadline following the spells of droughts experienced in the past five years and recently, due to COVID-19 lockdown.

"This year, 21 277 households will receive food security-related support. By 2024, we aim to have 50% of provincial government spend on entrepreneurship for women-owned and women-led business. Our aim is to ensure that at least 40% of land to be acquired under the Rural Land Reform Programme will target 40% youth by 2024.

In conclusion, Zikalala said the planting programme is augmented by a mechanization service, which will be monitored and evaluated by South African Farmers Development Agency (SAFDA), five mega-nurseries producing seedlings and fruit trees and an additional R30 million budget for the initial phase of agricultural infrastructure, equipment and operations to ensure that the provincial target of 21 000 hectares does not fail.

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