



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
agriculture  
& rural development  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

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### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MR CYRIL XABA AT THE EVENT TO MARK THE OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF HYDROPONIC TUNNELS TO THE LUNGISISA INDLELA VILLAGE (LIV) FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2015**

Program Director

eThekwini Mayor Councillor James Nxumalo

eThekwini Council Speaker, Mr Logie Naidoo

Members of the eThekwini Executive Council

Director of LIV, Mr Tich Smith

Co-Founder of LIV, Mrs Joan Smith

All dignitaries present

Farmers

Children, staff and families of the Lungisisa Indlela Village

Ladies and Gentlemen

In his 2011 State of the Province Speech, former Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize first announced **the Provincial Government's** partnership with LIV. He described this as a most exciting initiative presented to Government by retired cricket player, Mr Tich Smith. The model proposed by Mr Smith was a partnership of government, the church and business to look after orphaned and vulnerable children in a holistic manner. The model addressed the need to give children the chance to experience family life and to have opportunities to reach their full potential. At the heart of the model was the concept of Ubuntu and for the people of the province to join hands in tackling the challenges of poverty.

Four years later and under the Present Premier, Mr Senzo Mchunu that partnership remains firmly in place. To date, LIV has undertaken joint ventures and received financial support from various government departments. A number of projects have been successfully completed. These include the construction of housing facilities, sporting facilities and the construction of a school. The KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has partnered with you on food security projects as well as commercial agricultural projects. Our latest joint

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venture – the hydroponic tunnel project - has been successfully completed and is being launched today.

LIV has come to stand out in our province as a beacon of hope for orphaned and vulnerable children, and as an example of what can be achieved by a caring society.

For me as KwaZulu-Natal's MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, LIV also stand out as a trailblazer. With your many agricultural projects you are showing how farming can be a catalyst for economic growth and job creation.

You have expanded and continue to expand your farming operations. This indicates that you have confidence in agriculture and you see it as a way to raise your own capital to run the village. **To quote Tich Smith's own words, "LIV's priority is to be less reliant on donors and to provide economic and employment opportunities. You also said, Mr Smith that your aim is to turn Aid to Trade.**

This is what government wants to achieve – to see agriculture as a catalyst for economic growth. The National Development Plan directed government to focus on agriculture as means of uplifting the economy of our rural areas and creating jobs. The KZN Department of agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) took up this mandate. The Department has worked out a strategy for agrarian transformation which will see agriculture become an economic game changer in the fight against poverty.

In many ways what you are doing here at LIV is putting that strategy into action. You are conducting your farming operation as a business. You are using science and technology in your enterprise. An example of this is the hydroponic project. Agriculture being both a business and science are the foundations of the **Department's agrarian transformation strategy.**

KZN DARD is extremely proud to be closely associated with LIV and to have assisted as a partner on many of your agriculture projects, which included the drilling of a borehole and the supply of water storage tanks. From the Village you can see the Hazelmere Dam, which has shrunk in size. The current drought is certainly teaching us hard lessons about the importance of water and the need to conserve this precious commodity.

**This week, I announced that as part of the department's drought relief scheme,** R45 million is to be set aside for the scooping of dams and the rehabilitation of boreholes across the province. My message to the farmers present here today is that you must take care of your water infrastructure and find ways to harvest and conserve water in your operations.

The most recent activity in our partnership with LIV is the establishment of the hydroponic growing facility. The department partly funded the project with an amount of R1,2 million and LIV contributed the other R1,3million. Today we are officially launching this R2,5 million project which also includes the construction of a pack house. On my tour through the tunnels, I was impressed that you have wasted no time and have become fully operational. You have also secured markets for the cucumbers produced at Checkers and Pick and Pay.

In South Africa, when it comes to farming, there are valuable lessons that we can learn from the past. The Afrikaner government grew agriculture by providing infrastructure for farmers, access to markets and skills development. This is what the **Province's** strategy for agrarian transformation aims to achieve and this is what you are doing here at LIV

\*Infrastructure like the hydroponic tunnels and pack houses have been built

\*There is active pursuit of access to markets LIV eggs and produce being sold at the major supermarkets.

I was excited to learn that LIV Flowers is one of the largest cut flower producers in South Africa, specialising in hydroponically grown anthuriums, gerberas and Ruscus. This project certainly has potential to grow and perhaps in our partnership we need to talk more about this expansion.

With the Dube Trade Port on your doorstep I am aware that you are looking at the potential of getting involved in the cut flower export market.

\*A Skills training and development Centre is an integral part of your operation going forward. **I've been carried away talking about your farming operations but** there is so much more going on in the LIV organisation. You have other business operations to ensure that the village becomes sustainable and this is having a spin off effect in uplifting the surrounding communities by growing employment opportunities and offering skills.

I am aware that the basis of your skills training programme is to equip adult learners so that they are better able to serve their own communities. What you **are doing here is also in keeping with the Province's poverty eradication master plan.** Ultimately our partnership is about changing and improving lives.

To the children of LIV I want to say that you are our most important partners. Living in a farming community you are fortunate that you have the opportunity to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. From your lessons in school you have learnt that healthy eating and a diet with plenty of vegetables helps boost your brain power.

My main message here today is that farming is the future for the development of KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa. I hope that many of you will grow up and get **involved in agriculture. You don't all have to become farmers, you** could become soil scientists, or veterinarians and work with Farm animals. You could become extension officers and teach people how to farm. The sky is the limit on what you can do. When you get a chance read up on all the different work opportunities available in the business of farming.

The motto of LIV is: Rescue a child, Restore a life, Raise a leader and Release a star. I would like to see some of you become future farmers or leaders and stars in the field of agriculture. There are lessons all around you here at LIV on how this can be achieved.



I now declare the LIV hydroponic project officially launched. Please enjoy the rest of the function and celebrate this KwaZulu-Natal success story.

I thank you



MEC for KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba together with Lungisisa Indlela Village Director Mr Tich Smith, Lungisisa Indlela Village Project Leader Mr Patrick Mbokazi and KZN DARD Acting Senior General Mr Jerry Mfusi during the official opening of the Hydroponic Tunnels



MEC for KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba together with Lungisisa Indlela Village Director Mr Tich Smith during a tour visit of the Pack house

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MEC Mr Cyril Xaba together with Mrs Smith of Lungisisa Indlela Village and Mr Abongwa of Lungisisa Indlela Village during the event



MEC Cyril Xaba addressing the community of Lungisisa Indlela Village

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