



agriculture & rural development

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agriculture
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PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC CYRIL XABA'S SPEAKING NOTES FOR CABINET OPERATION SUKUMA SAKHE COMMUNITY MEETING AT EMANDLANGENI, GROENVLEI COMMUNITY HALL 27 MAY 2015

I arrived in eMadlangeni with 15 electrical sewing machines, equipment and sewing materials sent by the provincial government for members of the Wonderpot Project.

This is a project that was started through the honorable Premier, Mr E.S. Mchunu's spousal office. The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs also got involved as well as the District Municipality. In March, 65 unemployed women from wards one to four were identified by their councilors to take part in the project. The Premier's office arranged for trainers to teach the women how to make the wonder pot bags. The Department of Economic Development assisted with sewing machines and material while the municipality provided transport and venues where the training took place.

The Premier asked me to formally hand over the project to the women who have completed their training and this was done today. The project will be registered as a co-operative and continue with the production and sales of the wonder pot bags.

The wonder pot project has more benefits as it helps households, save electricity and therefore saves money. The way it works, is that you can half cook food and then put the hot pot into the wonder bag and leave for work or shopping. Hours later when you return you will find the food well cooked. Food like beans, samp, stew and rice can be left to cook in the wonder pot bags.

This is an example of government working in partnership with the community to overcome issues such as poverty, unemployment and saving electricity.

I am here today as part of Operation Sukuma Sakhe Cabinet Day. Premier Mchunu and members of his Provincial Executive Council are visiting various areas in the Amajuba District to interact with communities and to assess the

impact of government programs. We want to find out from you what your challenges are; what we can do better and how we can work together to resolve problems in the area.

The local community had complained about the Ngcuba Bridge project which was incomplete and lacked flooring. Government listened and I was sent to find out about the progress of the bridge. I am happy to report that the bridge is completed, the flooring has been laid out and I was also able to officially hand over the bridge to the community on behalf of the provincial government.

The Ngcuba Bridge was a project which was initiated by government to make the lives of local residents easier. It provides a direct and easy route for residents from the nearby mountain villages to reach the town and learners can have easier access to their schools. Without the bridge, residents would have to walk an extra five kilometers to reach the town.

On this Amajuba District Operation Sukuma Sakhe Cabinet Day, I can confirm that Grootvlei is going to become the site of a pilot Agri-Village Project.

This project is going to transform this area and address many of the challenges you face. It is another example of government listening to the people and together coming up with solutions.

Before I explain what an agri-village is and how it is going to change your lives, let me tell you how this project came about.

Premier Mchunu held discussions with farmers and farm workers in the eMadlangeni area. During that meeting, concerns were raised about physical attacks and abuse of labourers and farm dwellers. Other issues raised was that of farm murders, child labour, evictions, trespassing, grazing rights, over grazing, impounding of cattle, cutting of fences and the destruction of crops.

Farm workers spoke of difficulties they had accessing government services like clinics because they were so far away and their children had to walk long distances to reach schools. There were concerns about the mushrooming of residential settlements on farm lands, which meant that these productive pieces of land could not be used to grow crops. There were tensions amongst land reform beneficiaries as well as between farm laborers and commercial farmers.

The establishment of an Agri-Village was seen as a solution to resolve many of these challenges. An Agri-Village is the development of a new settlement where farm workers and farm dwellers will have security of tenure. They will live close to their places of work, without having to live on the farm. Households will have enough land to grow their own food as well as have the choice of taking part in agricultural business enterprises that will be developed within the Agri-village.

The settlement will have basic services as well as amenities like clinics, schools and a community center. The village will have the services of better transport systems and the plan is that over time, it can be developed into a fully-fledged small town.

The Premier had set up a task team to implement the project and the team will be working in partnership with the local community including farm dwellers, land reform beneficiaries, the amakhosi in the area, farm associations, commercial farmers in the area, the municipality as well as community representatives such as women and youth interest groups.

In his State of the Province Speech this Year, the Premier said that the aim of setting up the Agri-Village was to ensure peace and stability in eMadlangeni and to grow the local agricultural economy. Residents will be able to live in dignity, with housing and access to services as well as opportunities to get skills training and take part in agricultural enterprises that are developed in the village.

The Groenvlei community have a big responsibility, you are partners with government on the project and together, we must ensure the success of this first Agri-Village in the Province. This is a pilot project and what happens here, will guide the province in setting up agri-villages in other districts and re-building the lives of our people.

As partners, I invite you to raise your concerns and comments. From here I will be proceeding to Osizweni where I will meet with my other Cabinet colleagues. There we will look at the issues raised and how we can come together with communities to resolve problems within the Amajuba District.

I thank you