



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
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PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

KZN Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Private Bag X9059, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

Enquiries: Nalini Dickson
Tel: 033-3438254 or 0832340475

Fax: 033-343 82551 not
Toll-Free: 0800 000 996
Email: Nalini.Dickson@kzndard.gov.za

SPEAKING NOTES FOR KZN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC MR CYRIL XABA ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT INVOLVING MONDI AND NODUNGA AND MKHUZANE LAND CLAIMANTS IN PIETERMARITZBURG, 23 JULY 2015

Program Director Advocate Bheki Mbili

Deputy Minister for Rural Development and Land Reform, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini

Chief Director Provincial Shared Service Centre Mr N Mndaweni

KZN Regional Land Claims Commissioner Mr LH Maphutha

Chairperson of the Mkhuzane Land Claims Committee Inkosi Sithole

Chairperson of the Nodunga Land Claims Committee Mr S Zulu

Mondi Representative Mr M Makhathini

Guests from Mondi and Community Representatives

Officials present

Ladies and Gentlemen

When I meet with different agricultural sectors, the issue of land restitution always come up. People ask me about land being taken away from agriculture and the failure of post-settlement farms. My response has always been that all of us within the sector need to work together to find win-win situations.

I also tell them that a key pillar in the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's new Strategy for Agrarian Transformation in the Province is recapitalisation and post-settlement support for land reform farms.

I am happy to be here today with the Deputy Minister for Rural Development and Land Reform, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini to witness the forging of such a win-win situation.

Mondi as well as the Mkhuzane and Nodunga land claimants must be commended for agreeing to work together. We are here this morning not just for

the signing of the settlement claim, but to also witness a commitment, among the parties involved, to work together. The claimants will take over the management and ownership of the land and Mondi will lease the land for forestry plantations from the claimants. Everyone is a winner and farming of the land continues.

Deputy Minister what is happening here today can also be described as KwaZulu-Natal's new vision for Agriculture and Rural Development being put into action. We have crafted a strategy for Agrarian Transformation in the province. The aim of this strategy is to promote **through partnerships** economic growth, food security and the advancement of rural communities.

I wish all of you every success in your endeavour and may it prosper to help grow the forestry sector in KZN.

Deputy Minister, your home province, Mpumalanga is the largest timber producer in the country while KwaZulu-Natal comes second. We may end up competing with you for this top position, that is, if we follow the example set here today. By this I mean if we in government, communities and the commercial forestry sector work in cooperation.

Forestry is extremely important in our province. It is the biggest agricultural commodity in KwaZulu-Natal and accounts for 24% of the total Provincial Agricultural GDP of R1,3 billion. KZN is home to over 1000 commercial timber farmers and over 25 000 small-scale timber growers, the majority of whom are women. We are also very excited that the 14th World Forestry Congress will be taking place in Durban in September.

Deputy Minister, I'd also like you to know that land claims settlements are moving with pace in KwaZulu-Natal. We've had a number of settlements recently. Two weeks ago there was a handover of financial compensation vouchers valued at over R55 million to 581 households to settle the Roosboom community claim in the Ladysmith area. There is today's event and on Saturday there will be the handover of financial compensation vouchers to 152 beneficiaries to settle the St Xavier's land claim in the Durban area. I have commended the work done by the Provincial Land Restitution team and I would like to thank them once more for their thorough research and commitment to getting land claims settled.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for visiting our Province. Before I take my seat, I would like to introduce you to our guests here today.

Deputy Minister Candith Kwati Mashego-Dlamini was born on a farm in Hazyview, Mpumalanga. She trained as a teacher and taught for a number of years. While teaching she continued her studies part-time completing her degree and other post-graduate qualifications both in education and public management Ms Mashego-Dlamini was a member of the Executive Council in Mpumalanga for a number of years. She served as MEC in the following

portfolios, Health, Welfare and Gender Affairs; Agriculture, Conservation and Environment as well as Public Works.

Ms Mashego-Dlamini was appointed as one of the Deputy Ministers of Rural Development and Land Reform in the Republic of South Africa from 26 May 2014.

Deputy Minister we look forward to your address.

I thank you.