



## agriculture & rural development

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

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

Enquiries: Nalini Dickson  
Tel: 033-3559300 or 0832340475

Fax: 033-343 8255  
Toll-Free: 0800 000 996  
Email: [Nalini.Dickson@kzndard.gov.za](mailto:Nalini.Dickson@kzndard.gov.za)

---

### **KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (KZN DARD) MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU'S SPEAKING NOTES AT THE CONGRATULATORY DINNER FOR THE OVERALL WINNER OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**DATE: MONDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

**VENUE: PHUMOBALA LODGE, UMHLABUYALINGANA**

Program Director, Ms J. Majola

Umkhanyakude District Mayor, Councillor T.S. Mkhombo

Mayors and Councillors present

Amakhosi

Community Leaders

Head of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. Dr S.F. Mkhize

All Officials Present

Our outstanding overall winner of the National Public Service Excellence Awards,  
Mrs T. Mathenjwa

Members of her Team

Ladies and Gentlemen

This evening's event is in honour of Mrs Thulisiwe Mathenjwa who has placed Umhlabuyalingana, Umkhanyakude and KwaZulu-Natal on the map and made our Province shine.

Mrs Mathenjwa won the Overall Outstanding Public Servant of the Year Award at the fourth National Batho Pele Excellence Awards. She also won under the best Batho Pele leader of the Year category.

As a Province we can stand tall because Mrs Mathenjwa was not the only winner at the National awards. Our KZN DARD team from the eZingoloni Local Office on the South Coast won the top award for being the Best Batho Pele Team of the Year. We will also be holding a celebratory function on the South Coast for the team.

Ladies and gentlemen, the National Batho Pele Awards is one of the highest honours in the country. It is even more special if we stop to consider that at the last count, there were over two million public servants employed in all three

spheres of government. This award was open to all of them to enter. Mrs Mathenjwa stands above all of them as the top civil servant in the country.

The Batho Pele Award recognises public servants who are selfless, dedicated, committed and who go the extra mile in servicing the public. In addition to improving service delivery, the awards recognises the work done by Mrs Mathenjwa in putting into operation some of the building blocks towards the realisation of a capable and developmental state in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Province's growth plan. Above all, it recognises that she has put the poor at the centre of development plans. Umkhanyakude is considered one of the poorest districts in KwaZulu-Natal and Mrs Mathenjwa has worked tirelessly for the poor.

If I have to go into all the work that Mrs Mathenjwa has done in this area, we will be here all night. I have to keep my speech short so that we have enough time for the celebrations. However, I request the Department officials to make sure that her Portfolio of evidence of all that she has accomplished goes onto our website and is available to the public.

Before touching on some of Mrs Mathenjwa's achievements, let me tell you that the Batho Pele Awards is a tough competition. Judging for the competition starts at departmental level, then moves onto Provincial then National levels. At each stage there are a different set of adjudicators and the competitors are subject to a whole range of questions. The judges look at:

- whether the needs of the community are taken into account when the local office plan their services
- How is information given out - is it easy to use and how helpful are the staff
- How quickly does the office respond to queries
- Whether the office is run efficiently and effectively
- How are budgets managed and how did Mrs Mathenjwa go the extra mile to help the community.

The best part of the competition is that members of the community are interviewed to find out what they have to say about the service. In all these categories, Mrs Mathenjwa came out tops.

As MEC, I was particularly touched by the words of praise for our award-winner not only from her staff but from the community. There was a letter from a staff member thanking Mrs Mathenjwa for teaching her to be caring of others and to consider her job in the public service as a calling. She said she would never forget the lesson Mrs Mathenjwa taught her to always care about the poor and to show respect to everyone.

When you run a local office, you can get carried away with the big projects that will give your office fame and glory. Here in uMhlabuyalingana, big and small projects were treated with the same importance.

Mrs Mathenjwa and her team successfully managed the Province's flagship Amarula Project of over R25 million rand and with an aim of eventually creating 1035 jobs. They oversaw the building of the Amarula Plant forged partnerships with the local municipality, KZN Trade and Investment and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to spread the scope of the project. In all of this, the poorest of the poor were not left out as she consulted with Operation Sukhuma Sake (OSS) to ensure that poor households were part of the project. In this regard, households were included as depots for fruit that were collected.

Together with her team they did their homework to ensure that the project extended to agro-processing with participants trained to make jams, jellies, chutney and oil from the fruit. In addition, the flesh is processed to be sold to juice manufacturers.

The local Tembe people and Amakhosi were consulted and as a result the annual Umthayi Festival is incorporated as part of the project.

Besides the Amarula Project there are many others such as the initiation of cooperatives involving youth and women to produce groundnuts and raise poultry. Household gardens is also an important part of the work of the local office, although efforts over the past year, were hampered by the drought. To encourage household farmers Mrs Mathenjwa gave out watering cans as an incentive.

As an ambassador of the Department, she makes sure she attends all local meetings. She is a member of the local OSS committee, the local HIV/AIDS council and represents the department at Municipal IDP gatherings. We often talk about government departments operating in silos, Mrs Mathenjwa demonstrates the importance of alignment and being representative on local committees.

Her caring extends to small community meetings where she reaches out to the youth and women giving them motivational talks from discipline, to nurturing children and empowering women to be agents of change in their own lives.

This motivational spirit extends to the way she runs her own local office, which is like a well-oiled machine. Staff are offered training. They are encouraged to work hard and to take pride in their office space and to be innovative with limited resources at their disposal. Meetings are regularly held to ensure accountability and projects are assessed to make sure that challenges that have been identified are dealt with immediately and not allowed to get worse.

As I said I could go on and on about Mrs Mathenjwa and all that she has accomplished and we would be sitting here all night.

Let me conclude by drawing on some of the lessons that we can learn from our Award-winning Civil servant.

The first lesson is that accountability and caring for people leads to a corruption-free office. We know that the Public Service often comes under criticism for corruption in terms of fraud and greed. What is not mentioned often enough, is

that not doing ones job is also viewed as corruption. The term used is silent corruption. Not doing what you are paid to do and delivering true service to our people is a silent form of corruption. Mrs Mathenjwa has taught us how an office can function efficiently and effectively, even when there are limited resources. For example when there was no water during the drought, she took such pride in the office equipment that she urged her staff to clean the KZN DARD vehicles by the local rivers.

Mrs Mathenjwa has taught us how to promote agriculture in a community and how to make sure that the poorest of the poor get service.

In fact, she stands out as a worthy ambassador for the new direction that the department will be following next year. We held a five day strategic planning meeting last week. Some of the key plans to come out of this meeting is that the Department is going to concentrate on food security and making sure our children and communities do not go hungry and that they have access to healthy and nutritious food.

At the strategic planning meeting I said that I welcomed the many women we have on our staff because the women brought heart into the discussion. They could relate to the child without a plate of food. I said this was what we needed if we are to become a department of agricultural activists. We need to care! We need the passion and drive to want to create a better world for our people.

Mrs Mathenjwa you have demonstrated compassion in all that you have done. I congratulate you for being an ambassador, a leader and an example we can all follow as we go on to make Agriculture our Culture in this Province.

Above all, I thank you for the humility with which you carry out your duties. I was struck by the fact that when you won the national award, you did not sing your own praises. Instead you acknowledged your colleagues in the Department and you thanked them for their efforts in assisting you to get the award.

You said that the main aim of a government department is to serve its people and this is done without keeping an eye on any prizes. You said the work is carried out without knowing that one day we will get recognition of this magnitude. You never took the glory for yourself but gave it to the entire Department.

We have every reason for this celebration this evening as you are a true public servant of the soil. I thank you!



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu handing over a certificate of recognition to the 2016 Batho Pele Best Public Service Leader, Mrs Thulisile Mathenjwa



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Umhlabyalingana Deputy Director and 2016 Batho Pele Best Public Service Leader Mrs Thulisile Mathenjwa in celebration