



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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SPEAKING NOTES BY KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU AT THE EZINQOLENI PROJECTS LAUNCH

THURSDAY, 14 JULY 2016

VENUE: EZINQOLENI, UGU DISTRICT

Programme Director

Ugu District Mayor, Councillor N. Gumede

eZinqoleni Mayor, Councillor M.A. Mpsi

All Councillors present

Inkosi Z.A. Ngcobo

The Premier's Service Excellence Award Winning team from the local Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) offices – Manager Mr Njabulo Ntshangase and his staff

Members of the Wosiyane Riverside Cluster and the Horse Shoe Irrigation Scheme

Community Leaders

Farmers

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am here today to launch agricultural projects valued at more than R3 million in the eZinqoleni area. These projects would not have been possible without the winning team of the local Department of Agriculture and Rural Development together with the local community.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this team won gold last week at the KZN Premier's Service Excellence Awards ceremony. They took the top award as the Best Batho Pele Team of the year. Just to remind you, Batho Pele is a system started by the Government to ensure that our people get better service delivery. The Batho Pele vision is for a better life for all South Africans by putting people first.

Congratulations to the local Manager Mr Njabulo Ntshangase and his staff for their dedication to serving the people of eZinqoleni. My gratitude goes to all of

you for your hard work and dedication in promoting agriculture in this area. At the beginning of each year, the President makes a very important speech known as The State of the Nation Address. In this address for the past two years, President Zuma has stressed that developing agriculture is key to grow the economy. This means that there is a lot of potential here in eZinqoleni, which is surrounded by farmlands.

It takes two hands to clap. For the KZN **DARD team to win the Premier's** Service Excellence Awards, they must have had a good working relationship with the community. I visited projects in the area this morning and saw first-hand how the Department and the project beneficiaries are working very well together.

They are on a mission to generate income for the community and to create jobs. It has not been easy because of the hardships created by the drought. This meant that the projects could not grow as fast as we wanted, but despite the challenges, nobody is giving up. Team eZinqoleni including the community, the staff at the KZN DARD offices and the municipality are all determined to change lives for the better. This is why it is my greatest pleasure today to launch the Horse Shoe Irrigation Scheme and the Wosiyane Riverside Cluster. These are examples of cooperation, hard work and a determination to succeed.

The Horse Shoe irrigation scheme has benefitted from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development with the installation of an irrigation scheme covering 30 hectares of land and fencing over 16 hectares.

This year, the Department has supported Horseshoe with production inputs. This includes 175 000 cabbage seedlings, 72 000 tomato seedlings, 100 000 onion seedlings, 15kg spinach seedlings and 15kg butternut seedlings. In addition, 400 000 tea tree cuttings will be delivered by September.

Currently, the farmers are busy with land preparation and although there is a problem with water that has hindered their planting, they are not giving up. There is also a challenge with electricity and payment to the municipality has been delayed. However, I can assure Mayor Mpisi that this is being sorted out.

The farmers will generate income from the vegetables and arrangements have already been made for the vegetables to be sold at outlets in Shelley Beach and the surplus will be used for household consumption.

I am excited by the expansion of planting of Tea Trees which will be sold through Oribi Oils to local and international markets.

Tea Tree oils is a product that is used in hair, face and body lotions as well as in toothpaste, perfumes and air fresheners. It is also used in the manufacture of medicines to treat rashes and skin diseases. Research has shown that the Tea Tree can reproduce for up to 40 years from the same stalk. The plant is drought resistant and livestock and wild pigs cannot browse on it. The oil has a big market both locally and internationally. My plea to all of you is to work with determination to build up eZinqoleni as a major Tea Tree oil production area. This could become a major income and job generator in this area.

The Department is committed to growing the Horse Shoe irrigation Scheme by assisting with the provision of implements and tractors. We will also be involved

in empowering the local farmers with skills development and training so that they become experts in crop production.

Last year the Department committed R1,1 million to the project. This year we have allocated R1,5 million to developing this farming enterprise.

Today we are also launching the Wosiyane Riverside Cluster which has 65 beneficiaries getting an income. The Department has provided R1,9 million for the project.

The Wosiyane Riverside cluster extends over 128 hectares and is run by two cooperatives. The Department has assisted with fencing, mechanisation and production inputs including dry bean seeds and fertilizer. The beans have been harvested and are currently being processed. They will be sold under the brand name chari beans generating an income and thus improving livelihoods. The project is aimed at alleviating poverty, helping with food nutrition and creating jobs.

The Department will also be helping to train the cooperative members in sound management and to develop skills in crop production. Thank you to team Wosiyane for your commitment to the project.

In conclusion, congratulations to all involved in uplifting eZinqoleni. The projects launched today show what can be achieved when government and communities work together. As government, we are committed to creating a better life for our people and uplifting the poor. Agriculture is an important tool that can change lives for the better. My message to you is to never give up and that by all of us working together we can grow agriculture and create jobs in this area. Working together we can do more. Lasting victory over poverty and hunger means that we have to create decent work and ensure sustainable livelihoods. Nobody must go hungry.

Thank you once more to the winning DARD Team for carrying out the spirit of Batho Pele and demonstrating that our ANC-led government is caring and dedicated to improving the lives of our people. We wish you the best of luck as you go on to compete in the National Service Excellent Awards. Show the rest of the country the good work being done in KwaZulu-Natal, to create a better future for our people.

I Thank You!