



## 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

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### **SPEAKING NOTES BY KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU FOR THE HANDOVER EVENT FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE KWACELE-NHLANGWINI COMMUNITY LAND CLAIM**

**SATURDAY, 30 JULY 2016**

**VENUE: ENTUBENI SPORTSGROUND, KWACELE-NHLANGWINI**

Programme Directors, Linda Sibiya and Mnyamezeli Dlamini

Mayor of the Ilembe District Municipality, Councillor S.W. Mdabe

Mayor of KwaDukuza Municipality, Councillor N.R. Mthembu

Mayor of the Ndwendwe Municipality, Councillor M. Hadebe

Councillors

Inkosi Cele & all Amakhosi present

Chief Director of the KZN Land Claims Commission Adv Bheki Mbili

Mr TB Nzuzo & Mr BW Khuzwayo representing the KwaCele Claimants

Beneficiaries of the Kwacele-Nhlangwini Community Land Claim

Honoured Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Land reform rings hollow if it is not linked to agricultural development. We need to ensure food security for future generations of South Africans. More importantly, we need to ensure that food is affordable if we want to eradicate poverty in the country. We have to grow more food so that it can become cheaper and help the country to be less reliant on imports.

When it comes to food security and nutrition, Government has to be forward thinking and plan for the future. Our population is growing but the numbers of our farmers are declining. South Africa has a population of 52 million people and this number is expected to grow by over 12 million in the next 15 years to

64,4 million people. We are going to need more farms and farmers to provide food for our growing population.

This is why it is a pleasure today to hand over the title deeds to the KwaCele community, who have chosen to farm on the land that was awarded to them as a result of the restitution process.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure all of you were as impressed as I was to hear about the model that has been used to grow the KwaCele farming enterprise. The key to growing agriculture in our province is by forming partnerships. This is captured in the mission statement of the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural **Development (KZN DARD) which states, and I quote: "To promote through partnerships, sound agricultural practises that promote economic growth, food security and the advancement of rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal."**

The working relationship between KwaCele Farming Pty Limited and the Crookes Brothers Limited is an example of this partnership and can be an example for other land reform projects to follow. We forget how skills were lost as a result of our people being dispossessed of the land.

In my visits to communities who are getting back their land through the land restitution program, I hear over and over again that they farmed their land profitably before it was taken away from them.

Just last week we were at an event where the Golokodo community received compensation for the land they had lost in Folweni. I came across research which showed they were skilled farmers. The community also cultivated hectares of sugar cane and had devised an irrigation system of digging long tunnels which held water for a long time so that during summer when it is hot, water was gradually absorbed by the soil to irrigate plants. This also helped to prevent soil erosion.

When the apartheid regime carried out forced removals, families were moved from farms into townships where they could not take their cattle, goats or sheep. They also found that the plots in the townships were so small that they could no longer grow food to feed their families. The older generation could not pass on their farming skills to the younger generation.

To make matters worse, the Bantu education system was designed in the words of former Prime Minister Verwoed so that blacks could be **"hewers of wood and drawers of water."** Agriculture was introduced as a subject in schools, but it was basically to serve as training for farm labourers. As a result our children saw this subject as punishment and did not want to do agriculture. Today we are left with repairing this damage and starting from scratch to show our youth, especially in the rural areas, that agriculture is a science and business and that they too now have the opportunity to become profitable farmers, like the KwaCele beneficiaries.

It was impressive to hear about the **Crookes Brother's Programme** of Entrepreneurial Development and that you have now handed over the operational reins of KwaCele Farming to the community property trust established by the KwaCele-Nhlangwini community. This is what we want to grow agriculture – the transfer of skills and mentoring on our land reform farms. We need to build up our next generation of farmers and we can do this through partnerships. I would also like to express my gratitude to **KwaCele Farming's other partners** - the Gledhow

Sugar Mill, uShukela Milling Pty( Ltd), Cane Growers Association and Private Growers.

The ANC-led government at its 2012 conference in Mangaung resolved that economic transformation would only be achieved by the united action of all South Africans working in a concerted manner to eradicate poverty, create full employment and reduce inequality.

Government committed itself to build strong partnerships with community organizations, and social movements, with trade unions, with the business sector, youth, women and in the case of agriculture, with commodity organizations and organized agriculture.

Ladies and gentlemen we need to increase our land under agricultural production, as I said earlier a large part of the problem is high food prices with families struggling to afford nutritious food to feed their families. National Minister of Agriculture, Mr Senzeni Zokwana as a champion for promoting food security, has consistently spread the message that people must not rely on government grants alone and that all of us must use our land and gardens to grow food.

According to Agricultural Statistics, South Africa has less than two-thirds of the number of farms it had in the early 1990s.

Thank you to the KwaCele community for continuing the tradition of farming and for your wisdom in setting up a partnership that allowed you to get skilled. Please continue your good work and share your farming skills with others.

You bear the hopes of our forebears whose demand in Freedom Charter was for the land to be shared amongst those who work it. Food security and economic development for the rural areas will become a reality when agricultural land is not only returned to those who have been dispossessed but is productively used.

This is why land restitution is a key government policy. The KwaCele Land Claim was settled in three phases between May 2008 and October 2010. The extent of the land restored to the Claimant community is 7 200 hectares most of which is under cane. The State paid R118 million purchasing land on behalf of the Claimants.

The Claimant beneficiaries are represented by KwaCele Nhlanguwini Communal Property Trust. KwaCele Farming Pty (Ltd) has become an important employer in the Ilembe District. It employs roughly 320 people. The Banana Project has 40 Permanent employees and Co-Managed properties have 450 employees. Well done and thank you for your contribution to job creation. In addition, there are 520 households with 4278 beneficiaries that have gained from this land claim and 20% of them are women.

Government has promised to create a better life for all. In handing over the title deeds to the KwaCele community, it is uplifting to realise that as a result of the land restitution process many lives have changed for the better. We need to continue with land reform so that many more lives are transformed.

I thank you.



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu together with Ilembe District Municipality Mayor Clrr Welcome Mdabe, visiting KwaCele Sugarcane Farm



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MEC Mr Themba Mthembu together with Ilembe District Municipality Mayor Clrr Welcome Mdabe visiting a Classroom built by the KwaCele Community Trust



MEC Themba Mthembu together with KZN Land Claims Commissioner Advocate Bheki Mbili handing over title deeds to the Chairperson of the KwaCele Community Trust Mr Themba Nzuzi and Inkosi Cele