



**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 LAUNCH  
OF DAMS, BOREHOLES AND TRACTORS EVENT**

**VENUE: MABEDLANA SPORTS GROUND, ULUNDI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY  
ZULULAND DISTRICT**

**FRIDAY, 29 JULY 2016**

Programme Director

The Mayor of Zululand District Municipality, Councillor M.A. Hlatshwayo

The Mayor of Ulundi Local Municipality, Councillor N. Manana

Councillors

Inkosi Z. Mpungose of the Ngobozane Traditional Council

Inkosi S.L.N. Mbatha of the KwaVezunyawo Traditional Council

Amakhosi

Community Leaders

Farmers

All officials present

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are here today to deliver on the promise made with regard to further measures to help the people of Ulundi and the Zululand District to cope with the present drought as well as future seasons of dry weather.

Although there are heavy rains falling in the Province and more rains are expected, the drought is yet to be broken especially here in Zululand. We learnt our lesson over the past year, that South Africa is a generally a dry country and that more has to be done to prepare for future periods of little or no rain. The KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) undertook to re-scoop 15 livestock dams in the Zululand District at a cost of over

R5 million. Eight of these are in Ulundi. The contractor has completed 12 dams and three are left for completion.

KZN DARD has a partnership for Livestock Infrastructure Development with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Through the partnership seven boreholes were drilled and equipped at the cost of R3,75 million.

This morning we visited the Ndlovana Dam and the KwaMpothi Borehole to officially launch them as part of Government's Programme to improve the lives of farmers here in Ulundi.

The Dam and Borehole Project started immediately after the Provincial Government handed out R8,5 million in drought relief to farmers affected by the drought. With more than 10 000 heads of cattle having died as a result of a lack of grass and drinking water, KZN DARD allocated a further R10,89 million for drought relief. The total budget for drought relief to the Zululand District was R27,66 million.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you have a caring government which did its best to find extra money to help our distressed farmers.

I understand that Ulundi livestock farmers faced a particular challenge as you had to pick up drought relief agricultural supplies from Eshowe as there is no agricultural supplier in Ulundi. A total amount of R2,3 million was used for drought relief in Ulundi and a further R1,5 million was allocated when some farmers could not get feed at Eshowe Coastals. The Department with the Ulundi Municipality also provided transport to farmers who could not afford the costs of picking up supplies from Eshowe.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as government we do listen to the pleas of our people. When a number of Zululand farmers did not get drought relief, they called on the Head of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. S. Mkhize to express their feelings. I commend Dr. Mkhize and the Zululand District officials for searching through the Department coffers and finding the extra R10 million to help the farmers. A total of 1535 farmers were assisted.

In addition, tanks were supplied to provide water for livestock and food security gardens. In Ulundi 55 water tanks were provided, 25 of which had stands for the food gardens and 30 for livestock watering.

The Provincial Government has a strategy to grow the livestock industry, particularly in communal areas. A key part of this strategy is to enhance animal health. Our Veterinary Services have been hard at work. As part of the drought relief activities, more than 21 000 animals were vaccinated against disease; more than 7000 animals were dewormed and received other levels of care. I am happy to announce that the Veterinary Services of the Department has also established a veterinary clinic at the Ulundi local office and there are two mobile animal clinics that are available.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have by no means outlined every single aspect of the drought relief offered, but as I said government cares and we are here to serve you.

The past two years have not been easy for our farmers because of the hardships created by the drought. This has meant that many agricultural projects that have been launched could not grow as fast as we wanted.

Despite this, the farmers of Ulundi persevered. I must express my gratitude to you for not giving up. The weather experts say that we can expect the rains to fall again from October this year. With the help of KZN DARD you will be well prepared to grow your farming enterprises.

The Zululand District planned to register 27 communal estates and all of them have been registered as legal entities. 18 of these have signed direct funding and tractor lease agreements with the Department. Planting could not continue as usual because of the drought, farmers planted more dry beans. We are hopeful that the situation will begin turning around by the next planting season.

As part of our strategy to boost the livestock industry in the area and improve the grazing land, we have a landcare project. The aim is to rehabilitate agricultural land that is infested with alien vegetation and dongas. Zululand District has 44 landcare projects and more than 117 local people have been trained to carry out the rehabilitation work.

Ladies and Gentlemen our commitment continues to the people of Ulundi and Zululand. As government we understand that there is still a need for drought relief interventions. There are plans to drill a further 15 boreholes, scoop out ten more dams and construct six more diptanks.'

To grow agriculture in Zululand I am very happy to announce that R61,4 million has been allocated to the district to implement various projects. This includes the cultivation of maize, dry beans, vegetables. In addition to boosting the livestock industry, there are poultry, pork and goat projects to be implemented.

With these words I officially hand over the KwaMphopti borehole, the Ndlovane Dam and the tractors for the communal estates. This is a symbolic gesture of government's commitment to the people of Zululand. These projects being officially launched here today will add to the many others around the country aimed at creating a better life for all South Africans. We do this to ensure our mandate of growing the agriculture sector to transform the rural economy and the living conditions of our people so that all enjoy the fruits of our freedom and democracy.

I thank you!