



## 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 THE NKANINI QWABE SUGARCANE PROJECT AND HANDING OVER TITLE DEEDS AMOUNTING TO R140 MILLION AT ROYENDAL FARM IN ILEMBE DISTRICT**

**THURSDAY, 28 JULY 2016**

**VENUE: SAKHUXOLO SPORTS GROUND, MDLEBENI, ILEMBE DISTRICT**

Programme Director [Please bear with me I have a long list of guests to welcome]

Members of the Agriculture and Rural Development Portfolio Committee

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

Mayor of Ndwedwe Local Municipality Cllr M. Hadebe

Inkosi Gumede of the Qwabe Traditional Council

Councillors

Amakhosi

Our Partners, the South African Sugar Association

Representatives from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform

Beneficiaries of the Qwabe-Nkanini Community land Claim

Community Leaders;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with a deep sense of joy and pride that I stand before you to launch the Nkanini Qwabe sugarcane project and to officially hand over title deeds for land valued at R140 million to the Nkanini community.

What is happening in Ilembe represents a province at work to build a better future. It shows what can be achieved when different sectors such as

government, communities and the private sector join forces. Together we can do more and achieve much more. The evidence is here in the Ilembe District.

Government has recognized that for South Africa as a whole to advance economically, the agricultural sector has to be transformed. It has to feed the nation, provide jobs and more importantly, uplift the rural areas where the majority of our people in this province live in poverty. Towns and cities can no longer sustain the drift of people from rural to urban areas. More has to be done to enhance the economic potential of our rural areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the agriculture sector is being transformed in Ilembe thanks to a group of land claim beneficiaries who have opted to go back to work the land. The Qwabe-Nkanini Community Claim is a land reform success story that shows that Government is on the right track in giving redress to communities who were deprived of their land during the apartheid regime.

The beneficiaries know their own story, please bear with me as I relate it to the audience in general. Your success must be heralded for the rest of KwaZulu-Natal and the country to hear. You are an example of how land reform farms can become productive and contribute to the economy and food security in the country.

The Nkanini community was dispossessed of their land rights in 1971 when the Apartheid government set about dividing our cities, towns and rural areas into racially exclusive living areas. This is a far cry from the united, non-racial and democratic South Africa that we live in today.

After South Africa became a democracy and began the process of land restitution, the late Inkosi T.B. Gumede lodged a land claim on behalf of his community. The claimants opted for land restoration instead of financial compensation.

They formed a Communal Property Association (CPA) and registered an operating company known as the Qwabe Enkanini Farming Enterprise. The CPA is made up of 180 households and 1104 beneficiaries. The Board of trustees consists of 9 members. The CPA has a strategic partnership with a local farmer and also employs managers to make sure that their farming operations are a success. The enterprise grows sugarcane, bananas, macadamia nuts, litchis and cut flowers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, South Africa is currently the third largest macadamia nut producer in the world, after Australia (where they originated) and Hawaii. The experts tell us that our country has the potential to become the number one macadamia nut producer in the world. With initiatives like the Qwabe Enkanini Enterprise, that goal can be well within sight.

Farming cut flowers also has huge potential. The Dube Trade Port has already started to export cut flowers and wants to grow this market. Ilembe is ideally situated on the doorstep of the Trade Port. The Qwabe Enkanini Enterprise as well as the Agri-Park being developed in this district can become major contributors to this market.

As a step forward, the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is contributing to the funding to re-construct the Qwabe Nkanini cut flower nursery

and the upgrade of its irrigation system. Perhaps one day we could be competing with Kenya, which is currently the third largest exporter of cut flowers in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, sugar cane is the largest component of the CPA's farming initiative. This is why we are also here today to launch the growth of the Qwabe Nkanini sugar cane project. This project highlights the importance partnerships in growing the agricultural sector. I want to thank the South African Sugar Association for being our partners in this endeavor.

The Nkanini CPA currently has 295 hectares under cane. The project being launched today seeks to further this to another 85 hectares, which will bring the production area under cane to 380 hectares.

This will increase the tons of sugarcane produced from 12 550 to 17 765, improving the projects economic viability. The expansion is being facilitated through the KZN DARD and SASA partnership. We have a formal agreement to work together in support of land reform and small-scale growers in the sugar sector.

As a result of the partnership, KZN DARD has committed over R55 million to SASA for cane development on land reform farms and for small-scale growers. The funding is for ratoon management and infrastructure development projects across KwaZulu-Natal. The Qwabe Nkanini CPA and the Qwabe Secondary Coop in the Ilembe District will get a R16 million slice of this R55 million sugar cane development cake.

SASA has drawn up the business plans for the development of these projects and I am pleased to see that local contractors will be used. Currently 75 people are employed in the Nkanini farming enterprise, as the project develops more than 117 jobs will be created.

The Qwabe Secondary Cooperative has a total of 892 beneficiaries with 349 people employed by the cooperative. An additional 87 jobs will be created for land preparation and ratoon management operations.

Government's key objective is that the money invested in communities must result in job creation, entrepreneurial development and poverty eradication. This is why a positive aspects of the sugar cane projects, being overseen by SASA, is that there are food security gardens built into the overall plan to complement the cane development within the district.

Government support is not about handouts but about empowering members of CPA's and cooperatives to take control and become farmers in their own right.

This is why the Nkanini CPA must be commended. They took the support given by government and developed a productive farming enterprise. Once more, my gratitude goes to SASA for working with government to promote sustainable land reform and rural development programmes.

With these words, it gives me great pleasure to launch the Qwabe Nkanini Sugar Cane Project and to present the CPA with the title deeds to their land.

I thank you