



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

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU FOR DAFF'S NELSON MANDELA DAY COMMEMORATION

THURSDAY, 21 JULY 2016

VENUE: MELMOTH SPORTS GROUND

Programme Director and Head of Department for KZN Agriculture & Rural Development (KZN DARD), Dr S.F. Mkhize

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, the Honourable Senzeni Zokwana

Deputy Minister for Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries, General Bheki Cele

Uthungulu District Mayor Councillor T. Mchunu

Mthonjaneni Mayor, Councillor M. Nkosiphuli

All Councillors Present

Amakhosi

National, Provincial and local officials

Community leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you to Honourable Minister Zokwana for bringing the celebration of Tata Madiba's birthday to the Mthonjaneni local municipality. As you are aware, this celebration is commemorated in a call for action. A call to carry out activities to change the lives of the poor and most vulnerable members of our communities.

Minister Zokwana, the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) gives its wholehearted support to this commemoration that highlights the need for food security. You have chosen 27 indigent and vulnerable households and have given them the means to establish food gardens to show how agriculture can provide for a sustainable way of making a living.

We are well aware that this is a symbolic gesture. However, it serves as a powerful reminder to those of us involved in the arena of agriculture that we must work daily to ensure our communities are food secure.

When I became MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, my message to the staff in the Department was that we must become campaigners for social change within the agricultural arena. I said we must become agricultural activists with a special responsibility to work towards food security and ensuring that no one goes hungry.

We are currently particularly challenged on this front by rising food prices so our focus going forward, has to be on growing agriculture so that food can be cheaper. We also must provide indigent and vulnerable households with the means to grow their own food.

I am happy to announce that in KZN to date, there are over 300 000 food insecure households receiving support with agricultural projects. Over 27 000 hectares have been cultivated for food production. More than 1000 household food gardens have been established as well as over 300 community and institutional gardens including 385 tunnel farming projects.

More than R34 million has been earmarked for food security programmes in our various municipalities. The food security package includes seeds and vegetables as well as indigenous chickens, laying hens and indigenous goats. The aim is for households to be able to join together and grow their enterprises into income-generating projects.

We know that this is the tip of the ice-berg and today's commemoration serves as a reminder that we have many more gardens, farming activities and agro-processing endeavours that need to be developed.

This is why we have no choice but to be agricultural activists. As Tata Madiba reminded us and I quote his words, "As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest."

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO) 2015 report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World said that hunger kills more people each year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

The FAO also noted that price and income swings can significantly affect the poor and hungry. When prices rise, consumers often shift to cheaper, less-nutritious foods, heightening the risks of malnutrition. The Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition said that poor nutrition causes nearly half (45%) of deaths in children under five. Tata Madiba had a particular love for children and as agricultural activists, our work must ensure that there is food security for future generations of South Africans.

Minister Zokwana, thank you once more for holding this important event in our Province and for the people in the Uthungulu District.

I conclude with an important quote from Tata Madiba who said: "Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural, it is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings."

To the communities present, I want to say that as government, we are here to serve you. Our actions are aimed at helping you achieve a better life.

I Thank You.



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu together with National Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr Senzeni Zokwana, at the Zululand FM Radio Station



National Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr Senzeni Zokwana together with KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu, arriving at Mthonjaneni



National Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr Senzeni Zokwana together with KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu, sharing a light moment



Dignitaries at the Nelson Mandela Day Commemoration



MEC Themba Mthembu delivering his message of support at the Nelson Mandela Day Commemoration



Minister Senzeni Zokwana delivering his keynote address at the Nelson Mandela Day Commemoration