



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
agriculture  
& rural development

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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### MEC FOR KZN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU'S SPEAKING NOTES AT THE 2016 NACSANO SPORTS WEEK GALA DINNER

VENUE: CENTENARY HALL, CEDARA AGRICULTURE COLLEGE

DATE: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016

The Mayor of Umgeni Municipality, Councillor Councillor Sizwe Sokhela  
Chairperson of the Association of Principals of Agricultural Colleges and Acting Principal of Cedara  
College of Agriculture Mr Siya Mazibuko  
Principals of Agricultural Training Institutes  
Chairperson of the National Agricultural College Soccer and Netball Organisation (NACSANO)  
Mr K. Shakwane  
Head of the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr S.F. Mkhize  
Special Guest & Mamelodi Sundowns Assistant Coach Manqoba Mngqithi  
Members of the local organising committee  
Our VIP's for tonight, **The Players**  
Ladies and Gentlemen

This an evening of fun, celebration and rejoicing, so I am not going to bore you with a long-winded speech.

When I found out that Mr Manqoba Mngqithi of Mamelodi Sundowns was going to be here, I had mixed feelings.

Mr Mngqithi's presence highlights the prestige of these games. He is the assistant coach of a top club. On that score, I am very happy to see Mr Mngqithi. It shows the importance of this sporting fixture.

The downside, is that he may have spotted many highly talented players who could be tempted to leave agriculture to become sports stars. I've been told that the soccer and netball matches were of the highest professional standards during the past week. South Africa needs sports stars, but we need skilled agriculturalists even more. So my appeal to the players, is that you stick to agriculture and finish your courses.

It is a rare-treat to be able to address a future generation of agriculturalists from across the province. I salute you for choosing agriculture as your career.

As you know that the revitalization of agriculture and the agro-processing value chain is on top of the list of government's nine point plan to revive the economy. The National Development Plan says that agriculture as the primary economic activity in rural areas, has the potential to create close to one-million new jobs by 2030. So you see, the country needs farmers and skills within the agricultural arena.

There is another reason why you were extremely wise in choosing agriculture as a career. Futurists are scientists and social scientists who examine current trends and make predictions about the future. Many futurists believe that farming is going to be the top job of the future, outstripping such current popular choices as accountancy and investment banking.

The futurists base their predictions on a number of factors including the view that 9.6 billion people are expected to inhabit the earth by 2050. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) says to be able to feed this population, food production will have to increase by 70%. This is not going to be easy, given the challenges of climate change, serious water shortages – like the drought we are currently experiencing; and the limited availability of arable land.

Joe Tankersley, a futurist says that though technology continues to move the world into the virtual space, the 21st century may see the return of local farming, this is due limited space, the number of people living in urban areas and the increasing awareness of the detrimental environmental impacts of large-scale industrial farming.

The South African Government has also been examining different scenarios and planning for the future. Let me elaborate. In October last year, Government held a conference in Boksburg in Gauteng, to discuss and formalise the Transformation of Colleges of Agriculture into Agricultural Training Institutes.

This led to the adoption of a Colleges Revitalization Plan. The theme of that conference was – enhancing food security through sector-specific education and training. You can see that government's chief concern remains steadfastly around eradicating poverty and enhancing food security.

Next week on October 14<sup>th</sup>, we will be celebrating World Food Day. A study by the Office of the Presidency showed that half of South Africans do not have sufficient access to affordable, nutritious and safe food to meet their basic health requirements. As future agriculturalists you will be contributing to food security.

As players in the 2016 NACSANO Sports week, use your sporting skills as well, to promote sport in the communities where you work. This will contribute to healthy lifestyles and keep youngsters in those communities away from alcohol and drug abuse.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the past week's programme shows the holistic nature of Agricultural education in our 11 Agricultural Training Institutes. As you can see it is not about all work and no play.

Thank you to NACSANO for organising another successful sports week. I am also grateful to the staff of Cedara College and the local organizing committee for being good hosts and upholding the Province's image of hospitality and good care.

The members of the Association of Principals of Agricultural Colleges must also be thanked for providing leadership for an event of this magnitude. To all of you, please keep up the transformation agenda to ensure that our Agricultural Institutions become Centres of Excellence that drive the National agenda of fighting poverty, ensuring food security and building the rural economy.

Cedara College Acting Principal, Siya Mazibuko in his Welcome message said, "Let the Games begin!"

In conclusion I say: The games have ended ... let us go back to our Colleges remembering that despite the fierce competition, there was also a wonderful spirit of sportsmanship at the 2016 NACSANO games. There was camaraderie and all of you had the opportunity to network. Build on the links forged here to grow your careers and agriculture in South Africa.

Enjoy the rest of the evening, I thank you!