

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE HON. PREMIER R.M MTSHWENI-TSIPANE ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF THE REVITILISED NKANGALA GRAIN CORRIDOR PROJECT IN THE THEMBISILE HANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

DATE: 9 APRIL 2024

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

INGWENYAMA MAKHOSOKE II OF THE NDEBELE NATION

CHAIRPERSON OF THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL AND KHOI-SAN LEADERS, KGOSHI MOKOENA

BO-NDABEZITHA REPRESENTING VARIOUS TRADITIONAL COUNCILS

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE NKANGALA DISTRICT, CLLR. TD NGWENYA

EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE THEMBISILE HANI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CLLR. LJ DIKGALE

SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, LED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MR PETER NYONI

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

LOTJANI

1. Programme director, during the State of the Province Address, more than a month ago I made a commitment to the people of Mpumalanga that

we will be embarking on massive agricultural programmes that will become game changers in the production of grain products which include among others, maize, soya beans, sunflower, sorghum, dry beans.

2. Through this commitment, the Nkangala Grain Corridor project would be piloted in two municipalities, one of them, the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, before rolling it out to other Municipalities in the Nkangala District.

3. We are here today, to say to the people of Nkangala, specifically in Thembisile Hani, that this was not just an empty promise, but a commitment by the ANC-led government to deliver on projects that are focused on enhancing our vision of creating a vibrant, equitable and sustainable agriculture.

4. We intend to achieve this vision through a multi-pronged strategy based on the following:

- *A coordinated and integrated broad-based agrarian transformation;*
- *Strategically increasing investments in rural development as you can see here; and*
- *An improved and accelerated land reform programme.*

5. Programme director, the people of this region took an initiative and asked their government to assist with the establishment of the grain production system which will culminate into the commercialization of grain products that are of high quality and of massive quantity.

6. Most of our people in this area have long been involved in grain production dating back to the period before their land was stolen away from them by the successive colonisers.

7. As a caring ANC-led government we answered their clarion call by building this infrastructure which has been revitalized and remodelled to respond to the modern technological needs of our farming communities.

8. When in full production the pilot project will see 4 029 hectares of grain, planted in Thembisile Hani and 1063 hectares in Dr JS Moroka Municipality. The Thembisile Hani Grain Project consists of four primary production cooperatives who took an initiative to form the ***Iphakeme Secondary Cooperative***, previously known as ***Zijamele Farmers' Cooperative***.

9. Primary production fields are in Kapros, Blwsbokfontein, Rooderpoort, Loopspruit, Van Dykspruit, Valschspruit and Hartebeespruit. The Secondary Cooperative Iphakeme Mill is situated at Klipspruit Farm.

10. The cooperative is also farming in cash crops like vegetables to supplement and sustain their operations. There are 65 direct beneficiaries which include 20 females, 37 males and 8 youth.

11. Programme director, in accordance with the Rural Development Master Plan the project is designated as a **Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU)**. Primary Producers receive assistance in the form of mechanisation, production inputs, extension and advisory services as well as market linkages.

12. Since its inception government has installed a number of silos, harvesters, tracktots, till planters. We have also built a security fence and a weigh bridge, upgraded the transformers and installed milling equipment.

13. This project is premised on our District Development Model (DDM) which reinforces the need for coordinated and integrated socio economic development in all sectors across all spheres of government including the broad based agrarian transformation.

14. Our government has always been of the view that rural development is about enabling rural people to take control of their destiny, thereby dealing effectively with rural poverty through the optimal use and management of their farming activities.

15. As an ANC-led government we strongly believe and encourage our people to be engaged with us through our participatory process which rural people have learnt over time, through their own experiences and initiatives, how to adapt their indigenous knowledge to their changing world. Our responsibility is to facilitate that process so that we can meet their inspirations and fulfil their dreams.

16. Like many other agricultural projects, this grain corridor project is supported through the agro-processing value chain, ensuring that primary produce is processed in Agro-processing facilities like Mills and distributed through our Agri-hubs.

17. Agri-hubs serve as a market link for both subsistence and commercial farmers. This is further supported by the Government Nutrition Programme that serves as the main market for produce from the Agro-processing facilities and Agri-hubs.

18. What this means, Programme Director, is that for its school feeding schemes and hospital nutrition programmes government buys agro processed products like maize meal, bread, and beans from these markets. This results in the massification of job creation through the value chain from primary production to secondary production.

19. We have also committed ourselves to intensify the rolling out of:

- Massive drive on infrastructure development; this includes, among other things: dams, irrigation, farm roads, silos, pack houses, mechanisation, electricity and infrastructure for agro-processing.
- Massive drive in Agricultural skills development.
- Comprehensive support to small-scale farmers, commercial farmers and agri-businesses.
- Fast-tracking of the settlement of the outstanding land claims.
- Optimal utilisation of resituated and distributed land.
- Increase acquisition of agricultural land for the previously disadvantaged.
- Assistance (technical, material and finance) to identified Agricultural co-operatives in traditional areas.

20. The International Fresh Produce will soon come into the operationalization phase and the Nkangala grain corridor will play a critical key role, serving as an export market for grain products.

21. We call upon our people who wish to be involved in farming, to take the leaf from Iphakeme Mill Secondary Cooperative, group themselves together and form cooperatives, whether primary or secondary in different production lines and do what this cooperative has done. Government will support their initiative.

22. Bo-Ndabezitha, we draw inspiration from the Cameroonian proverb, which aptly states that there are no shortcuts to the Palm tree. Today we took a significant step towards the Palm tree, through the launch of this project. ***Uzoyithola kanjani uhleli ekhoneni.***

Re a leboga.