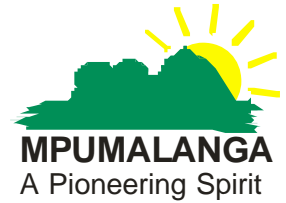




dardla

Department:
Agriculture, Rural Development
and Land Administration
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



President Zuma's initiative bearing fruits

Away from the madding crowd with the splendor that is often reserved for big government events conspicuously missing and the glare of the media nonexistent, Etombe, an obscure village in Mkhondo Municipality bordering the Kwazulu-Natal province, played witness to what was probably the first installment of pledges made for President Zuma's brain child aptly coined the Masibambisane Rural Development Initiative (MRDI).

Indeed, President Zuma in his capacity as the chairman of MRDI, a nongovernmental initiative aimed at eradicating poverty and stimulating economic growth in rural areas, did leave a lasting legacy when he launched MRDI on 6 November 2011. On that day he handed over RDP houses that were part of the presidential housing project, 2 bulls and 25 heifers and 1 ram and 25 heifers to a myriad of beneficiaries to the delight of the local community.

On that same day, private business and some Cabinet Ministers in attendance also made pledges that would ensure that MRDI is sustained in the area and subsequently rolled out to other rural areas in Mpumalanga. On 6 December 2013, exactly 13 months after the pledges were made, 4 cows were handed over to Mr. Nqotheni, a deserving livestock farmer from Entombe village. This was after officials from the Department did follow ups on the pledges that were made on the launch of MRDI.

Explaining the purpose of the day, Mr. Xaba, DARDLA Director of Gert Sibande District said the purpose of the gathering was to officially hand over cows that were pledged by Mr. Skosana a local business man and Pastor Sithole during the launch of MDRI. Mr. Xaba asserted that Mr. Nqotheni was chosen as a beneficiary for his proven track record of dedication and hard work in livestock farming.

Mr Xaba insisted that the cows were handed over unconditionally but hinted that in the spirit of masibambisane, the Department depending on how this herd perform might humbly request that spin offs thereof be extended to other deserving local livestock farmers. He appealed for patience as they were still awaiting other pledges which upon delivery were going to be handed over accordingly.

Speaking on behalf of Mkhondo Executive mayor councilor Ndlovu thanked President Zuma for initiating MRDI as it encourages rural people to be champions of their own development and stem the tide against urban migration. "Farming has always been our source of livelihood and it should be our responsibility to ensure that it remains as such," said councilor Ndlovu.

In his message of appreciation, Mr Nqotheni thanked the Department and those who made the pledges for their good deed. He indicated that for a while he had been trying to solicit assistance from a private company to expand his livestock farming business in vain maintaining that thanks to this hand over the future looked bright.