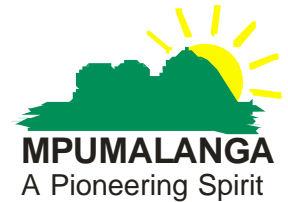




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Department:
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MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



GIBA CPA'S REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AT AN ADVANCE STAGE

Mbombela - The GIBA CPA is returning to its glory after the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration (Dardla) vigorously implemented its Master Development Plan intended to revitalize the farm and increase production. The banana-producing farm, acquired through the Restitution programme in 2003, was once among the largest suppliers and leading farms in the country. However its infrastructure and major crops became degraded due to poor management.

In its mission to extend a hand to many ailing land reform farms in the province, the Dardla had begun with its mandate to redevelop the farms. An Agric Advisor at Mbombela Municipality Ms Rejoice Malumane, who is a link between all stakeholders on the farm, said the progress of redeveloping the Giba Communal Property Association (CPA) farm is at an advance stage.

Ms Malumane indicated that various stakeholders were consulted to decide on the future of the farm. Project committees were established, AGMs were called, a strategic partner or investor, Mr. Ian Lourens of Welgelegen (Pty) Ltd was appointed and a lease agreement was also signed. The department commissioned MBB Consulting Engineers to identify, plan, and implement infrastructural requirements for the GIBA CPA in Kiepersol near Hazyview. She further stated that the Master Development Plan also gave guidance on how the project would be developed.

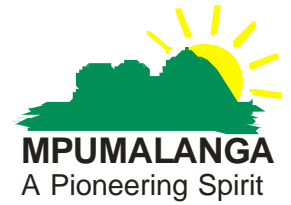
The progress on the farm is going well, regardless of few delays caused by heavy rains which affected the construction of dam 1, which is currently at 70 percent to completion. Planting of bananas is ongoing, so far with 125 ha planted. The building of cluster houses, bulk water supply and installation of laterals for infield irrigation is currently 98 percent completed.

Giba CPA Chairperson Mr. Lucas Mlimi said that they were very excited that the revitalisation of the farm is making good progress. "We anticipate that the farm will restore hope and create more job opportunities. The Giba community is already benefitting, after they were called in to assist under Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) for de-bushing of 180 ha of old banana trees and other activities since March last year", said Mlimi. He added that the beneficiaries were thankful of the partnership between the strategic partner and the department. "When the previous strategic Partner left the GIBA project was already in bad state; debt from poor management; lack of agricultural skills and most of the crops were in such an appalling state", said Mlimi, who added the progress made justified the good intention to totally re-establishment the Giba CPA property, including maintenance of irrigation schemes, roads, buildings, orchards, fencing, electrical supply system and skills transfer.



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The Giba CPA is part of the Presidential Infrastructure Programme, funded through CASP conditional grant (for the construction of the dam, infield irrigation and bulk water supply and planting of 130 ha of bananas). The Giba farm, with about 500 beneficiaries, inherited a once valuable and highly productive agricultural land; producing bananas, litchis, avocado and macadamia. The farm is made up of 46 portions of the farm Burgers Hall 21 JU with a total of 2705 ha, and it is divided into four zones. Phase 1 of zone 1 is where development is currently taking place.