

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: All Media
Date: 16 May 2023
For Immediate Release

KZN FINANCE MEC, NELISWA PEGGY NKONYENI, GEARS UP ILEMBE DISTRICT FOR ORGANIC MEDICAL HERBS AGRICULTURE

In a ground-breaking initiative set to swell and rev up the agricultural sector in Ilembe District, KZN MEC for Finance, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni, who is also the Political Champion of Ilembe District, facilitated a strategic engagement on growing organic medical herbs in communities.

This initiative, first of its kind in the district, saw KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Super Zuma, Ilembe political, religious, business and traditional leadership descend to KwaDukuza Town Hall. This agricultural programme promises to create thousands of job opportunities and instill various agricultural skills in the youth and is led by seasoned experts from Zimbabwe working with traditional leadership and the business community of Ilembe District.

Thobani Shandu, Mayor of Ilembe District, said this engagement is very strategic in that it helps them to bring together variously skilled professionals, especially in a scarce and unique agricultural platform such as growing and selling organic medical herbs, to share ideas on how they can further develop the livelihoods and the economy of Ilembe District.

“The partnership with Amakhosi is crucial because they facilitate availability of agricultural land for development of communities”, said Mayor Shandu.

Super Zuma, MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, said he was happy to have his Cabinet colleague who holds a finance portfolio in the province, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni, spreading a message about the significance of agriculture.

“This shows that agriculture is for all of us. As the Department of Agriculture, we focus more in agricultural projects that help us fight poverty, create employment and reduce inequality. That is why we are focusing strongly on our programme in one home, one garden. We are working with Amakhosi to help us demarcate agricultural land and make it available for communities. This initiative in Ilembe District is a breath of fresh air and we hope to see many people getting involved,” he said.

Speaking on the focus of the project, MEC Nkonyeni said they want to focus on growing cannabis and other indigenous plants and then facilitate entry into markets so that all their organic agricultural products can be exported to foreign countries.

“We are here to offer our services to teach all communities under Amakhosi to plant and use their vast agricultural land to improve their livelihoods. Through this initiative, we also want to afford an opportunity to the youth and unemployed graduates to get involved in farming. We are here to share experience, learn from each other and grow

our agriculture commercially. As much as we want to fight poverty and food shortages, but what is equally important is to be creative and focus on organic plants that we can consume but also sell outside of our country to boost our economic development. This requires strong partnerships and commitment to succeed,” Nkonyeni said.

The engagement today will soon be followed by the implementation where already identified agricultural land in Ilembe District will be used for training and planting, promising thousands of jobs spin-offs for local communities.

Issued by KZN Treasury. For clarity, contact Thuba Vilane on 060 521 7319 or Musa Cebisa on 071 687 8777.