

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACTING MEC FOR FINANCE, BONGI SITHOLE-MOLOI ENCOURAGES ILEMBE COMMUNITY TO INTENSIFY FARMING TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

Today's roll out of the Planting Season in Ilembe District created a strategic platform for government to intensify a message about the significance of food security and starting agricultural businesses.

Agriculture has been identified by the KZN Provincial Growth Development Plan (PGDP) as one of the key drivers in ensuring food security and radical economic development in the Province.

In view of the plight faced by poor rural communities which is partially caused by inadequate operational farming resources, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has intervened with an aggressive and holistic Multi Planting Season Approach.

Speaking at KwaDeda Sports Field near Bhamshela, Sithole-Moloi said the aim is to provide resources to equip poor farmers to participate in the mainstream economy of the province through developing vast tracks of underutilized land.

The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for 2019-2024 has indicated that the country needs to put 1 million hectares to production.

"It is for this reason that here in iLembe District, we have committed ourselves to ensuring that a total of 600 hectares are planned for the development support of primarily producers in the current financial year, she said.

Through this programme, farmers will be supported through a supply of production inputs (fertilizer, seed and chemicals), provision of mechanization services (ploughing, disking, planting and application of agro-chemicals and fertilizer) as well as assistance with marketing of produce especially through the Government-led Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic Transformation programme (RASET) and other outlets.

"We are not here for a mere talk shop, we have brought various tools of the trade, implements and advice with a view to helping farmers to growth and be self-sustainable. We also want to ensure that our mentorship programme in Ilembe District is also intensified through use of our agriculture experts," said Sithole-Moloi.

“Our concern as government is that food insecurity remains a challenge for the country, especially at local household levels in rural communities. That is why we encourage the youth to get involved in agriculture business and apply for business finance from government’s funding schemes which include Youth and SMME Funds,” she said.

Sithole-Moloi was representing MEC for Finance who is the MEC Champion for Ilembe District.

Issued by KZN Treasury. For clarity, contact Musa Cebisa on 0716878777.