



**agriculture,
forestry & fisheries**

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BUDGET VOTE SPEECH
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

BUDGET VOTE 24:
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

DELIVERED BY
DEPUTY MINISTER
HON. GENERAL BHEKI CELE (MP)

11 MAY 2016

14:00

Honourable Chairperson;

Honourable Minister Senzeni Zokwana;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Chairperson and Members of the Select Committee on Land and Mineral Resources;

Members of National Council of Provinces;

MECs of Agriculture;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

My humble and agriculture centered revolutionary greetings honourable members. I greet this august house in the name of agriculture because our very existence in this planet earth is dependent on the agricultural sector. Human beings need only three things to exist: oxygen, water and FOOD.

This is one sector that requires people from all walks of life, regardless of their political affiliation and skin colour to unanimously take a firm position to support and defend the agricultural sector. This, we earnestly owe to the generation of Chief Albert Luthuli, to the current generation, to the generation of the next 100 years and to the almighty God himself.

The commemoration of 20 years of our constitution can no longer be on paper but it must be seen, felt, heard and held in high esteem by fellow South Africans. The fulfillment of hope for a better life and the answer to

the triple challenges of poverty, hunger and unemployment lies in the heartbeat of service delivery at provincial and local levels. Chairperson, this informs our founding representation in this Parliament.

The presentation of budget vote 24, by the honourable Minister Zokwana reaffirms our commitment to the people's contract. My inputs will dwell mainly on the progress made to commercialise our smallholder farmers through the conditional grants given to provinces under CASP and Ilima/Letsema.

Honourable members, provincial grants take the highest percentage of our national budget, hence the call for increased service delivery performance and high level of efficiency and effectiveness in government programmes; which are aimed at growing the agricultural sector, whilst responding to the fundamental mandate of food security, job creation and economic growth.

CASP AND ILIMA/LETSEMA

Chairperson, this year's budget vote has a common denominator which is mainly caused by the effects of drought. Regardless of the severe effects in this regard, the department has observed positive outcomes in yields in other areas in the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape following government decision to reprioritise CASP and Ilima/Letsema allocations to respond to the drought disaster last year; we managed to minimise the impact of drought for 75 020 (Seventy five thousand and twenty) smallholder farmers who were assisted with animal feed and boreholes in nine provinces.

Chairperson, the backlog in production infrastructure, high input costs and no access to finance among black producers chairperson is a creation of the apartheid system but we are beginning to see the fruits of our interventions through the conditional grants, for an example, in the Free State, government supported Dihoai farming cooperative of Mr David Mphuti with a loan from National Empowerment Fund to erect an abattoir, feed processing plant and machinery and CASP assisted the farmer with production inputs, construction of additional silo to accommodate increased capacity of the processing plant.

Moreover, Harmony mine later assisted the business by upgrading the abattoir. The farm employs 42 permanent workers and the feed processing plant has the capacity to produce 2 000 tons of feed per month, which can feed about 530 000 chickens per month. The farm is within the Lejweleputswa poultry hub and supplies poultry feed to smallholders around the area at reasonable prices.

Honourable members, this is not the only good story to tell, there are many good stories that we can share. The department will consolidate all the good stories together in a booklet which will be shared with all stakeholders. The pace of telling good stories must increase instead of focusing on the weaknesses in the system; however, Chairperson, the weaknesses must be addressed to improve service delivery.

Chairperson, the CASP impact study conducted in 2014/15 indicated that only 14% of supported farmers were youth. We have since increased our focus in prioritising youth participation in agriculture and the department

has initiated a number of programmes in this regard. 230 unemployed graduates will be recruited, 177 are already placed in the department, 55 will be placed at Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) as Export Technologists and 30 will be deployed to various Agricultural Policy Action Plan (APAP) aligned farming enterprises.

To this end, an interesting programme has been launched by Mpumalanga province in 2015 called Fortune 40 Young Farmer Incubator Programme. This programme has recruited 20 youth-owned cooperatives involving 210 young people from across the province. In 2016/17 the Programme will receive R80 million supporting 20 incubation farms. The youth will be trained on dry land crop production, livestock production and poultry development. The produce of these cooperatives is sold to the School Nutrition Programme and Hospitals in the province.

FORESTRY

Chairperson allow me to briefly report on the forestry sector as it remains one of our sector's strategic contributors to our development agenda and a beacon of hope for realising our National Development Plan (NDP) goals and an adaptation resource in the changing climatic conditions. It is on this basis that I take pride in reporting on some of the priorities and notable achievements of the sector.

Accordingly, in a quest to implementing the target of expanding land under forestry as indicated in the APAP the department funded the Environmental

Impact Assessment studies in the Eastern Cape two years ago. As a result of this support, afforestation licenses were granted for an area of about 10 000 ha. Through the partnership between Sappi, PG Bison, the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency and Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC), to date 2 700 ha have been planted and 819 jobs have been created.

Honourable members, we also take pride in our continuous efforts to green our communities. In this regard, the Department facilitates the planting of 1 million trees annually where 60% of these are fruit trees to support food security objectives. As part of the expansion of the programme, the Arbor City Awards are held annually where municipalities are recognised for their greening efforts.

For the first time this year, a new category for rural municipalities has been introduced to recognise the work that these municipalities do and on creating awareness in greening for our rural communities. We continue to do this guided by the vision: *Forests and People: Investing in a sustainable future*. Siyaqhuba

Chairperson, as I draw towards my conclusion, the sector has adopted a proactive planning strategy in dealing with any form of disaster, including proper and effective resource allocation measures going forward. The issue of drought is not getting any better, in fact predictions reveal that the conditions will worsen in the coming years.

The sector will never again respond to the drought challenge as if, it was a bad dream. All our strategies and planning will take into cognisance both the existing and looming challenges facing the sector. Our coordinated responses will ensure economic stability in the sector, whilst equally addressing the challenge of limited resources and low budget allocations in the agricultural sector.

The Agriculture revolution continues...

I thank you