



Agriculture & Rural Development

Department:
Agriculture and Rural Development
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MEDIA STATEMENT

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EMPOWERING VULNERABLE GROUPS THROUGH AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

Phokeng-In response to high levels of food insecurities and as part of the drive to fight poverty and hunger amongst local communities, MEC Desbo Mohono of North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on Monday, 28 October 2019 handed over garden inputs, planted various vegetable gardens and fruit trees in number of households and community centres in villages around Phokeng, Rustenburg.

Held under the theme "*Addressing Poverty & Malnutrition: the plight of Rural Women in Agriculture*", the aim of the project was to improve food security, up-liftment of community projects and to empower vulnerable groups to start working the land and producing food.

Speaking during the handing over of these garden inputs, MEC Mohono said her department had a constitutional responsibility to use public funds to respond to the needs of the people by supporting them, especially rural women and communities to produce their own food and income through agriculture.

Mohono went on to say the implementation of that critical intervention was a sign that the government deeply cares about the wellbeing of the people in general, in particular vulnerable groups which includes rural women, elderly people and people living with disability.

"We are working closely with the Department of Social Development to improve the lives of our people and we will be on the ground to identify and assist those needy and deserving households.

"It is important that people realize they are their own liberators from poverty; and government can contribute and assist them in their efforts so that they become successful. There are difficulties but it is important that people produce food to sell to the markets; those who can't produce must buy from producers so that our province can grow.

"When people produce their own food sufficiently and are able to access markets, we can say as department that we have done our part. Ours is to make sure that people use the land to produce their own food and trade to make money," MEC Mohono said.

With regards to empowering of households, MEC Mohono reiterated that empowering households to be food secure restores dignity of every citizen hit by poverty.

"Our hope is that once we produce food in society, we restore dignity," Mohono concluded.

Beneficiaries to these programmes welcomed the assistance from the Department in alleviating hunger and poverty in their areas.

Victory Christian Centre through its founder, Ms Jeannete Maithufi thanked MEC Desbo Mohono for giving them much needed garden tools and coming personally to see the centre's efforts in trying change people's lives for better.

Victory Christian Centre is situated in Phokeng and deals with young people with a history of drug and substance abuse as well as ex-convicts. When accepting the garden inputs on behalf of the centre, Jeannet Maithufi who is a church pastor said the tools came in handy as they will make their job easy to produce their own healthy food.

"We want to thank the department for everything they brought us. We will now be able to work this piece of land and produce more food as nutrition and addiction recovery work hand in hand," Maithufi emphasised.

Ms Nkele Tsholo of Tsholetsa Disability Centre; an institution caring for people living with disability in Tlhabane also welcomed MEC Desbo Mohono visit to their centre and thanked her for garden inputs and planting of it thereof.

Food security forms part of department's key priorities. The programme, particularly household food security will be rolled out to other areas across the province to advance the living standards of the rural communities.

CAPTION

IMG-20191029-WA0013 -Mr and Mrs Maithufi of Victory Christian Centre receiving garden tools for their centre from MEC Desbo Mohono.

IMG-20191029-WA0012—MEC Desbo Mohono hard at work planting gardens as part of the drive to fight poverty and hunger amongst North West Province communities

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