



Agriculture & Rural Development

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



AgriCentre Building
Cnr. Dr. James Moroka and
Stadium Rd
Private Bag X2039, Mmabatho 2735

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE SERVICES

Tel: +27 (18) 389 5719/5684
Fax: +27(18) 384 4571
E-mail: Esetlhako@nwpg.gov.za

MEDIA RELEASE

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Media Houses**

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THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT SUMMIT HAILED A SUCCESS BY DELEGATES

KLERKSDORP-The first ever International Agricultural Investment Summit organised by the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in partnership with the Global Economist Forum (GEF) has been described by several delegates as a huge success. This first of its kind summit was held in Klerksdorp last week from the 12th-13th of December 2019.

The objective of the summit was amongst others to promote investment into the field of agriculture development, promote agricultural entrepreneurship in order to boost the contribution made by this sector to the domestic economy, address and encourage awareness of agriculture in a broader spectrum as well as to introduce new dimensions in rural development and sustainable agriculture which will ultimately contribute in making the North West Province a revered food basket.

The summit also discussed agricultural investment opportunities, funding mechanisms, recent innovations and trends in the field of agriculture; managerial practices; concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and related solutions adopted in promoting and strengthening investments.

In her opening address, MEC Desbo Mohono of Agriculture and Rural Development said the North West Province has abundant private, state and communal land resource and it must be utilised to benefit the residents of the province.

"We feel that there is a lot that can be done to grow the agricultural sector in the province. Therefore with this first international summit, we want to explore and find creative ways to deal with the current and future challenges in this very sector, we are also encouraging farmers in the province to work together to ensure that we utilize all the available farming land in the province to ensure that the residents of North West Province will not be food insecure through investment opportunities created by the summit.

On behalf of the Provincial government, North West Premier Tebogo Job Mokgoro assured delegates that the summit has government support. He reminded the gathering that agriculture remain the main contributor to job creation.

In his address, Premier Mokgoro emphasised that the province has comparative edge that has not yet been explored over the past few years and reiterated that it must be done for the benefit of North West residents.

Amongst others, the following were identified by the summit as investment opportunities and commodities of interest in the North West Province: cotton; dry beans; groundnuts; sunflower; yellow maize; peacan nuts; lucerne, beef; goats and poultry to mention just few.

Part of strategic intervention by the department will include developing integrated implementation programmes supported by value chain planning, strengthening coordination towards catalytic programmes and projects for investment by both private and public sector and redesign the funding support mechanism; enhance transformation in skills development, market access and infrastructure development.

The last day of the summit saw delegates of government and of GEF committing to work together to support farmers. Government delegates vowed to make land available to farmers for food production and avail requisite human capital to support the cause.

GEF on the other hand has committed to conduct feasibility and viability studies for the success of the initiative, provide requisite technical expertise, provide associated funding and funding mechanisms, unlock and create sustainable markets access, monitor, evaluate and develop support interventions for a minimum duration of two years. The Global Economist Forum is a general consultative member organization of the United Nations (UN). One of the key priorities of GEF is to provide support to different countries with the development of agriculture in designated regions by utilizing and cultivating lands through the help of trained agriculturalists, mainly from the South Asia.

Dr Nancy De Sousa, the Vice President of the Global Economist Forum (GEF) said her organization is proud to partner with the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on this initiative which is geared at changing the lives of ordinary citizens for better.

She praised the Department for organising such an important summit and said the GEF is equally willing to assist with expertise to ensure that the vision of a food secure North West Province is realised.

Sindi Mzamu President of the Global Business Women Circle said her organisation is also proud to have been part of the summit and she is happy with the outcome of the summit.

"I think it went exceptionally well and we are very supportive of what the North West Province is trying to do with this summit. It is a much-needed initiative which will assist farmers to produce more food and boost the economy of the region and of the country," Mzamu said.

Delegates included farmer unions, farmers, agri-businesses, international delegates, senior government administrators as well as leaders of provincial government.

The second international summit will be held next year where progress on commitments made during the first summit will be reviewed.

CAPTIONS : IMG 1499- **FRONT ROW** : From left to right : MEC Motlalepula Rosho, MEC Desbo Mohono, Premier Tebogo Job Mokgoro, and the Global Economist Forum (GEF) Vice President Dr Nancy De Sousa with senior government officials (back row) during the first International Agriculture Summit held last Thursday and Friday in Klerksdorp.

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Issued by:

Communication Services Directorate

Enquiries: Ms Emelda Setlhako

Tel: 018 389 5684/ Cell: 060 745 4020

Email: ESetlhako@nwpg.gov.za

Website: www.nwpg.gov.za/dard

Facebook: www.facebook.com/dard

Twitter: @nwpg_dard