

# **KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY COUNCILLOR IVY PHAAHLA ON THE OCCASSION OF FEMALE FARMER AND YARD COMPETITION EVENT AT DITHABANENG VILLAGE (HLABIRWA A SEROGOLE PROJECT)**

**26 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Programme Director

Ba Moshate

Protocol Observed

For a long time in our history the true toilers of the soil, the cultivators of the land and producers of food have always been women. This situation has been more pronounced in our country as results of numerous oppressive and racial legislatives such as the 1913 Land Act, Influx Control and many others.

Owing to these laws women were left in their families while men were exploited in the cities and towns of our country. Women remained, even today, the bedrock of families. In the face of systematic onslaught against the traditional family structure by apartheid laws leading to disintegration of families women serve as the last pillar that hold the structure together. The resilience of our women has always been tested and found to be extraordinary.

It is therefore befitting we come together this morning to celebrate the power and greatness of female and young farmer of the year. When we celebrate this power and greatness of female farmer of the year, we pay homage and honour the gallant struggle of the women of 1956 who bravely marched in defiance of the abhorrent racial system of government espoused by the then apartheid regime.

Throughout our history, as I indicated, the role of women in society can never be underestimated or underplayed as women are the bedrock upon which the family is built. Women are not only nurturers, but in many instances the providers of their families. It is therefore disheartening and saddening that as we celebrate, many women still face tremendous hardships both economically and socially, where women are being abused, raped and even killed.

Ladies and Gentlemen; we should applaud the Department of Agriculture and our municipal LED desk for organizing this event despite the financial challenges. As municipality we take cognizant of the fact that the Agricultural Sector is a critical economic sector responsible for our food security.

Let me also take this moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the sponsors of this event. Our municipal family believes that together we can indeed do more through private and public partnerships, where collectively we join hands in addressing the challenges facing our country. It is therefore pleasing to say that this event is in itself a clear demonstration and testament to how when we join hands together we can in this instance, address some of the challenges faced by our smallholder farmers, while ensuring that our country becomes food secure.

By forging this partnership and having the event, we are able to address challenges our farmers face that include access to information about suppliers of various agricultural inputs, suppliers of mechanization (Tractors) and related equipment and all agricultural types of infrastructure necessary for a successful farming operation. Of outmost significance, this event creates interaction with potential buyers of the produce of smallholder farmers, a critical element in their productivity and profitability of their enterprises.

Programme Director;

Allow me to highlight in particular Outcome 7 that is about ensuring Vibrant, equitable, sustainable rural communities contributing towards food security for all.

We fully note that successful economic growth encompassing agriculture is centred on ensuring the interaction of various programmes and projects which work together in combination to achieve the outcome I have just mentioned.

Training and mentoring of smallholder farmers to be more productive and participate meaningfully in the agriculture value chain is a fundamental aspect of our work and this event provides additional platform through the workshops that have been organized for farmers to interact with potential service and input providers as well as mentors in this regard.

Programme Director;

We have often heard of different statistics and percentages of farmers who are not succeeding, it is also said that most of these farmers are beneficiaries of various programs. Today as we are honouring farmers who have excelled in their various enterprise categories, let this be a reminder that there is excellence out there that sometimes goes unnoticed. It is all our responsibility to ensure that such a trend does not continue.

We have changed gears, we have changed our course to ensure that this excellence does not go unnoticed forever. It is furthermore our aim to ensure that success must continue to breed more success. Therefore this recognition must serve to provide further impetus and momentum to our smallholder farmers to continue striving to perform optimally in accordance with the capacity of their farms.

We firmly believe that this excellence is not in isolation, but it is a manifestation of increased support that government has provided in addition to efforts of mitigating systematic efforts that have sought to undermine development of all farmers in particular smallholder farmers.

As I conclude, Programme Director, I wish to congratulate winners of the Female and young farmer of the year 2012. I also wish to thank in earnest all competitors who are making this initiative a success. We are proud of all of you who work our land for the survival of all that depends on it, be it humans, animals and flora.

Lastly, we would like to wish Mama Winnie Madikezela-Mandela Happy Birthday. We are saying HAPPY BIRTHDAY MAMA!!

**WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE!!**

**I THANK YOU!!**

**KE A LEBOGA!!**