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Media Release

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

17 May 2016

Mahikeng - In just weeks after presentation of the Departmental Policy and Budget Speech Vote for 2016/17, MEC for Rural and Agricultural development, Manketsi Tlhape is acting upon the department's commitment to ensure inclusion of women and youth in mainstream economy. MEC Tlhape visited women and youth projects at the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati district recently, in a move that will see this visit being done at other Districts of the province.

Speaking during the visit, MEC Tlhape said it was imperative for the department to empower women and youth. "This is a befitting honour and gesture from our department as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Women's march and 40th anniversary of the Class of 1976. It is our belief that all these efforts were not in vain as we continue to recognise the gallant contribution made by these groups," she emphasised. MEC further said she was aware that women and youth around the province specifically on agriculture and rural development are making an effort to establish themselves.

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"Today we have a lot of cooperatives in the names of these groups. Some are really making it big and it is our role as government to keep on encouraging them to work hard because they then remain exemplary to others and contribute towards economic growth of our province," MEC further said.

MEC Tlhape said the visit was to assess the efforts women and young people are making in call to ensure that agriculture remains the key provincial economic driver. She further said she had noted that continuous efforts are made by government to support women and youth and the cause for celebration would be when their businesses are sustainable.

Amongst the projects visited, MEC Tlhape went to the previous winners of the popular departmental programme, Female Entrepreneur Awards, Matshediso Mooketsi and Thandeka Moseki. Both women have grown their farming since their winnings. They have both used the funds to expand on their infrastructure, livestock and inputs for their produce.

Despite her challenging market distance from her Driekiesrus farm, 40 km away from Stella, Ms Moseki said she is still in business and will keep on looking for other markets for her produce which include spinach, cabbage and carrots and potatoes and fruits. She is currently adequately using her 3,6 hectares and is looking forward to expand. "I have employed six employees full time and I envisage that my business will grow and I can employ more people," Thandeka said.

In her Driehoek farm which is about 1800 hectares, Matshediso Mooketsi said her business has received support from government and grown to that effect. The Lykso, based farm situated some 80km away from Vyrburg currently has 121 Nguni cattle and 30 Bonsmara breeding cows, 61 Boer and Kalahari Red Goats and 1500 Layer Hens.

As part of her expansion, Ms Moeketsi has started with vegetable production and sees the business growing even further. She said MEC's visit was motivating and she was looking forward to strengthened relations between the department and women and young farmers.

MEC lauded all efforts and encouraged women to keep the hard work. The department will host the Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development Awards in June this year as well as Women in Agriculture and Rural Development in August in an effort to acknowledge, encourage and increase participation of young people and women in sectors of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Photos:

9306: MEC Tlhape with departmental officials and proud farmers, Thandeka Moseki and Matshediso Mooketsi.

9374: Harvest time: Barui Driekhoek farmer, Matshediso Mooketsi with MEC Tlhape

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