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Media Release

Saamtrek - Saamwerk for Mazista's future

28 July 2016

Mazista - In what many of its residents referred to an unexpected move, the North West Department of Rural Environment and Agricultural Development (READ)'s partnership of food security efforts with Diageo Consulting, a private company specialising with consumer goods has brought hope in Mazista. The community welcomed three food security projects which will be implemented at a cost of R2,4 million. The department together with Diageo, worked with a purpose of solely improving household food security for the community. Premier Supra Mahumapelo, MEC for READ Manketsi Tlhape and local councillors led the handover of the projects at Mazista on Thursday, 28 July 2016.

Speaking about the projects MEC Manketsi Tlhape articulated that it was important for the Department to ensure that communities like Mazista does benefit from government efforts. "In terms of the national integrated food and nutrition security strategy, READ has to ensure that the four pillars of food security, which are: availability, access, utilization and stability are met" she said.

MEC further said that READ is helping communities with household tunnels among other initiatives, to ensure that they produce vegetable to sustain their livelihoods.

For Mazista, 60 households are being assisted with household mini-tunnels. The school has received a shade net for the vegetable garden. The Diageo, has expanded the communal garden and will further implement drip irrigation and production inputs as well as to provide the beneficiaries with indigenous layers and feeds. The families of the communal garden will get at least 1000 live layers, to enable them to make some monthly living from the project.

Premier Mahumapelo acknowledged the history of the area and noted that the Mazista settlement came after the shocking random shootings of 14 January 2008, at the then informal settlement which was called "Skierlik"-a name derived after the people who were retired from the Mazista slate mine got permission from the land owner to erect their shacks there. Premier said it was proper for government to implement the provincial Reconciliation, Healing and Renewal noting that after the fatal shooting of four people and others wounded, the people were subsequently moved from their shacks, to the current area, which was donated by the mine owner.

Premier further acknowledged the efforts made by the department of READ. "This is what we can refer to as a Biekie, Biekie Maak Meer Approach, because these efforts are a beginning of greater things to come," he emphasised. He also appreciated the efforts by Diageo and praised them for embracing the provincial Saam-Werk Saamtrek philosophy. Premier requested beneficiaries to take care of the projects and to ensure that they are sustainable.

One of the garden beneficiaries and also a victim of the Johan Nel's 2008 fatal shooting incident, 64 year old Meisie Mophitlhi thanked government for its efforts to reach out to them. She said life was difficult for them in area as there were very few employment opportunities. Mophitlhi said she will use the vegetable garden to feed herself and grandchildren and even sell. Mophitlhi lost her daughter and grandchild then.

The department of READ will provide continuous extension and advisory services to ensure that the gardens remain sustainable for the benefit of the community.

Photo:

2246 Premier Supra Mahumapelo and MEC Manketsi Tlhape with beneficiaries of household gardens

2302 Premier Supra Mahumapelo and MEC Manketsi Tlhape together with the happy Kopano Communal garden beneficiaries

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Issued by the Communication Services Directorate

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