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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For immediate release**

### **15 JANUARY 2019**

## **FARMERS HAIL MEC MOHONO'S MOVE WITH SPEED APPROACH IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES FACED BY EMERGING FARMERS**

**Rustenburg**-Moving with speed in addressing farmers challenges, empowering people involved in agriculture, prioritising the needs of emerging farmers were some of the commitments made by MEC Desbo Mohono during her first meeting with farmers in Bojanala Platinum District Municipality on Tuesday, 15 January 2019.

The arranged string of meetings with farmers across the province is part of MEC Mohono's plans to improve stakeholder engagement, public participation and to promote accountability as well as transparency in government.

During the meeting, farmers complained to MEC Desbo Mohono about access to land for farming purposes, mechanisation, and shortage of water for farming and visibility of extension officers in various areas of Bojanala.

George Moatshe a fish farmer from Madibeng asked MEC Mohono and the department to make an arrangement for them to be trained and equipped with skills to farm fish and create necessary job opportunity for people in the Madibeng area.

"We need training MEC! We don't need money, only training on aquaculture," pleaded Moatshe.

Youth who were in majority on the day, agricultural formations and farmer associations welcomed MEC Mohono's visit to Bojanala.

Speaking on behalf of AFASA in Bojanala, Chairperson Mr K.K Motsosi said they welcome Mohono's appointment to the Rural Environment and Agricultural Development Department.

“We do welcome MEC Desbo Mohono and we hope that we will have a good working relationship with her. We also wish to commend her initiative of visiting farmers on her first few weeks after her deployment to READ department,” Motsosi said.

In her response, MEC Mohono said not everything will be resolved in short period of time but her department will do everything possible to assist farmers in the province with production inputs.

“We would not know the challenges you are facing as farmers unless we engage with you. That is why we are here today. I have heard your complaints and suggestions. Some of your complaints will be attended to as a matter of urgency as I have said I want to move with speed. I must also say that your contributions will help us as a department to make informed decisions and proper plans.

With regard to shortage of agricultural technicians, MEC Mohono said her department has taken a decision to employ and increase number of Extension Officers and Veterinarians in the province whom will be attached to farmers at community level.

When responding to issue of access to land, MEC Mohono said discussions between READ and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform will take place in not distant future to assist those in need of land for purpose of food production.

Mohono further indicated that for this academic year, at least ten (10) needy and determined students will be supported financially to further their studies in two state-owned agricultural colleges found in the North West Province.

She challenged the youth to fight for their space in the agricultural and environment sector. “Let’s all put our hands on deck and make our communities better. There are opportunities in the agricultural sector and in the sector of environment.

With regard to food security, MEC Mohono has instructed her officials to identify 200 families, (i.e 50 families per district) whom will be empowered with food security programmes aimed at pushing back the frontiers of poverty in the rural communities of the province.

MEC Mohono’s meetings with farmers will continue to other three (3) districts of the province. On Thursday, 17 January MEC Mohono will meet with farmers in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District in Matlosana Banquet Hall. She will then proceed to Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January to meet with farmers in Naledi

Banquet Hall and will meet with Ngaka Modiri Molema farmers on 24 January in Mmabatho Civic Centre.

PHOTO CAPTION : IMG 2361 MEC Desbo Mohono promises to move with speed in resolving challenges of emerging in the province

IMG 2382 : Bojanala farmers welcomed MEC Mohono's commitment to assist struggling farmers

**## ends ##**

**Issued by the Communication Services Directorate**

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