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**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Att : ALL EDITORS**  
**Media Houses**

**Date: Monday, 28 January 2019**

### **TACKLING BARRIERS AND INCREASING FARMER SUPPORT TOPS MEC DESBO MOHONO'S PRIORITY LIST**

**Mahikeng-** MEC for Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development Department in the North West Province Ms Desbo Mohono has assured North West farmers that her department will prioritise programmes aimed at supporting farmers' craft.

Mohono said this during one of the meetings with farmers in the province. MEC Mohono has been meeting farmers across the four districts of the province in a form of stakeholder engagements. This she said was her primary task in an effort to ensure improved relations with stakeholders and promoting accountability as well as transparency in government.

In a meeting held at the Mmabatho Civic Centre on Thursday, 24 January 2019 with farmers for Ngaka Modiri Molema District, MEC Mohono reiterated President Cyril Ramaphosa's view regarding the potential the agricultural sector holds –that it can significantly grow the economy and create jobs.

"Use agriculture as driver of change! Let's use it to grow our economy and create jobs for our people," Mohono challenged farmers.

Mohono went further to say she would like to see growth amongst farmers.

"I have taken a decision to channel more resources towards assisting our farmers to produce more food and growing our economy," said MEC Mohono.

She reiterated that farmers must not be comfortable to remain at smallholder level forever.

"Currently, there is a much greater focus on the smallholder farmer, but I often wonder which projects have been delivered. I want to see these projects growing. I want to see farmers growing from being small holder farmers to commercial farmers," Mohono said.

The National Development Plan (NDP) reports that agriculture has the potential to create close to one million new jobs by 2030.

During her series of meetings with farmers, a list of concerns and challenges were raised. Farmers complained about lack of technical and infrastructural support, stock theft and access to land and market.

Gaolathwe Tiro, a farmer from Dinokana complained about stock theft in the area of Ramotshere Moilola and had a suggestion for MEC Desbo Mohono in dealing with the scourge.

“MEC I am asking you and your colleagues at national parliament to revisit the 1959 stock theft act. There are lots of loopholes that need to be addressed. If you can do that, I am confident that it will help the country in dealing with the stock theft issue,” Tiro said.

Addressing the tabled issues by farmers, Mohono acknowledged that farmers could have experienced a lot of challenges in the past but assured everyone that on top of her list was to make sure that farmers are supported adequately.

“We have serious wealth in the North West in terms of agriculture. We therefore need to protect and promote it to ensure that the industry does good things for our own economy and our own people. We have therefore resolved that every cent in the department meant for farmer support programmes will be spent on such programmes before the end of the current financial year.

“Agricultural infrastructure and equipment for production activities, production inputs, mechanization support to farmers’ capacity building, youth in agriculture programmes and food security initiatives are non-negotiable and a priority. The department will do things differently to make sure that support is improved and in turn, farmers and communities are able to produce food”, emphasized Mohono.

MEC Mohono has also vowed to increase number of Extension Officers and Veterinarians to meet the demands of farmers.

Commenting on stock theft, MEC Desbo Mohono said working with relevant authorities; her department will definitely be striving to stamp out stock theft as it affects productivity and what should be happening on farms.

“Working together with my colleague Dr Mpho Motlhabane of Department of Community Safety and Transport Management in the province, we will spare no effort in ensuring that we put an end to stock theft. It is affecting the agricultural industry in a very bad way.

“We also need you as farmers; we need everyone to collectively deal with this scourge of stock theft in the province. Government alone cannot win this battle,” Mohono pointed out.

Officials from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform were present to address issues of land.

Meanwhile - Apart from meeting with farmers MEC Desbo Mohono has visited number of rural development projects and environmental projects to assess them.

**## ends ##**

**Issued by the Communication Services Directorate**

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