

***“We are free, but not to be evil, not to be indifferent to human suffering, not to profit from the people, from the work created and sustained through their spirit of political association, while refusing to contribute to the political state that we profit from. We must say no once more. Man is not free to watch impassively the enslavement and dishonor of men, nor their struggles for liberty and honor.” Jose Marti in MARTI: THOUGHTS/ PENSAMIENTOS BY CARLOS RIPOLL***

Honourable Speaker and Madame Deputy Speaker

Honourable Premier

Members of the Executive Council

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

Honourable Members of the House

Leaders of Local Government

Veterans of our struggle

Former combatants of our glorious army Umkhonto we Sizwe organised under MKMVA

Comrades and Friends

Traditional Leaders

Head of Department, Senior Management and Staff of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

Heads of Departments and other Managers in the Civil Service

Invited Guests and Members of the Agricultural Community

People of the Northern Cape

The above quotation by Jose Marti, a journalist, poet and struggle hero for the people of Cuba, enjoins us once more to selflessly serve our people to the best of our ability. In governing, we must be mindful of the aspirations and wishes of the majority of our people who are working class and poor who continue to put their trust in the ANC government. We cannot, in the execution of our responsibilities, suddenly forget them when we have assumed positions of power and want to serve the interest of one class above those of the other.

Before the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 General and Provincial Elections, the African National Congress took to the electorate its policy proposals contained in what we call the elections manifesto and based on those proposals the overwhelming majority of our people adopted these proposals which we as a Department now have to develop into a programme of action and policy documents. In our manifesto, the ANC made a commitment to ensure that we do the following as a way of addressing historical injustices:

- Intensify the land reform programme in order to ensure that more land is placed in the hands of our rural motive forces and at the same time provide them with technical skills and financial resources in order for them to productively use their land to create sustainable livelihoods and decent work in rural areas

- The expansion of the agrarian reform programme as a means to buttress rural development and the systematic promotion of agricultural co-operatives throughout the agricultural value chain that would include agro-processing. We also need to develop measures that will ensure that support mechanisms created benefit our rural communities in terms of access to markets for their benefit and financing for small scale farmers, including fencing and irrigation schemes
- There is a need to develop a stronger, dynamic and dialectical link between land and agrarian reform programmes, water resource allocation and ensure that our rural communities also have access to the best water quality, in particular the working class and poor.
- We have also stated our commitment to ensuring that we develop proper and healthier sanitation systems for our rural areas as part of our commitment to lifting their standard of living and recognising their right to dignity
- We also need to establish strong partnerships between and among all spheres of government and institutions of traditional leadership with a view to working together to ensure meaningful rural development and join hands in the fight against poverty
- We have to work together with commercial agriculture and the broader farming community to improve the living conditions of farm dwellers, farm labourers and look at the provision of basic services in these areas

- Provide support to organised labour in order to be able to unionise farm workers whose constitutional rights and labour rights are being trampled upon daily

Honourable Speaker, as we present this budget to this august house, we do so while our Department is celebrating Land Care Awareness Week. Through this week we seek to highlight the plight of our agricultural heritage given the climatic challenges posed by climatic elements that include, among others, global warming. Throughout this week we seek to encourage and support sustainable land use practices and raise awareness in order to develop a resource conservation culture and ethic. This is essentially a community based approach to addressing environmental issues and protecting the long term sustenance of our natural resources.

We are also presenting this budget to this house during a period of turmoil in the global financial markets and there is now official confirmation that our economy contracted by about 6, 4% in the last quarter. This essentially means that our country is officially in a recession and this should be a major concern for a Province like ours whose economy is largely dominated by the primary sector. The current world economic situation can have serious implications for our exports in the agricultural sector, in particular, for the wine industry and the grape producers in our Province. Honourable Speaker, as we put our shoulder to the wheel to deliver on our mandate as a reconfigured Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, it is important to highlight that the key mandate given to this government by the people of our Province is to deliver on the 5 key priorities of the African National Congress. Among these priorities is the area of rural development of which, as a Department, we have a privilege of driving. We are of the firm view that as we take this journey

together, we can no longer prevaricate on the responsibility of developing a systematic and integrated rural development strategy which would include land and agrarian reform. This should be used as a locomotive to carry forward the advances we have made since 1994 in terms of the delivery of social services to our rural motive forces. These services should in some form or the other be able to support small scale agricultural activities and other rural economic activities to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Our rural development strategy should also be seen within the context of trying to stem the tide of rural to urban migration which essentially places undue pressures on the urban centres' infrastructure.

We see the development of a comprehensive Rural Development Strategy as part of a comprehensive and overarching industrial policy for our country and Province and we will obviously make an input into these matters. Rural Development should be seen as a proactive measure being introduced by government to deal with the developmental challenges that manifest themselves in our rural communities. Rural Development to us includes the improvement of economic infrastructure through the development of access roads in the rural areas, fencing for agriculture, community gardens for food production and food security. We also have to establish storage warehouses, distribution and transportation networks and rural electrification, of which there is already significant progress. We have read media reports that the South African Post Office has closed down its agency in Vosburg. We will be getting in touch with the management of the South African Post Office to ensure that this service is returned to the community.

We also need to pay close attention to agrarian transformation which should be seen as a agent that enhances and buttresses rural development. Agrarian transformation

should speak to issues that ensure food security for our people for a dignified and improved quality of life, the usage of appropriate technologies, modern approaches and the usage of indigenous knowledge systems and improved livestock farming and so on.

In the same breath it is important that as part of developing our rural communities we encourage them to form organs of people's power so that they become agents for social transformation and mobilisation. We have to encourage our rural communities to form peoples land committees in their areas, savings clubs and co-operatives in order to create social cohesion and access to human and social capital. It is also important that we encourage the formation of sports clubs and the creation of sports facilities especially for women and youth development. The rehabilitation and development of schools as centres of excellence, with activities which should play a key role in the development of rural livelihoods.

Honourable Speaker, we are pleased as a Department to announce that the National Female Farmer of the Year Winner for the Export Market Category, Ms. Elize Beukes, is from the Northern Cape in the Siyanda District. This is a clear indication that indeed the support that the Department has given to her has been worthwhile.

We are also pleased to announce that 80 hectares of olives orchard was established for the Vaalharts Youth Project. We have also been able to get the Tshwaraganang Hydroponics Project into production and 79 108 cucumbers were harvested and sold to Checkers/Shoprite between October and December 2008.

## **LAND REFORM**

We have redistributed 1 117 868 million hectares of land since 1994 up to and including March 2009, 781 851 hectares have been restored back to their claimants during the same period. Last week we handed over 46 595 hectares of land to the people Riemvasmaak and in that brought the total land handed over to the people of this community since 1994 to 122 813 hectares. We are in the process of establishing an office in Kakamas, together with the National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and other relevant Government Departments, which will exclusively serve the Riemvasmaak community as part of our monitoring of this site as a pilot for our comprehensive rural development strategy. In May this year we were also able to hand over 4283 hectares as settlement of Gouws family claim in the Siyanda district. This brings the total of land restored to 832 729 hectares.

In an effort to better service our people and to ensure efficiency in the manner in which we conduct our business, we are in the process of reviewing the land allocation committees such as the Provincial State Land Disposal Committee (PSLDC), Provincial Grants Committee (PGC) and the Land Reform Co-Ordinating Committee (LRCC). All this is being done in an effort to strengthen the institutional capacity of these bodies to effectively carry out their mandate and to adequately support land reform.

A total of 2672 claims out of a total of 2882 have been settled and 192 claims rejected, 16 of these claims are untraceable, 25 transferred to the relevant Provincial Offices and 17 of these closed. Our Province is left with 143 claims to settle and we

are well on course to ensuring that these are settled expeditiously. Our province has the highest percentage in terms of land claims settled in the country.

The Regional Land Claims Commission Free State/ Northern Cape has made significant strides in the processing and settling of claims. This can be attributed to a plethora of factors including the mobilisation of support from other stakeholders and municipalities giving assistance in ensuring the successful settlement of claims.

The good working relations between and among the commission and other government Departments has allowed the commission to move forward with vigour to double our efforts in settling the outstanding claims.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members, we are in discussions with the Land Bank to defer its decision to auction some farms, mainly LRAD farms, where new owners have failed to meet their obligations in servicing their loans. Their failure is attributed to a myriad of factors, which are not of their own making. These farmers lacked immediate support they needed from the responsible line function Departments and the Land Bank itself.

We have agreed with the Land Bank that we will finalise the strategy as soon as possible around these farms for their consideration. They will also revisit the list of the affected farms as some farmers have already made arrangements with the Land Bank. Honourable Members, it is my view that as government we have as much a responsibility to the Land Bank to recover its debt as to the poor farmers to whom these farms were purchased to create a source of livelihood. We therefore need to find a common ground to balance the two. We also need to ensure that the Land



Bank plays the developmental role for which it has been established in order to assist the working class and poor in our Province.

Honourable Members, the Provincial Land Reform Office delivered 25 projects in the period under review and it is our hope that they will be able to deliver more. These projects covered a total of 125 363 hectares of land and a total of 364 persons benefited out of their efforts. The NCPLRO plans to deliver projects totalling 120 000 hectares in the 2009/10 financial year which will benefit 240 beneficiaries. This office has a total allocation of R230 million in order to advance land reform projects and they have committed R50 million towards the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy.

In so far as the Transformation of Certain Rural areas Act (TRANCRAA), there are eight areas that fall in this category in our Province and six of these areas are in the NAMA KWA District and two in the Siyanda District. Ministerial approval has already been granted for the transfer of seven of these areas into the name of their chosen legal entities.

### **LETSEMA/ILIMA**

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members of the House, the revitalisation of the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme has been identified as one of the key projects aimed at increasing agricultural production in our Province and country. An amount of R7 million was received from National to proceed with this strategic entity and to date the following progress has been made:

- The surveying and design of the sub surface drainage system and overnight dams started in September 2008

- Plans for 15 reservoirs and sub system drainage systems for 24 farms comprising 600 hectares to the value of R6,9 million has been approved and plans and specifications have already been provided to the farmers
- Soil surveys have also been conducted on the 24 farms

A Steering Committee has been established with a view to develop a comprehensive business plan that will look at broader economic development activities. This plan would also need to look into the new mandates and reflect on our new agenda for change which takes into account the need for meaningful rural development.

Plans are also underway for an assessment of the status of the Boegoeberg and Onseepkans irrigation schemes. This assessment should be able to give us a sense of the extent of the water losses and resultant water logging problems in these areas. Having identified the problems we would then develop a mechanism to intervene in order to ensure more efficient water management and utilisation. This intervention will assist in making more resources available in order to enhance production in these areas.

Honourable Members, we have been able to assist the emerging farmers at the Niewoudtville Rooibos Tea initiative in terms of the increase of their production from 70 tons to 300 tons between 2006 and 2008. Opportunities exist to increase the production levels at this initiative to more than 3000 tons per annum. We were able to assist this project with the purchase of 10 000 litres of diesel and 50 kg of Rooibos Seed for planting. The construction of the drying, fermentation yard, laboratory, weighbridge, storage facility for processed tea and pasteurizing has been completed. A thousand tons of tea was delivered at the plant by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. 500 tons have

been marketed to Venteco Company through a partnership established with the Department of Agriculture in the Limpopo Province.

Construction of the processing factory will continue and be completed in the years 2010/2011. 40 jobs have already been created at this facility and we anticipate to create a further 217 jobs by 2012. We would expect a 9, 9% economic rate of return on this investment by year 15 of this project.

## **WINE DEVELOPMENT**

In an effort to ensure that wine production in this Province does not remain an exclusive terrain for the privileged and propertied class, we are continuing with our wine development programme and to date the following progress can be reported:

- 20, 5 hectares of vineyards have been established in the Riemvasmaak, Sandraai-Arbeidsgenot, Rea Leboga and Eksteenskuil areas to the tune of R2, 6 million. This year phase two of the Rea Leboga (5 hectares) and phase one of Blocuso (15 hectares) will be completed and R6, 4 million will be spent to this effect. The ultimate plan is to establish 780 hectares of new land over five years exclusively for emerging farmers and farm workers being the key drivers and benefactors in order to produce 25 550 tonnes of grapes in the following areas of production based on the current cellar capacity:

1. Siyanda 530 ha
2. Frances Baard (Hartswater) 50 ha
3. Pixley ka Seme (Prieska, Douglas) 200 ha

Furthermore, we believe that the delivery of this tonnage would be able to allow these emerging farmers to acquire meaningful shares in the participating wine cellars. For us to be successful in this endeavour will require that any future land acquisition in these areas should be geared towards supporting this wine development initiative.

### **WATER SHORTAGE IN THE JOHN TAOLO GAETSEWE DISTRICT**

Honourable Speaker, The supply side of water for livestock in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District remains a critical challenge. This is particularly prevalent in the Moshaweng area. In an attempt to address this challenge, we have conducted a survey to determine the levels of underground water availability and have tested and equipped boreholes.

### **DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Honourable members, we have developed a strategy for the development of an Agriculture Disaster Risk Management Plan (ADRMP) which is a five stage development process that will be completed in the next three years.

During the 2008/09 financial years the Department appointed the University of the Free State to conduct a gap analysis in terms of our risk profile. This analysis was done in support of the ADRMP and took four months to complete. We have engaged the different stakeholders with respect to the outcomes of the risk analysis made and these interventions and discussions will inform the development of our ADRMP.

## **EMPOWERMENT OF EMERGING FARMERS**

Honourable Speaker, 1369 farmers and farm workers have received training in various agricultural fields and practices in order to improve their farming practices which will lead to improved productivity levels on their part, both qualitatively and quantitatively. This is a conscious decision on our part in an attempt to develop emerging farmers who can move upward into mainstream commercial agriculture and stop being passive bystanders in a sector to which they contribute significantly through their labour and other expertise. Commercial agriculture can no longer be left to be an enclave of a selected few but should, as a primary economic driver in our Province be used to drive people centred development. The training that we have provided has assisted these emerging farmers with marketing and financial management skills. This has assisted the farmers to better apply business practices and principles and has allowed them to run their enterprises profitably.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development provided implements and irrigation equipment to the value of R3,5 million to the resettled claim of Droogfontein. This intervention has enabled the community to produce vegetables and cash crops commercially on 300 hectares of land. This has given the community an opportunity to access both the national and international formal markets through FreshMark. This has led to dividends of R500 000 being paid out to the 89 households in the first year of their operations. This community will further benefit from the Livestock Improvement Programme which would amongst others include the commercialisation of goats and the Nguni project.

A joint venture has been established between a commercial farmer and 5 emerging farmers in Jagpan, Carnarvon, Pixley ka Seme District on the expansion of

commonages whereby the mentor contributed 400 ewes, 460 lambs and 30 rams while government contributed 400 ewes and 20 rams on behalf of the emerging farmers. The emerging farmers generated an income of R200 000 during the 2008/09 financial year as a result of this intervention. These joint ventures are going to be phased in over the next 7 years to include other areas throughout the Province

### **COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

Honourable Speaker, a total amount of R49 million is allocated to the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and is mainly aimed at providing the much needed support to our farming communities in order to ensure that their operations are sustainable. R7, 110 million of this money is allocated to the wine development initiative which is primarily based in the Siyanda District. We anticipate that 1692 persons will benefit out of this massive cash injection.

Through the CASP we also hope to create job opportunities as part of the Phase 2 of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) which will be part of our contribution to the fight against unemployment in our country. To further elucidate the point on Rural Economic Development, we will vigorously promote the establishment of agricultural co-operatives. We have to date established 130 co-operatives and envisage establishing 30 or more in the current financial year. This will be done consciously because we believe that the co-operative movement is the only legitimate vehicle through which meaningful and serious transformation of the agricultural sector will take place. Their establishment will also be coupled with extensive training in order to ensure their continued existence and sustainability.

We are of the view that agriculture is a science that can make a meaningful contribution to our survival as a country and it can also change our lives for the better. This science can create a better life for our people and needs to be nurtured. It is therefore important that in collaboration with the Department of Education, Tertiary Institution and the Youth structures expand our awareness programmes at various schools and forums. We also have to establish partnerships with our national counterparts whereby we make available training programmes and bursaries for the youth and women in our Province.

R9, 390 million will be allocated to the Vaalharts Revitalisation Scheme as well as the procurement of implements and irrigation systems for the Youth Olives Project. R1, 17 million will be allocated for the Schmidtsdrift fencing and stock watering systems.

R3, 2 million has been allocated for fencing and stock water in the communal areas of the John Taolo Gaetsewe District. A massive amount of R14, 028 million will be spent in the Namakwa District for the upgrade of the irrigation infrastructure in this district and to support emerging farmers to increase their tea production capacity and for mechanisation at Henkries dates project.

Furthermore, R12, 781 million will be used for the extension recovery plan which is a program intended for the transformation of extension services to improve the quality of service being rendered by these officers. The extension recovery plan is premised on three principles i.e. the recruitment of new personnel, improvement of qualifications of current officers and the provision of information communication technology infrastructure.

## **MACRO AGRICULTURAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA (MAFISA)**

Honourable members, the National Department of Agriculture has finalised the accreditation of the Developmental Funding Institutions (DFI's) that will assist with the disbursement of the MAFISA loans in the Province. Those institutions that are participating in the Province are the National Emergent Red Meat Producers Association (NERPO), KAAP AGRI and ABSA Bank with the assistance of KHULA Enterprises. There are other initiatives already underway to bring other commercial banks also on board.

## **MARKETING SUPPORT**

Honourable Speaker, we are also working in collaboration with the SA Agri-Academy to develop a programme of clustering farmers in different categories in order to be able to create better opportunities for them to access markets both nationally and internationally. This works through the clustering of farmers in terms of their product commodity. To date 5 clusters have already been identified in the Frances Baard, Siyanda and Namakwa districts. We are also in the process of constructing the second set of auction pens in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District for livestock marketing. The current experience is that we have tuck shop like auctions that take place in rural areas whereby speculators buy livestock at below market price. This works essentially to the disadvantage of our rural motive forces for change, the working class and poor. To counter this activity, the Department has enlisted the services of reputable auctioneers and farmers to hold regular auctions in the far flung



areas of the Northern Cape. We hope that this will be able to allow farmers in these areas to receive market related prices for their livestock.

## **VETERINARY SERVICES**

Honourable members, the Department will be embarking on Rabies and Brucellosis campaigns in this financial year to raise awareness about these animal diseases. We would also be conducting a revaccination programme for Anthrax in the Frances Baard District around August this year targeting 20 000 animals. Communal Property Associations will be assisted to strengthen their control over their animals and farms through tagging and vaccination orders.

In our attempt to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth disease into our province, we will continue with Sero-surveillance on 250 farms along the Botswana border which will be coupled with quarterly and unannounced border controls with the SA Police Service.

A mobile clinic has been purchased which will assist the department with awareness and sterilization campaigns as part of primary animal health care. Education and awareness campaigns will continue with regard to food safety issues.

## **RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

The Department will continue to strengthen our partnerships with reputable academic institutions and research institutions in order to better serve the interests of our people. We would continue to work with institutions like the University of the Free State and the Agricultural Research Council in the best interest of all affected communities and entities, in particular the poorest of the poor and emerging farmers.

Research as a developmental tool should be used to advance the wishes and aspirations of our people broadly and should not be used as a tool for their continued exploitation and degradation. We will continue our research initiatives on indigenous plant and animal breeds in order to enhance the productivity levels of these species as they are more susceptible to the conditions in our Province.

It is predicted that the emphasis on large livestock will move to small livestock in areas adversely affected by climate change and that the population of meat eating individuals will increase worldwide. With this as background information, special attention will be given to research on indigenous livestock, especially small livestock, with the emphasis on aspects such as animal production and natural resource management. The research programmes will continue according to the Departmental performance plan with the development of a milk goat research facility at Rietrivier Research Station and the continuation of the capture and evaluation of the feral goats from Tankwa being new initiatives.

We will continue the research on plant and animal breeds adaptable to the conditions in the province in order to enhance productivity as well as evaluate other species and breeds.

Koopmansfontein Research Station will be developed as a centre of excellence for goat research, development and training. Furthermore R3 million has been allocated for the upgrading of some facilities at the research stations, these include windmills and water pumps at four research facilities i.e. Vaalharts, Karakul, Koopmansfontein and Wesselsvlei. We are also attending to the sewage problem at Rietrivier and Vaalharts and are upgrading some houses at Wesselsvlei and Koopmansfontein

facilities and we are also busy with the first phase of the animal handling facility at Wesselsvlei.

Honourable Speaker, it is also appropriate to mention that we are working together with the Department of Water Affairs in order to fast track the allocation of water rights to emerging farmers along the Orange River and to deal with all aspects of the agricultural value chain. 361 hectares of water rights have so far been allocated and 1200 hectares is under consideration by the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs.

We also need to ensure that the creation of decent work and the creation of sustainable livelihoods becomes the cornerstone of our dynamic relationship with Agriculture, particularly commercial agriculture. This should be in order to foster a healthy working relationship between farm workers, farm dwellers and farm owners. We need to deal with the scourge of ill treatment of farm workers and farm dwellers by farm owners who only see their contribution on the farm being their labour and nothing more. We need to foster a culture of human rights within our farming community where there is mutual respect and mutual co-existence between the farm owner and those that sell their labour, in most instances for a pittance. We will be working jointly with the Department of Labour to ensure that our commitments as outlined in the manifesto, with respect to labour and other rights, of farm workers are respected. We commit ourselves to implementing the resolutions of the farm workers summit hosted by our Department last year.

## **CRIME**

We also do acknowledge that crime is a serious concern within our rural areas and within the farming communities. The loss of life in any crime related incident on our farms is totally unacceptable and it is a phenomenon that has to be dealt with severely by the criminal justice system. We will also work with our counterparts in the Department of Safety to ensure that criminals respect the sanctity of life. Stock theft is also a problem that has to be confronted head on and the back of syndicates broken if we are to take back our farming communities and rural areas.

The challenges of a developmental state places moral and professional responsibility on all of us within the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to serve with humility, dignity, honesty and integrity at all times. We serve our people with the knowledge that we do so at their pleasure will. It is therefore a privilege to be serving our people in our different capacities and commit ourselves to hold the highest level of ethical conduct and have a zero tolerance on corruption.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members, the overall Departmental budget for the 2009/2010 financial year is R250, 217 million and is allocated as follows:

### **PROGRAMME 1 (ADMINISTRATION)**

This programme will receive R48, 79 million which will be used to improve our human resources capacity, filing systems and renovations to our field offices. We will also in this financial year be focusing on the development of a Communications Policy and Strategy, development of human resource capacity and the development of an ICT strategy with more emphasis on wireless technology. We will also be working on the improvement of our asset management capacity as an area

highlighted by the Auditor-General's office and the development of a proper registry infrastructure.

## **PROGRAMME 2 (SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT)**

This programme will receive R34, 037 million which includes R2 million for Land Care programmes. The key priorities here will include awareness principles on the Land Care Programme, Engineering Technical Advice and on and off farm infrastructure. This will ensure that we all ensure sustainable management and use of our natural resources.

## **PROGRAMME 3 (FARMER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT)**

This programme will receive an allocation of R90, 362 million and these funds will be used mainly for increasing farmer support, particularly in line with our conceived rural development paradigm shift. This will also be used to increase our agricultural production capacity through the ILIMA/LETSEMA programme. We would also use these resources to build capacity for our emerging farmers and implement a food security programme in order to ensure that no one goes hungry.

## **PROGRAMME 4 (VETERINARY SERVICES)**

The allocation for this programme is R29, 996 million which will be used to control animal diseases and promote food safety as part of our contribution towards improving the health profile of the people of our Province. A mobile facility was procured in 2008 and will be launched this year and its impact will be evaluated towards the end of the financial year.

## **PROGRAMME 5 (TECHNICAL RESEARCH)**

This programme will receive R37, 711 million to conduct various research initiatives in order to support production massification and food security programmes in the Province.

Honourable Speaker, we are aware that research has for some time been underfunded and it is a matter that we are paying attention to and would report to this good house on progress. We will also be launching the Agricultural Research Strategy this year and establish a research forum in the Province.

### **PROGRAMME 6 (AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS)**

This programme will be allocated an amount of R9, 316 million which will among others be used to identify and disseminate information on marketing opportunities nationally and international for producers in our Province. We also have to develop a database for various economic statistics and funds to assist us in contributing towards speeding up growth and transforming agriculture and the economy. This programme also has to act a locomotive for the establishment of agricultural co-operatives in conjunction with other role players

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members, perhaps it is appropriate before we close to quote a great Cuban revolutionary and an Internationalist Ernest “Che” Guevara and declare

“Many will call me an adventurer - and that I am, only one of a different sort: one of those who risks his skin to prove his platitudes.” It is perhaps opportune that we should be called adventurers in pursuit of a better live for the people of our province and should risk our skins and dare not fail to prove our commitment to the people of the Northern Cape.

In conclusion Honourable Speaker, I wish to thank the

- Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee and members of the Committee for their oversight role
- The Provincial Executive Committee of the South African Communist Party, the African National Congress, COSATU in the Province and the broader Mass Democratic Movement for their political guidance
- Women in Agricultural and Rural Development for their commitment to rural development and women empowerment
- Youth in Agriculture for championing the interests of youth in agriculture
- Various stakeholders and organisations (NAFU, NCEDA, AGRI NC) etc for their engagements
- PLRO Office, Mr. O. Mvula and his staff for their support
- Provincial Land Claims Commission, Mr. Sidney Hlongwane and Staff for their unwavering commitment
- HOD, Senior Management and Staff, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for your dedication
- The Staff in the Ministry, under the able leadership of the Head of Ministry Comrade Pele Modise for their dedication and support

I thank you