



MINISTRY  
AGRICULTURE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X250, PRETORIA, 0001 • Tel.: +27 12 312 9395  
Private Bag X9087, CAPE TOWN, 8000 • Tel.: +27 21 467 4502 •  
Web: [www.dalrrd.gov.za](http://www.dalrrd.gov.za)

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

**HONOURABLE MINISTER JOHN STEENHUISEN (MP)**

**DURING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 2024 WORLD FOOD DAY**

**AT NG KERK IN AFRIKA IN DELPORTSHOOP; DIKGATLONG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY; FRANCES  
BAARD DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

**NORTHERN CAPE**

**16 OCTOBER 2024**

**Theme: “Right to foods for a better life and a better future”**

Programme Director: Executive District Mayor: Honourable Councillor **UNONDUMISO BUDA**  
The Deputy Minister for the Department of Agriculture: Honourable **NOKUZOLA CAPA**  
The Premier for the Northern Cape: **Honourable DR ZAMANI SAUL**  
The MEC for Agriculture in the Northern Cape: Honourable **MASE MANOPOLE**  
The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation Country Representative: **DR BABAGANA  
AHMADU**  
The Mayor for Dikgatlong Local Municipality: **Honourable JOYCE TSHWANAGAE**  
The Councillors present in our midst  
Our Esteemed Business partners and Sponsors  
Senior Government Officials  
The CEOs and stakeholders within the agricultural sector  
Our valued guests: the farmers and community of Delportshoop  
Ladies and gentlemen: **DUMELANG! GOEIE MIDDAG! GOOD AFTERNOON!**



Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development · Departement van Landbou, Grondhervorming en Landelike Ontwikkeling · Muhasho wa zwa Vhulimi, Mbuedzedzo ya Mavu na Mveledziso ya Mahayani, · uMnyango Wezolimo, Izinguquko Kwezomhlaba Nokuthukiswa Kwezindawo Zasemakhaya · Ndzawulo ya Vurimi, Antswiso wa Misava na Nhluvukiso wa Matikoxikaya · Litiko Letekulima, Tingucuko Kutemhlaba Nekutfutukiswa Kwetindzawo Tasemaphandleni · UmNyango wezokuLima, ukuBuyiselwa kweNarha nokuThuthukiswa kweeNdawo zemaKhaya · Kgoro ya Temo, Peakanyoleswa ya Naga le Tlhabollo ya Dinaga- magae · Lefapha la Temothuo, Kabobotjha ya Naha le Tlhabollo ya Dibaka tsa Mahae · Lefapha la Temothuo, Pusetso dinaga le Tlhabololo ya Metsemagae · ISebe lezoLimo, uBuyekezo lwemiHlaba noPhuhliso lamaPhandle



It is truly a privilege to lead this year's commemoration of World Food Day.

This day is commemorated yearly, and our theme for 2024 is to commit to a: "Right to food for a better life and a better future".

Ensuring that every South African has access to adequate, high quality and nutrient dense food is not just a matter of a "right", it is a moral obligation on all of us.

As I mentioned last week during the launch of the National Food and Nutrition Survey, food security is a matter of national security. History itself has shown us that the very stability and cohesion of a country hinges on whether every citizen, from its President (or Monarch) to its poorest residents, has access to nutritious food on their table.

There is a global and national imperative to ensuring the right of human beings to access food and feed themselves, either by producing their own food or by buying it.

Government must play a leading role in ensuring that the poorest of the poor do not face severe hunger or famine, and in this regard the country has over 50 programs and initiatives aimed at addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. These extensive social security initiatives are driven at all levels of government, and at the national level primarily via the Department of Social Development.

However, I must be unequivocal in stating that the only real sustainable way to beat poverty and ensure that no South African ever faces the hardship of facing hunger and malnutrition, is by ensuring millions more citizens acquire a job and have the dignity of an income that empowers them to be self-reliant.

The idea that government can meet this moral obligation alone, or in a silo approach, has been a mistake.

Instead, a whole-of-society approach, and a focus on reshaping the priorities of the Department of Agriculture on building partnerships across the sector and value chains, allied to a need to create a citizenry who are self-reliant, is desperately needed.

The whole-of-society approach involves building partnerships that bring together the government, the private sector and civil society to pool resources, and collaborate on marshalling them towards achieving common goals. No one element can achieve the goal of beating hunger and ending food insecurity in South Africa, but rather a partnership model will help us get there.

### **SHIFTING PRIORITIES: GROWING AGRICULTURE & PUTTING JOBS FIRST**

This is why, as the Department of Agriculture, it is important that our focus be more on driving the broader agenda of:

- Fostering public-private partners aimed at creating an enabling environment that grows the agricultural sector
- Supporting the expansion of existing commercial farmers and agri-businesses while at the same time focusing on providing targeted support to subsistence farmers
- Freeing up the private sector to be internationally competitive, create more jobs and continuously upskill our farmers and farmworkers



And

- Rapidly expanding new Agri-entrepreneurs, with a focus on inclusivity, attracting new entrants from currently disadvantaged backgrounds, especially young people and more women.

The Government of National Unity (GNU) and specifically the Department of Agriculture, has embraced a whole-of-society approach that focusses on providing an environment that enables individuals to actively participate in the formal economy and other activities of our societies.

This is critically important in the context of the now 33,5% of unemployed South Africans who remain economic outsiders, locked out of economic opportunity. It is these fellow South Africans most at risk of hunger and malnutrition.

The agricultural sector has proved in recent years, including during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns era, to be a leading sector in job creation. At the end of Q2 of this fiscal year, the agriculture sector contributed 896 thousand new jobs.

Therefore, our goal as a department will be to create a growing pool of South Africans who are economic insiders, enjoying the dignity of a job and income, living in a prosperous society anchored by a growing and inclusive economy.

To achieve this, my Ministry will drive a reform agenda within the Department of Agriculture to focus on the following strategic objectives over the next 5 years:

1. Growing partnerships for growth,
2. Building a modern, progressive legislative and regulatory environment,
3. Improving market access and boosting exports for South African agriculture,
4. Providing effective support for farmers to ensure inclusive, viable, sustainable and profitable farming operations,
5. Ensuring collaborative approaches and responsibility for biosecurity,
6. Advocating for a growing sector,
7. Improving food security.

I will expand on these in the coming months, especially as the work to unbundle the Department of Agriculture from the now separate Department of Land Reform & Rural Development, is still in progress.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO MEET NDP GOALS & BEAT HUNGER**

From an agricultural perspective, we must ensure that current programs

in the department of agriculture is structured in such a way that we provide support that would have a lasting impact.

Our success as a department will hinge on our ability to be data-driven and evidence based. To this end, the National Policy on Comprehensive Producer Development Support, will regulate and guide interventions (support services) provided to the various categories of producers by the government. It will also provide and guide other stakeholders involved in producer support such as the private sector, civil society organizations and development partners and other



stakeholders

These strategic shifts are critical if we are to meet the goals of the 2030 National Development Plan. I'm referring specifically to Chapter 6 on "An Integrated and Inclusive Rural Economy" which emphasises agricultural development, based on successful land reform, employment creation and strong environmental safeguard, as an economic activity that has a potential of creating close to 1 million new jobs by 2030.

The NDP continues to put emphasis on household food security and nutrition in its Chapter on "Social Protection" (Chapter 11, NDP 2030). It specifically identifies access to land and sea for subsistence farming as having a potential to play an important role in ensuring minimum standards of living.

The GNU is prepared to tackle the challenges of food insecurity in the country head-on. When I launched the National Food and Nutrition Security Survey findings, I indicated that our State President, President Ramaphosa, requires us to implement evidence-based programs and policies.

The Department of Agriculture is currently implementing interventions in those areas that were identified in the results of the Survey as worst affected by food insecurity in the country, now known as Priority Districts.

Three Priority Districts in each Province were identified. In the Northern Cape these were Frances Baard (hence our presence here today), ZF Mngcwawu and John Taolo Gaetsewe.

The results of the Survey placed the Northern Cape on top of all Provinces with the prevalence of underweight and wasting in children under the age of 5 years, at 18,8% and 19% respectively. The Survey also revealed the Northern Cape and Western Cape as topping the list in the prevalence of stunting for the same age group category.

Ladies and gentlemen, these grim numbers should be a wake-up call for us all to double our efforts and work in a collaborative way to beat hunger and malnutrition. Indeed, this year's World Food Day should create awareness in the entire country. We can make a difference when we work together.

Today you witnessed the start of what will be the benchmark for how this Department will work in partnership with the private sector and other spheres of government. The donations and pledges from our partners in the private sector to support sustainable initiatives here in Delportshoop is a call to participate in a country-wide collaborations and whole-of-society approach.

Beyond the food hampers, today was also about a call to developing a culture of focus on sustainable interventions, which must include training programmes as well as ongoing support aimed at making gardens at schools, churches and residences self-sustaining.

The success of the commemoration of this year's World Food Day would not have been possible without the support from our sponsors. A special word of thanks to the following sponsors:

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
- Fruit SA
- Macadamias South Africa



- Oceana Group Ltd
- PEPSICO
- PPECB
- Tiger Brands
- Unilever South Africa
- Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP)
- Enza Zaden and
- ZZ2

These sponsors have undertaken the journey of supporting our communities during the World Food Days for years now. Over and above the food item donations, these sponsors used their own transport to criss-cross the country in support of our communities for World Food Day.

As a department, we will also work to make sure that the 2024 to 2029 National Food and Nutrition Security Plan, which is currently under review, gets the attention of all stakeholders involved, up to its implementation.

More focus should also be placed on how the department could intervene in cases and situations that threaten the national food and nutrition security of the country. This can range from intervening after disaster weather situations, or as has been an ongoing and current crisis, the addressing of biosecurity issues.

We are supporting our farmers in parts of the country who are facing livestock diseases by enacting strict control measures for dealing with those disease, e.g., in the recent outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), and Avian Flu. We have moved to swiftly control the movement of animals. This is done to protect our national herds our livestock and protecting our market interests locally and export opportunities globally.

These efforts have borne fruits, after the recent memorandum of understanding that I signed during the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) with the Chinese government on Foot & Mouth Disease. The key win was the allowing of compartmentalization of beef product exports, meaning that the export of beef products would only be restricted from only those parts of the country affected, and not the entire country.

As mentioned, we are committed to beating hunger and malnutrition through a new strategic focus for the Department that prioritizes getting bang-for-our-buck with regards to our annual budget. The Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP) is one the seven priority plans in this regard. Funding will be done in collaboration with the agri-sector (both established and developing) via various commodity groupings each forming “roundtables” to work with the Department.

I wish to reiterate here again that we must always find ways to advance commercial agriculture while supporting small-scale farmers.

One of the requirements of this policy is the farmer register.

We wish to encourage all farmer categories to work closely with our Local Offices in developing a credible database of farmers in South Africa. It is on such policy implementations that we will be able to provide this evidence-based information.



## **CONCLUSION**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude, let me remind you that government, including the department of Agriculture cannot do this alone. Today, as we mark World Food Day, you have seen the power of adopting a whole-of-society approach, founded on the idea of building meaningful public-private partnerships.

I'd like to once again extend a special word of thanks to all our sponsors and partners. My door as Minister is open to you. Together, we can beat hunger and roll back the crippling effects of malnutrition in South Africa.

I invite you all to contribute to our National Food and Nutrition Security Plan for 2024 -2029 and contribute towards a prosperous South Africa where every South African is food secure.

I thank you!

END

