



OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MOGALE CITY, CLLR DANNY THUPANE AT THE HEARINGS ON PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND [B8-2021] s76 HELD AT MAGALIESBURG COMMUNITY HALL ON THE 18th AUGUST 2023

Programme Director,

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandla Mandela,

Honourable Members of Parliament here present,

Executive Mayors, Speakers and Whips of Municipal Councils,

Honourable Councillors,

Heads of Government Departments and your teams,

Leaders of political parties and organs of civil society,

Members of the media and distinguished guests,

People of Mogale City:

On behalf of the Government of Local Unity in Mogale City I wish to express our humble appreciation at being invited to this important gathering today.

This gathering is focused on one of the most important issues for our continent, if not the only issue: LAND.

The reason there has been strife all over the world is human contest for land and its resources. It is human greed after depleting their own portion wherever they were born that led to what people call expeditions all around the world to look for land and resources elsewhere. We do not want to bother this meeting with the known history of African dispossession, our gallant fights for land and our emergence as democratic governments in all the states of the continent.

We do not want to belabour the point, that in our own country a heroic struggle was waged for many years because of land dispossession. It is a known fact that Africans were removed from 87% of the land of their fathers and compressed into a tiny 13% of their country to live in.

Programme Director, this gathering knows too well that we have moved from those issues that confronted the majority of the population: the issues of land dispossession, racial discrimination and exploitation by a few. We are almost in three decades of forward movement to the promised land. We remain confronted with the reality that the land remains in the hands of a few.

Be that as it may, our municipality has made many strides to ensure that those in the urban and rural areas enjoy the democratic dividend equally. We have several housing projects at different stages of development in our townships and rural areas to secure the tenure rights of those who were once marginalised. We are making substantial investments in infrastructure in rural areas in order to bring dignity to residents living there.

We are also bringing public amenities that include sports complexes, multi-purpose government centres that bring government services closer to the people. We have ensured that over the years we get rid of the practice of having people buried in the farms of those they work for, only for the graves to be desecrated when new farm owners come along. All our four rural areas have fully functional cemeteries that guarantee dignified burial and peaceful rest for our departed loved ones.

We have an aggressive agricultural support programme for emerging farmers in the city and which we want to expand so that we can increase the uptake for tilling of the soil by Mogale residents, both because of its commercial advantages as well as to address food security issues. We have distributed tractors and implements to these emerging farmers through DALLRD and GDARD financed Mechanisation Programme. We assist the farmers with repairs and maintenance as well as project management.

We have several AgriParks where emerging farmers hone their skills and provide supplies to an ever-ready and growing market for Mogale's fresh produce.

For example, in Tarlton, the AgriPark is on land that is in excess of 200 Ha while Carmel Estate AgriPark which is across the road from here is about 400 Ha. We are grateful for the generosity of both the national and provincial departments of agriculture for the success of these projects.

We also have 75 Ha of agricultural land in Hekpoort, and 68 Ha in Kromdraai where the national agricultural department is assisting us to implement projects of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme.

In the urban areas, we have partnered with Harmony Gold Mine on an agricultural project which is being implemented under the Social Labour Plan (SLP) as required by Mining Legislation. The agricultural project is on some 8 Ha of land, and we are looking at expanding it further. We are also encouraging and supporting subsistence farming in the townships.

Programme Director, as a consequence of these projects we are the biggest supplier of fresh produce for the Gauteng Province because 70% of agricultural products sold at the busy Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market comes from Mogale City.

We are teaming up with the Gauteng Provincial Government to establish the **West Rand Special Economic Zone** in Mogale City. We have been earmarked to be the Agricultural Hub of the province, effectively the breadbasket of Gauteng, the country and SADC. Talks are at an advanced stage to bring investment for exploitation of our vast agricultural land as well as to stimulate job creation through Agri-processing. The SEZ promises various crop farming opportunities that include vast farming and processing of cannabis among other ventures.

We therefore have more than a vested interest in the Bill that we will discuss today. It will assist the Municipality to sharpen its management of its agricultural land, open new opportunities as well as to widen and sustain a vibrant agricultural sector.

With these few words, we wish this gathering fruitful deliberations.

We thank you.