



# agriculture, forestry & fisheries

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Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **SPEECH**

**BY MINISTER SENZENI ZOKWANA**

**DAFF FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR AWARD 2017**

**27 AUGUST 2017**

**EMNOTWENI SOUTHERN SUN, NELSPRUIT**

Programme Director

MEC: Mpumalanga DARD, Mr Vusi Shongwe

MECs from other provinces

House of traditional leaders

Executive Mayors and Mayors

Director – General and Heads of Departments

Chairpersons and Presidents of Agricultural Unions

Our main sponsor, Total SA

Other sponsors, Omnia, Old Mutual, Mondi, Sakata Seeds and Manstrat

Our 43 finalists

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening,

The struggle for the emancipation of women remains urgent and faces immense challenges. According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), women produce more than 80% of the continent's agricultural production, yet they only own roughly 1% of productive land and have no access to productive resources. Their working conditions are still deplorable.

African women continue to labor with outdated means such as the hoe, the pestle and the mortar; consequently, they can neither be productive nor provide substantial contribution to the economy. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 30%. Women constitute 52% of the continent's population, therefore, their voices and role cannot be ignored.

This year also marks 22 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a historic road map signed by 189 governments that set the agenda for realizing women's rights. Notwithstanding the strides that South Africa in particular has made, serious gaps still remain.

There is a need to multiply the efforts in the struggle for the emancipation of women from the chains of patriarchy associated with our sector. We cannot allow the rights of women and girls to regress. I personally, envision South Africa where each woman and girl could freely exercise her rights, from participating in politics to obtaining education, having an income and living in a society free from violence and discrimination.

According to the African Development Programme, Agenda 2063, women in rural areas must have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services. Africa by 2063 must have full gender parity with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and private sector. I am hopeful that we will reach this target. Speaking for my department, we are making progress in this area.

By the way, last year in August, our Department scooped an award during the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Standard Bank Top Women Award. The Department was recognised in the Government Department Award Category for the strides we make in championing gender equality and promotion of women development and empowerment.

A big thank you to the DAFF team, this is demonstrative of the acknowledgement of our contribution to the transformation agenda. The accolades achieved included the work the Department does through FEA programme, training of women farmers and the work of internal Human Resource Development was part of the profile subjected to Standard Bank panel of judges.

Over the past 3 years, this programme grew to enjoy the country's attention. The overall winners have been invited to the State of the Nation Address (SONA) as the President's special guests and they were acknowledged in his speech. This challenges us to ensure that we support these women beyond the awards.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know and appreciate the gruesome effect the recent drought had on our farmers. It has affected production levels in a negative way. I was encouraged to learn that our women farmers persisted and make means under those harsh conditions.

The one message that I keep on reiterating to the Department is that I want FEA to be a development programme with clear aspirations beyond the awards. I want a clear trail of what support these women receive. I have been informed that 26 of the previous winners of this programme are now exporting to international markets. 2 of the 26 women are from this province, Mpumalanga.

Ms Thandi Mokwena who is exporting bananas to China and Ms Doreen Kemp who is exporting reptiles to China. Ms Mavis Mathabathe from Limpopo is exporting Moringa to Swaziland and

Botswana, Ms Nomzamo Khoza from Kwa Zulu Natal is exporting moringa to Mozambique and Ms Nokwanele Mzamo from Eastern Cape is exporting citrus to the Middle East, Europe, United Kingdom, Russia and China.

Ms Vanecia Janse who is farming on deciduous fruit (apples and pears) in Eastern Cape was crowned the Top Entrepreneur: Export Market and the overall winner. She is exporting to European Union, Asia and United States. Her 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades fruit are sold to local retail shops such as Checkers, Pick and Pay, Golden Harvest and other markets in Port Elizabeth. Her farm employs 44 permanent workers and 68 seasonal ones. This is an encouraging story. Ms Janse is here, she will join me later on stage to hand over the prize to the 2017 overall winner with me.

Most of these women have continuously shown improvement on markets access. They are now expanding their contracts with big retailers such as Pick and Pay, Woolworths and Shoprite.

Ladies and gentlemen, we as the Department would not be able to bring a difference in these women's lives if it was not for our main sponsor, Total SA. Thank you Total SA for your continued support over the past 17 years

Let me also to convey my unreserved gratitude to all our other sponsors who contributed generously in making this programme a success namely; **Omnia, Old Mutual, Mondi, Sakata** and **Manstrat**.

I want to recognize and thank the panel of adjudicators for the role they play in the programme namely; **AgriSA, NAFU, AFASA, Forestry South Africa, Fish South Africa, FAWU, WARD, YARD, Omnia, Farmers Weekly, Old Mutual and Total SA**

Ndiyabulela, I thank you.