

**SPEAKING NOTES BY MINISER DIDIZA DURING THE MEDIA BRIEFING ON
THE PRESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT STIMULUS INITIATIVE FOR SUBSISTENCE
PRODUCERS**

29 OCTOBER 2020, 10H00 IMBIZO CENTRE CAPE TOWN

On 15 October 2020, President Cyril Maṭamela Ramaphosa called a joint sitting of the National Assembly and the National House of Provinces, to announce the Presidential Economic Recovery Plan.

As part of our contribution to the Presidential Economic Recovery Plan, today I wish to announce the Presidential Economic Stimulus package for the agricultural sector.

The president requested our department to support employment in the country, through a short-term (6-months) support intervention in the agricultural sector. Following that request, we initiated a producer relief fund for subsistence producers that would help them retain self-employment and support food value chains. On 23 September 2020, National Treasury confirmed R 1bn to fund the initiative and the allocated fund to be used before 31 March 2021.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) will use Extension Officials in all provinces, as well as a contingent of approximately 9000 youth from the constituted of agricultural graduates, and the NARYSEC youth.

The initiative seeks to provide subsistence producers with non-financial input vouchers that are to be used to retain their livelihoods and support household food security.

The qualifying criteria for applicants are as follows:

- a. The applicant must be a South African, with a valid identity document and currently be actively involved in agricultural production.
- b. Subsistence producers (excluding smallholder producers) of all genders will be supported, and priority will be given to 50% of women, 40% youth and 5% persons with disabilities and the applicant must be farming in the following places:

- either in rural and peri-urban areas (urban areas are excluded for purposes of this initiative);
 - Backyard gardens or balconies or planters;
 - Communal lands, commonages, school gardens, clinic land, community hall land, etc.
- c. Vulnerable subsistence producers such as child-headed households, farm dwellers, farmworkers will also be supported proactively.
- d. Military Veterans, involved in subsistence production will be supported.
- e. The 1000 Narysec youth, recruited through the Khawuleza District Coordination Service Delivery Model (3 Districts) will be supported.
- f. Subsistence producers that did not received DALRRD support in the past financial year.
- g. No government, salaried employees will be supported.
- h. One application per household will be permitted.
- i. Award sizes range between R1000 and R9000 and are dependent on the commodity type applied and current verified production scale.
- j. The maximum size of production allowed will be the following:
- Vegetable and fruit growing: 1ha (smaller than 100 meters x 100 meters or two soccer fields);
 - Maize/soya/cotton/sugar/other production: 1ha (smaller than 100 meters x 100 meters or two soccer fields);
 - Layer Chickens: 50 layers or less;
 - Broilers: 100 broilers for less;
 - Small Stock Units (SSU): 25 or fewer animals; and
 - Large Stock Units (LSU): 5 or fewer animals;
- k. The department will, at its discretion, determine the final award sizes based on the number of successful applications received.

Farming commodities to be supported:

The following farming commodities will be supported under this initiative:

- Vegetable and fruit growing;
- Maize/soya/cotton/sugar/other production
- Poultry: Layer Chickens and Broilers
- Small and Large livestock.

The size of the non-financial awards will be determined by the scale of current production, after an intensive physical verification process

Application and voucher redemption process

The application process will be done through the electronic-platform.

If an applicant can load airtime, then they will be able to use the system, using any of the 11 official languages.

The system provides a cost effective and rapid method for applications to be received and to be registered.

The electronic system will, furthermore, have the functionality to screen applicants based on preloaded rules, as per the criteria developed. The system allows for live tracking of applications, verification visits and issuing of electronic vouchers.

The applicant will go through a two-phase verification process.

The first phase will be completed when an applicant meets all conditions, as it relates application criteria set out above.

The second phase, the verification phase, will be done through physical site visits, to verify the applicant's current production, the size of land and the number of livestock the applicant currently has.

During this physical verification phase, important information that will be collected from the applicant this will include: the making available of a copy of an identity document, medical confirmation to verify claimed disability points and documentation proving military veteran status. It must be emphasised that applicants that are unable to provide the necessary information will not be considered for an award.

Electronic vouchers will be issued to successful applicants only. The vouchers will be used to collect inputs at suppliers registered by the DALRRD.

The vouchers will be used to redeem the required production inputs in line with the commodity support applied for.

The vouchers will be valid for a period of three months, but must be used before 31 March 2021.

A successful applicant will have the opportunity to use the voucher up to five (5) times over the three-month period, this will allow for inputs to be purchased when there is a need it will also facilitate easier transportation of inputs, particularly heavier items such as feed and feed supplements.

Monitoring and evaluation will consistently take place. Visits will be made to applicants to monitor the use of inputs received. The suppliers will also be monitored to ensure that they supply the correct quality inputs and at the right quantity. Any supplier or individuals found to be misusing the voucher and or inputs will not receive support for the DALRRD for a period of 12 months.

The innovative use of a USSD code will make the application process easily accessible to the largest number of small producers. The process will be quick and save money.

On the advert that will be advertised by the DALRRD, there will be a USSD code.

The USSD code will constitute a number that you will be required to dial on your phone. You do not need a smart phone; a normal cellular phone will work. Applicants in rural areas are encouraged to get to an area where signal is available to make the application. The entire application process will take you no more than ten minutes, and you can complete it in your own language.

If you or any of your family members has loaded airtime on a cell phone, you/they can do this. The USSD number will work on any network, i.e. Vodacom, MTN, Telkom or Cell C.

They will need to follow the simple steps below:

- ❖ You will need to dial in * then a number * a number # key
- ❖ The phone will prompt you to choose one of the 11 official languages.

There are 12 steps to be followed that will take less than 10 minutes of your time.

Choose your language

Step 1: Does the cell phone number belong to you

Step 2: Enter your ID number

Step 3: Select your farming activity

1 = Vegetable and fruit growing

2 = Maize/soya/cotton/sugar/other production

3 = Layer Chickens

4 = Broilers

5 = Small stock

6 = Large stock

Step 4: Based on the answer to the question on **Step 3**, the following options will follow:

If you chose any of the following, the system will ask you to indicate quantities.

1 = Vegetable and fruit growing

1 = planters (pots, bags or trays)

2 = smaller than 0.25ha (50 meters x 50 meters)

3 = 0.26ha to 0.5ha (smaller than 50 meters x 100 meters)

4 = 0.6ha to 1ha (smaller than 100 meters x 100 meters)

2 = Maize/soya/cotton/sugar/other production

1 = smaller than 0.25ha (50meters x 50meters)

2 = 0.26ha to 0.5ha (smaller than 50meters x 100meters)

3 = 0.6ha to 1ha (smaller than 100meters x 100meters)

3 = Layer Chickens

1 = less than 11 layers

2 = from 11 to 20 layers

3 = from 26 to 50 layers

4 = Broilers

1 = less than 21 broilers

2 = from 21 to 50 broilers

3 = from 51 to 100 broilers

5 = Small Stock Units (SSU)

1 = 1 to 5 animals

2 = 6 to 15 animals

3 = 16 to 25 animals

6 = Large Stock Units (LUS)

1 = 1 animal

2 = 2 to 3 animals

3 = 4 to 5 animals

Step 5: Are you a person with a disability?

Step 6: Are you the head of a child-headed household?

Step 7: Are you a military veteran?

Step 8: Enter your name and surname with a comma between them, e.g. Serame, Mzizi?

Step 9: In which province are you located?

The 9 provinces will be listed and per the extraction below.

1 = Eastern Cape

- 2 = Free State
- 3 = Gauteng, etc.

Step 10: In which Municipality are you located?

The 258 municipalities will be listed as a cluster per district municipality, as per the extraction below.

- 1 = Mohokare, Kopanong or Letsemeng
- 2 = Mangaung
- 3 = Moqhaka, Ngwathe, Mafube and Metsimaholo, etc.

Step 11: What town or village is closest to you or are you staying in?

Step 12: Your reference number is (it will be a 'number # number')

You will receive an SMS with a reference number after registration that your application has been successfully registered

"Thank You for your application, please note your reference number is as indicated. Kind Regards DALRRD"

Once you have registered, you will wait approximately 2 weeks for your information to be verified. If your application meets the minimum requirements, you will receive another SMS indicating that a representative of the DALRRD will visit your house in the following three (3) weeks to do a physical verification visit. The visits will verify the, size and type of relief applied for. The physical visits will be used to collect ID copies, Medical confirmation, and documentation identifying the applicant as a military veteran, if required. The visit will also identify additional support needed by child-headed-households.

The following implementation methodology will be followed:

- a. Ward extension offices will be the point of farmer verification, support and monitoring. Thusong Centres and Traditional courts may also be used if the ward agricultural extension offices are unavailable.
- b. The district director (DALRRD - lead) will establish a task team that includes the district director (PDA) and they that will monitor and advise on operations in wards.
- c. Any unresolved issues will be escalated to a provincial operation forum constituted by the PSSC head (DALRRD - lead) and the relevant Chief Director (PDA).
- d. Verification visits to subsistence producers by extension officials, teamed up with NARYSEC youth and agricultural graduates will take place at ward level and the information will be captured on an ePlatform.

Local governance structures

Local governance structures will comprise of the following local governance structures:

- a. A Ward-Level Joint Operating Committee (WLJOC) will be established, to support applicants with registration on the ePlatform and ensure that every qualifying applicant is visited and their production status is verified. The extension official (convenor and responsible official) will ensure that Narysec, agricultural graduates and any additional support sourced from traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, civil society, is managed to do accurate verifications in a ward. During the voucher implementation phase, the WLJOC will conduct monitoring and evaluation visits to successful applicants to ensure inputs are used as intended.
- b. A District Joint Operating Committee (DJOC), chaired by the District Director: DALRRD (or identified official) and co-chaired by the Director: PDA, will be established to manage and control operations in wards, and report to the provincial committee.
- c. The Provincial Joint Operating Committee (PJOC), Chaired by the DALRRD PSSC and supported by the relevant Chief Director: PDA, will serve as management and operational control for the province and report to the national committee.

Ends