



## agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES MINISTER AND DEPUTY HOLD A STAKEHOLDER MEETING**

Media release:

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Mr Senzeni Zokwana, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and his deputy, Mr Bheki Cele, met representatives from organised agriculture yesterday in Pretoria as part of their introductory interactions with key stakeholders in the agriculture sector. The meeting marks the first series of engagements with stakeholders since the Ministers took over at the Department.

Yesterday's meeting was with the leadership of AgriSA, one of the biggest industry players in the South African agriculture sector.

During the meeting, the parties agreed that close co-operation would be vital for the success of the sector.

AgriSA, which is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year, was represented by its President, Mr. Johannes Moller, its Deputy President, Mr. Phineas Gumede and its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Hannes van der Merwe.

Mr. Moller informed the meeting that Agri SA is an organization that has grown to represent commercial farmers in the country, big or small and regardless of race. Agri SA undertook to work with government and support the Minister and Deputy Minister in making sure that:

- South Africa has a vibrant and growing agricultural sector that contributes significantly to job creation;
- Farmers engage in sustainable production practices while striving for profitability;
- Farmers contribute to growing the rural economy and impacting positively on food security.

The Agri SA delegation also informed the Minister and Deputy Minister that as an organization, they advocate for South African farmers to keep producing in the country while they seek to expand their operations to other countries in the continent.

The Minister and Deputy Minister emphasized the importance of ensuring that food security remains at the apex of priorities for all involved in agriculture. This was informed by the realization that there are still millions of South Africans who still go to bed on hungry stomachs. To this end, a call was made for the farmers to work with the department to ensure that the Integrated Food and Nutrition Security Policy is translated into actionable plans to attain the stated objectives of that policy.

Mr. Gumede used the opportunity to thank the government for the financial and technical support provided to the cotton farmers at Makhathini Flats, where the cotton ginnery was again put to full operation after years of struggling. He extended an invitation for the Minister, Deputy Minister and the Director-General to visit the ginnery at any time before the end of July 2014 when operations for the season are expected to cease.

#### FISHERIES:

Last week, the Minister and Deputy were taken aboard the Sarah Baartman fishing patrol vessel in Cape Town on what was to be their maiden voyage. However, the mission could not be completed but a briefing took place.

Ministers Zokwana and Cele addressed fisheries officials at the Department's office at the Foreshore, committing themselves to working to address issues of transformation in the fishing sector, pursuing unity and job creation.

The briefing, which was on the most pressing issues of faced by sector and government, included a presentation on the allocation of long term fishing rights, research and patrol vessels and government's efforts to combat poaching.

Minister Zokwana remarked that the briefing was good as it gave him first hand insight into the Department's most pressing issues.

Said the Minister; "What we realized was that for us to reach the goals we seek to achieve we will need to build partnerships with industry players, both big and small. What came out in the briefing was that the fisheries sector, and development needs to be open beyond the borders of the Western Cape into other coastal provinces."

The Minister added that his plans are to maximize interactions with all stakeholders in the fishing sector.

Ends.

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