

**Welcome Address and Introduction of MEC by Cllr ZRT Gumede
20 June 2017, Durban ICC.**

Programme Director,

MEC of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs -
Sihle Zikalala,

HOD – Phumla Ncapayi,

Members of Parliament and Legislature,

Councillors,

Captains of the industry,

Government officials,

Media,

Sanibonani,

What a wonderful morning, it is good to see all of you gathered here. Siyabonga kakhulu kunqonqoshe nomnyango ngokuhlela lelithuba lokuthi sixoxisane ngohlelo esilesekayo sonke, ikakhulukazi njengoMkhandlu weTheku.

I must say to you that I very passionate about Agriculture and the RASET project which is a radical program aimed at turning around the situation. The struggle for liberation was about three things – BLACK, GREEN and GOLD. Black represent black people who were colonized and treated as pariahs in their land. Green stands for land and environment that was taken away from us. Gold is for the mineral resources beneath the soil including gold. Radical economic transformation is about black, green and gold and that is why even our colours are like that.

In our ready to govern document – we noted that the dispossession and denial of rights to land have resulted in the present unequal division of land and landlessness, which will require radical intervention far beyond the mere repeal of apartheid land laws.

The development of a productive agricultural sector and a viable rural economy is necessary for economic growth and the well-being of all

South Africans. The productive potential of the land and the people living on it should be effectively harnessed, for the benefit of the entire nation. Our agricultural land should be treated as a fragile and precious resource base which belongs to future generations. As this government of the people, we want to ensure enrichment, protection, and productive utilisation of the land as a foundation for food production.

This flagship programme is what we call Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic Transformation or Operation Vula is about land. Operation Vula is aimed at transforming the agriculture sector by bringing the historically disadvantaged people into the entire value chain of agricultural produce – from production to distribution in the markets.

Programme Director,

In partnership with the Province, eThekweni is implementing RASET or operation Vula. In addition, the Municipality is in the process of acquiring farms from Rainbow chickens to capacitate local communities and encourage youth to participate in Agriculture.

EThekweni Municipality has also partnered with the Jobs Fund to support Edamame Development Programme (EDP) in this initiative which is aimed at supporting job creation and Agribusiness Development within the Municipality. The EDP is a soybean agribusiness programme conceptualised five years ago to initiate the cultivation of the high value nutritious soya bean firstly in the eThekweni District, KwaZulu-Natal and throughout South Africa.

Programme Director,

We hope that today's meeting will be able to assist in changing the lives of our people. We believe that we should be practical about development of our people. We believe in the vision that has been presented by our MEC Zikalala.

I would like to take this opportunity and introduce our MEC who is also our provincial chairperson of the ANC. He young energetic and is a visionary. Let us put our hands and welcome ubaba Khuzeni.