

**SPEECH BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF TLOKWE AT THE NORTH
WEST 2008 FEMALE FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD
CEREMONY**

August 08, 2008

Programme Director

MEC for Agriculture, Conservation and Environment; Mr J Serfontein

Chairperson of the North West House of Traditional Leaders; Kgosi Mabe

Executive Mayor of Dr Kenneth Kaunda District; Mme Pinki Moloji

District and local councilors present here

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have gathered here tonight in a celebratory mood for two main reasons. Firstly, the month of August is marked in our national calendar as the women's month in honour of the valour and the bravery of South African women in the struggle to build a non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa. Secondly, we have come to pay tribute to the sterling work that our women continue to do in bringing to fruition the prosperous nation which we all cherish.

The women of our country have long ago debunked the notion that "a women's place is in the kitchen" and have shown that it is everywhere, even in the farming fields.

The most common anecdote often told from the struggle days is that when some of us men cowered under the boot of oppression, women demanded that we exchange our trousers for their dresses. Today, as most of us men begin to mull and moan over the steep rise of prices of everything, from electricity to fuel and food, I'm afraid women may well again demand that we exchange our trousers for their dresses.

Timed to coincide with this period of celebration and rededication, this occasion tonight is in itself and by itself confirming that the conditions that inspired women to join the struggle in some degree still remain. The struggle today may be manifesting itself in poverty, hunger and all the associated maladies of disease and crime.

However, at the root of the matter is the fact that genuine non-racism, non-sexism and prosperity for all is yet to be achieved. The yoke of triple oppression endured by women has been alleviated only some what. It is women, especially rural women, on whom the manifestations of poverty, hunger, disease and crime play out their most cruel consequences.

We all are equals in terms of the country's constitution yet the social and economic status of South African women belies this sacrosanct constitutional provision.

The Female Farmer of the Year project should recognize this reality and strive to make its contribution in the building of a truly united non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa. This national programme should complement other initiatives to fight poverty, create jobs and build an economy that benefits all our people.

Combined with other agricultural initiatives, the Female Farmer of the Year project has the potential to reverse the current status of women in the country's agricultural sector and in society at large. It also has the potential to dent poverty and to stimulate further economic development in our quest for equality and prosperity.

Programme Director, the challenge of our time for us all in the public sector is to continue to search, develop and review strategies on food security. These strategies must ensure universal and sustainable access to the minimum daily, safe and nutritious food. This is one of the most critical approaches that can help us to establish and maintain a healthy, active and better life for all the people of our province.

Programme Director; allow me to conclude by congratulating all the winners in the 2008 North West Provincial Female Farmer of the Year Awards. May the prize winners bear in mind that the women of our country will truly benefit from their victory if this occasion is used to broaden women empowerment and to further stimulate economic development that benefits all our people.

I thank you.