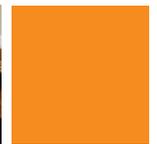




MYDISTRICTTODAY



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Land, which was restored from 1994/95 to May 2009, amounts to 6,7 million ha plus 882 238 ha of land redistributed from the year 2000 to 2012, and 368 483 ha of redistributed land from 2009 to 2012.

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE GCIS PROVINCIAL OFFICES

For more information about similar programmes that are run across the country, contact one of the following provincial offices:

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OUTCOME 7: VIBRANT, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES AND FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL

Youth acquire agricultural skills

By Mlungisi Dlamini: GCIS KwaZulu-Natal

In response to high poverty rates affecting rural communities, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has launched an agricultural skills programme.

Through its operating agency, the Agricultural Research Council, the department has equipped about nine youths from Ingwe wards 1, 2 and 11 with agricultural skills.

At an event held at the Zidweni Hall in KwaZulu-Natal in September 2013, to mark the start of the rollout of the programme, beneficiaries expressed confidence that their crop-cultivation skills had improved considerably and that their produce would be sold to big businesses. One of the beneficiaries, Nompumelelo Sibetha, 25, said, "We are working in association with community care givers to fast track 'one-home-one-garden'."

She said they aim to contribute to child-headed households.

The agricultural training for the youths follows on from Operation Sukuma Sakhe, which identified some wards in Ingwe as "War on Poverty Sites." The training responds to outcome seven of government's 12 desired outcomes, namely "Vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities with food security for all."

The programme's successes include the establishment of 58 food gardens, and training in cultivation for 45 groups of people. More groups are expected to be formed through training.

Nontokozo Ngwabe of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform said the purpose of training the youth is to make them ambassadors and help

realise the department's vision of tackling poverty through agriculture. "We want to see this group growing bigger, dominating the local market. I had a good working relationship with them because they are so passionate about training. Even after studying they did not wait for assistance from the department. Instead they started doing what they could with limited resources," said Ngwabe.



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In 2012 gross enrolment at primary school shows the country having achieved close to universal access to primary education for both genders. Enrolment for the five-year-old age group which was at 22.5% per cent at the 1996 Census leapt to 81.2% in 2011.

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Gadgets to improve learning

By Vuyani Sibene: GCIS Eastern Cape



Education as the First Key Priority

Presenting tablets to learners from the Arthur Mfebe Senior Secondary School, Cofimvaba, (from left) Mr Yotsi of the Department of Education, Cofimvaba District, Eastern Cape; Mr Laurens Cloete, Executive Director: CSIR Meraka Institute; and Ms Reid of Rural Infrastructure.

The use of technology to improve education is being tested in the rural area of Cofimvaba, Eastern Cape.

The Technology for Rural Education Development (TECH4RED) Project is a collaboration between the departments of science and technology, basic education, of rural development and land reform, and the Eastern Cape's Provincial Department of Education.

The project is aimed at contributing to the improvement of rural education through technology-led innovation.

It entails creating an integrated large-scale demonstration environment in the Cofimvaba district, to serve as a test-bed for technologies to support the education system, using a "living lab" approach.

As part of the information communication technology (ICT) for Rural Education Development

pilot project the Rural Infrastructure Development branch of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform recently handed over 260 tablets to delighted matric students at the Arthur Mfebe Senior Secondary School in St Marks Village, Cofimvaba. The students were ecstatic, as the tablets will make learning and especially research easy.

The pilot project has been introduced in the area as a means of supporting traditional teaching and learning with digital content on tablets.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is funding the ICT infrastructure for the schools involved and the network infrastructure and operations management infrastructure for the successful rollout in support of the e-Textbook pilot at the 25 Nciba Circuit schools.

The project focuses on implementing appropriate ICT infrastructure to support the rollout of mobile devices to schools in the Cofimvaba School District.

The programme intends to investigate the implications of giving rural South African schools access to digital content by using advanced mobile devices such as tablets, e-readers and smartphones.

The project will test various models, in terms of devices, content, infrastructure, connectivity, and integration into the school environment, costs, sustainability, logistics, support and maintenance, operational support and teacher training. The intent is to phase in mobile devices to support teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom as part of a blended learning environment, where various modes of teaching and learning material co-exist comfortably.



95% of households now have access to running water



OUTCOME 12: AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED PUBLIC SERVICE AND AN EMPOWERED, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP

KwaSani Cultural and Food Testing Expo celebrates Heritage/Tourism Month

By Mlungisi Dlamini and Makhosi Nyawo: GCIS KwaZulu-Natal



Drum majorettes lead celebrations during heritage month.



African cuisine display during Heritage month celebrations.

KwaSani Municipality held its third annual Cultural and Food Testing Expo in Himeville, KwaZulu-Natal in September 2013, to mark Heritage Month.

In line with the Heritage Month 2013 theme of "Reclaiming, Restoring and Celebrating Our Living Heritage" the Mayor of KwaSani Municipality, Mduduzi Bhandu said, "September is a time to celebrate our heritage and promote social cohesion."

"The Cultural and Food Testing Expo event provides a platform for local residents to showcase the beauty of their culture," said Banda. "People should not be ashamed of their origins. Instead they should attract other people to their culture."

The expo was supported by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture and Sisonke District Municipality. Senior KwaSani Tourism officer Andile Zwezwe said future aspirations for this project include contributing to job creation by assisting local people to start their own food businesses catering for different culture groups.

Celebrating this day gives community members the courage to look back with pride, heal the divisions of the past, and move towards the vision of national unity and cultural harmony.

The expo included performances of traditional music, hip-hop, gospel, house music

and participation in indigenous games such as Induku.

Stakeholders who supported the event and gave their services were Vodacom, the Department of Arts and Culture, Future Leaders, the Mzansi Jazz Association, the Independent Electoral Commission and non-profit organisations.

Mrs Mwandla of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, who was the judge on the day, tasted various traditional foods and presented shopping vouchers to the winners. A Basotho dish won third prize, the second prize went to an Indian dish and a Zimbabwean dish claimed first place.



As of March 2009, more than 10 million households (77%) had access to sanitation compared to about 5 million (50%) in 1994.



OUTCOME 12: AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED PUBLIC SERVICE AND AN EMPOWERED, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP

Elderly people in robust engagement with government

By Mbuyiseli Boqwana: GCIS Western Cape

At a health screening event organised in partnership with Neighbourhood Old Age Homes (Noah) in the Western Cape during Older Persons Week, 30 September to 6 October 2013, GCIS officials presented government messages and gave elderly people the opportunity to engage with government representatives on issues that affect them.

“We are grateful that the President and government is caring about us and we need more events of this nature to speak to our government regularly,” one elder commented.



Elderly people listen to a representative from GCIS outlining the purpose of the engagement.

Members of the audience raised many challenges that confront them. Some needed immediate interventions with a range of stakeholders. Safety and job creation were the most critical issues addressed at the event.

Fighting crime is one of government’s five key priorities. GCIS facilitated the dialogue and gave an undertaking to create a platform with the South African Police Service, Community Policing Forum and other key stakeholders to deal with the safety of elderly people in the area.



Leaflets are distributed at a nearby shopping centre to raise awareness about the role of elderly people in laying the foundation for the pursuit of a better life for all.

Another community member said, “Cape Town seems not equally serviced. We are not enjoying the fruit of freedom and yet government addresses equal opportunities as we celebrate 20 years of our democracy”.

The audience demonstrated that elderly people need government to work with them in tackling some of the challenges. Overall though, they were impressed that government believes they have a role to play in building democracy in South Africa.

The event enjoyed media coverage and helped raise awareness in the community about the needs of elderly people.



OUTCOME 7: VIBRANT, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES AND FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL

Collage for the Limpopo 1913 Land Centenary Exhibition By Reneilwe Moringi: GCIS Limpopo

Strategic support provided to 416 new emerging farmers through the Recapitalisation and Development Programme, in addition to the existing 595 farms currently being supported at a cost of R1,2 billion.

The arrival of the trucks



The official opening



The parade in Polokwane, Seshego and Disteneng



Welcoming the trucks

TIME TO COMMENT ON E-TOLLING TARIFFS

The tolling of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project (GFIP) is not just about building roads and paying for them; it is about investing in our future and building a better country. Last week's gazetting of the e-toll regulations and the decision by the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) to dismiss the Opposition to Urban Tolling Alliance (Outa) against the SA National Road Agency Ltd (Sanral) has brought us a step closer to building a better country.

Importantly, the use of the courts and the respect accorded to court decisions demonstrates that we are a maturing democracy. The SCA ruling confirms that the decision to implement the e-tolling on Gauteng's freeways is lawful and that all procedures including the public consultation process had been followed.

The government believes this latest development will now allow the people of Gauteng and South Africans in general to focus on the benefits we have already gained - and still stand to gain - from improvements to the freeways in the economic hub of Southern Africa.

The government has taken into consideration the concerns and adverse effects this might have on the poor; as a result the tariffs were revisited. This process has led to the reduction of e-toll tariffs in response to public comment; the poor have been taken care of through the exemption of public transport operators from paying toll fees; a monthly payment cap has been introduced, and a rebate system exists for transport companies.

Also, the Department of Transport anticipates that 82% of road users (Class A2 or motor vehicle users) will pay a maximum of R100 per month in their day to day commuting if they are registered as e-tag users. Last week the Department published the proposed e-tolling tariffs in the Government Gazette and the public has 30 days to comment.

The four sets of regulations published relate to the conditions of tolling, exemption from tolling, e-toll road signage, and e-toll specifications.



According to the Department of Transport spokesman Tiyani Rikhotso, "the Minister of Transport will consider the input before making a final determination on the tariffs that motorists will pay on the tolled road network".

We call on the public to participate in this consultative process to ensure that their views are taken into account. The latest e-toll tariffs are up for comment and are a testament of a caring government; we have more than once reduced the toll tariffs since the first announcement in February 2011. The original tariff for the various classes of e-tag vehicles published in February 2011 was drastically cut after government heard the voice of the people during the public participation meetings.

The user-pay principle was adopted as government policy as stated in the White Paper on Transport in 1996 as it offered an equitable method for motorists to pay only for the section of road used. It ensures that South Africans who do not use the Gauteng freeway will not be expected to finance the construction or upgrading of the road. The argument that funding the roads through the e-tolling was "unreasonable" misses the point and it was dismissed by the Pretoria High Court which had earlier ruled:

"The premise of the unreasonableness argument is that funding by way of tolling is unreasonable

because there are better funding alternatives available, particularly fuel levies. But that premise is fatally flawed. Sanral has to make its decision within the framework of Government policy."

In moving forward we must be mindful that there needs to be a shared responsibility between Government and citizens to support, finance and develop the country's infrastructure. The upgrades are already assisting in contributing to the economic development of the country. The main benefit of the GFIP is that it lowers the cost of motoring due to benefits derived from decreased congestion.

Over the years traffic congestion has steadily increased, with peak hours extending about 15 minutes every year. In addition, increased productivity from less time spent in the movement of goods and services has a direct impact on South Africa's overall economic growth.

We hope that this latest development will not lead to a situation that compromises the level of South Africa's economic growth and the standard of living of citizens, especially the poor and unemployed. We should heed Cabinet's call when it says: "The e-tolling system is one aspect of the GFIP which has enhanced the movement of people and goods and will make the provincial and national economy more efficient into the future".

The Cabinet has urged South Africans to work together to make the GFIP a success and to appreciate the remarkable growth of modern infrastructure in the country.

