



agriculture

Department:  
Agriculture  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL:  
SECTOR SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AT AN AGRISETA GALA  
DINNER ON WEDNESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2007 AT KOPANONG  
CONFERENCE CENTRE, BENONI**

**24 OCTOBER 2007**

The Chairperson of the AgriSETA Board Mr Van Dyk, Members of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer Mr Van Niekerk, the Agricultural Sector partners present tonight, officials from the Department of Agriculture present, honourable guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me real great pleasure to address you at this prestigious event tonight.

The promulgation of the Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998) and its twin sister the Skill Development Levies Act (Act No. 9 of 1999) ushered our country in what the Department of Labour refers to as the “Skills Development

Revolution". We will remember that it is as a result of these two pieces of legislation that the national skills development and national human resource development strategies were developed. These national strategies are a yard stick for measuring our achievements as the agricultural sector in this "revolution" which has engulfed our country since 2001.

Similarly, subsequent to the promulgation of these two pieces of legislation, an institutional framework, which included the establishment of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) was established. Initially 27 SETAs were established with the mandate to ensure persistent skills development of the workforce within their respective economic sectors. These 27 SETAs were later collapsed into 25.

We will also recall that at that time there were three SETAs that related directly to the agricultural sector. These were the Primary Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority, Secondary Agriculture Education and Training Authority and the Food and Beverage SETA. We all remember the teething problems that were experienced by most SETAs then. Many of these newly formed structures found themselves having to struggle with issues of governance and administration in particular. There were other problems relating to the questions of mandate and operation.

It was because of these problems and the fact that many of the SETAs had not yet demonstrated effective service delivery that around 2003/4 the Department of Labour decided on a review of these established bodies. Pivotal to this review was the most daunting question of whether or not there was no duplication of work and/or mandate among the 25 SETAs that existed then. Under the leadership of the Department of Labour, a series of meetings were held with these SETAs particularly those that posed doubt in terms of their declared mandates and scope of work.

Both the Primary Agriculture and Secondary Agriculture SETAs could not escape the marauding grinder of this process. This resulted in the two SETAs being collapsed into one, which is today referred to as the AgriSETA.

It is important to point out, programme director, that at the time when the newly established SETAs were still finding their feet on the ground which was around 2001, an important process of developing the sector strategic plan for the agricultural sector was being pioneered by the Department of agriculture. Under the leadership of our current Director General Mr Masiphola Mbongwa, key industry Stakeholders including both the AgriSA and NAFU came together

in what was to become a watershed moment in the history of the agricultural sector, to produce a historic unprecedented document known as the Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan (2001). This Strategy was approved and endorsed by President Thabo Mbeki in 2001.

I am mentioning this, Programme Director, because, this document underpins and/or must underpin everything we do for agriculture. This is a document which provides a vision and long term objectives for agriculture in this country. I take it, Programme Director, that this is a document that also forms the basis of what our line function partners, including the AgriSETA are doing because, strategically speaking, the ideals contained in the plan provide a conducive environment for an integrated approach by the Department of Agriculture and its industry partners in advancing agriculture to high levels of international competitiveness.

It must be acknowledged today, Programme Director, that ever since the establishment of the SETAs, the DoA has enjoyed a relationship of good cooperation with the AgriSETA. From the days when it was still PAETA, the DoA and AgriSETA collaborated on a number of issues. These included the development of an annual Sector Skills Plan by the AgriSETA and payment of the 10% of the 1% levy contribution to AgriSETA by the DoA. Not only does the DoA have a seat in the board of AgriSETA, but there is evidence of a joint effort by the two organizations in tackling major skills shortages effecting the sector such as ABET, Awareness creation with particular attention to HIV-AIDS and the like.

This relationship has grown in lips and bounds over the years such that in 2006 a formalized Service Level Agreement was entered into between the DoA and AgriSETA. It was the Director General of the Department of Agriculture who officiated at the signing ceremony held in November 2006 and who personally signed on behalf of his Department.

It is important, Programme Director, that we reflect on the tenets of this agreement, for the benefit of all sitting here tonight.

Central to this Agreement is the intention of the DoA and AgriSETA to specifically further the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) for the period 2005 to 2010 as well as the objectives of the National Agricultural Education and Training Strategy (2006).

The Agreement focuses on a number of things including Information Sharing, Representation, Financial Arrangements and Joint Interventions.

It is important, Programme Director, that in order to maximize the sharing of knowledge and to minimize duplication in generating information, AgriSETA:

- On an annual basis forward its cumulative quarterly report developed with the purpose of meeting its Service Level Agreement with the Department of Labour to the DoA for consideration,
- On an annual basis submit its annual report and related annual statistics to the DoA with regard to accredited learning programmes,
- On a continuous basis inform the DoA of new initiatives it will be implementing for further development of human potential in the Agri-Sector.
- On an annual basis provide the DoA with an update on the Sector Skills Plan.
- As a visible means to support each other, the CEO of AgriSETA will participate in the NAETF Executive Committee as a member and on request participate in other structures and committees including ad hoc meetings of the DoA by nominating a relevant staff member to participate in those committee.

On the other hand the DoA will:

- Make available to AgriSETA any research it engages in which focuses on the development of Human Resource in the Sector.
- Through the Unit responsible for education and training keep AgriSETA abreast of initiatives of the Department in the field of Human Resource Development;
- If satisfied that the Sector Skills Plan is in line with the strategic plan of the DoA, support that such plan be approved by the Director-General;
- Ensure that the Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services participates in the Governing Board of AgriSETA;

- On request participate in other structures and committees including ad hoc of the AgriSETA;
- Pay annually the administrative component of the skills development levy calculated at 10% of the 1% of the departmental payroll to AgriSETA;

It is in this spirit, Programme Director, that the DoA is participating in this event wholeheartedly. As DDG: Sector Services and Partnership, I dared not renege on the tenets of this Agreement when I was invited as guest speaker to this event.

As I conclude my address, Programme Director, I would like to remind everybody that the need for appropriate skills in the Agricultural Sector is great. The report on the ten year human resource development review published by the Department of Agriculture two years ago indicates an imbalance between the demand and supply of agricultural skills. The agricultural graduates enrolments and output annual reports produced by the Department over the past three years confirm this imbalance by further pointing at the low numbers of agricultural graduates as compared to the numbers that enrolled in any particular academic year. This is beside looking at issues of quality and appropriateness of the qualifications produced by institutions learning.

Let us be reminded that there can never be a development project/programme which does not prioritize skills for both the beneficiaries and those responsible for managing such projects/programmes.

Currently Government has key priority programmes such as CASP, Land Care, IFSNP, ASGI-SA, JIPSA, AgriBEE and others. At the centre of the success of these important programmes is the need to develop skills. Undoubtedly, the prevalence of appropriate skills linked to these programmes will not only ensure their success but will further guarantee their sustainability.

On behalf of the Department of Agriculture I call on all of us to do our bit in ensuring that the skills development revolution, in the words of the Department of Labour, intensifies for a better life for all. I say, Skill, Skills and more skills for a united and prosperous agricultural sector.

**THANK YOU**