

MEC KHOABANE—KROONSTAD LAND CARE PROJECT

Mayor of Matjhabeng Local Municipality, Cllr

The Speaker, Cllr

Municipal Manager, Mr...

Acting HOD, Dr Masiteng

Senior Management of the Department

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

1. Today, we launch a Land Care community based programme which created temporary job opportunity for about 66 young people from Kroonstad.
2. Through this programme we have eradicated invader plants such as Acacia Karoo and Asparagus Laricinus bush at Kroonstad commonage. This include Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) which are from foreign origins; the plants that evolved where the climatic and soil conditions correspond to the new territories they invade and where they displace indigenous plant communities.
3. Invader plants are a serious threat to sustainable farming practises in the Kroonstad Commonage and contribute to the causes of the land degradation. Today's project will go a long way in controlling the invader Plants.
4. When effectively implementing the advanced methods of controlling the Invader Plants with its competition effect on grass, the production will be increased and more soil moisture will also be available for grass production.
5. **Ladies and gentlemen**, Invader plants are extremely successful in their new territories particularly because their natural enemies are absent. At the current stage, there are about 198 declared invader plants and weeds in South Africa; and this can intensify floods and fires.
6. In the last five years to date, the department has conducted 67 awareness campaigns and capacity building exercises on this project.

- Through this initiative **48 296** Hectares were protected to improve agricultural production that includes waterways, contours and eradication of invader plants.
 - We have created **2 639** Green Jobs were created mostly through the eradication of invader plants;
 - We have planned **440** Stock Watering and veldt utilization works for farmers;
 - **4 518** young people attended Junior LandCare training at LandCare Centres;
 - **90** LandCare funded projects were supported ranging from Invader Plants Eradication, Conservation Agriculture Practices Implemented, erosion structures, fencing, water reticulation and Purchasing of fire Fighting Equipment.
 - So far, we have spent more than R44 million on LandCare and EPWP Projects.
7. **Programme director**, we urge our farmers to establish and democratically elect LandCare Committee in their respective areas because those committees will serve as a pre-requisite for successful project implementation; will also enhance vertical communication between Land Care officials and the community at large.
 8. We also need acknowledge the fact that the World and the Local population is growing while the available land for food production is getting smaller due to all the different environmental problems such as Invader Plants and Erosion.
 9. This situation tells us that Food Security is under threat so we need to take care for our land.
 10. **Programme director**, as I conclude the department will continue to assist and support commonages to address environmental issues in commonages.

I thank you.