

**SPEECH BY FREE STATE MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT, MR OUPA KHOABANE AT THE 93<sup>RD</sup> GRADUATION  
CEREMONY—GLEN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE**

**PROGRAMME DIRECTOR**

**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, MR MP THABETHE**

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT**

**ACTING PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE**

**COLLEGE MANAGEMENT,**

**LECTURES & SUPPORT STAFF OF THE COLLEGE**

**SRC REPRESENTATIVES**

**BATSWADI BA TENG KAJENO**

**FARMERS PRESENT**

**BAHLOMPHEHI BA BOHLOKWA BA LETSATSI—GRADUATES**

**MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA**

We are gathered here today not only to acknowledge and appreciate the achievement of 2015 final year students but also to reconfirm this government's commitment to the development of our young people.

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead. It is not beyond our power to create a world in which future generation have access to a good education. Those who do not believe this, have small imagination.” These are the words of former President: Rolihlahla Dalibunga “Madiba” Mandela.

Today, we see our brothers and sisters burning, demolishing schools, clinics as well government buildings—this behaviour is contradictory to what TATA, our hero who pioneered our way leading to the democracy we all enjoy in this country today stood for.

**Ladies and gentlemen**, it is befitting for all of us to live up to his dreams. It is therefore crucial to invest in education in order to participate in growing our economy and improve socioeconomic status of our people, especially in rural areas.

**Programme Director**, since 1919, this college has enlisted about 3058 graduates; and we will continue to recruit more young people to enroll in coming years so as to ensure that Agricultural sector especially in Free State sustain to be the food basket of South Africa. It is for this reason that I urge the young people to take up Agriculture as a career because the nation including the economy cannot survive without this sector.

Graduates I want to believe that your parents are over the moon to see you having achieved yet another milestone. Today's session serves as a proof that the years you have sacrificed to get the best education have yielded the desired results. You have made right choice by pursuing your agricultural studies with the only college of agriculture in the Province because what you have acquired is critical in addressing skills development and socio-economic challenges facing our country.

**Programme director**, it is important that our youth recognize the fact that knowledge, skills and competencies are the most important resources to alleviate poverty, promote and initiate entrepreneurship opportunities to reduce high unemployment rate in our country.

**Ladies and gentlemen**, the road to success for you in the agricultural sector has just begun; your perseverance during your practical training especially at the farms has clearly indicated how committed you are, please do not decelerate the pedal of moving agricultural sector forward. The world is waiting for your expertise that you have acquired at Glen College over the past three years and it will not be a smooth road to travel on—you are now facing the real world with unique challenges; the world full of opportunists waiting to mislead you one way or the other, but as beneficiaries of ANC led government I want to believe that you will at any level defend your position.

Allow me to express my appreciation to all the farmers who selflessly put their hands together to avail their farms for students to perform practical training; because that skill and experience will better shape them to become the best agricultural practitioners

and future farmers. Indeed government cannot do it alone—we need this kind of partnership in reconstructing and developing our country to move forward.

**In conclusion,** I want to reaffirm that Glen College of Agriculture has a high potential to produce farmers of note who will contribute generously to the economy of the Free State and the entire South Africa.

I want to challenge all of you (graduates) not to leave your rural areas but to seek the farming opportunities within your respective areas because as an agriculturist, your primary responsibility is to feed the nation.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours and please do not forget to exercise your constitutional rights by voting for the party of your choice on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2016.

**I thank you**