



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Address by the Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga,
at the Handover Ceremony of the Agricultural Equipment in
the Free State Schools donated by the South Korean
Embassy**

14 January 2022

Programme Director, Mr. F. Sithole

Ambassador to South Africa: H.E. Ambassador Chull-Joo Park

Free State MEC for Education: Dr. P.H.I. Makgoe

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Chief Director, Curriculum Management: Mr. E.T. Montso

SGB Chairperson and Members

Principal, Learners and Teachers

Ladies and Gentlemen

As I have the honour of addressing you for the first time this year,
may I extend warm compliments of the New Year to you all.

On behalf of His Excellency President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, I convey the best wishes of our Government.

We wish the Republic of Korea prosperity and resilience as we start this year.

2022 promises to be a year when humanity reclaims civil liberties denied to us by the various lockdowns desired to arrest the spread of the novel coronavirus.

May this year be of peace and prosperity for humanity across the globe!

Our country emerges from nearly two years of waging a titanic battle against the novel coronavirus.

As we know, Covid-19 threatened to reverse the developmental gains of the past 27 years since the Democratic Breakthrough of 1994.

As we speak, we are emerging from the fourth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, bruised, yes, but stronger and united in our mission to birth a prosperous nation, united in its diversity.

I am pleased to say our people and our Government have covered themselves in glory as we have fought alongside each other to mitigate the devastating effects of this disease.

Today, South Africa has enough vaccine doses to vaccinate all its adult population.

At present, 27, 3% of South Africans are fully vaccinated.

Over 80 percent of our personnel are vaccinated in the basic education sector.

It is pleasing to report that the Republic of Korea has reached an impressive 83, 5% of the vaccinated population, making it into the top five most vaccinated countries globally.

We commend this milestone and urge all eligible South Africans to jab for prosperity.

Programme director, I am glad to acknowledge that the Republic of Korea is a key friend of South Africa.

We enjoy warm diplomatic and people-to-people relations dating back to the early nineties.

The Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Korea (ROK) bilateral relations had grown steadily since 1995 when the late President Nelson Mandela visited ROK to strengthen economic ties. The relationship has grown to be mutually beneficial for both countries.

For instance, South Africa imports from South Korea were US\$ 679.47 Million during 2020, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade.

Similarly, South Africa's exports to South Korea were US\$ 1.39 Billion during 2020, according to the latest data international trade.

In December 2022, diplomatic relations between the two countries will mark the 30th anniversary of its initiation in 1992.

It is instructive that ROK only formalised relations with South Africa two years after the prisoner of conscience, former President Nelson Mandela, was released from apartheid Robben Island prison.

Programme director, we meet today to further strengthen our diplomatic relations in the basic education sector.

Through the Korea International Co-operation Agency (KOICA), the people of Korea decided in 2021 to support our country by providing agricultural equipment for education and training in schools.

As you know by now, this beautiful and top-performing province of the Free State is designated as a key beneficiary.

The total value of the investment to the South African basic education is a whopping US\$100,000 to the Free State Education Department.

The following schools are designated as recipients of agricultural equipment: Trio High School Farm, formerly Kroonstad Comprehensive High School, Unicom Agricultural School and Landboudal Agricultural School.

Programme director, recent studies of Agricultural Education and Training (AET) in sub-Saharan Africa suggest that many Agricultural education curricula have shortcomings as they are unresponsive and inappropriate.

Primarily for socio-economic, technological, physical and environmental changes in the rural sector and the local context (Wallace et al., 1996).

At the heart of today's event is increasing the agricultural training's technological bandwidth and velocity.

We hope to increase the country's human resource capacity for productivity in the long term, which is a prerequisite for social, economic, and technological advancement.

We thank the South Korean Embassy for facilitating this timely investment, thus further strengthening our economic and diplomatic ties.

As we ought to know, agriculture is viewed in many geographies as a vital means of addressing poverty and unemployment.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the average global food availability will reach 3 025 kcal/person/day by 2030.

Yet, in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 224 million people were undernourished before the Covid-19 pandemic, food availability will only increase to 2 500 kcal/person/day.

Furthermore, income losses following the Covid-19 pandemic moved us away from achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on zero hunger.

One of the long-term strategies is to improve participation in agriculture, thus improving food security through investment in agricultural education and training.

Our policy lodestar, the National Development Plan (NDP), urges us to improve the quality of basic education, including agricultural training in South Africa.

The policy says that by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes.

The NDP says the different parts of the education system should allow learners to take different pathways that offer high-quality learning opportunities.

Thus, we implemented the curriculum shift towards the Three Stream Model to answer the NDP's cry for the differentiated pathways in the basic education sector.

The Three Stream Model offers Technical Vocational, and Technical Occupational pathways added to the Academic pathway.

The introduction of the Three Streams Model has led to a plan to incrementally establish Focus Schools (Schools of Specialisation), including Maths-Science and Technology Schools, Schools of Engineering, and Art Schools.

One can say the Three Stream Model is a silver bullet to the dearth of skills in our country.

We need more technical support, training of teachers to offer our Three Stream Model curriculum.

We also urgently need further investment in rolling out the Focus Schools and Schools of Specialisation such as agricultural schools.

Programme director, agriculture remains an essential contributor to the overall GDP numbers in our country.

Since 2020 the agricultural sector has been a positive contributor to the country's GDP growth with an increase of 28.6%, becoming the strongest performer (15.1%) in the second quarter of 2020.

The relative success of the sector was despite the unpleasant conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Agriculture continued to increase at a rate of 18, 5% in the quarter of 2020.

According to the World Bank, the employment in agriculture (% of total employment) modelled according to the International Labour Organisation's estimate) in South Africa was reported at 4.989 % in 2020.

In more straightforward language, economists calculated that in the second quarter of 2021, direct agricultural jobs recovered from the slump of the first quarter by 9% quarter-on-quarter and 8% year-on-year to 862 000 employees.

The value of primary agricultural production in South Africa increased by 15, 9%, to R332 953 million in 2020, while its contribution to the GDP was estimated at R81 337 million in 2019, data shows.

In 2006, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) put the agricultural sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 4%

At the time, the agency (OECD) concluded that the agricultural sector accounted for 10% of reported employment (OECD Observer, 2006). However, the Agricultural sector in South Africa is not only dualistic with a developed commercial farming sector that co-exists with a large number of subsistence (communally owned) farms.

However, in terms of the actual size of production, education and technological know-how, it is still primarily in the hands of a few white South Africans.

The National Agricultural Marketing Council estimates that black farmers still constitute less than 10% of the commercial production.

Consequently, the country's challenge is to bring the previously excluded black community into the mainstream economy through job creation, training, and entrepreneurship.

And agriculture is one important avenue to redress past inequalities and improve food security.

Agriculture is most likely to play a critical role in resolving both the economic and human development of the Republic of South Africa.

The South African Government has made employment creation one of its primary goals.

For this purpose, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a new R800 million Social Employment Fund, which will create thousands of work opportunities in South Africa.

His Excellency President Ramaphosa said that fund forms part of the second phase of his Presidential Employment Stimulus, launched in October 2020 as part of a response plan to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is expected that the new fund will create 50,000 work opportunities.

As previously noted, the National Development Plan touts agriculture's role in creating employment as a game-changer.

Despite its relatively small share of the total GDP, primary agriculture is an important sector in the South African economy.

Agriculture remains a significant provider of employment, especially in the rural areas, and an important foreign exchange earner.

For instance, in the first half of 2021, South Africa's agricultural exports amounted to \$6,1-billion, which is a 30% year-on-year increase.

Farmers and agricultural industry organisations often stress the importance of the farming sector in the South African economy.

We agree that agriculture remains a crucial sector and an essential engine of growth for the rest of the economy.

Thus, this investment in the Agricultural Education and Training (AET) sphere plays a vital role in preparing the next layer of agriculturalists to make their productive contributions to the economy.

However, one of the critical issues of the 21st century, says academics, is the changes and adaptations required in AET to contribute to improved food security and sustainable agricultural production effectively.

This investment in equipment and a battery of education reforms are building blocks to implement the required changes for agricultural training to thrive.

In conclusion, we reiterate our gratitude to the people of South Korea for this investment, an act of human solidarity.

We urge young South Africans to explore educational opportunities in the agriculture and food production value chain.

I thank you.