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MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

Date: 24 March 2022

SUBJECT: LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT/INFORMATION SHARING PROGRAM

On the 23 March 2022, it was a delightful moment for Communal Farmers in Lusikisiki (Ngobozana Location) at Ingquza Hill Local Municipality. Communal farmers benefited in various activities/educational programs such as Animal branding, Rural Economic Development, Livestock Production, opportunities available for local businesses/SMME's and capacity building on communal farming. Communal livestock farming is one of the world's oldest farming systems and is associated with improved household food security in poverty-stricken areas like O.R. Tambo District Municipality.

This program/outreach is an ongoing Livestock Improvement /Information sharing programme initiated by Ntinga O.R. Tambo Development Agency SOC LTD in conjunction with Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR) and other key stakeholders such as TARDI, SAPS, SEDA, Local Municipalities as well as Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency (ECRDA). The first leg of programme was conducted in Lusikisiki and will spread to other parts of O.R. Tambo District Municipality.

As part of ensuring livestock improvement, Communal Farmers will also benefit in the Heifer Exchange programme and bull loaning. The aim is to build sustainable communal farming and strengthen rural economic development and put people on the pathway to a living income through agriculture.

Speaking during the programme Ntinga Chief Executive Officer Loyiso Mbiko emphasized that Ntinga is working tirelessly to invest in Agriculture, ensuring food security and improved value chain in the O.R. Tambo region and beyond.

Ntinga O.R. Tambo Development Agency SOC Ltd: A Municipal Entity of the O.R. Tambo District Municipality (Reg. 2016/272582/30)

Directors: Ms. U.N. Mkize; Dr. L.L. Ndabeni; Ms. N.S.N. Bam; Dr. N.T. Ndudane;
Ms. N.D.A. Ngewu; Mr. M.M. Pupuma; Mr L. Mbiko (CEO)

“The entity is investing in communal farmers because we understand that having a secure income can be truly transformational in the rural communities of O.R. Tambo at large” said Mr Mbiko”.

Challenges facing communal farmers are notable, thus we find it necessary to conduct more initiatives of this nature and advise our communities of the agricultural opportunities available for them.

As the entity we are ready to work with all stakeholders in improving economy of the district and Eastern Cape Province. Ntinga has created market (Umzikantu Red Meat Abattoir) for animal producers, where animal producers can sell their animals. Vegetable producers can sell their produce through Kei Fresh Produce Market (KFPM). Ntinga CEO encouraged farmers use Adam Kok farms to learn new farming techniques like animal and crop production. Ntinga is strongly encouraging all the farmers to utilize these facilities as they are established to assist them.

Due to high demand and limited number of heifers available in our region, heifer exchange programme will be rolled-out on a first come first serve approach. We believe everyone deserves a fair opportunity to benefit in initiatives of this nature hence we encourage interested local farmers to apply now.

“As the Communal farmers in the Ingquza Hill Local Municipality area, we are happy that government is tirelessly devising means to assist us and is establishing mechanisms to ensure revival of the communal farming in our respective areas” said Mr Tembile Melani speaking on behalf of communal farmers.

Among the key challenges that were lifted by DRDAR is animal health and it was over emphasized that animal healthy is essential and local farmers must improve animal health to make livestock production more productive and sustainable.

To ensure poverty eradication, it is paramount important to establish mechanisms that will allow or create conducive environment for communal farming and improve food security. It is also vital to revive and mainstream communal farming for the betterment of our communities at large.

L.T. Colonel Maxabiso Nkani SAPS Stock-Theft Flagstaff and Lusikisiki speaking during the engagement, urged communal farmers to brand their livestock. He also highlighted that Lusikisiki, and Flagstaff are one of the areas with high stock-theft.

“All the communal farmers must apply for branding certificates. If we work together as the community, we will be able to fight stock-theft in our communities. Let’s do away with the

traditional/communal form of branding livestock and create a safe environment for everyone,” said L.T. Colonel Nkani.

A representative from ECRDA outlined programmes and opportunities of the Agency which included blended finance that is available to the farmers. Farmers were also encouraged by SEDA to formalize their operations by registering their businesses or setting up cooperatives.

TARDI was also at hand to share information about its curriculum and their doors are wide open to extend their capacity building programmes to communal farmers. They also expressed a word of gratitude for the partnership they have with Ntinga in the development of their students.

All the stakeholders involved in this initiative are committed to assist and create an informed society about various opportunities available for the community of O.R. Tambo at large.

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Issued by Ntinga O.R. Tambo Development Agency SOC Ltd, Office of the CEO:
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