

**Address of Registerd office:**

Old Government Printers  
No. 5 Textile Road  
Vulindlela Heights  
Mthatha  
5099

**Postal Address**

P.O. Box 1134  
Mthatha,5099



**Tel** : +27(0) 47531 0346

**Fax** : +27(0) 47531 4121

**Email** : info@ntinga.org.za

**Website** : www.ntinga.org.za

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**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**For Immediate Release**

**Date: 02 February 2023**

**SUBJECT: MAIZE CROPPING PROJECT SET TO EXTEND FOOD SECURITY IN THE O.R. TAMBO DISTRICT.**

It is a delightful moment for the emerging farmers in the O.R. Tambo district as the Maize Cropping project commenced during the month of January 2023. 38 subsistence farmer groups (projects) from across the district are benefiting from this great initiative. A total number of 317,5 hectares will be under production.

This is one of the notable strides done by Ntinga in partnership with O.R. Tambo District Municipality as part of playing a central role in Agriculture across the district. This effort comes after the district municipality mandated Ntinga to play central role in agriculture working with various stakeholders through the District Development Model (DDM). As part of supporting this great program, the district municipality committed to contribute with an amount of R4 500 000.00.

This is an interesting opportunity for subsistence farmers as they are supported with mechanization, production inputs such as seeds, agro –chemicals including herbicides, pesticides, fertilizer and LAN. These tireless strides are made with the intention of supporting emerging farmers and ensuring that their harvest is of good quality. In addition, this is one of our strategies of enhancing primary agriculture and agro-processing value chains.

Projects that are participating in this great venture are constituted in group forms to maximize beneficiation and ensure food security across the district. All the participating projects are required to have a minimum of 5 and maximum of 40 hectares for each project.

As part of ensuring success and commitment to this project, all the stakeholders involved agreed to make monetary contributions for mechanization services and in-kind contributions for production inputs such as seeds, agro-chemicals including herbicides, pesticides, fertilizer, and LAN.

Maize is a total amazing crop and is a versatile food for Africans. It is processed and prepared in various forms across the country.

It is mostly used as the animal feed, it is cheaper than many other feeds and provides the required nutritional content for livestock. As a result, an estimate of 60% of the maize produced every year in South Africa is used in feed production.

Through integration of government programmes, the O.R. Tambo District can be the food basket of the province and the country at large. Investors and potential funders from the Eastern Cape province and beyond are urged to come forward for possible collaborations for the betterment of our communities.

Mr Fezile Mazikwana one of the beneficiaries based in Mhlontlo Local Municipality (Qumbu, Mdeni Location) expressed words of gratitude for this great initiative. In his insights, he highlighted that they are experiencing delays due to heavy rains and water-loggings. However, he is adamant that they will get good yield.

“Irrespective of the challenges we are facing this season, we are expecting good harvest. We have all the production inputs we need, and we appreciate our government for ensuring that everything is in place” said Fezile in his closing remarks.

This will contribute towards improving food security as well as promoting and accelerating sustainable transformation in the agriculture and agro-processing sectors.

At the current levels of high unemployment and poverty rates, there can never be any important and noble government intervention than ensuring food security, job creation as well as improving the local economy.

For information and enquiries contact Mr. Siphosethu Tikana at 064 900 8392 / 047 495 0715 or via email on [siphosethut@ntinga.org.za](mailto:siphosethut@ntinga.org.za)

Issued by the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Communications and PR Unit.

**Approved by**

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**Loyiso Mbiko**  
**Chief Executive Officer**