

MINISTER'S SPEAKING NOTES

CLOSING PLENARY AT THE WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI CONVENTION CENTRE, DURBAN

11 SEPTEMBER 2015

Programme Director, after a week pre-events, side events, special events and plenaries, we have come to the final day and the last plenary session of the WFC. During our stay here, we have talked, shared, debated, laughed, critiqued and partied. It has been a good week, a week of creating sustainable working relations by making new friends and meeting old friends. As it rained this afternoon, it was a confirmation that the event has gone very well. In the African culture, if you have an event and it rains as you are about to close, it signifies that it has been a good event.

As we close this Congress, we are proud that we have hosted this successful Congress. The Durban Declaration reflects issues of climate change, food security and competing land use which are precisely the same issues that we as African countries are currently grappling with. Therefore this Congress was addressing the real issues affecting the Continent and the world at large.

I understand that the 162 youth that attended this Congress presented their Vision that will ensure their participation in future decision-making in sustainable management of forests. In effect, we created a platform for the youth who ably claimed their space as the voices of the next generation of foresters. My message to the young people is that the vision of the World Forestry Congress 2015, "Forests and People: Investing in a sustainable future", is now in your hands.

Having hosted the first Congress as Africa leaves behind a legacy. As South Africa, the Congress has highlighted how forestry can contribute to food security, job creation and economic growth whilst ensuring that we continue to curb deforestation and forest degradation. South Africa, through the Local Organising Committee, identified community development projects which will contribute to Skills Development; Poverty Alleviation, Entrepreneurial Development and are sustainable and reflect strong partnerships.

Since one of the major issues that have been raised in this congress is lack of communication and awareness, the FAO and DAFF have committed to working together in creating awareness and monitoring the implementation of these projects. The identified projects cover a broad spectrum including forests and trees outside forests. As we opened this Congress on 7 September, a Millionth tree was planted as part of our Million Trees Programme and to launch the Legacy projects for South Africa. Some of the legacy projects include the

- The rehabilitation of natural forests in Adams Mission, Nkandla and Ingquza Hill Heritage Site. The work has commenced in Adams Mission where 11 hectares of natural forest has been cleared of alien invasives and 400 indigenous trees have been planted. The project is a partnership between the Department and the eThekweni Municipality and the young people of the area (Future Leaders of Change).
- To reduce the costs of transport by 70km for the small growers, Sappi has built a weighbridge in Hluhluwe north of KwaZulu-Natal.
- The “Beat Leptocybe” project which focuses on the eradication and prevention of the spread of this global pest attacking eucalyptus plantations. This will assist small growers in protecting their plantations against this pest.
- Lastly, there is One Tree, One Child project that was initiated by the Eastern Cape Provincial government. This promotes the planting of both indigenous and fruit trees whilst promoting and educating school children about ecosystem management. There is a play this afternoon that will showcase this work.

We recognise that none of this would be possible without your participation and involvement. To all of you, 3901 delegates, thank you.

As I mentioned during the Africa Day Special event, Forests are Our Natural Heritage, The Lungs of the earth that Sustain All Lives

Forests Today and Forests Forever through Our Common Action in Sustainable Use of Our Natural Heritage

I thank you