WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE MAYOR OF ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL AWARDS AND AGRIC AFRICA DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT, 7 November 2025

- Programme Director
- Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ms Rosemary Nokuzola Capa
- Professor Melusi Sibanda
- Mr Nic Williamson
- AgriSETA Representatives
- Distinguished Guests
- Representatives from the South African Agricultural Awards
- Award Finalists and Recipients
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to our beautiful city on this remarkable occasion — the South African Agricultural Awards 2025.

Today’s gathering reaffirms our shared belief that the future of South Africa’s economy is rooted in the fertile soil of our land.

Ladies and Gentlemen, agriculture remains central to sustainable development, food security, and climate resilience. Across the globe, countries are redefining this sector through innovation, youth participation, and green entrepreneurship — transforming farming into a modern engine for inclusive growth.

Here in eThekwini, we recognise that by investing in community-based farming, agro-innovation, and youth skills development, we are not only contributing to Africa’s agricultural renaissance, but also building a resilient, inclusive, and self-sustaining local economy.

Agric Africa Development (AAD) has emerged as a beacon of hope and transformation in this space. Through initiatives such as *“One Woman, One Farm, One Business”* and *“One Residence, One Garden,”* AAD continues to empower women, nurture youth, and revitalise agricultural livelihoods across our communities.

I am aware of the impactful programmes this organisation is implementing in areas such as KwaMashu, Mbumbulu, Clermont, and Hammarsdale. These initiatives embody the true spirit of participatory development, where knowledge, mentorship, and opportunity intersect to build sustainable futures.

At the eThekwini Municipality, we share this commitment wholeheartedly. Our development programmes place young people at the centre of economic renewal, linking agriculture to food security, environmental sustainability, and enterprise creation.

We view agriculture not merely as an industry, but as a catalyst for empowerment — one that connects social justice with economic opportunity. By nurturing the skills and ambitions of emerging farmers, we are cultivating a generation capable of ensuring both our country's food security and its long-term economic resilience.

As we celebrate the South African Agricultural Awards 2025, we also honour every farmer, mentor, and young person who is part of this transformative movement. These awards not only recognise excellence — they tell a story of resilience and determination; a story of South Africans who, against all odds, continue to plant, nurture, and grow.

On behalf of the people of eThekwini, I extend heartfelt appreciation to the Agric Africa Development and AgriSETA for your leadership, partnership, and vision. You remind us that true development is not achieved in isolation — it is cultivated through collaboration, purpose, and perseverance.

Let us continue to grow together — planting not only seeds in our soil, but hope in the hearts of our people.

Thank you, and welcome once again to this inspiring occasion.