



MEDIA RELEASE

UK HIGH COMMISSION AND SA GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES JOIN SOLIDARITY FUND ON VISIT TO FARMING INPUT BENEFICIARIES. | 29 MARCH 2021

Johannesburg, 29 March 2021 – On the 18th of March, representatives from the Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner to South Africa, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), as well as the Solidarity Fund paid a visit to the Bojanala District in Rustenburg, North West Province. The aim was to engage with the input suppliers and beneficiaries of the Fund’s Farming Input programme in the village of Mogwase and assess the effectiveness of this initiative in achieving its stated objectives.

The Farming Input programme is designed to enable subsistence farmers in all 882 traditional councils to purchase key farming inputs with a R2 000 e-voucher, allowing them to continue to produce food and prevent their households from being pushed into a poverty trap. The Solidarity Fund approved a R75 million farming input voucher intervention, as part of its efforts to ameliorate the negative consequences of COVID-19 restrictions. Subsequently, the UK Government committed co-funding of R25 million to this intervention, bringing the total initiative budget to R100 million. DALRRD assisted with the identification, verification and registration of input suppliers, while CoGTA and LandNNEs (Land Network National Engagement Strategy) assisted in the identification of beneficiaries.

“One of the many impacts that the pandemic has had on communities is the inability of previously self-sufficient households to provide for themselves.” Said Wendy Tlou, Exec Head: Humanitarian Response & Behaviour Change Pillars, Solidarity Fund. “This programme is aimed at providing these farmers with meaningful and immediate support so that they can continue farming and contributing to their families.”

The field visit began at Mogwase Hardware, a local input supplier where representatives witnessed first-hand the redemption process and engaged with farmers and suppliers. Following a short presentation and exhibition of the various inputs typically redeemed by farmers the delegation then proceeded to visit beneficiaries in order to assess the impact of the initiative and receive feedback from those directly affected by the programme.

Benefits have already accrued to the small-scale farmers, and the community alike as a result of the programme. A sustainable community ecosystem has developed with farmers benefiting from purchases of their crops while addressing food insecurity in their immediate environment. Ellie Masego, a Farming Input Voucher recipient that received a visit from the delegation on the day said: "This voucher and help we have received has really made a big difference as we have been struggling. Now I am able to extend my vegetable garden so that I can improve my life and that of my community."

Approximately 47,000 beneficiaries across all nine provinces were targeted to receive e-vouchers as part of the initiative. Since inception in December 2020, over 43 000 beneficiaries have registered, and been issued with e-vouchers, and over 60% of the e-vouchers have been redeemed to date.

"This visit will play an important role in helping to understand the impact of the initiative first-hand." Stated Chris Austin, Development Director, UK High Commission. "As the global pandemic continues, it is vital that the work and programmes undertaken to alleviate suffering and poverty create the maximum impact possible. This initiative is a bold step to uplift individual households as well as the communities they live in."

For detailed information and reporting about donations received, projects and approvals, as well as the impact the Fund is having, visit www.solidarityfund.co.za

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