

## **FACE TO FACE INTERACTION WITH FARM DWELLERS**

The Executive Mayor of Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality, Councillor Malefu Vilakazi, reached out to the farming communities when she hosted an Imbizo at Lechabile Trust Farm outside Ladybrand in Mantsopa Local Municipality this past Sunday.

She was accompanied by the Mayor of Mantsopa Local Municipality, Councillor Sello Ntsepe, Councillors from both the district and local municipality and representatives of various government departments.

The Executive Mayor also donated food parcels and blankets to several families in the area.

Communities from Lechabile Trust Farm and neighbouring farms came in their numbers to the Imbizo, which was an opportunity for them to have face to face interaction with their political leadership and have their concerns addressed.

“The district municipality decided to reach out to these farming communities as most of the time they feel neglected and left out by the government in most of its programmes and services.

“We are here to listen to you and hear directly from you what your concerns are,” Vilakazi told the farming community as she stood up to address them.

Issues raised by the community ranged from lack of housing, electricity, water and farming equipment. Some were issues of concern with regarding to their stay on the farms as some farm owners threaten them with evictions, while others were complaints were relating to lack of government services.

“We have been granted this farm by government but our main challenge is that we do not have farming equipment to do farming activities. We are also struggling with water,” said Tjhipisa Mabeya, who is one of the beneficiaries of Lechabile Trust Farm.

Teboho Mohapi from a neighbouring farm said they needed a place to stay because the farm belonged to someone else. His statement was supported by Sabata Morobi, who has been staying on this farm since 1979, with claims that the farm owners already want them out of that farm.

Mayor Ntsepe explained to the community that some of the concerns were already being addressed by the municipality and the Free State Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs. He added that were some of the community members, who were also employed in the Community Works Programme.

In responding to the issues raised by the community, the Executive Mayor said all the concerns have been noted and will dealt with accordingly the district and local municipality as well as relevant government departments.