

OPENING AND WORD OF WELCOME: 2014 AGBIZ CONGRESS

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Deputy Chairman: Agbiz

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Delegates and members of the Agricultural Business Chamber, or Agbiz, as you now all know it, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a privilege to welcome you all to the 2014 Agbiz Congress!

Your presence and numbers, the diversity of representation and also the number of dignitaries present today, are testimony indeed to the importance of this event to our country, our economy and our sector.

We welcome foremost our members and their respective representatives. Our members are the most important asset of our organization. They come from all over South Africa, are engaged in a diverse range of agribusinesses, and make a major contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, and thus the wealth, of our country. But their contribution goes much further than just a contribution to pure economic growth and wealth, as the immense role they play in rural development and sustainable employment in the rural environment is rarely recognized and discounted. Your constructive participation and contribution is essential to take agriculture and especially agribusiness forward in our country.

We have noted a significant number of guests from the governmental sector, such as from the National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, the National Agricultural Marketing Council, IDC, Land Bank, Western Cape Department of Agriculture, Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, Limpopo Department of Agriculture, Mpumalanga Economic Development Agency, Universities, Transnet Freight rail, and others. This bears a strong and encouraging message of positive engagement and partnership formation in order to tackle the challenges and problems facing our country together.

We are also privileged to have representation from organized agriculture and agriculture industry organizations here today, such as ASUF, Agri SA, Agri Wes-Kaap, SASA, SAPA, NCM, Potatoes SA, SATI, Grain SA, Mpumalanga Agri Skills Development, Fish SA, FERTASA, AHI, and others, lest I have left anyone out.

From the private sector we have excellent guest representation, including a number of potential members showing keen interest, and we heartily welcome our guests representing Sakata Seed, John Deere, Technoserve, Toyota Tsusho Africa, TSB Sugar, Munich Re, Resource Consulting Services, Omnia Fertilizers, Oceana Group, Lona Citrus, Hilton Lambert, Cape Wools, Capital Harvest, Cape Value, Breede Valley Fruit Processors, BathoPele ADI, Agri-Expo, Agriconsult Africa, Fresh Produce Markets, and others. Also to our

guests from the governments of the United States of America and Lesotho, a most sincere welcome to you.

Building on the success of hosting the Agbiz/IFAMA Student Case Competition at our 2012 Congress, we are again staging this event. Leading agribusiness students from our agricultural universities are identified, sponsored and participate in a business case competition. We have no fewer than 16 top students from 6 universities represented here today. A very warm welcome to you and we trust that you will find the experience enriching and stimulating. A sincere thank you to those members of Agbiz that have generously invested in these students to also broaden their world and perspectives. You will see these students with their neat jackets and sponsors' logo. Please engage with them and make them feel welcome!

The presence of the media and their reports of these proceedings are critical to successfully convey the messages of this Agbiz Congress. We appreciate your participation at this event today and tomorrow, and recognize the important role you play in informing the agricultural sector and the general public at large of the important story of agriculture, agribusiness and food security in South Africa.

Agbiz will later recognize and thank our sponsors individually and in detail, but allow me to also welcome most sincerely the representatives of our sponsors here today. Without your contributions it would not be possible to host such a distinguished

event. Let's remember them, support them, and give them a big hand so long.

Lastly I wish to welcome our guest speakers to our Agbiz Congress and express my sincere thanks to them. I am confident that you will all add much value to our Congress and the industry as a whole.

The Agbiz Congress is a major and biennial event on the calendar of the Agbiz, and includes the closed members' meeting that is held at the conclusion of the open session. During this session matters such as discussion of the Chairman's Report, the audited financial statements, membership matters, and the election of office bearers will be dealt with.

Ladies and gentlemen, I trust that you will find this Congress informative and constructive. I trust that it will pose challenges and stimulate your strategic thinking. I trust that you will benefit from the networking opportunity and go away tomorrow feeling enlightened and enriched.

Thank You!