



**Government  
of Flanders**

GenderCC-SA Women for Climate Justice  
Victoria Yards, 14a Viljoen Street, corner Victoria  
Laurentsville, Johannesburg

23 March 2021

## **CLIMATE-SMART NURSERY TO BOOST RURAL JOB CREATION**

Plans to develop a successful fruit and vegetable agro-processing cooperative in Vhembe District in Limpopo - one of many drought stricken municipalities in the province - are well underway in Mutale village. Following extensive training and workshops with beneficiaries of the Vhembe Agro-processing Cooperative, the nursery has received renewed production capacity despite an eight-month delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The climate-smart nursery will target local farmers and produce at least fifty-thousand mango trees and tomato seedlings in its early stages as well as create jobs through training nine lead farmers to run the nursery.

GenderCC-SA director, Bertha Chiroro says capacitating the cooperative with infrastructure and beneficiaries through skills development is imperative as the region produces a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

“Our farmers have a lot of resources at their disposal. They know how to farm, they want to farm and feed their families and take their children to school. We need to ensure we capacitate them and empower them with marketing strategies to become climate-smart enterprises,” she explained.

### **Tackling unemployment and inequality**

The Vhembe Agro-processing Cooperative is one of GenderCC-SA's flagship projects supported and funded by the Government of Flanders through the Gender and Climate Resilience Initiative (GCRCI) project. The third phase of the project will focus on capacitating the cooperative with machinery. This will amongst others ensure:

- > Processing of mangoes to atchar
- > Drying and production of pickled mangoes
- > Processing of fruit and vegetable juice; and
- > Production of bio-diesel

GenderCC-SA recently conducted a site visit in Mutale following numerous farmer workshops on new ways of farming for beneficiaries and farmers through support from the Government of Flanders. Speaking during a site visit in Mutale, Development Cooperation Attaché of the Government of Flanders, Nikolas Bosscher, says the cooperative has great potential to grow and succeed.

“The Vhembe Agro-Processing Cooperative has the potential to become a successful agro-processing business. South Africa has various internal and external market opportunities, the trick is the ability to have a market analysis of the environment to identify the potential areas,” says Bosscher.

Funding from the Government of Flanders has gone a long way in empowering and training farmers on climate change and driving awareness on new farming practices. Madambi Muvhulawa, chairperson of the Vhembe Agro-processing Cooperative says climate change initiatives are vital to the sustainability of livelihoods from farming. “The newly constructed nursery will give farmers access to trees that are adaptable and minimise the adverse effect on the environment.”

The GCRCI-project aims to mainly empower women small-scale farmers to tackle the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality by helping them build Climate resilient agriculture enterprises due to their vulnerability to climate change. The eradication of rural poverty is identified as one of the most sustainable ways of helping rural women adapt to climate change.

*For more information, contact: Bertha Chiroro, Director of GenderCC-SA at:*

[bertha@gendercc.org.za](mailto:bertha@gendercc.org.za)

[www.gendercc.org.za](http://www.gendercc.org.za)