

Didiza commends agri sector's contribution to economy

Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Minister, Thoko Didiza, says growth in the agricultural sector signifies the importance and influence of the sector in the nation's economy.



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Didiza's remarks come after the latest figures released by Statistics South Africa on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the second quarter of 2023, showing that the agricultural sector was once again, one of the biggest contributors to the country's economic growth.

The report showed that the agricultural sector grew by 4.2% in the second quarter of 2023, fuelled largely by a good summer harvest of grains, and oilseeds commodities, coupled with solid horticultural exports.

The report also showed that South Africa has, in the second quarter of 2023, exported agricultural products worth R60.2bn, which is almost 13% higher than the corresponding period last year.

Didiza commended the agricultural sector's continued contribution to the country's economy, noting that currently, the country is expected to harvest 16.4 million tonnes of maize and about 743,000 tonnes of sunflower, a crop size that will bode well for consumers, as food inflation will subside.

SA's agriculture footprint in global markets

"The growth in agriculture and its contribution to the country's economy can be attributed to the increasing footprint of South Africa's agricultural products in the international markets.

"This is underscored by government's decisions to invest resources in opening new export markets, whilst maintaining trade relations with existing markets," Didiza said.

Didiza said already in July 2023, food inflation had receded to 9.9%, providing a much-needed relief to consumers.

In August 2023, the Minister secured new export markets for avocados, beef and other animal products to countries including Saudi Arabia and China.

"The drive to open new export opportunities will continue as government strives to grow a competitive, resilient and export-oriented agriculture," Didiza said.

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