



**RECEIVES:** Minister of Agriculture Jabulani 'Buy Cash' Mabuza.

## India Government sponsors Maphalaleni, Lubuyane project

**By Zwelihle Sukati**

The ministry of agriculture yesterday received the second batch of material for the approximately E8 million irrigation project, sponsored by the Government of India.

The donation was received by Minister of Agriculture Jabulani 'Buy Cash' Mabuza.

The irrigation project is at Lubuyane and Maphalaleni in the Hhohho region.

Minister Mabuza acknowledged that this was not the first meeting about this project after a visit to the development site late last year, where both parties jointly commissioned the start of the project implementation after the sponsor government made available half of the total US\$400 000 pledged in support of the project.

### Receive

"Today, we are gathered to receive the second half on behalf of the Government of Eswatini and on behalf of the community of Maphalaleni, where the project is implemented," Mabuza said.

The scheme covers over 45 hectares which is beneficiary to at least 50 homesteads, translating to approximately 350 people in the area.

The project, when completed will improve household income and transform the economic landscape of the areas.

"The project has three phases: Phase I is the construction of a weir which is a water diverting structure to channel water from the Lubuyane river into the conveyance system. This phase has been completed. Phase 2 is the construction of the conveyance system, which includes the pipeline

conveying the water from the weir to the edge of the field. Most of the work has been done as it has been reported that it is at 70 per cent completion.

The funding made available by your government has been able to cover the two phases mentioned above. Phase 3 is the installation of the sprinkler irrigation system on the 45 hectares and getting the fields ready for planting, including community training.

### Budget

Through the 2020/21 budget, government has made available the required resources so that the project can be fully implemented and the community benefits as soon as possible.

As a ministry, we are grateful to both the Government of India and Government of Eswatini for supporting this project.

"Now that all the funding required for the project is available, we are optimistic that we should be able to have all development work completed by October this year and have the first crop of vegetables by December," the minister said.

He said it was in this spirit that one wishes to see more of such investments, commitment and collaboration.

"I am sure Your Excellency, despite the challenges we are all facing you will do whatever is possible to lobby for the replication of such good work in other communities."

The minister went on to invite other partners, the private sector and the nation at large to join hands with the ministry and government in addressing the issue of food insecurity and poverty, exacerbated by COVID 19, which is affecting all people.