

PRESS RELEASE

WESTERN CAPE - BURGUNDY WINE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME: NEW BOOK CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

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Picture: *From left to right: Ivan Meyer, Western Cape Minister Cultural Affairs and Sport, Ms Sofia Otokoré. Second-Vice President to the Regional Council of Burgundy, Mr Joseph Plaatjies (participant and former Farmworker of the Year) and Gerrit van Rensburg, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development*

ELSENBURG – Last night, the Western Cape – Burgundy Wine Exchange Programme celebrated its 10th birthday on a high note with the launch of a beautiful new book, “Bourgogne Western Cape: Vines and Life, encounters and sharing” by Florence Zito and Philippe Maupetit. The book reflects on 10 years of co-operation, especially in the agricultural field, portraying a number of participating farmers, farmworkers and training institutions.

The Thuthukile Skweyiya Western Cape-Burgundy Wine Exchange Programme, was named after South Africa's former ambassador to France and UNESCO, who started it in 2001. Its main objective is to motivate young people to improve their social status through education and training, made possible through a common commitment by participants, professionals and politicians of these two regions.

Van Rensburg had only praise for the programme which “changed the lives of farm workers in South Africa. We have seen many examples of ordinary farm workers departing for France as part of the programme, only to return as highly motivated and ambitious workers who then progress rapidly on the career ladder.” The Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Market Access Programme also empowered new farmers through the Exchange Programme “especially in terms of knowledge exchange and securing international market access for their new produce.”

Ms Sofia Otokoré. Second-Vice President to the Regional Council of Burgundy congratulated everyone on “ten years of sharing, consolidarity and commitment. It was an investment in the participants and the professionals and innovation.” Ms Otokoré said this was a project she was extremely proud of and she is looking forward to another ten years.

A challenge was put to the local participants to learn French by Dr Ivan Meyer, Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport. “Language transcends nations.” Minister Meyer also conveyed Premier Helen Zile's congratulations to everyone who had the perseverance, commitment and dedication to see this project grow from seed to fruit.

A Western Cape Burgundy Alumni programme was also called to life.

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