

# High prices a threat to food security

High food prices pose a serious threat to food security at both household and country level, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Tina Joemat Pettersson told the National Assembly on Tuesday.



(Image: GCIS)

Presenting her Budget Vote Speech to the National Council of Provinces, Joemat-Pettersson said lower-income South Africans are the biggest victims of upward trends in food prices and most of South Africa's poorest people spend about 60% of their income on food.

She said price hikes for cereals and other staples can force the poor to cut back on the quantity and quality of their meals.

"This may result in increased food insecurity and malnutrition, with tragic implications in the short and long term, particularly for children, the aged and other vulnerable members of our society.

"Price hikes also limit the ability of poor households to meet other important non-food expenses, such as education and health care," she said.

The minister said a state of food security can be considered as achieved when all people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

"Regrettably, despite the significant decline in the numbers of households vulnerable to hunger in South Africa over the past decade, according to STATS-SA 12 million (22.7%) South Africans have insufficient access to food," she said.

## Food Security and Nutrition Policy

Minister Joemat-Pettersson also announced that her department has developed a Food Security and Nutrition Policy, which

is currently in the Cabinet processes.

The aim of the Food Security and Nutrition Policy is to reduce the incidence of acute and chronic hunger to zero by 2030 and thereby contribute towards poverty eradication, increased human dignity and improved quality of life for all citizens.

"The approval of the Food Security and Nutrition Policy is one of our priorities for the current financial year.

"The main objective of this policy is to ensure that there is food security and good nutrition at all levels and segments of our society, and at household level," she said.

The Minister said although South Africa has national food security through its own production and trade, at household-level food security is threatened by globalisation, international trade regimes, the poor storage, post-harvest process and distribution of food.

## **Interventions to combat high food prices**

One of the interventions initiated by the department to combat high food prices and household food insecurity is the Integrated Food Security Production Intervention (IFSPI).

This initiative seeks to afford smallholder farmers, communities and households an ability to increase production of basic food and therefore increase access and availability of such to attain basic food security at household and local levels.

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