

Government identifies land for redistribution

As part of accelerating land reform, government has identified land parcels owned by the state for redistribution, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Thursday, 7 February.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

“Strategically located land will be released to address human settlements needs in urban and peri-urban areas,” he said, delivering the State of the Nation Address (SONA) in Cape Town.

Ramaphosa commended the many South Africans who participated in the work of the Constitutional Review Committee on Expropriation of Land Without Compensation, in the dialogue that ensued through the length and the breadth of the country. The National Assembly agreed last year to establish an ad hoc committee to initiate and introduce legislation before the end of the fifth Parliament to amend Section 25 of the Constitution so that expropriation of land without compensation is made explicit, as a legitimate option for land reform.

Ramaphosa applauded the members of the Constitutional Review Committee for remaining focused throughout this period and sifting through the submissions that were made by ordinary South Africans and their organisations.

“We will support the work of the Constitutional Review Committee tasked with the review of Section 25 of the Constitution to unambiguously set out provisions for expropriation of land without compensation. Alongside this constitutional review process we tasked the deputy president to lead the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land Reform to fast-track land reform,”

the president said.

An advisory panel of experts headed by Dr Vuyo Mahlathi, established to advise government on its land reform programme, is expected to table its report by the end of March 2019.

Potential of agriculture remains underdeveloped

Meanwhile, Ramaphosa said that the potential of agriculture in South Africa for job creation and economic growth still remains largely underdeveloped.

“South Africa still has large areas of underutilised or unproductive land. There are around 250,000 small emerging farmers who are working the land and need support in fully developing their businesses,” he said.

Ramaphosa maintained that agriculture exports are an important source of revenue for the economy, and “developing our agricultural sector is key to enhancing our food security and for attracting investment”.

“We are fortunate to have an agricultural sector that is well-developed, resilient and diversified. We intend to use it as a solid foundation to help develop agriculture in our country for the benefit of all.

“Through an accelerated programme of land reform, we will work to expand agricultural output and promote economic inclusion. Our policy and legislative interventions will ensure that more land is made available for agriculture, industrial development and human settlements,” Ramaphosa said.

Stimulus package in agriculture

As part of the stimulus package in agriculture, Ramaphosa added that government has invested significantly in comprehensive farmer development support to ensure that restituted and communal land is productively utilised.

“We will continue to prioritise targeted skills development and capacity building programmes for smallholder and emerging black farmers. In the coming year, we will continue to focus on high value agricultural products with export potential such as our fruit, wine and vegetable industries, as well as poultry and red meat,” the president said.

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