

Expropriation Bill will create a clear framework, says Didiza

Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Minister Thoko Didiza says she is pleased the Expropriation Bill has been tabled in Parliament.



sandro mattei via [Unsplash](#)

"This important bill will ensure alignment with the Constitution as well as creating a clear framework on how expropriation for public purpose and public interest will be undertaken," Didiza said.

Addressing the media in Pretoria on Tuesday, Didiza said it is important that people familiarise themselves with the legislation and make inputs to the parliamentary process as lawmakers craft the legislation that will become part of the legal framework.

Didiza said land reform is an important economic base for agricultural development, industrialisation and human settlement.

"Land reform, therefore, plays a critical role in enabling those who have been historically disadvantaged to have an asset that can give them a foothold in economic participation," Didiza said.

She said the process of land reform will also ensure social cohesion and inclusion.

"Government has committed itself in supporting the new entrants into the agricultural economy. We are also encouraged by the expression of support from a number of organisations who are willing to partner with government to make a success of those who have received land from the government either through restitution of land rights or land redistribution.

"As part of the Economic Recovery Plan tabled by the President, agriculture is one of those sectors of the economy that is poised to contribute positively to job creation, food security and economic growth, particularly as we strengthen our market access for South African agricultural products globally," Didiza said.

The Minister said in order to achieve improved economic growth as seen in the first and second quarter, the government needs to ensure that an enabling environment is created.

"The policy and regulatory environment will require certainty in order to eliminate negative perception from would-be investors in this sector. Agricultural infrastructure, particularly for irrigation remains critical in particular in new areas that offer new opportunities for inclusive growth," Didiza said.

On 1 October 2020, the government gave an update on the State land that has been released as part of the 700,000 hectares announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address in February 2020.

The government also announced that it will be advertising 529,000 ha amounting to 894 farms across the country for release on 15 October 2020. The advert was to run for a month ending on 15 November 2020.

Didiza explained that the land in question refers to land that the then government earmarked for the consolidation of homelands and was then held by the South African Development Trust.

"In some of these lands, farmers were allocated hectares of land in different sizes depending on the agricultural viability of the land.

"Some of these lands like the Makhathini Flats were managed by Umjindi Management Company," Didiza said.

Didiza some pockets of land was then used by communities for grazing though no formal consolidation had been done.

To date, the government has received 5,838 online applications which include cooperatives/companies and individuals. A number of physical applications have also been received and will be consolidated after the closing date.

"The land rights enquiry has commenced and a number of farm dwellers, farmers and communities have been met. The process will continue until such time that all state-owned land has been recorded and accounted," the Minister said.

With regard to allegations made about government officials who have written letters of eviction to individuals and communities on state land, Didiza said the conduct by those officials is unacceptable and criminal.

"We want to advise our communities to bring these issues to the office of the acting director-general for attention and to the nearest police station," she said.