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PRESS RELEASE: Agbiz's reaction on the SONA

“In these tough economic times, it was refreshing to hear President Ramaphosa’s recommitment to placing South Africa’s economic growth at the forefront of the sixth administration’s agenda,” an Agbiz spokesperson said. “We were also pleased to hear the president’s re-emphasis of the need to implement the National Development Plan (NDP) and the country’s commitment to vision 2030. In this vision, the agricultural value chain plays a crucial role in the growth and stability of rural economies.” Agbiz has long supported and argued for the implementation of Chapter six of the NDP over the past few years as it is the roadmap to inclusive growth in the sector and will address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

“We are encouraged by the president’s pragmatism regarding contemporary issues facing the agricultural sector such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, water infrastructure and increasing the pace of technology adoption across the globe. These factors could affect the growth and competitiveness of the South African agricultural sector in the global markets.”

While an increasing focus on the aforementioned issues is encouraged, the lack of clarity regarding the land reform policy framework remains a concern to South African agribusinesses. “We note the progress made regarding the report of the Presidential Advisory Panel on Agriculture and Land Reform and look forward to engaging with its content and focus once it is made public. We will continue to engage with government in various fora on crafting a sustainable solution to land reform in South Africa that is based on the principle of public-private and community partnerships as envisioned in Chapter six of the NDP.”

“For the agricultural sector to thrive, South Africa not only needs to boost production, but also increase access to the export market, and we were pleased that the president acknowledged the importance of export-led growth in the sector. While we like the tone of the president’s speech, we remain cautiously optimistic as the challenges facing

South Africa today will require a greater commitment to action than ever before. The focus must now be on the how, so providing detailed content to the broad policy direction and implementation will be key. Agbiz will continue to engage with various ministries and SOEs over the coming months.”

Enquiries:

Wandile Sihlobo
Agbiz Chief Economist
Email: wandile@agbiz.co.za
Tel: 012 807 6686

Theo Boshoff
Agbiz Manager: Legal Intelligence
Email: theo@agbiz.co.za
