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Outcomes of Operation Phakisa on agriculture, rural development and land reform officially released

On 25 February 2017, the President of the Republic officially launched the outcome of the Operation Phakisa that took place in September and October 2016 focusing on agriculture, rural development and land reform. “Phakisa” comes from the Sesotho word meaning to ‘hurry up’ and is based on the Malaysian model of “Big, Fast, Results” which tasks public and private sector stakeholders to jointly identify bottlenecks constraining service delivery.

At the end of a 5 week workshop the participants formulated a total of 27 initiatives aimed at growth and transformation in the sector. A number of commodity-specific initiatives were recommended by participants grouped into either livestock, crops or horticulture, whilst the majority of the initiatives focussed on cross-cutting issues such as labour, producer support, rural development and land reform.

Within the land reform grouping, participants critically analysed the root causes leading to some of the challenges faced by the programme and formulated five initiatives, including policy proposals and operational recommendations. These proposals briefly included the following main points;

- A range of alternative financing proposals need to be pursued that include alternative state-funded models, exploring commercial models that have already been implemented independently by private persons, as well as a range of hybrid models;
- A hybrid model of land restitution settlement whereby individuals within communities can opt for a stake in land, financial or other compensation to mitigate internal disputes within large community claims. Decentralisation within the commission was also recommended as an operational adjustment;
- ‘District Land Reform Delivery Centres’ should be piloted as a means to provide District Land Reform Committees with an operational arm and certainty regarding its legal standing;
- In anticipation of future legislative developments, an audit should be undertaken to record existing land rights in communal areas; and
- A policy should be considered whereby local government planning mechanisms are used to earmark peri-urban areas for land reform, including the human settlement aspect thereof, to address the oft-quoted ‘land-hunger’.

In his media address President Zuma announced that an ‘implementation plan’ will need to be developed by July 2017. In light of this deadline, the Phakisa team will need to liaise with all affected



stakeholders, both in government and private sector, in an attempt to secure buy-in. In the meantime, the affected stakeholders will need to critically assess the proposals in preparation. President Zuma also passed comments on “expropriation without compensation”, but this did not form part of the Phakisa outcomes.

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