



Women on Farms Project (WFP)

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Mr. Darrin Arends
3rd Floor
90 Plein Street
Cape Town

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Appropriations and Committee Secretaries

Women on Farms Project (WFP) makes this submission, calling for the **increase in the Division of Revenue allocated to rural and farm households, municipalities and provinces**, on behalf of women farm workers and dwellers.

Established in 1996 and working with women farm workers and dwellers in the Western Cape and Northern Cape, Women on Farms Project is a feminist non-governmental organisation that believes in feminist solutions for dignified lives for farmwomen. Our vision is of an “engendered society that treats women who live and work on farms with dignity and respect in accordance with the constitutional rights guaranteed to all South African citizens.”

The Meeting Summary of National Treasury’s Briefing on the Division of Revenue Bill to the Standing Committee on Appropriations showed that the **Division of Revenue** was skewed in favour of rural households, municipalities and provincesⁱ. WFP welcomes this redistributive approach, as rural and farm communities were the most historically deprived during apartheid and therefore require more resources.

In the same session, the adequacy of National Treasury’s budget allocation was raised. While noting Treasury’s response that the question of adequacy was difficultⁱⁱ; it is WFP’s contention that current budgetary allocations to rural areas are still inadequate to address the structural inequalities inherited from centuries of commercial agriculture, apartheid and racialised capitalism.

Despite significant gains made within democratic South Africa, farm workers remain poor, marginalised and vulnerable. Women farm workers and dwellers remain landless, experience evictions, and earn low wages for the increasingly precarious seasonal work they do on farms. With poor health outcomes arising from generations of inadequate nutrition, exposure to pesticides, gender-based violence, and the legacy of the *dop* system, farmwomen also have low levels of formal education and literacy.

BOARD MEMBERS

Joy Watson (Chairperson), Colleen Titus (Treasurer), John Brown, Jo-Ann Johannes, Berenice Paulse, Colette Solomon (Director)



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WFP therefore recommends that in the interests of women farm workers and dwellers, additional revenue be allocated to ensure the following public services:

1. **Land redistribution:** Despite the fact that farmwomen make up the bulk of labour in commercial agriculture, women are less likely to benefit from government's redistribution programme. Between February and December 2020 there were 544 land beneficiaries - 30.5% were women and they received only 17.2% of the total hectares allocatedⁱⁱⁱ. WFP calls for a significantly increased budget allocation for the redistribution of land for women farm workers and dwellers, including unused state land and state land currently leased to commercial farmers.
2. **Health:** It is essential that rural clinics and hospitals be adequately staffed and resourced. Women's specific health needs, such as sexual and reproductive healthcare services, need to be prioritised. In addition, community-driven health services must be created to deal with a range of health problems, from pesticide exposure to addictions and conditions caused by foetal alcohol syndrome, a legacy of the *dop* system. WFP also advocates for the introduction of mobile clinics which provide psychosocial services for gender-based violence survivors, as well as government-financed shelters in all rural towns.
3. **Police:** More funding for rural police stations will result in *inter alia* the appointment of more police officers, gender-sensitivity training for police officers, police vans, and trauma rooms at police stations, from which farmwomen will benefit when reporting gender-based violence, including the enforcement of Protection Orders.
4. **Justice and Courts:** Additional revenue should be allocated to strengthening and resourcing rural courts, including more Sexual Offences Courts, increasing staff numbers and training staff to expeditiously deal with gender-based violence cases.
5. **Education:** Rural schools are overcrowded, under-staffed and under-resourced. Farm children face additional constraints such as transport, discrimination, high drop-out rates and aggravating factors such as evictions and seasonal household food insecurity. Matriculants on farms often find themselves excluded from tertiary education opportunities due to geography and economic constraints.
6. **Basic Income Grant:** While WFP welcomes the extension of the Social Relief of Distress grant for the next 12 months, it is, however, significantly less than the Food Poverty Line of R624. Given the low wages, seasonality and precarity of farmwomen's labour, growing mechanization on farms, etc. WFP is calling for a permanent Basic Income Grant which will ensure food security (especially during the off-season period) and cover other critical household expenses.

From Minister Godongwana's Budget Speech of 2022, it is evident that government is constrained by *inter alia* budgetary constraints and spending that worsens the fiscal deficit. For WFP, this is concrete evidence of the need for a **Wealth Tax** on the richest 1% of South Africans.

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The World Inequality Lab, affiliated to the University of the Witwatersrand, found that a **Wealth Tax** of 3% to 7% on the richest 1% of South Africans could raise about R70 to R160 billion per annum^{iv}. We believe that such revenue must be ring-fenced to finance the social redistributive spending mentioned above, for poor South Africans, including farm workers and dwellers.

A progressive solidarity Wealth Tax on the richest 1% of South Africans is therefore an untapped tax revenue source that can be used to reduce our large budget deficit, finance more redistributive social spending and address South Africa's wealth inequality.

We trust that our submission will be well received.

Regards,
Dr Kara Mackay and Dr Colette Solomon, on behalf of Women on Farms Project

References

ⁱ *Division of Revenue Bill: National Treasury Briefing*, Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2 March 2022.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Redistribution of land remains a man's world in South Africa*, Monty Fynn and Cecile van Schalkwyk for The Mail and Guardian, 6 February 2022.

^{iv} *A wealth tax for South Africa*, Aroop Chatterjee, Leo Czajka and Amory Gethin for University of Witwatersrand, January 2021.

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