**DRAFT DEBATE ON THE BUDGET VOTE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Chairperson, the EFF rejects budget vote 29 on agriculture, land reform and rural development. It is an uninspired budget, fundamentally out of touch with the reality of the land and agricultural challenges the country faces.
2. At the core of these challenges is lack of political will by this department to take tough decisions to salvage the little that is left of South African agriculture, and to fundamentally restructure the entire structure of the agrarian economy to ensure that land reform is widely redistributive, and that agriculture is largely responsible for sparking growth in the countryside.
3. To put matters into context, South Africa has seen a dramatic decline in the number of agricultural producers over the past decade. The dairy sector is one of the most seriously affected, with about 73% decline in the number of dairy farmers in the country.
4. These numbers are declining because most of these farms are bought by bigger enterprises who want to consolidate and monopolize agricultural production, but in real terms, lead to a dramatic reduction in the country’s ability to produce what it needs.
5. The result is that we now import basic products that we used to export as a country.
6. This could be corrected if the country were to revisit its decision to deregulate the agricultural sector and provide subsidies to agricultural producers.
7. There is no agricultural economy anywhere in the world that has developed without massive State regulation and investment. It is foolish to think that ours would grow and meet the demands of this generation without massive state support.
8. The State support needed for a restructured agriculture must however follow a massive and unrepentant programme of land redistribution in this country.
9. It is inexcusable and treasonous that today, 28 years since 1994, white people still own over 70% of agricultural land in this country, while African people, the primary subjects of land dispossession, own a little more than 4% of the land.
10. There is no determined effort in this budget and in previous budgets to drastically scale up land redistribution.
11. There is no policy or programmatic departure from the redundancy of the past two decades, and at this pace, it would take over a hundred years just to redistribute a mere 30% of the land back to African people.
12. We need a radical policy shift, and that minister, cannot be premised on your childish view sponsored by Johan Kirsten from Stellenbosch, that land reform can be successful if premised on a policy encourages white farmers to donate land for land reform purposes.
13. White farmers are beneficiaries of a vile system of colonial land dispossession and apartheid forced removals. They knowingly benefited from the dehumanization of black people.
14. It is naïve to think that today, they have some humanity and sense of guilt to give away this stolen land back to African people. It will simply never happen.
15. We need to expropriate land without compensation to resolve the centuries old land questions in this country. That is the only viable principle upon which a thoroughgoing programme of land redistribution and rural development can happen.
16. We offered you this opportunity to change for good the nature of land redistribution in this country and you declined it in favour of your white financiers.
17. But what is more despicable is that you are refusing to do the bare minimum even within the limits of the sell-out constitutional order in as far as land is concerned.
18. You have up to this day refused to develop an all-encompassing legislative framework to secure tenure rights of people living under strenuous tenure conditions on farms and in the former homelands.
19. You have dragged your feet in developing an overarching land redistribution legislation to guide the government’s land reform programme.
20. You have allowed people such as Jerome Ngwenya, the erstwhile chairperson of the Ingonyama Trust Board to continue mismanaging the affairs of that Board, thereby bringing into disrepute the honorable name of the Zulu Royal family.
21. You have refused to develop a comprehensive programme of pre and post settlement support to the few beneficiaries of land reform.
22. You have put into abeyance indefinitely the settlement of the land claims you opportunistically reopened in 2014, raising expectations on people for things you knew very well you had no intention of delivering.
23. You have failed in every imaginable aspect of land reform, and the electorate must finally see you for who you are and what you represent.
24. We reject this budget vote.