**DEBATE ON VOTE 29: AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

House chairperson,

1. The land reform programme since 1994 has been characterized by policy incoherence, political zigzags and administrative paralysis. The ruling ANC never had any intentions, let alone imaginations, to address the land question in this country. This was shown by the appointment of Derek Hanekom as first minister tasked to oversee land reform under the ANC government.
2. The 1994 government preferred a bourgeois inspired land reform with its narrower redistribution of land, usually to a limited group of beneficiaries over agrarian reform, as the latter is more progressive, developmental and covers not only a wide redistribution of land but also the provision of infrastructure, extension support services and a whole programme of redistributive and democratic reforms in the areas of land use-rights and tenure security.
3. There is a widespread agreement that land reform in South Africa has dismally failed and continuing to fail to deliver the changes many hoped it would. Racially based dislocation and dispossession were central features of colonial conquest and apartheid grand plan remain key features of this failure to this very day.

House chairperson,

1. To date, the department has not resolved the land claims lodged by the December 1998 deadline.
2. They have spent over R45 billion buying land from white farmers and giving people money instead of land.
3. Most recently, the department has indicated that it needs R68 billion to settle the remaining 6000 claims lodged in 1998.
4. This basically means that the department would need a further 30 to 40 years to settle land claims lodged in 1998.
5. The department has further failed to provide much needed support to land claimants who have had their claims settled.
6. Many of these farms are now derelict because there was no pre settlement planning, and now, no post settlement support.
7. The country’s land reform program is misguided as it is based on a narrow neo-liberal, macro-economic policy framework of keeping big farmers big and small farmers small in pursuit of maximum food production. But this is a scientifically unsound view. Large farms are not the most efficient way of producing food.
8. The inverse relationship between farm size and production has long been established.
9. The merger of the former Department of Agriculture and the former Department of Rural Development and Land Reform was expected to improve and streamline the delivery of services to farmers and land reform beneficiaries. However, nothing has changed and the opposite seems to be true as the merger of the two Departments and the reconfiguration of the new structure does not seem to have taken into account the complexities of some of the Programmes that have now been combined into one,
10. For example, the clustering of Food Security, Land Reform and Restitution into one Programme (Programme 3) could still not be justified as there is no clear alignment of interventions within the Programme. Land Reform, which has become a sub-programme of Programme 3, is not only about availing land for agricultural production but also for human settlement, tenure reform and security as well as economic development, which may not necessarily be agriculture-based.

House chairperson,

1. The amount of money spent by the department must force the ruling party to rethink its opposition to expropriation without compensation as articulated by the EFF. There is a need to concede these failures and quickly come to terms with a pressing urgency to correct them.
2. In reality, the budget allocation to the Department is not enough in light of the sectoral importance and the challenges it faces. However, the actual performance often does not justify a budgetary increase especially since the Department often underspends on important service delivery programmes and returns funds to the National Revenue Fund.

House chairperson,

1. The EFF in 2018, called and tabled a motion for the amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution with the emphasis for the abolishment of private ownership of land, and the transfer of the land as a whole to the people, and the State to hold this land in custody on behalf of the people as a whole. This noble mission was forestall and frustrated by ANC with the collaboration of its rightwing allies led by the DA and western lobby groups.

1. We are of a firm view that there is only one way out of this conundrum and policy paralysis and that is the expropriation of all South Africa’s land without compensation for equal redistribution. This is the only way we can significantly alter the agrarian, class structure and power relationships of rural communities.

Lastly, we reject this budget vote.