



**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT (DALRRD)**

**2019/20 BUDGET VOTE SPEECH**

**BY**

**DEPUTY MINISTER: M SKWATSHA (MP)**

**16 JULY 2019**

Honourable House Chairperson

Honourable Minister Thoko Didiza

Deputy Minister Sdumo Dlamini

Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Honourable Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee

Esteemed Members of Parliament

Director-General and Acting Director-General

Our Stakeholders & Entities

Executive Management from the Department

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

## **Introduction**

A few days ago, our country paid homage to an epoch-making moment in the political history of our struggle when the High Command of uMkhonto WeSizwe was arrested at Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia on 11 July 1963. (56 years ago)

More than 1500 kilometres away, almost a month later in Cape Town, a man who was deeply involved in the underground activities of the ANC was captured at a hide-out.

Within a month this South African Communist Party and ANC activist became the first political detainee under National Party regime to die in detention at the hands of the notorious apartheid state security police.

This same fate that befell Imam Abdullah Haron who was brutally killed in 1969.

His name was Looksmart Khulile Ngudle of Gugulethu, a migrant from Middledrift in the Eastern Cape.

This morning, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to dedicate my contribution to the memory of Comrade Looksmart Khulile Ngudle. His son Siyanda Ngudle is here with us today.

One of the last people to see Comrade Ngudle alive has graced us with her presence, that is the veteran Mildred "Mme" Ramakaba-Lesiea, she who had joined the ANC in 1954.

Comrade Ngudle was an organiser of note. He was credited for recruiting for many people including General Zola Nqose of Gugulethu into the ranks of uMkhonto WeSizwe.

This fearless leader worked very closely with Isithwalandwe Dennis Goldberg.

We should not forget these stalwarts and martyrs. Today when we enjoy the privileges of our freedom and democracy, we should remember that we stand on the shoulders of these giants.

We may forgive, but we should never forget.

In two days, our country - and indeed the entire world - will honour the birthday of one of the greatest statemen, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, His

selfless sacrifice should be a source of encouragement and inspiration to us all.

**Honourable Chair:**

I now turn my attention to the work we have been doing in land reform which is constituted by redistribution, restitution and tenure. In this regard, we consider various interventions such as the promotion of food security, rapid release of land for urban human settlement and growing our economy.

We gather here on the cusp of history. Our road map is cast in stone. We have a serious challenge on our hands.

We are faced with a massive task of speeding up the process of resolving the land ownership patterns in this country and tackling the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, as outlined in the National Development Plan.

History will judge us harshly if we were to miss the opportunity of undoing one of the major hallmarks of oppression and colonial domination.

We have the opportunity of restoring the dignity to our land dispossessed people. We can create a better life for all by redistributing the land, facilitating the creation of an equal and just society.

Without being alarmist, we have arrived at the moment of reckoning. We have no obligation, but to address the land question decisively. We have a duty to promote a diverse farming landscape in this country.

Isikhalo somntwana sihoye!

We heard the cries of our people on the platforms of the public roadshows of the Constitutional Review that investigated this vexing land question.

The legislative wheels of the vehicle are in motion to change Section 25 of our constitution. Those who always beat the drums of doom will be disappointed that the sky will not cave in when the legislation is finally changed. The expropriation of land without compensation will soon be a reality.

Gone are the days when farming was the sole preserve of certain khaki-clad Safari suit men. Such stereotypes belong to the dust bin of history.

Collectively, we have the capacity and the political will to execute this task successfully. What counts in our favour is that we have the experience of having defeated far bigger challenges.

During the State of the Nation address, President Ramaphosa directed us when he said:

“We need to focus on those actions that will have the greatest impact, actions that will catalyse faster movement forward, both in the immediate term and over the next 10 years.”

Today we heard Minister Didiza also reiterating the strides that our reconfigured Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is undertaking.

For the next few minutes, I shall outline the highlights of the programmes of our Department.

### **Land Tenure & Administration**

We are in the process of revamping the Extension of Security Tenure Act of 1997 to protect one of the most vulnerable groups in our society – the farmworkers.

Honourable members, the revised legislation will go a long way to restore the dignity of the farm workers. In the next few months, our Department will publish the regulations for public comment as part of the compulsory consultative process.

In 2018/2019, our Department assisted nine provinces to implement the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management. To this end, the Department developed 44 District Rural Development Plans to facilitate enhanced integrated spatial planning initiatives in these poverty-stricken areas.

Plans are underway to speed up the implementation and assessment of these initiatives in the current financial year. The provision of the capacity support to the municipalities will be key.

We have begun with the mapping out environmentally sensitive areas and assessment of the project impacts of climate change to 2050 as well as targeted potential nodes for migration and various forms of development.

The National Spatial Development Framework will guide policies on population growth management and agricultural land tenure as it is projected to diminish in areas to 2050 against a projected population growth of some 17 million.

To date, the Surveyor-General has approved cadastral surveys to create 44 772 sectional title units from 2 649 Sectional Title Schemes. This has resulted in the approval of General Plans for 749 new townships, 122 518 land parcels and 167 290 new land rights entities.

As a result, we have seen growth in housing, infrastructure, commercial and other land related economic activities.

Chairperson and members, with respect to fulfilling the promise of conferring legally secure tenure, we will need to learn from our own efforts and others' experiences with recording rights to land and provide the basis for recourse in instances of rights violations, particularly against women and other vulnerable citizens.

Honourable members, in 2018 the Department introduced to Parliament the Electronic Deeds Registration Systems Bill to facilitate the development of an electronic deeds registration system to boost the registration of large volumes of deeds and decrease the registration process.

In 2019 a Deeds Registries Transformation policy will be prioritised for tabling to Cabinet. The policy will result into the amendment or repeal of the Deeds Registries Act (47),1937

The magnitude of the challenges we face require us not to be complacent. We are currently fine-tuning our vast land reform programs to achieve maximum results. We are strengthening the capacity of the 1 602 Community Property Associations so that they can improve on the delivery of their mandate.

We have noted that CPAs are marred by a series of problems ranging from alleged corrupt practices and bad governance. We owe to our people to act when we encounter such problems.

These changes are part of the process of improving the management of land tenure system to which our Minister referred earlier. The mediation and legal services provided by the Land Rights Management Facility have been extended to assist CPAs in instances with tenure rights issues affecting their members.

### **Land Redistribution**

In the financial year under review, our Department acquired 85 000 hectares of land at a cost of R590-million for the benefit of several poorest districts in provinces such as Free State, Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape.

These communities are producing priority commodities ranging from crops livestock vegetables and forestry in line with our Agricultural Policy Action Plan.

It is common cause that we are also experiencing structural challenges in our economy. The triple challenges – namely unemployment,

inequality and poverty - are worsening, and they adversely impact our children, women and youth.

Exacerbating this untenable situation is that pockets of poverty are concentrated in our rural and peri-urban areas. We plan to redress this by acquiring 94 050 hectares, of which 42 750 hectares will be allocated to smallholder farmers made up of women, youth and persons with disabilities for agricultural production.

The budget allocation for the land acquisition is R 595 million.

Chairperson and honourable members, *"azilime siyetjeni"*, let us soldier on accordingly. Our commitment was to acquire 81000 hectares with 40 500 hectares of the land targeted for smallholders, 9100 hectares for labour tenants and farm workers.

Earlier I spoke about demystifying the character of a farmer. Perhaps we should run public campaigns to encourage our youth in the townships to take up farming. Young people should tilt the land. We should not allow land in arable areas to lie fallow. We must make farming cool.

On the Land Development support, we recorded some important progress. We concluded agreements with commodity organizations to support land reform farmers. In this financial year, we have undertaken to support 162 farms with a budget allocation of R 1.3 billion for the year.

We are also committed to prioritize the implementation of on-farm infrastructure support for PLAS Farms. We targeted 166 farms, but we ended up supporting 208 farms.

On property management, we completed the assessment of 2200 Pro-Active Land Acquisition strategy farms.



In support of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Land and Agriculture call to prioritize state land for rapid release, we have assessed 2155 farms for possible release. We are also prioritizing release of state land for the settlement of restitution claims.

### **Restitution**

Furthermore, the target for claims for 2018/2019 was to settle 1151 Restitution of Land Rights Claims and finalize 991 claims. Only 502 land restitution claims were settled because of several challenges.

We experienced claimant disputes, beneficiary verification challenges, claimant's rejection of offers or changing offers, delays in gazetting of claims and disputed valuations. Collectively, these factors led to the decrease and slow pace of the finalization of the process.

However, we can report that we have 995 finalized claims and 140 phased projects approved.

In the face of the challenges, we are fast tracking the pace of settlement of claims through increased efforts to trace restitution claimants and hiring tracing agents. The approach has seen significant progress in KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. We are confident that improvement is likely to continue into 2019/2020 financial year.

### **Office of the Valuer-General**

As stated earlier, we will continue to deal with the challenges in our midst. Regarding the Office of the Valuer-General, we are about to implement a series of remedial measures to boost the effectiveness of this crucial player in the land reform value chain.

Top of our list is to approve the structure and recruit appropriate human resources. Some of the interventions will include the formation of a Project Management Office within OVG to help to speed up service delivery and eliminate valuation backlog.

In conclusion, Chairperson, Honourable members, ladies and gentlemen, we will continue to deliver to our people. Wherever possible, we shall continue to introduce major policy, frameworks, institutions and systems changes to manage disputes pre-emptively and engage the difficult land relations matters in support to lasting social solutions finding amongst communities rather than the adversarial legal route.

We shall always dedicate our energies to unlocking these barriers and clearing the ground to ensure protection of the land rights of the vulnerable and tenure insecure. Consequently, we shall stand a good chance to contribute effectively to eliminate poverty and inequality by 2030.

I thank you