**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 227**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 4-2019 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**227. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

What are the details of the institutional basis established by the formation of her department for a comprehensive approach to the economic development of the country’s rural areas, especially relating to the removal of constraints in accessing land, as declared by the President of the Republic, Mr M C Ramaphosa, on 26 June 2019?

**NW1186E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

The President in the State of the Nation address indicated that government will immediately release State land for agricultural and human settlement in order to make a contribution towards acceleration of land reform to address the inequality in terms of ownership and use. Similarly, the President highlighted the need to urgently address issues of economy. As a strategic intervention on the delivery model, the President has indicated that government will adopt a district approach.

Land release

The departments of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development together with other departments have identified state land that is suitable for agriculture and human settlement. Such identification has taken into consideration who is the holder of the land in question amongst the various spheres of government. Secondly such profiling will indicate the appropriate use of such land and its potential and whether such land is encumbered or not. Thereafter necessary processes of State land disposal will take effect.

Public works has identifies about 100 parcels of land where Restitution of land will be a beneficiary given that some of these properties are areas where communities were forcibly removed in the past.

Agricultural land therefore will enable those communities to engage in agricultural activities and government will give necessary support through its programs such as CASP, Letsema and Land care. A range of farmer support services will be provided for some from provincial departments of agriculture.

The combination of the two departments and the alignment of their programs will go a long way in creating viable farmer support to farmers. Building on the Agriparks, the department will focus on 27 Farmer Production Support Units (FPSUs) which are like service centres to support farmers with mechanisation, extension, market information, production inputs such as seeds and vaccines.

Honourable member, these FPSUs are located in the districts consistent with the President’s statement. Key to the functionality of the FPSUs will be the mobilisation of farmers to ensure that production is activated. The second phase will be the construction of production hubs such as storage facilities, pack houses as well as mini processing plants. However, this will be guided by the commodities that will be produced in those localities.

The department will engage municipalities and districts to activate farmers markets so as to create a value chain pipeline in the various localities. It is our view that these interventions by our department will make a contribution towards the development of economic activities in our communities especially in rural economies.