**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3097**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 33-2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**3097. Ms T M Mbabama (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development: [🟊535] [Question submitted for oral reply now placed for written reply because it is in excess of quota (Rule 137(8))]:**

With reference to her department’s mission statement, what mechanisms has her department implemented since 1 April 2019 to (a) accelerate land reform and (b) catalyse integrated rural development in the Republic? **NW3781E**

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

1. To accelerate Land Reform, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) implemented the Proactive Land Acquisition Policy (PLAP) in terms of which the state has acquired over 170 000 hectares of land to date. The land is allocated and leased out to farmers for a period of 30 years and the lease can be extended for another 20 years.

In order to ensure equitable access to land, the Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy (BSLAP) was formulated to ensure transparent allocation of land with priority being given to vulnerable groups, i.e. women, youth and people with disabilities. Over 76 000 hectares of land was allocated to women, over 52 000 hectares to youth and about 489 hectares to people with disabilities. The policy also prioritises the allocation of land to communal farmers to decongest communal areas.

The Department further identified and released 700,000 hectares of state land for agricultural purposes.

DALRRD has also developed the Land Donations Policy to encourage landowners to contribute to land reform, as recommended by the Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture. The policy provides a framework on how a donation can be done including associated incentives to those who donate land i.e. tax incentives.

DALRRD is currently processing applications for awards of land by labour tenants, which were lodged not later than 31 March 2001. The Department is, therefore, working with the Special Master on Labour Tenants to settle all outstanding labour tenant claims as ordered by the Land Claims Court.

Communal tenure remains another priority for Land Reform: following the Communal Land Tenure Summit held from 27-28 May 2022, and taking into account the outcomes of the Summit, the draft Communal Land Tenure Policy and Communal Land Tenure Bill have been formulated and once finalised will follow the normal processes of government before it is tabled in Parliament.

Regarding Tenure Policies and Legislative Development: The Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Act 112 of 1991 (ULTRA) Bill was passed into law to comply with the Court Judgement and the Regulations have been finalized and will be published during the 2022/2023 financial year.

The Communal Property Associations Amendment Bill was approved by Cabinet and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act, 1997 (Act No. 62 of 1997) (ESTA) Amendment Bill was also passed into law. Regulations will be published in the 2022/23 financial year.

The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights has developed a backlog reduction strategy to accelerate the finalization of land claims. These mechanisms are at an implementation stage.

1. The Department’s Rural Development Mandate Outcome 6: Integrated and inclusive rural economy:

The Department is engaged in the finalisation of the Draft Integrated Rural Development Strategy, building on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) and the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS). The Department continues to play its role to “initiate, facilitate, coordinate and act as a catalyst for the implementation of a comprehensive rural development programme leading to sustainable and vibrant rural communities”, working closely with provincial and other national departments through the District Development Model (DDM) and Rural District Plans as well as with Traditional Councils.

The Strategy further recognises that rural development and rural economy objectives are transversal in nature and cannot be successfully implemented without the collaboration of Traditional leaders and traditional communities because rural areas are largely under the custodianship of Traditional Councils. Sustainable communities and inclusive rural economies require a bottom-up community-driven participatory approach that places traditional communities and rural people at the centre of development.

The National Development Plan (NDP) (2012) identifies the following four key points relating to rural development: (i) Rural communities require greater social, economic, and political opportunities to overcome poverty; (ii) To achieve this, agricultural development should introduce a land reform and job-creation/livelihood strategy that ensures rural communities have jobs; (iii) Ensure quality access to basic services, health care, education, and food security; and (iii) plans for rural towns should be tailor-made according to the varying opportunities in each area.

Intergovernmental relations should be addressed to improve rural governance.

The Department in conjunction with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation have also finalized the first National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) for the country, which was approved by Cabinet in March 2022. The NSDF is a strategic long-term spatial planning instrument with a 2050 – time horizon. One of the key objectives of NSDF is to assist in the redress of multiple social and economic problems and ensure decisive, collaborative, integrated state and non–state action. The NSDF proposes the identification, development and strengthening of a series of Regional Rural Development Anchors to create a functional polycentric rural service delivery network, that will enhance rural development and more efficient land reform delivery.

The District development model (DDM) provides a platform to align and integrate multi-sectoral contributions from all spheres of government toward sustainable rural development. The DALRRD has also developed Rural Development Sector Plans (RDSPs) to reflect the Department’s programmes and priorities in line with the mandate of the Department. The RDSPs are plans that package the Department’s interventions and contributions at a district level and elements of these plans are incorporated into the District One Plans to ensure better integration in Rural Development interventions in line with spatial development opportunities and priorities.

The Department remains the driver of the Agri-Parks Programme that aims to uplift impoverished rural communities into the agricultural value chain. The Department provides critical infrastructure such as fencing and irrigation to rural communities to assist them, with improving their production. These communities are linked to Farmer Production Support Units, which are constructed in rural areas to provide communities with agricultural support services. The Department continues to construct Farmer Production Support Units (FPSUs) that provide rural communities with a range of facilities such as mechanisation, pelleting machines for feed, silos to store grain, pack houses with refrigeration, access to state vets and training. Many of these services were in the past only reserved for commercial farmers in rural areas. This allows rural communities to improve their production and enter the agricultural value chain with their small-scale production and creates a sustainable path out of poverty.

The current programmes through which the Department executes its work include the following:

* Socio-economic infrastructure projects to support Farmer Production Support Units (FPSUs), Animal and Veld Management Programme (AVMP) and River Valley Catalytic Programme (RVCP). This includes mechanization such as: fencing, animal handling facilities, stock water dams, boreholes, canals, dip tanks, pump houses, pack houses, irrigation pipes and schemes, silos and storage facilities and rural roads.
* The AVMP, focuses on bringing arable and grazing land into production by providing all the required infrastructure like fencing, boreholes, irrigation systems, cattle handling and dipping facilities, dams etc. In addition, the AVMP supported re-greening and soil rehabilitation.
* The RVCP, focuses on the catalytic utilization of river systems to bring the land into production and would typically develop irrigation schemes with all the associated infrastructure. Both the AVMP and RVCP provide infrastructural support to commonages, communal areas, traditional areas and farmers occupying state-owned facilities (where requested by Land Reform).
* Road infrastructure remains a high priority in national, provincial, municipal and farm roads to promote economic viability through safer, swift transport logistics of agricultural produce. As part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) and Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP), repair and rehabilitation of rural roads are critical to facilitate road logistics from farm to harbor and to market. The Department is coordinating a Public-Private Partnership initiative which will include national, provincial and local governments as well as agricultural organisations. Rural Roads are economic catalysts for impoverished rural communities. It provides entry for communities to access basic services and to take produce to the markets. The Department will work with farmer organisations and their counterparts in all spheres of government to implement the repairing and rehabilitation of rural and farm access roads to facilitate improved access for rural communities into the agricultural value chain and broader rural economy.
* Development and Implementation of skills development opportunities for rural youth through the National Rural Youth Services Corps (NARYSEC) which aims to build the capacity of rural youth through various skills development interventions and working with public and private sector partners to facilitate the transitioning of recruited youth into economic activities.
* Research of new innovative technologies, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and promote indigenous knowledge systems in rural communities to contribute towards improving the quality of lives of rural communities working in partnership and collaboration with institutions of higher learning, research agencies and technology agencies.