

COMMENTS ON GREEN PAPER LAND REFORM, 2011

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Sustainable Farming Study Group, P/Bag X 6531, George, 6530

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We, the undersigned, are a group of experienced farmers and academics. We are members of a sustainable farming study group who have for many decades experimented with and researched sustainability in agriculture. We are currently involved in a number of innovative projects to promote sustainable land reform, in partnership with government and emerging farmers. We are serious about sustainable land reform and would like to play a constructive part in putting land reform in South Africa on a sustainable path, in the interest of present and future generations. We support the more equitable distribution of land in South Africa as one of the cornerstones of a sustainable society.

We wish to comment as follows, and request an opportunity to present our views to Parliament:

1. The central theme of a Green Paper should be *sustainability* in its comprehensive sense, i.e. social, ecological, economic and institutional sustainability
2. The four elements or 'legs' of sustainable land reform are a) equitable distribution of land; b) natural resource conservation; c) food production and d) economic self-sufficiency. These four legs, underpinned by collaboration and partnership, across the entire food chain, should be inclusively addressed in the Green Paper
3. The departure point should be the South African constitution, with specific references to Sections 24, 25, 26 and 27
4. The Green Paper should be based on solid and credible knowledge and information about the commercial, social and environmental obstacles to sustainability in land reform, and the 'bridges' that could overcome these
5. The past decade has seen sweeping changes in the functioning of agricultural systems, both nationally and globally, particularly in relation to markets, input costs, technology and adaptations to climate change. These fundamental changes should be taken into account when formulating a land reform strategy
6. The Green Paper should be practically implementable, with a strong focus on broadening the sustained participation of historically disadvantaged people in land management in general and the agricultural economy in particular
7. **The outcomes of sustainable land reform should be:**
 - 7.1 A culture of partnerships, cooperative learning and collective responsibility between existing and emerging land owners, government, civil society and academia, across the entire value chain of land management and food production

- 7.2 A significant increase in black participation in land ownership and agricultural production and in the short to medium term
- 7.3 Improvements in the quality of life of land reform beneficiaries
- 7.4 Increased on-farm productivity and agricultural production
- 7.5 Increased national food security
- 7.6 Increased production potential of the land through improved soil, water and biodiversity conservation and management
- 7.7 Improved capacity amongst land managers to conserve the land and combat land degradation
- 7.8 Improved capacity amongst farming communities and other stakeholders to respond to global climate, social and economic change
- 7.9 All stakeholders (new land owners; existing land owners; government; civil society and science) should take collective responsibility for sustainable land reform
- 7.10 Land management, as a way of life, should be attractive to new entrants

8. The characteristics of a sustainable land reform programme are:

- 8.1 Sustained investment in sustainable land management by entrepreneurs and government
- 8.2 Cultivation of young, enthusiastic role models
- 8.3 Investments in action research
- 8.4 Significant investments in capacity development and training
- 8.5 Room for innovation, experimentation with different business and ownership models, based on learning and adaptation
- 8.6 Openness to debate and constructive dialogue amongst all parties

9 The practical interventions and strategies that would promote sustainable land reform are:


- 9.1 An over-arching inter-departmental body that coordinates land reform, consisting of representatives of commercial agriculture, cultural and civic organizations, and representatives of the Departments of Trade and Industry; Environmental Affairs; Agriculture; Water Affairs, Rural Development and Land Affairs; Health
- 9.2 A comprehensive investigation into the demographics, needs and challenges experienced by land reform beneficiaries, including an analysis of the status quo and reasons for existing successes and failures

9.3 Investments in market-lead projects based on cooperatives, partnerships and intensive production systems based on agro-processing and fair trade schemes

9.4 Implementation of a sustainable land management certification system, which should include issues such as equitability, empowerment, contribution to food security contribution earth stewardship; job creation; and over-all social contribution

9.5 Government-lead interventions to make existing land reform projects more sustainable.

Comments submitted by:

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