Agri SA

Mediaverklaring / Media Release

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AGRI SA HET KOMMER OOR GRONDBELEID
AGRI SA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER LAND POLICY

9 Junie/June 2010

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“Dit is in niemand se belang en veral nie dié van armes om drastiese maatreëls vir grondhervorming daar te stel wat vertroue kan skend en voedselsekerheid in die gedrang mag bring nie. Gebreke in die implementering van die bestaande beleid moet eerder reggestel en vennootskappe met die privaatsektor gesluit word om volhoubare en versnelde grondhervorming te verseker,” sê Johannes Möller, President van Agri SA.

Hy het kommentaar gelewer op uitlatings van President Zuma en ander regeringswoordvoerders die afgelope drie maande na elemente van ‘n veranderde beleid waarmee meer aggressief en fundamenteel gevorder wil word met versnelde grondtoegang vir voorheen benadeeldes. Volgens Möller is administratiewe onbeholpenheid met die uitvoer van grondbeleid die hoofoorsaak dat die regering nou oorweging aan radikale veranderings aan sy beleid gee om sodoende die ANC se Polokwane-resolusies oor versnelde grondhervorming uit te voer.

Hoewel die Minister van Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondhervorming, Minister Nkwinti, Adjunk-Minister Phaala en Minister Joemat-Pettersson gesê het dat daar met Agri SA gekonsulteer word, was daar volgens Möller nie konsultasie nie en het die regering beleidshersiening as ‘n interne proses hanteer. “Agri SA is bekommerd dat konsultasie na die publisering van ‘n Groenskrif oor hierdie belangrike en hoogs emosionele saak min beweegruimte vir veranderings kan laat. ‘n Groenskrif verteenwoordig tewens die wel oorwoë mening van die regering. Uitlatings van politici maak ons dus ernstig bekommerd oor moontlike oormatige regulering deur die staat wat markbeginsels sal ondermyn. Dit sou beter wees indien die Groenskrif eers die lig sou sien nadat daar beter konsultasie met geaffekteerdes in die grondmark was, om sodoende vertroue nie onnodig te skok tot nadeel van voedselsekerheid en ekonomiese vooruitgang in die algemeen nie,” aldus Möller.

Agri SA het verskeie beleidsdokumente die lig laat sien waarin grondhervorming ondersteun word. Die organisasie stel ordelike transformasie binne ‘n wetlike raamwerk en ondersteun deur toereikende finansiering en ander bystand as voorvereistes. Omdat grondhervorming ‘n nasionale uitdaging is, het die organisasie ook ‘n sterk standpunt dat dit nie tot selektiewe benadeling van bestaande grondeienaars deurgevoer mag word nie, maar dat die fiskus die koste daarvan gebalanseerd moet verhaal.

Teen dié agtergrond het Agri SA vorige aanbiedinge herhaal dat hy graag dringend en in diepte met die regering in gesprek wil tree oor die uitskakeling van knelpunte met die proses van grondhervorming. Agri SA verwag ook dat ander sektore van die ekonomie hierdie proses ten nouste sal volg omdat dit aanduidend is van hoe die regering die Grondwet se bepalings oor eiendomsreg in die algemeen interpreteer en respekteer asook konsulteer oor fundamentele veranderings oor beleid in dié verband.

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"It's in no one's interest – and certainly not in the interest of the poor – to introduce drastic land reform measures that will undermine confidence and have an adverse effect on food security. Deficiencies in the implementation of existing policy should instead be addressed and partnerships should be formed with the private sector to ensure sustainable and accelerated land reform," said Agri SA president Johannes Möller.

He was commenting on statements issued by President Zuma and other government spokespersons during the past three months regarding elements of an amended policy with a view to more aggressive and fundamental progress with accelerated access to land for the previously disadvantaged. According to Möller, administrative incompetence with the implementation of land reform was the main reason why the government was now considering radical changes to its policy in order to implement the ANC's Polokwane resolutions on accelerated land reform.

Although Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform Nkwinti, Deputy Minister Phaala and Minister Joemat-Pettersson said that Agri SA had been consulted, no such consultation had taken place as the government had dealt with the policy review as an internal process, according to Möller. "Agri SA is concerned that consultation after the publication of a Green Paper on this important and highly emotional matter could leave very little room for changes. A Green Paper represents the well-considered opinion of the government. Statements issued by politicians therefore make us very concerned about possible over-regulation by the state, which could undermine market principles. It would have been better had the Green Paper appeared after more effective consultation with the affected parties in the land market so that confidence was not unnecessary undermined to the detriment of food security and economic prosperity in general," said Möller.

Agri SA has released various documents in which land reform is supported. The organisation proposes orderly transformation within a legal framework, with adequate financing and other assistance as prerequisites. Since land reform is a national challenge, the organisation has also adopted a strong viewpoint that it should not selectively disadvantage existing land owners but that the fiscus should recover the cost thereof in a balanced manner.

Against this background Agri SA reiterated previous requests for urgent and in-depth discussions with the government regarding the elimination of obstacles hampering land reform. Agri SA also expects other sectors of the economy to follow this process closely because it was indicative of how the government will interpret and respect the provisions of the Constitution relating to property rights in general, and also consult on fundamental policy changes in this regard.

Issued by Agri SA, Directorate: Corporate Liaison

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