



**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND REFORM,
MR G NKWINTI, (MP)**

ADDRESS AT THE AGRISA COMMODITY CONGRESS
"Building vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities"

SOMERSET WEST, WESTERN CAPE
26 FEBRUARY 2009

President of AgriSA, Mr J Muller
Deputy-President of AgriSA, Mr T de Jager
The General Affairs Chamber,
The Commodity Chamber,
The Agriculture Business Chamber,
Dames en here,

Dit is vir my 'n groot voorreg om vandag hierdie konferensie toetespreek, en ek dank U vir die uitnodiging. Ek waardeer die geleentheid en sien uit om die pad vorentoe saam met julle te stap.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware, with the advent of the new Administration, the Department of Rural Development of Land Reform was established, meaning that we shifted our approach from that of land affairs to that of land reform. You may be asking what the difference is, I will elaborate later.

Our vision is vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities, and our mission is to facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches, in partnership with all sectors of society.

During my interactions with the Department, and the re-alignment of our work, we found that we will need to be very conscious of the role played by all in the process of land reform, thus the importance of my interaction with you today.

I want to focus on two key issues during my address to you, namely, recapitalization of land reform projects and the deracialisation of the rural economy.

As you are most probably aware, many land reform projects are not successful, not by the fault of beneficiaries alone, but by us all. Land reform cannot happen in isolation, it requires a collective resolve of all, namely, government, the private sector and the communities.

The Department has taken a conscious decision to recapitalise all land reform projects that have been implemented since 1994. We have made a budget available for this, as well as created the necessary capacity within the Department to implement this. The re-organisation of the Department has enabled us to create the necessary capacity in order to give effective meaning to land reform.

What is imperative in terms of land reform is to link our processes with strategic partners to ensure skills transfer and sustainability. It is for this reason that we want to partner with you, in terms of the co-management, share equity and mentoring. There

are two objectives behind this initiative: skills, expertise and knowledge sharing and transfer; and production discipline. Our collective goal, as a nation, is food security.

Ons wil die pad van ontwikkeling en grond hervorming saam met julle loop. This partnership won't be short term, as we want to work together over the long-term, 10 years and beyond. We are looking at all farmers to assist, even those 'youthful yet retired' farmers.

Julle vra seker wat die verskil is, in die verlede het ons altyd gepraat oor wat ons wil doen, vandag se ek, ons gaan doen wat ons se. Soos President Zuma gese het, dis die jaar van aksie.

As part of the recapitalisation drive, the Department advertised for service providers to assist us with the recapitalisation process, and we have received more than 200 responses in this regard, which is very encouraging. It is important that the Department actively involves the agriculture sector in undertaking the mandate of rural development and land reform.

We must put in place adequate support systems and skills development mechanisms for emergent farmers; this will of course be done in conjunction with AgriSA and other role-players in the sector. Land reform cannot happen in isolation, it must be integrated with and into the whole value chain. We are looking for your expertise and support.

We have met with Agri-Western Cape, and they have indicated their willingness to work with us, they were encouraged by our interactions. We have agreed with them that they will draft a viable and sustainable proposal in terms of the share equity scheme, which we can jointly implement in the Western Cape. I also met with farmers in Robertson, and had a discussion with them regarding the share equity scheme, we have agreed to work together on the way forward, and I will soon be returning to finalise discussion with them. We have also met with Afrifresh, who are also willing to come on board and assist. We have to work together!

In terms of the deracialisation of the rural economy, we aim to match emergent farmers with the expertise of commercial farmers. The proposal in this regard, is that when we allocate land, we ensure that in doing so, the experience and expertise of farmers like yourselves, is harnessed as co-partners in managing and running the farm. If we want to ensure sustainable agrarian reform, we must ensure that both black and white farmers and communities work together. We want joint responsibility and joint beneficiation from this partnership, what is important is ensuring that land reform is sustainable, but also that rural economies are stimulated by successful enterprises.

I am aware that there are many white farmers out there who want to assist, I therefore call on you to partner with us. I will, during my Budget Policy Speech in March, elaborate further on how we aim to implement this initiative.

The Department is in the process of finalising the Green Paper which will be tabled in Parliament soon, I implore you to actively participate in the process, as the Green Paper will map out the way forward for rural development and land reform.

Ek sal dus baie dankbaar wees om jul standpunt oor grondhervorming and landelike ontwikkeling te hoor. Dit is ons almal se verantwoordelikheid, en ons gaan saamwerk. Ek is vandag hier om met julle te praat, maar mees belangrik om te hoor wat julle te se het.

Ek dank U!