



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NOTES FOR THE WEBINAR BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES HONOURABLE SENZENI ZOKWANA (MP)

5 FEBRUARY 2019

Programme Director; Dr Sibanda

The Minister for Rural Development and Land Reform

The Director General of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture

Organisation: Dr. José Graziano da Silva;

The FAO Country Representative: Dr Francesco Pierri

The World Food Programme Country Representative

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning,

The opportunity presented by this webinar is greatly appreciated by my Department as it comes at the time when South Africa is entirely engaged in discussions around land as a resource that should be shared amongst those who live on it.

The Freedom Charter adopted on the 26th June in 1955 has as one of its principles, that The Land shall be shared among those who work it. It is however critical to note that South Africa is conscious of the importance of allocating land without compromising first, its production ability and secondly the country's food security status.

My Department is assigned the mandate to ensure food security for all, this is in line with Outcome 7 of the fourteen Outcomes that are expanding the government's Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

Outcome 7 pronounces on the need for vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities with food security for all.

The need for a food secure nation is further expressed through the Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2, which would ensure that there is no poverty and there is zero hunger, respectively.

The process of achieving the set outcomes and the SDGs are in our hands as a farming community.

The role that the smallholders and family farmers play towards food security should be enhanced and hence the need for improved innovations. An **effective agricultural innovation system** is about the farmers, their knowledge, technology, infrastructure and ways of living that have been created or learned due to changes in their livelihoods or circumstances. South Africa is currently promoting the following innovations:

- **Water Efficient Maize for Africa seed (WEMA)** produced via the South African Agricultural Research Council (ARC) to endure severe drought and is pest resistant.
- **Yellow flesh sweet potato** which was introduced as an alternative for family farmers and is tolerant to disasters.
- **Agricultural suitcase** that is used to support producers in the Western Cape and includes **water tanks, uses of grey water and drip irrigation**.
- Climate Smart Agriculture Strategic Framework gazetted in August 2018 for public inputs and comments intended to address efficiencies in the Agricultural sector which include water use

management, natural resource management considering new tools and technologies in agricultural sector. **No till farming.**

- Focus is also on agro-forestry which is based on the Strategy on Agro-forestry.
- **Improved aquaculture processes** especially for the **supply of fingerlings.**
- Carbon sequestration to reduce emissions – a common practice in the rural areas.
- Smart farming - digital farming efforts are being tested in line with the G20 thematic areas.

This webinar provides a platform where each one of us should reflect on the ways and means of empowering the small scale producers with appropriate innovations.

The producers of our food will not achieve their goals on their own, government and its partners should work together to ensure complete support to our producers.

The National Development Plan (NDP), the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) and the Agricultural Policy Action Plan (APAP) identify the potential of agro-processing to stimulate growth and development through backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy.

The smallholders and family farmers should be supported to participate in the entire value chain, especially at the agro-processing stage.

My Department with its three sectors, agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is hard at work towards ensuring that food security, employment and economic growth are attained.

The one challenge in all these sectors is still the participation of the smaller operators at the tail-end of production.

Further to this is the need to prioritise agro-processing infrastructure inclusive of storage silos, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 12, of ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns whilst reducing food losses and waste.

Our Country has prioritised the Revitalization of Agriculture and Agro-processing Value Chains owing to their huge potential towards promoting economic growth, creating jobs; attracting investment and as well as reducing trade imbalances on processed products.

Currently, the Agro-processing Industry is characterised by high levels of market concentration, which as a result offers fewer opportunities for small scale farmers. It is therefore important to promote the participation of start-up enterprises in agro processing activities in order to realise the policy imperatives of employment generation, rural development and food security whilst addressing the issue of market concentration.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The President of the Republic His Excellency Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa during His 2018 State of the Nation Address said “We will accelerate our land redistribution programme not only to redress a grave historical injustice, but also to bring more producers into the agricultural sector and to make more land available for cultivation”.

This statement is aimed at developing under or unutilized redistributed farmland to its full potential and ensuring skills development and capacity building. It is important for government to partner with private and business sectors to deal with the challenges of Poverty eradication and Job creation amongst South Africans, in particular targeting our youth.

Partnerships such as these we have with the FAO and the WFP will go a long way in bringing about the required innovations and growth.

As government, we are committed to working together with our sector partners and all our communities to ensure that through agriculture, forestry and fisheries we move South Africa forward.

I would like to invite all participating in this webinar to submit their proposals on how can we improve on the innovations that will benefit and be adaptable to the small scale producers.

In conclusion, let me appreciate this webinar and thank the partners inclusive of DIRCO, the FAO and the WFP. Your involvement in the development of our Country is noteworthy and commendable.

Thank you.