

NFP Debate on ANC Party motion: 4 June 2015

Hon Speaker

Hon Members

All Guests,

As the National Freedom Party, we would like to begin our contribution by stating very clearly that we full support land reform as a means to redress the legacy of apartheid as well as a measure to empower black people. It is strange that this motion has been raised by a Member from the ANC because the fact that 21 years into democracy, the land reform process has failed; is something the ANC government has to take full responsibility for. In 2012, the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr. Gugile Nkwinti, said that government wanted to have 30% of all white commercial agricultural land in the hands of black people by 2014. And yet only 8% was achieved. This is a failure, whichever way you look at it.

As the NFP we believe that some of the obstacles to fair and meaningful land reform are the 'willing buyer/ willing seller' principle which has failed dismally, unnecessary red-tape and corruption. Our party is of that view that South Africa has a moral obligation to achieve land reform in order to confront the historical injustices of the past brought about by the 1913 Land Act and other laws of the time.

On the question of foreigners and land ownership, our view is clear: indeed foreigners should not own agricultural land but should be able to lease it. We believe this is fair and safeguards the interests of South Africans. There are some who amongst us who are misleading people about the intention of this: we are not trying to remove foreign investment from South Africa but we are putting in place measures to make sure that South Africans participate in the land economy of their own country.

In order to achieve equitable distribution of land, we hold a number of views which we believe would fast-track the process of land reform in the country. But first, let us be very clear: the NFP does not support methods of land reform which will destabilise the country or cause chaos. We do not believe that land grabs are the way to go. We can achieve real land reform and justice through peaceful measures. The Constitution of our country mandates land reform as it calls for social justice and so it is clear that we can achieve law reform in ways that are consistent with law and order.

As the NFP, we call on government to conduct an audit of all land ownership in the country as well as an audit of all land which can be used for agricultural purposes. We also propose a system where all land that is held in trust on behalf of communities must be used for the benefit of those communities.

Government needs to fast track the processing of land claims by setting time limits for these claims and to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to allow for this. A corruption unit also needs to be established within the department in order to prevent cases of corruption and bias in this process.

We support the Constitutional method of expropriation at fair market value after a fair, transparent and accountable assessment has been made. This however does not mean that government must be at the mercy of land owners who will refuse to sell land or even set the value of the land at extremely high prices. We need to make use of our justice system as the Constitution states, and approach the courts to determine such prices.

Honorable Members, we will not achieve anything if we simply talk about land reform without talking about how to provide assistance to emerging farmers. We need to protect our food security. Therefore, the NFP proposes a system of mentorship support and skills transfer in the form of a Commercial Farming and Training Programme for new farmers, especially in the case of land restitution.

Honorable members, there is another element of this discussion that we should not ignore; and that is the working and living conditions of farm workers. As well as their ownership of land on the farms on which they live and work. As

the NFP we would like to see a strengthening of security of tenure for farm workers through laws and other means in order to create good working conditions between farmers and their workers. We also need to ensure that farm workers get paid fairly for their labour.

The NFP believes that Local government is the most important sphere of government as it has a direct impact and contact with communities. So it would not make sense for us to have this debate without talking about how to involve local government in land reform.

We would like to see a reintroduction of agricultural extension officers to provide agriculture advice and support to districts at municipal and local level. We also need to decentralise and simplify the process to register agriculture cooperatives to local municipal level.

Thank you.

Presented by: Hon B Nzuza