

# Land tenure reforms under the spotlight at summit

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Land tenure reforms will take centre stage at a three-day National Land Tenure Summit in Johannesburg next week.



Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti says that meaningful changes to land reform, particularly for commercial farmers, is urgently needed in South Africa. Image: GCS

The summit, which seeks to address the challenges facing land tenure reform in South Africa, is to be hosted by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

Some of the issues the summit will tackle include tenure insecurity on commercial farms, tenure challenges in communal areas and how best to resolve South Africa's land reform.

"This land tenure summit will provide critical debate and create a social dialogue on various aspects of transforming land ownership patterns," said Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti.

"We want to get South Africa talking about the various policy proposals we have put before them. Let's engage with these policy proposals and find lasting solutions so we can come up with the best ways to resolve the issue of land tenure," Nkwinti said.

The summit is expected to be attended by representatives from non-governmental organisations, organised agriculture, academia, farm workers, traditional leaders, government, political parties, and leading international researchers on agrarian reform.

The summit will see delegates presenting papers on a number of issues including legislation that will come before Parliament during this financial year.

Nkwinti said the decade between 1997 and 2007 was characterised by significant shifts in ownership and land use including increasing acquisition of residential and agricultural properties by foreign nationals in certain regions.

"These trends have resulted in increased landlessness and precarious tenure for citizens, particularly residents of the former reserve areas and commercial farming areas," he said.

"New proposals will be presented to the national Land Tenure Summit in an attempt to address the growing land tenure insecurity problems which impact negatively on about 20m people living in commercial farming areas, communal areas and in formal and informal townships," Nkwinti added.

Nkwinti said the summit may help to accelerate the process of rural development and land reform and bring meaningful dialogue on issues of land tenure.

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