

# Programmes in place to return land to tenants, farm dwellers

Deputy President David Mabuza says government is implementing programmes aimed at returning land to labour tenants and farm dwellers.



© Maciej Maksymowicz – [123RF.com](https://123RF.com)

He said this when responding to oral questions in the National Council of Provinces on Thursday afternoon.

ANC MP from the Eastern Cape, Zukiswa Ncitha, had asked the Deputy President what progress had been made in using existing programmes like Operation Phakisa and other land reform initiatives to ensure the return of land to labour tenants and farm dwellers.

“With regards to Smart Agri-Villages, Operation Phakisa initiated an integrated, holistic and coordinated on or off ‘Farm Worker House Ownership Plan’ based on a partnership between farmers, farm workers and the State.

“This partnership will seek to secure title deeds for farm workers in houses and on land that they own. It will be complemented by the provision of basic public infrastructure and services to create sustainable human settlements,” he said.

The Deputy President also said that the partners were presently conducting research to develop best practice models for facilitation of land transfer for construction of smart villages and housing for the benefit of farm dwellers and labour tenants.

“In addition, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has prioritised the settlement of 8,500 labour tenant applications for land acquisition, and award of 28 000 hectares of land to farm dwellers and labour tenants, and will settle 3 369 land restitution claims.

“Whereas government is making progress within the existing framework to address land reform, we do acknowledge that it is not enough.

“That is why the Report of the High Level Panel on the Assessment of Key Legislation and the Acceleration of Fundamental Change recommended slight amendments to the Extension of Security Tenure Act (ESTA) and the Labour Tenants Act (LTA). These amendments included a special focus on their redistributive aspects in order to address land ownership for labour tenants and farm dwellers,” he said.

## **How Operation Phakisa is prioritising land reform initiatives?**

The Deputy President said, meanwhile, that the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, recently hosted an Operation Phakisa on Agriculture and Land Reform, which was launched by the President on 24 February 2017.

He said the Smart Agri-Villages and the Accelerated Land Redistribution and Development Initiatives are some of the initiatives prioritised by Operation Phakisa to address the plight of labour tenants and farm dwellers.

“These departments have engaged with different stakeholders to solicit their commitment and participation in the implementation of these initiatives.

“Through Accelerated Land Redistribution Development Initiatives, government will acquire agricultural land to promote smallholder production of high value horticulture and small livestock farming within 10 to 60 km rural service areas, rural towns and peri-urban areas across South Africa,” he said.

The Deputy President said this includes the development of serviced land and provision of bulk infrastructure services in conjunction with local municipalities, commercial banks, development finance institutions and private sector land developers.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is piloting the Accelerated Land Redistribution Development Initiatives in 54 farms over the next three years, he said.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>