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ACCELERATING LAND REDISTRIBUTION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

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1. INTRODUCTION

Thirty years since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the promise of a better future for all has not yet been fully realised, with millions of people unemployed and living in abject poverty. Since 1994, the South African government has embarked on a major investment drive to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs. Despite these initiatives, many of the economic disparities inherited from the Apartheid era persist, as the growth experienced is not inclusive.¹ This paper highlights constraints and key interventions to accelerate land redistribution and agricultural development to promote more inclusive growth.

1.1 Defining Inclusive Growth

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development describes inclusive economic growth as a model of economic growth that aims to distribute economic resources fairly and equally to all communities within a country. Inclusive growth places emphasis away from mere increase in growth rates, to improvement in productivity and standards of living of the poor. The premise is that growth is inclusive when it enables the majority of the members of a society to participate in, benefit from and contribute to the growth process.² In the South African context, inclusive economic growth requires a shift in trajectory to ensure that it benefits every citizen in all communities equally.

1.2 How can Inclusive Growth be Achieved?

Land reform is seen as a key catalyst for inclusive growth and employment creation in South Africa.³ This stems from the identification of the agricultural sector as a key to stimulating labour-intensive growth for the rural poor. However, economic growth in the sector has been constrained due to severe inequality in the ownership of and access to land between black and white South Africans.⁴ The importance of equitable land distribution for inspired agricultural growth is captured in all economic policy frameworks developed since 1994, including the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 and the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2012. The NDP envisages that land reform will unlock the potential for a dynamic, growing and employment-creating agricultural sector.⁵ Therefore, redistribution of agricultural land is a key catalyst for inclusive growth.

2. ACCELERATING LAND REDISTRIBUTION FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

2.1 Land Reform

Land ownership in South Africa is highly skewed due to past discriminatory policies. For instance, by 1994, Black people, who account for 81% of the total population, had access to less than 13% of total land in the country. Redressing the legacy of Apartheid's highly unequal land distribution and dispossession that occurred since 1913 is a constitutional imperative:

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

Section 25(5): The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to foster conditions which enable citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis.

¹ National Planning Commission (2012).

² Kanu et al (2014).

³ Kirsten et al (2022).

⁴ National Treasury in Kirsten et al (2022).

Section 25(6): A person or community whose tenure of land is legally insecure as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to tenure which is legally secure, or comparable redress.

Section 25(7): A person or community dispossessed of property after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to restitution of that property or to equitable redress.

These provisions embody three different aspects of enhancing access to land, namely restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. It should be noted that while the Constitution supports land reform, the right to own property is also protected, which creates tension between the rights of existing property owners and realising the rights of those whose rights to property have been denied due to discrimination.⁶ This balancing of rights was arrived at due to the need for a negotiated settlement, which necessitated a compromise on the issue of land. However, addressing the land reform matter will not erode property rights but will instead ensure that the rights of all South Africans, and not just those who currently own land, are strengthened.

2.2 Land Reform Programme explained

Redistribution: The purpose of land redistribution is to address the legacy of racial inequality in accessing land and creating opportunities for development. It is also to provide Black people with access to land for residential and productive use in order to improve their livelihoods. This is provided for in Section 25(5) of the Constitution. Through redistribution, the Government set itself the target of redistributing 30% (24.6 million ha) of commercial agricultural land by 1999. This target was subsequently shifted back to 2014 and now, through the NDP, is to redistribute 20% (16.5 million ha) by 2030.

Restitution: The Restitution Programme seeks to return land or compensate people who have been dispossessed of their land through discriminatory laws since 1913, and is regulated by the Restitution of Land Rights Act, No. 22 of 1994. The Act fulfils the requirement of section 25(7) of the Constitution, as it entitles a person or community dispossessed of rights in land after 19 June 1913 as a result of racially discriminatory laws or practice, to claim restoration of those rights or equitable relief in the form of alternative land or compensation.

The closing date for the submission of claims was set for December 1998. By the closing date, a total of 79 696 claims were lodged with the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights. However, it should be noted that the deadline of 31 December 1998 excludes potential claimants who were not aware of their rights ahead of this deadline, as indicated by the fact that the number of claims lodged by the cut-off date were far below the number of people who were forcibly removed. In response, the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act, No. 15 of 2014, was signed into law by President Zuma on 30 June 2014. The Act re-opened the lodgement of claims process up to 30 June 2019. This means that the process for lodgement of new claims started from 30 June 2014 and would continue until 30 June 2019. However, on 28 July 2016, the Constitutional Court declared the Amendment Act of 2014 constitutionally invalid on procedural grounds. This ruling meant that no new land claims lodged from 1 July 2014 can be entertained by the Commission, pending the re-enactment by Parliament of an Act reopening the period of lodgement of land claims. In effect, this means that only claims that were lodged before 31 December 1998 can be finalised before new claims can be processed. By the end of June 2024, 83 234 pre-1998 land claims were settled, with

⁶ Evans (2013).

3.8 million ha acquired, at the cost of R26.4 billion. There were 5 894 outstanding claims by June 2024.⁷

Land Tenure Reform: Land tenure reform is aimed at providing more secure access to land in communal areas and on commercial farms. The main achievements have been the enactment of laws aimed at creating statutory rights in land for different categories of landholders. These include the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA), No. 62 of 1997 and the Land Reform (Labour Tenants, LTA) Act, No. 3 of 1996, which aim to provide security of tenure for people living on commercial farms. The LTA also provides a limited opportunity for labour tenants and their associates to obtain ownership of the land they use or alternative land, through an application or claim-based process, by the end of March 2001. Of the 20 325 claims lodged by labour tenants, 10 992 have been finalised. A total of 30 350 ha of land was acquired and transferred to farm dwellers and labour tenants by the end of March 2024. This has benefited more than 1 588 beneficiaries, 673 of which are women and 448 young people.⁸

People in communal areas do not have tenure security and their rights to land are still protected by the Interim protection of Informal Land Rights Act, No. 31 of 1996 (IPILRA). The Act provides temporary protection for de facto occupation, pending the introduction of comprehensive legislation that will provide permanent rights.⁹ The processing of the Communal Land Tenure Bill, which aims to provide tenure security for people living in communal areas, has commenced.

2.3 Progress on Land Redistribution

The implementation of the redistribution programme was based on a demand-driven and market-based approach – i.e. the ‘willing-seller/willing-buyer’ (WSWB) principle. In line with the ‘willing-seller/willing-buyer’ approach, a grant system was designed to assist beneficiaries to purchase land from willing sellers. Through the Settlement and Land Acquisition Grant (better known as SLAG), poor families were provided with grants of R15 000, later increased to R16 000, to buy land.¹⁰ Since the size of the grant was too small compared to the high price of land, people pooled together their grants to buy land.¹¹

After an extensive review of the SLAG, a new programme for redistribution, the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) policy, was unveiled in 2001. LRAD was also a grant system but provided a higher amount of funds than SLAG and targeted better-off individuals.¹² For any funds applied for, applicants were required to contribute depending on their ability. The contribution could be in cash or in the form of labour or other resources. The requirement of own contribution was Government’s response to production failures on redistributed farms, based on the belief that the contribution by the land beneficiary would serve as an indicator of their commitment to farming.¹³ However, the process was later changed to proactive land acquisition through the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), influenced by the National Land Summit of 2005’s decision to review the WBWS approach. It should be noted that there is no actual transfer of land to beneficiaries through PLAS. Instead, land is leased to beneficiaries.

⁷ CRLR (2024).

⁸ DALRRD (2024a).

⁹ Rugege (2004).

¹⁰ Hall (2004).

¹¹ De Villiers (2003).

¹² Hall (2004).

¹³ Hall (2013).

In the first term of the democratic Government, progress with the land reform programme was reportedly very slow, with only 650 000 ha (less than 1%) of land redistributed by the end of March 1999. The situation did not improve in the following terms, with only 3.2 million ha of land redistributed by the end of the 2014/15 financial year.¹⁴ A land audit performed by the former Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) in 2017 showed that nearly 72% of agricultural land is in the ownership of white people, while the majority of people in the country only own 4% of agricultural land, confirming that little progress has been made, despite the land reform programme being in existence since 1995.

2.4 Status Quo on Land Ownership

South Africa's total land size is 122 million ha, of which 82.2 million ha is commercial agricultural land. As indicated in Table 1, the initial target was to redistribute 30% of agricultural land (24.6 million ha) but only 8 million ha was redistributed between 1994 and 2013. Reportedly, the land reform programme allocated approximately 9.2 million ha of land between 1994 and March 2023, 3.8 million ha of which was contributed through restitution. This amounts to about 11.2% of the total of 82.2 million ha of agricultural land, or 55.6% of the 16.4 million ha of land targeted by the NDP by 2030.¹⁵ Previously disadvantaged people received 5.2 million ha of land through 5 407 projects by the end of March 2023.¹⁶

Table 1: Land Redistribution Targets and Progress

Period	Target	Progress
1994 – 2013 (19 years)	Initial Target: 30% of agricultural land (24.6 million ha) to be transferred.	Approximately 8 million ha (9.7%) of agricultural land transferred.
2014- 2019 (5 years)	2 million ha of agricultural land to be transferred.	1 million ha of agricultural land transferred.
2019-2024 (5 years)	1.5 million ha of agricultural land to be transferred.	1.5 million ha transferred
2014-2030 (15 years).	NDP target 20% of agricultural land (16.5 million ha)	Between 1994 and March 2024, 9.5 million ha (11.5%) of agricultural land transferred. This means that the transfer of 7 million ha of agricultural land remains outstanding to reach the NDP target.

Source: Author's calculation based on DALRRD (2020), Ginindza et al (2020) and DALRRD (2024b).

- Table 1 illustrates that only 9.5 million ha (11.5%) of agricultural land was transferred to previously disadvantaged individuals by March 2024, which indicates that the country falls far short of reaching its NDP target.
- The Department of Land Reform and Rural Development has to transfer the outstanding 7 million ha in six years to reach the target of redistributing 16.5 million ha by 2030, while it has taken 30 years to transfer 9.5 million ha.

¹⁴PLAS (2016).

¹⁵ DPME (2024).

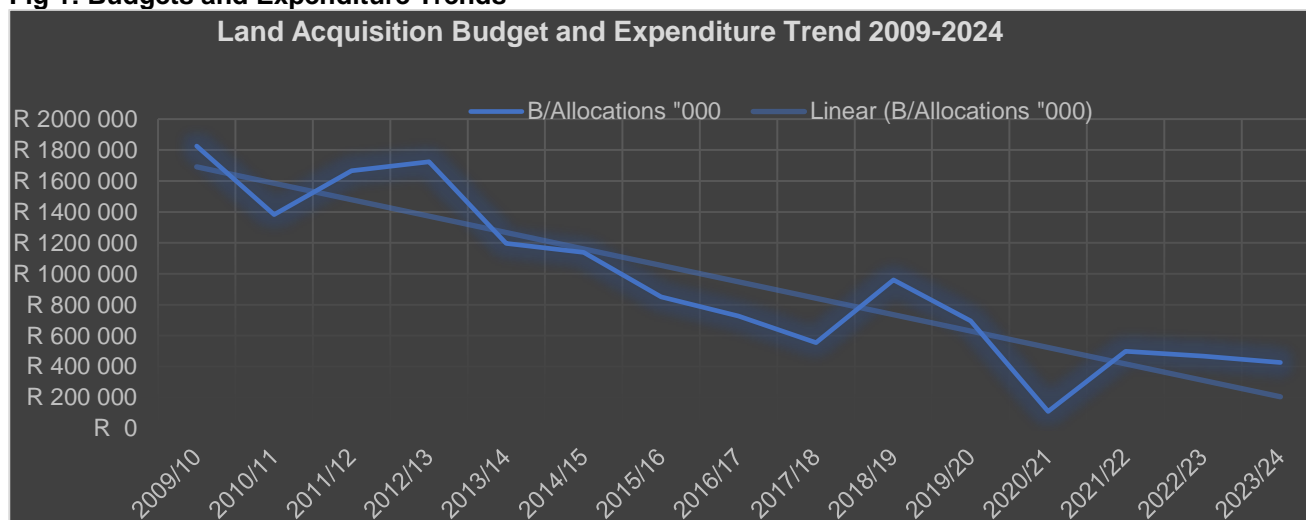
¹⁶ Ibid.

2.5 Land Redistribution Challenges

Key challenges facing land redistribution include:

- Landowners asking for high land prices and refusing to accept valuation reports by the Office of the Valuer-General (OVG).
- Overall decline of the Budget of the former Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development meant that there was inadequate budget for land acquisition. For example, the budget allocation in 2009/10 was R1.82 billion and decreased gradually to R427 million in 2023/24 (see Fig 1).¹⁷
- Land invasion on State land: Both State land (land under the control of a national or provincial government or municipality) and privately-owned land can be invaded unlawfully. While illegal land invasion is driven by lack of access to land it delays the process of land redistribution.

Fig 1: Budgets and Expenditure Trends



Source: DLRRD (2024c).

2.6 Measures to Accelerate Land Redistribution

The following are key policies and measures introduced to accelerate land redistribution:

- Acquisition of land through **Proactive Land Acquisition Policy (PLAP)** for leasehold.
- Allocation of land through the **Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy (BSLAP)**.
- **State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (SLLDP)**, which guides the land allocation and target groups.
- **Land Donation Policy** to encourage landowners to donate land to advance Land Reform.
- The fifth administration of Government, through the Office of the Deputy President, appointed the **Advisory Panel of Experts on Land Reform and Agriculture** to investigate measures that can be implemented to fast-track land reform, as well as address general land hunger in South Africa. One of the key recommendations of the Panel was that Government needs to identify and release available State land to support land reform.

¹⁷ DRDLR (2024c).

- Parliament took the initiative to amend the Constitution to allow for **expropriation of land without compensation** as one of the tools available to the State for accelerating the redistribution of land. However, the National Assembly, on 7 December 2021, failed to pass a resolution to amend the Constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation.
- **Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy:** The Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) was introduced in 2009 as a strategy to accelerate the pace of redistribution. Through PLAS, the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development (DLRRD) proactively identifies and purchases land (based on the land needs trends) to acquire land and hold it in the name of the State, which was in turn allocated and leased to beneficiaries on a long-term basis in terms of these established needs.¹⁸ This decision exacerbated the lack of access to credit for Black farmers. PLAS farms are acquired through the Agricultural Land Holding Account, which is also expected to manage the leasing of these farms. However, the Department has indicated lack of capacity to administer leases due to the substantial growth since 2009 after the abolition of grants of freehold tenure to beneficiaries. The process to transfer land currently under leasehold to current lessees or occupants to achieve freehold titles in terms of agreed criteria started in March 2024. Land will be prioritised to beneficiaries who have freehold tenure and the capacity to utilise the land.¹⁹ To date 209 farms have been approved for transfer and are now at conveyancing stage, while the transfer of 11 farms has been concluded. Transfers are being delayed by the process of getting rates clearance certificates from Municipalities and, in certain instances, the need for lessees to have settled their debt before lodgement at Deeds Office.²⁰
- **Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy:** The Government introduced the Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy (BSLAP) in 2020 to enable the Department to provide access to land for previously disadvantaged individuals on an equitable and transparent basis. In terms of the policy, the allocation of agricultural farming land under the redistribution programme should be allocated proportionally between women (50%); youth (40%) and people living with disabilities (10%). In line with this policy, to date, 306 000 ha of land has been allocated to different categories of beneficiaries as follows:²¹ women 127 000 ha; youth 110 000 ha and people with disabilities 2 800 ha
- **State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (SLLDP):** The State Land Disposal Act, No. 48 of 1961, empowers the Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development to, among other things, lease State land. Further, the Provision of Land and Assistance Act, No. 126 of 1993, empowers the Minister to, among other things, lease any property contemplated under the said Act. As mentioned above, one of the recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Land Reform was that Government needs to identify and release available State land to support land reform. Accordingly, during the 2020 State of the Nation Address (SONA), the President announced Government's plan to release 700 000 ha of State Land for land redistribution. Pursuant to this, 659 602 ha of agricultural State land was allocated for different purposes,²² of which 127 752 ha (19%) were allocated to women, 111 071 ha (17%) were allocated to youth and 2

¹⁸ DLA (2008).

¹⁹ DALRRD (2020).

²⁰ DALRRD (2024d).

²¹ DALRRD (2024c).

²² DALRRD (2024c).

781 ha (0.4%) were allocated to people with disabilities.²³ This implies that the criteria for allocation of these State farms based on the Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy was not met.

Measures in the process to accelerate Land Redistribution:

- Processing of the **Land Redistribution Bill** and policy through Parliament to enhance the redistribution of land to ensure equitable access to land.
- Review of the **Land Policy** with the intention to find alternative mechanisms to support the intensification of land redistribution using various policy instruments at the disposal of the State to fast-track delivery of strategically located and productive land to the landless, emerging and smallholder farmers.
- The Expropriation Bill was passed by Parliament on 27 March 2024 and is waiting for President to sign it into law. It will enable faster delivery of land.
- Establishing the **Land Reform and Rural Development Agency (LARA)**: It is envisaged that the agency will play an important coordinating function for the DALRRD, i.e. planning, land identification, land acquisition, investment plans, beneficiary selection, financing and managing a Land Reform Fund, in partnership with the Land Bank, to fast track land reform. The Government is finalising the establishment of this agency. However, it should be noted that it was meant to have been finalised by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

3. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Research has shown that agriculture is critical for sustainable development and poverty reduction, and agricultural growth can be a powerful means of achieving inclusive growth.²⁴ Given that agriculture dominates the rural economy in most African countries, increased productivity in the sector will remain a key driver and a critical component of inclusive growth. It has potential to offer increased income to the poor and provide food security and income diversification to vulnerable communities.²⁵ In South Africa, the sector creates job opportunities for low to semi-skilled people in rural and farming areas, employing an average of 843 177 people per annum between 2018 and 2022, which is equivalent to 5.4% of total employment in South Africa.²⁶ Agriculture could, therefore, be an important means of stimulating employment, incomes and achieving better living standards for the disadvantaged and marginalised groups in South Africa.

3.1 Agricultural Development as key tool to Inclusive Growth

Agricultural development is a key tool for inclusive growth because it can help to:

- **Reduce poverty:** Agricultural development can be a powerful tool to end extreme poverty. This is based on the fact that poverty in South Africa largely affects people living in rural areas and a significant proportion of poor people living in rural areas depend on agriculture for survival.²⁷ For example, by 1993, 68% of African people were poor and almost 75% of the poor lived in rural areas, compared to the 30 % of people in urban areas.²⁸

²³ DALRRD (2024b).

²⁴ Kanu et al (2014), Ntombela et al (2019), Machete (2004) and Kirsten et al (2022).

²⁵ Kanu et al (2014).

²⁶ Stats SA (2022) in Kirsten et al (2022).

²⁷ Machete (2004).

²⁸ May in Mbuli (2008).

Therefore, promoting smallholder agricultural growth can be an effective strategy to reduce rural poverty and income inequality.

- **Create jobs:** As indicated above, the agricultural sector creates job opportunities for low to semi-skilled people in rural and farming areas. Agricultural growth can create jobs for youth and women. The NDP views agriculture as critical to job creation and food security. Therefore, it is estimated that agriculture will create 1 million jobs by 2030. Stats SA has recorded that as from 2018 onwards, the agricultural sector creates an average of 600 000 to 800 000 jobs.²⁹ As at quarter 1 of 2024, the Stats SA Quarterly Labor Force Survey reports that 941 000 jobs were created in the agricultural sector. Although this number dropped by 4.8% in quarter 2 to 896 925 jobs created in the sector, it was above the long-term average of 798 640 jobs created.³⁰
- **Improve food security:** Studies show that growing the agricultural sector is the primary channel for achieving household food security. However, the studies conclude that unless agriculture reaches some degree of commercialisation, the impact of agricultural growth on food insecurity and poverty alleviation is limited. Another important observation from the studies is that households (in the rural sector) engaged in agricultural activities tend to be less poor and have better nutritional status than other households.³¹ However, it should be noted that the non-farm sector³² also plays a key role in poverty alleviation.

3.2 Factors Constraining Agricultural Development for Inclusive Growth

The following challenges constrain agricultural development to create more inclusive growth:

- **Poor Access to Water:** According to the National Planning Commission, access to water and irrigation systems are critical for unlocking increased investment in agriculture.³³ Agriculture is the largest user of water, consuming more than 60% of available surface resources.³⁴ Of this amount, 98% of irrigation water rights is owned by white commercial farmers, implying that Black farmers have no access to water.³⁵ A study by the Agricultural Research Council in 2019 also found that 87% of all transferred land to reform farms was transferred without associated water rights, which limits the ability of new farmers to maintain land productivity.³⁶ This impacts negatively on the productivity of farms.
- **Poor Access to Land:** Access to land for production purposes is an essential requirement for the poor to enjoy the benefits of agricultural growth. As indicated in the discussion on land redistribution above, approximately 9.5 million ha of land was redistributed to previously disadvantaged South Africans between 1994 and March 2024, which amounts to about 11.5% of the total of 82.2 million ha of agricultural land. The situation is exacerbated by uncertainties around land tenure for those living in farming and communal areas that has consistently reduced their access to land and incentives to invest on land.
- **Poor Support for land Reform beneficiaries:** There is a need for land reform beneficiaries and other smallholder farmers to get the necessary support to enable them

²⁹ DALRRD (2024a).

³⁰ Makube (2024).

³¹ Machete (2004).

³² All activities in rural areas except agriculture, livestock, fishing and hunting.

³³ National Planning Commission (2012).

³⁴ Department of Water and Sanitation (2017) in National Treasury (2022)

³⁵ Ntombela et al (2019).

³⁶ ARC In Mosamo et al (2023).

to use their land productively. Areas that need critical reform to support land redistribution in the agricultural sector include the development of rural infrastructure (such as roads, storage and irrigation); agro-processing capacity; inputs for farming (such as seeds, machinery and equipment); affordable finance for farmers; and research and technology innovations. Chapter 6 of the NDP calls for investment in a strong network of rural and economic infrastructure designed to support the country's medium and long-term objectives to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth. In addition, capacity building and skills development cannot be ignored, as the majority of entrant farmers have limited agricultural and farming skills due to long years of alienation from the land.

- **Biosecurity:** Improving biosecurity capacity helps to ensure that agricultural products comply with global food safety and quality standards. This will also limit the outbreaks of diseases, such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease, Avian Influenza, Fruit fly and others.
- **Agricultural research and technology to improve land productivity:** In general, South Africa allocates a limited budget to research and development. This is evident when assessing the data published by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in 2017. DST found that the Gross Domestic Expenditure on research and development as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product is 0.80 (equivalent to R32.3 billion), indicating a low investment in research and development.³⁷
- **Access to affordable finance for farmers:** Improving access to credit is often regarded as one of the key elements in raising agricultural productivity. Over the past 24 years, commercial farmers have been the main recipients of funding in the country due to their healthy balance sheets and collateral, such as land. Conversely, emerging farmers have been unable to secure funding due to a lack of collateral, such as land, and weaker balance sheets caused by historic discriminative laws.³⁸ Inadequate financing for agriculture is a major constraint and limits farmers' and investors' ability to exploit investment opportunities in the sector.
- **Access to Markets:** Improved access to input and output markets is an important ingredient for agricultural productivity, growth and food security.³⁹ On the output side, smallholder farmers are uncompetitive in global markets and have limited access to markets for their outputs due to lack of infrastructure and undeveloped supply chains.
- **Climate Change:** Climate Change poses a great challenge to promoting inclusive growth, as farmers face extreme weather events, such as drought and floods, that impact their production.

3.3 Agricultural reforms to achieve more inclusive growth

The South African Government has undertaken various initiatives to improve agricultural development to create more inclusive growth. These include:

- **Expanding access to land:** The Government uses land restitution and expropriation to increase agricultural output. SONA 2018 announced Government's intention to take decisive action to realise the enormous economic potential of agriculture. It announced that Government would accelerate the 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.⁴⁰ Further, SONA 2024 announced

³⁷ DST in Ntombela et al (2019).

³⁸ Ntombela et al (2019).

³⁹ Kanu et al (2014).

⁴⁰ Ramaphosa (2018).

that Government is accelerating land redistribution through a variety of instruments, such as land restitution and expropriation of land, to boost agricultural output. Expanding access to land is vital for Government efforts to reduce hunger and provide people with meaningful livelihoods.⁴¹ Measures taken by Government to accelerate land redistribution are discussed in the section on land redistribution above.

- **Improving Farmer support reform:** Literature provides vast evidence of a positive correlation between farmer support and agricultural growth. The South African Government supports land redistribution beneficiaries with financing, training, market access, irrigation, equipment, improving extension and advisory services and provision of seeds, fertiliser and equipment. This contributes to the sustainability of emerging agricultural enterprises through programmes such as the **Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASAP)** and the **Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP)**, better known as Recap). CASAP support is largely for subsistence and smallholder farmers on agricultural land. The support includes the provision of on-and-off farm infrastructure, production inputs, mechanisation, training and mentorship, and extension support. In addition, through **Ilima/Letsema**, Government supports vulnerable households with food production and job creation. RADP was initiated in 2009/10 to recapitalise and redevelop land reform projects and farms that had collapsed or were on the verge of collapse. However, the programme failed to make an impact among resettled farmers, in terms of increasing production, and was abandoned in 2018/19. Following the discontinuation of the RADP in 2018/19, a new **Land Development Support Program (LDS)** was established through the Land Development Support Policy. LDS was mainly to assist/support Black farmers (technically and financially) to be sustainable, reach full production capacity and develop their agricultural enterprises to be commercially viable.
- **Agri-parks:** were initiated in 2015 as part of the response to achieve the national goals of inclusive rural development and integration, employment creation, poverty eradication and reduced inequality.⁴² An Agri-Park is a networked innovation system of agro-production, processing, logistics, and marketing, training, and extension services, located in a District Municipality. As a network it enables a market-driven combination and integration of various agricultural activities and rural transformation services.⁴³ Agri-Parks are important vehicles in implementing the NDP's strategy of supporting small-scale farmers, developing rural infrastructure, and stimulating agro-processing. It is specifically expected to contribute to Government's targets of creating 1 million new jobs in rural economies by 2030. The aim was to establish one Agri-park per District Municipality, which means 44 Agri-Parks. However, the number was later reduced to nine. Agri-Parks were to be supported by Government for 10 years to ensure economic sustainability. Agri-Parks comprise three distinct but interrelated basic components, which are:
 - The Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU)** - a rural small-holder farmer outreach and capacity-building unit that links farmers with markets. The FPSU does primary collection, provides some storage, some processing for the local market, and extension services, including mechanisation.
 - The Agri-hub (AH)** - a production, hiring of equipment, processing, packaging, logistics, innovation and training unit.
 - The Rural-Urban Market Centre (RUMC)** - The RUMC has three main purposes: linking and contracting rural, urban and international markets through contracts, acting as a holding facility; releasing produce to urban markets based on seasonal trends; and

⁴¹ Ramaphosa (2024).

⁴² DRLR (2015).

⁴³ DRLR (2015).

providing market intelligence and information feedback to the Agri-hub and FPSU, using the latest information and communication technologies.

- **Blended Finance Scheme (BFS):** Regarding financial support, the Department of Agriculture has developed the Blended Finance Scheme (BFS) to increase access to affordable finance for Black farmers in the agriculture and agro-processing sector. Blended finance involves the provision of grants by the State and loans by private financial institutions, including development banks. Since March 2021, through the BFS, R3.1 billion has been invested in the agricultural sector for the development of 183 commercial Black producers, with R1.2 billion of this amount constituting grants.⁴⁴
- Cabinet has approved the **National Policy on Comprehensive Producer Development Support**, which is aimed at regulating and guiding the provision of support to various categories of producers.
- Implementing the **Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP):** The AAMP aims to improve agricultural production and revitalise agricultural infrastructure. Through the Plan, the Department of Agriculture seeks to transform and restructure the agricultural sector while ensuring the participation and inclusion of Black and rural producers in the mainstream economy of the country and globally. The Plan was finalised and endorsed by social partners and stakeholders in 2022. Its implementation framework, operational plan and risk register have reportedly been produced.
- **Improving Biosecurity:** It is important for the country to maintain good biosecurity, as it lowers the risk of infectious diseases spreading to crops, livestock and poultry that will negatively impact production in agriculture and lower the trading status of South Africa in the global market. The Department of Agriculture is working together with the Department of Science, Technology & Innovation and private sector partners in the National Biosecurity Hub Programme. This programme aims to integrate scientific disciplines to enhance sanitary and phytosanitary capacities and ultimately achieve a comprehensive biosecurity system in agriculture.
- **Improving Access to Water:** The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has developed a Water Sector Master Plan, which outlines the priority actions required until 2030 and beyond to ensure water security and equitable access to water for all South Africans, which will address this challenge. It is the new target of Government under the NDP to provide water rights to 100% of qualifying land reform projects/farms. As a result, from 2019 to 2024, 2 628 water licenses were authorised for farms of historically disadvantaged individuals. In addition, 36 bulk water infrastructure projects were completed across provinces, while 322 water service infrastructure projects are at various stages of construction in all provinces.⁴⁵ Further, through the FPSUs, several irrigation schemes in different provinces were revitalised.

4. CONCLUSION

This paper argues that there is a need to accelerate land distribution to increase agricultural production for inclusive growth. There has been a renewed sense of political urgency to accelerate land reform, using all available mechanisms, including policies and legislation, such as the Expropriation Bill. Accelerated land redistribution to change the patterns of land ownership, however, does not necessarily lead to more inclusive growth. It must be accompanied by the provision of post-settlement support to land reform beneficiaries, as well as undertaking key agricultural reforms. These include, but are not limited to, support with extension services, affordable finance, rural

⁴⁴ Minister of Agriculture (2024).

⁴⁵ DALRRD (2024b).

infrastructure, agro-processing and investment in agricultural research and development. By bringing more land into productive use, by giving more South Africans assets such as land and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, the country is creating conditions for greater, more inclusive and more meaningful growth.

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