

LAND TENURE STATEMENT

The Land Reform Programme was carried out for the purpose of divesting ownership of agricultural land from the minority white farmers to the black majority people of Zimbabwe. The rationale of the land reform was to address the inequalities that existed during the colonial era and to ensure that every Zimbabwean had equitable access to this finite resource. The Constitution and other legislative provisions that deal with the administration of agricultural land have mechanisms and safeguards to ensure that the legacy and benefits of the land reform are protected and that land reform is irreversible.

The noticeable new paradigm amongst Zimbabwean farmers, especially the majority of beneficiaries of the land reform, is to regard and conduct farming as a business; as a source of both livelihood and means to increasing personal economic value. Our young people have positively embraced the land reform programme and now account for a significant proportion of the country's commercial farmers.

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The Government has since 2008, put in place various programmes to assist farmers to be productive on the land. This support includes the Baccossi Inputs and Mechanisation Equipment, Maguta, and The Special Grains Import Substitution Programme among others.

In the Second Republic, the country has witnessed and benefited from the Government's deliberate and complementary policy of incorporating accelerated infrastructure development which includes road construction and rehabilitation incorporating the much-needed rural roads; dam construction; irrigation; and housing development.

While our people are endowed with agricultural land, resulting from progressive Government policies, they continue to grapple with the following challenges:

1. Difficulty in accessing affordable, appropriately structured and adequate finance for sustainable commercial agriculture.
2. In the absence of security of tenure, the farmers are not sufficiently motivated to invest adequately and to develop

robust infrastructure on their farms to enhance sustainable production.

3. The threat to land tenure, especially to successors entitled to land held by beneficiaries of the land reform programme (such as children of war veterans) arising from inheritance and fraudulent succession issues.
4. While Government conceived and implemented these positive programmes, there have been varying levels of accountability from the farmers, with a significant proportion of farmers feeling no obligation to pay back loans advanced. Consequently, Government has remained saddled with debt emanating from unpaid agricultural loans by many farmers.
5. The menace of land barons who have little or no regard for our town and country planning laws and policies, has put a strain on the Local Authorities' infrastructure. The land barons develop haphazard and unplanned settlements with no basic services such as water, electricity and sewer reticulation and storm water drainage.

Against this background and in line with Section 292 of the Constitution read together with Sections 289, 293 and 294 that obligates the State to give security of tenure to every person and to alienate for value agricultural land among other requirements, Government will implement the following measures:

1. All land held by beneficiaries of the Land Reform Programme under 99-year leases, offer letters and permits, will now be held under a bankable, registrable and transferrable more secure document of tenure, to be issued by the Government of Zimbabwe to beneficiaries. As such, beneficiaries of the Land Reform Programme will now have enhanced security of tenure to the land they legitimately hold. This new policy will invariably be informed by the following guidelines:
 - a. Priority will be given to our Veterans of the Liberation Struggle, youths and women;
 - b. Security of tenure to all agricultural land regularized under this programme, will at all time only be transferrable among indigenous Zimbabweans; and

c. The land targeted for the new land tenure system will exclude communal land that is under the jurisdiction of traditional Chiefs.

2. Urban land will only be made commercially available to credible and approved land developers who will add value to the land in compliance with all relevant laws and protocols. Ultimately, the goal is to establish high quality housing developments in fulfilment of our vision of an upper-middle income society by 2030. Areas that are not in use within cities will be considered for urban development. Urban renewal, urban transformation and regularization will also be given priority.

These agricultural and urban land measures will have a huge impact on our economic growth, and will unlock the full value of the land while enhancing the performance of our economy. This will facilitate accelerated investments in agriculture and associated value chains, which include irrigation, dam construction, power supply and rural road construction.

The economic value enhancement on land will further unlock resources for the fulfilment of Constitutional obligations related to land reform. All these measures will complement current efforts towards an upper middle-income economy, which will be achieved by 2030.

The President has constituted a Cabinet Oversight Committee chaired by Hon. Minister Oppah Muchinguri Kashiri to lead this reform process.

A technical committee – the Land Tenure Implementation Committee (LTIC) – to coordinate and steer the implementation of this process will also be constituted.

These Committees will work diligently to develop improved security of tenure for land beneficiaries, while ensuring that the value of agricultural and urban State land is fully unlocked to guarantee inclusive and nationwide economic development. Detailed terms of reference have been developed for the two Committees.

Government will put in place all the necessary institutional and logistical mechanisms to ensure the smooth coordination and implementation of these new policies and objectives.

Accordingly, Government hereby forthwith issues an indefinite moratorium on the issuance of any new 99-year leases, offer letters and permits for agricultural land.

In conclusion, Government remains committed to jealously safeguarding the gains of our Liberation Struggle, including our precious land and everything beneath it. Never again will our land fall back into the hands of our erstwhile colonisers. The utilisation of this land will be guided by our time-tested mantra:

“NYIKA INOVAKWA NEVENE VAYO”,

“ILIZWE LAKHIWA NGABANIKAZI BALO”.