

SA agrarian development agency to be launched

Nation in Conversation kicked off its first session of day two at Nampo Harvest Day with a panel of experts discussing support and funding for a developing agricultural industry. The discussion was led by Leona Archary, deputy director general Rural Infrastructure and Youth Development at Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The talks centred around the launch of a new agrarian development agency in South Africa.



Image via [AgriOrbit](#)

Panel members included industry role-players Peter Setou, chief executive of Vumelana Advisory Fund, Aggrey Mahanjana, group managing director of the National Emergent Red Meat Producers' Organisation (Nerpo), Brenda Tlhabane, National Women's Desk at the African Farmers Association of South Africa (Afasa), Chris Venter, CEO of AFGRI, and Malcolm Ferguson, retired ambassador for South Africa.

Small-scale farmers need assistance

"Through my experience as an ambassador of a development agency, I have seen many examples of how agencies can help small-scale farmers. It has helped stop years of civil wars over land in South America," said Ferguson when asked for his opinion on the new agrarian development agency.

According to Setou, the Vumelana Advisory Fund has delivered successful partnerships in support of small-scale farmers. This helps them to acquire skills and gain access to funding or tools they need to become better farmers.

A need to identify real farmers

Aggrey Mahanjana of Nerpo said that there are many organisations trying to achieve the same goal. South Africa will benefit from a development agency that can get organisations to work together. He also said the agrarian development agency will need to separate the true farmers from those who do not want to get their hands dirty.

In reply, Brenda Tlhabane from Afasa reminded the panel and audience that for the most vulnerable people in South Africa, farming is also a means to food security. Chris Venter of AFGRI, who represented private industry, emphasised the important role that private institutions will play in successfully launching such an agency in South Africa.

Ferguson, who is intimately involved in the launch of the agency said that while he could not discuss an exact timeline, the launch will take place soon.

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