

More than 2 million benefit from land reform programme

As government continues to fast track the pace of land reform, so far 2,345,547 individual beneficiaries, who are members of 460,952 households, have benefited from the Acceleration of Land Reform programme.



Image source: Henlynn from [Pexels](#)

“Of these households, 177,504 are female-headed households and 1,266 are households headed by persons with disabilities,” Minister in The Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni said on Thursday in Cape Town.

During its meeting on Wednesday, Cabinet was briefed on the implementation and progress of the Acceleration of Land Reform programme.

The Acceleration of Land Reform programme is an outcome of the accepted Recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture that presented its Report and Recommendations to Cabinet in 2019.

Through the provisions of the Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act of 1998, a total of 593,167 hectares have been transferred, while the Rapid Release of State Land has been completed, with the release and allocation of 659,602

agricultural State land.

“The Land Claims Commission has settled 83,056 claims as at December 2023, a total of 3,889,701 hectares of land were acquired at a cost of R25bn, and financial compensation of R23bn was awarded to beneficiaries,” Ntshavheni said.



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Development of cannabis and hemp sector

In addition, Cabinet received a progress report on the development of the cannabis and hemp sector and the cannabis master plan as part of government's strategy to industrialise the cannabis sector.

The aim is to provide a framework for the establishment, growth and development of the cannabis and hemp industry in South Africa in order to contribute to economic growth, poverty alleviation and job creation.

“In 2020, the Minister of Health approved changes to the scheduling of cannabis plants under the Medicines and Related Substances Act and the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development declared hemp as an agricultural crop in terms of the Plant Improvement Act of 1976.

“The Agricultural Research Council continues to develop hemp varieties, with the support of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), to make the seeds available for the 2025 planting season,” the Minister said.

The Department of Health through the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority is currently consulting on further changes to the Schedules of the Medicines and Related Substances Act.

The purpose of the consultation is to allow the Department of Health to regulate Cannabis for all medicinal uses, whilst the DALRRD will regulate the cultivation and processing of Cannabis and hemp for all other legitimate uses, such as industrial, cosmetic, human and food product applications.

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