MINISTRY
AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X250, PRETORIA, 0001 • Tel.: +27 12 312 9395
Private Bag X9087, CAPE TOWN, 8000 • Tel.: +27 21 467 4502 •
Web: www.dalrrd.gov.za

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW LAW AIMS TO HALT LOSS OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen, welcomes the signing of the Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Bill into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa that will support long-term food production and support the department's goal of creating further jobs and growing the economy.

Since the 2000s, there have been various attempts to develop legislation to replace the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act (SALA),1970 (Act No. 70 of 1970) as valuable agricultural land was being lost at an alarming rate for residential and mining purposes.

It is estimated that less than 13% of South Africa's 122 million hectares of land is high potential agriculture land. Minister Steenhuisen highlighted that improving food security is one of the Department of Agriculture's seven strategic priorities. "We want to create an environment for agriculture to prosper and to ensure the sector creates much needed jobs and food security. The ability to protect and preserve high potential agricultural land for this purpose is one of the essential tools to achieve this goal," he said.

An advisory committee that will consist of not more than 10 members, will be established to advise on achieving the objectives of this Act, and any other matter concerning the preservation and sustainable development of agricultural land.

The legislation further recognises the need for a national regulatory framework to coordinate the preservation and development of agricultural land in a proactive manner, and to prevent

the fragmentation of agricultural land to minimise the loss of agricultural land, promote viable farming units, encourage the optimal use of agricultural land and provide for food security.

Media Enquiries
Joylene van Wyk
Spokesperson: Ministry of Agriculture
joylenev@nda.agric.za
0832927399