



Govt to Consult Public On Land Reform

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The Legal Assistance Centre and the Institute for Public, Policy and Research are holding a workshop in preparation for a national survey to be conducted in 2007 on "Assessing Public Opinion on the Land Reform Process in Namibia". The workshop will be convened in Windhoek from November 21 to 22, 2006.

The aim of the workshop is to provide an appropriate platform for a representative and multi-stakeholder dialogue that will contribute towards developing a survey questionnaire which will include a broad spectrum of questions focusing on the land reform process in Namibia.

A press release from the LAC says a range of guest speakers have been invited to "address some important questions on the land reform programme, ranging from topics such as the programme's impact on society, the economy and the environment".

Members of the public are welcome to attend and participate in discussions that will contribute to the making of the survey questionnaire.

"At independence, Namibia inherited two agricultural sub-sectors, namely: communal and commercial agriculture. These parallel agricultural systems not only divided Namibia almost equally in terms of land utilization, but also reflected the racial division in the country at the time of independence.

Today, 16 years after independence, critics of the Namibian land reform process argue that the process is too slow and that too much freehold agricultural land still remains in the hands of Namibia's white minority," the release says.

The process of land reform has been two-pronged - with one programme being the Resettlement Programme, and the other the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme.

The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement implemented the Resettlement Programme to resettle poor and landless Namibians on State-acquired commercial agricultural land, with the aim of making settlers self-reliant, either in terms of food production or self-employment and income-generating skills.

The second initiative is the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme, whose aim is to subsidize the purchase of commercial farmland by formerly disadvantaged farmers, with AgriBank administrated loans.

"Lessons learned from the experiences of both these programmes have shown that land reform involves more than just buying or expropriating land. It also involves - or should involve - a complex human process that requires social and economic planning. It is thus essential for the Government to consult the public as one of its stakeholders in the land reform process, in order to ensure the sustainability of the process," the LAC says.