

Nation in Conversation at Nampo 2017

South Africa's respected agri-talk show, Nation in Conversation, which once again takes centre stage at the premiere agricultural highlight of the year, the Nampo Harvest Day, got underway last night at the official media launch in Klerksdorp. Media heavyweight and well-known Carte Blanche host, Derek Watts hosted a roundtable discussion on the subject of *Agriculture - A Positive Outlook*. The rest of the esteemed guests around the table included: Mike Mlangana, DG DAFF; Roelf Meyer, In Transformation Initiative; TP Nchocho, CEO Land Bank; Stephen Grootes, 702/CapeTalk, and Milaan Thalwitzer, Bosveld Group.



Image Source: [African Agri Council](#)

Land restitution

Steven Grootes got the ball rolling by saying that the aims of land restitution had to be articulated in order for the plan to work. "One needs to know what it means, why it needs to be done and how it has to be done."

Roelf said that the one thing that there is absolutely dispute about was "that the issue is real, it matters to people and to my mind it is not only about agricultural land, but also about urban land. Milaan made a passionate point that "90% of successful commercial farmers are willing to go into partnership with black farmers to help them."

While the DG said that the process has been plagued by a lack of capacity and general knowledge about farming. "The people implementing the process did not know what they were doing. Farming is a gut thing, it is about passion, that is why

a farmer wakes up at 3am to check his land.” He said government was actively creating a farmer’s register so that a reliable database could be established and so that the various stakeholders in government departments could work together from a collective approach to ensure the success of black farmers.

Nchocho asked the question as to why land reform had to be a divisive issue, “we need to approach it as a mechanism to bring us together, instead of pushing us apart.” Milaan added that white commercial farmers had to make an effort to get to know their black counterparts on grass roots level, “so that we can help each other.”

Continued dialogue necessary

The DG said that continued dialogue was necessary and that “platforms like Nation in Conversation had to happen more often and regularly to bring the different perspectives of the different stakeholders to the fore.”

In the end, regular show host Theo Vorster asked agri-newbie Derek Watts what he took from the discussion and he said: “Even though I have been hosting Carte Blanche for many years I’m not always up to date with developments in agriculture, however, I can genuinely say that I have a better insight into the issues and feel very positive about the future of agriculture.”

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