

Minister charts vision for future of agriculture

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PRETORIA: Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson says stronger partnerships are needed between black and white business in order to secure the future of agriculture and food security.



"The future of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, indeed the future of food security and wealth creation lies in partnerships between white business and black business. The biggest challenge facing this country remains partnerships between black business and white business. This future lies in the partnerships between small and large business.

"Let us once and for all bury the thought that the future of this country is either black without white or white insulated from black," said Joemat-Pettersson at the launch of the Black Business Council on Thursday.

The minister said her department was willing to maintain and strengthen the current partnership with both the black and white business communities in order to ensure significant acceleration of economic transformation and empowerment.

Joemat-Pettersson said the transformation charters of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors were currently at various stages of development and implementation.

She said her department has entered into an agreement with the Land Bank as an external agency to manage and administer the AgriBEE Equity Fund, which is geared towards increasing black entrepreneurs in the sector.

The scope of the fund also covers the funding of qualifying enterprise development initiatives, which are targeted at creating economic access and participation for black people in the agricultural sector.

With regard to forestry, Joemat-Pettersson said her department, in partnership with all the sector stakeholders, gazetted the Forest Sector Charter in 2009.

This was followed by the appointment of the Forest Sector Charter Council members, who are the representatives of key governments as well as both black and white business communities.

In partnership with the department, the council is working on the development of a funding scheme for black forest growers.

Joemat-Pettersson said a concept document for the funding scheme had already been developed.

Possible partners to the funding scheme for forest growers are development financial institutions such as the Industrial Development Corporation and the National Empowerment Fund. The process of consultations is on-going and the council is coordinating the activity.

The minister said her department was in the process of developing the transformation framework for fisheries.

"Black business' interests are represented within both the Forest Sector Charter Council and AgriBEE Charter Council," she said.

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