

Press Release

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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COUNCIL SETS UP POLICY ADVISORY PLATFORM ON DROUGHT RESPONSE

The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), a state-owned entity established in 1997 to advise the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and agricultural stakeholders on agricultural marketing policy, has established a high-level Committee to consider the impact of and generate plans to mitigate the effect of the drought facing the country. The Committee consists of representatives from organised agriculture, agribusiness, government, academia and research institutions. This broad representation gives it a credibility that ensures that its recommendations are comprehensive, practical and relevant, taking current knowledge and research outcomes into account.

“Section 7 of its founding legislation, the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act of 1996, mandates the NAMC to carry out special investigations on matters of concern to the agricultural industry. The current drought from which some parts of the country are struggling to recover, is one such matter”, said the NAMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Zama Xalisa, following the fifth meeting of the Committee set up with under the approval of Minister Zokwana during the height of the drought that has ravaged the country since 2015.

Harry Prinsloo, the Deputy Chairman of the NAMC and the current Chairperson of the Section 7 Committee on Drought remarked, “The NAMC must step in to use its convening advantages to bring together agribusiness, the banking sector, academia, government and other stakeholders to deal with this serious matter.” He added: “This committee must come up with a smart drought disaster management plan using reliable data, intelligence and state of the art analytical tools to advise current policy processes around drought and disaster response, and must focus on interventions that mitigate the anticipated long-term recovery from this drought and the past drought in 2015/16.”

The Committee will produce evidence of the economic impact of drought on key agricultural subsectors in South Africa and present possible future scenarios to show outcomes of various responses to drought. “The Western Cape, and parts of Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State and North West are currently reeling from this devastating drought, and urgent policy responses are now required to shield the economy from a severe blow that could even threaten the achievement of the goals of the National Development Plan (NDP).” said Xalisa.

The Section 7 Committee on Drought will release regular communiques on the progress of its work and will submit its final report to the Council for submission to the Ministry.

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FOR MORE ENQUIRIES

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