



INTERNET ARTICLE

Minister Sisulu addressing farmers on water related issues

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The Minister for Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu interacted with delegates from Agri South Africa (Agri SA) at their annual congress that took place at The Maslow Times Square, Pretoria on 11 October 2019.

The theme of this year's Agri SA Congress 2019, is to shape the South African agricultural landscape in the age of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Discussions varied from the future of South African farmers and the sector's use of nano and biotechnology, agricultural mechanisation and farm technology. Land, renewable energy, water-related issues also formed part of the agenda at the congress.

Minister Sisulu reminisced about her interaction with Agri SA regarding security issues, which dates back to 24 May 2010, when she was the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans. She said the current interaction has moved from discussing farming from a physical security perspective, to the contribution made by the agricultural sector to the economy.

Minister Sisulu added that the continued working relationship between the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation and Agri SA would forge stronger links among farming communities, land owners and the municipalities. She said the successful Water Colloquium held on 26 August 2019 at Somerset West has enabled serious issues of water use entitlements, pollution of resources, the cost of water, and transformation to be discussed at length.

"I recognise the strides you have made in the agricultural sector which earned South Africa reverence from the international agricultural sector. In an effort to ensure equitable access to water for all farmers, you have established a Water Desk and a Drought Disaster Fund which would assist the Department in aiding areas that are mainly affected by drought. You have also passed a resolution calling for the establishment of Catchment Management Authorities and local management agencies. This demonstrates a huge commitment in partnering with government to turn the country around" she said.

Minister Sisulu referred to her Budget Vote Speech of 16 July 2019, where she outlined the challenges faced by the water sector and particularly the slow pace of transformation. She said, just like all other socio-economic rights, access to water has also been historically linked to South Africa's inequalities of the past. She said policies on land reform should also address the provision of access to water to urban, rural, farming and agricultural communities.

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