

## NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2018

*“ Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness”*

- Desmond Tutu

1. In 2014 Witzenberg PALS (Partners in Agri Land Solutions) accepted the principles as contained in Chapter 6 of the National Development Plan and started to implement it. In consultation with experts and co-authors of the NDP, the suggested model for land reform as contained in the National Development Plan was refined and improved to establish the PALS framework.
2. Of the more than 50 listed PALS land projects and many value chain projects, the majority could have been implemented if the different government departments cooperated timeously.
3. Delays with subdivisions, water permits, supply of electricity and other approvals prevented the implementation of many projects. The result was that only 12 new PALS projects were implemented to date, with a further 6 projects which will hopefully be implemented in the next 6 months. This is well below our expectations and although PALS may be envied throughout the country for the 15 LRAD (Land Redistribution And Development projects wherein employees obtained shares in farms and farming

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businesses) and the 12 new PALS projects, we would have liked to see a further 20 PALS projects already implemented.

4. We do however realise that what PALS achieved in 3 years, namely to test the PALS framework properly and to implement sustainable projects for black farmers and establish 12 new agricultural businesses, is substantial progress in light of the many national land reform failures which were financed with taxpayers money. PALS as a private initiative did not receive any financial assistance from Government to enable the acquisition and transfer of land to new PALS companies/beneficiaries.
5. Our members, namely the participating producers and the many black beneficiaries in listed projects, are highly frustrated at the loss of opportunities for our new generation of emerging farmers. Delays with subdivisions of land already resulted in the loss of at least 2 years income, for these emerging farmers. The current drought's impact would also have been much less, if permits for the enlargement of dams to store surplus winter water, were granted timeously. The surplus winter water could then have been stored in the preceding 4 years.
6. The Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform failed to deliver on their promises and blatantly failed to adhere to their Constitutional mandate. This resulted in many opportunities that were lost for our black farmers.
7. We know however that despite difficult political and other issues, our producers, their partners and employees still believe to do the right thing in the correct manner. We will therefore proceed to implement land reform projects without government assistance, and will show South Africa that land reform can be implemented in a manner that supports economic growth, job creation and social harmony.
8. The current drought will hopefully be broken with a good winter. We believe that the new ANC President as co-drafter and protector of the NDP, will now ensure that the NDP is implemented effectively and to its full extent. For this to happen state departments must enable land reform and cooperate with the private sector. Political commentators agree that under the leadership of the new president, the NDP will be an important policy document.

9. In the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and many other regions of our country, agricultural leaders and communities agree with the principles that PALS stand for, and which is implemented in PALS projects.
10. Successful land reform in a manner that supports economic growth, food security and social harmony is of vital importance to all South Africans. To expropriate land or just donate land is not the solution. To give proper training and mentorship and to enable black farmers and white commercial farmers to be partners in building and growing new agricultural businesses, is the answer. The fact that employees in these businesses also receive a percentage of profits to improve their socio economic circumstances and that the black farmer has the option to become the sole shareholder, are other important aspects of the PALS framework.
11. The attached article which were published in Farmers Weekly as well as the article regarding the NDP and the suggested land reform model, provides relevant information to you and you are encouraged to read it.
12. Politics and own interest must not result in a situation where South Africa make the same mistakes as Zimbabwe. At least we all know what must be done and how land reform can be expedited in a sustainable manner.
13. A PALS delegation visited Luthuli House in 2014 and also presented the initiative to the relevant Ministers in early 2015. This was done to obtain approval for implementation of the initiative and the many PALS projects. Unfortunately the officials and the political situation in the country obstructed the implementation of several projects in the last 3 years. This is not acceptable on any level.
14. Politics, the current drought or individual agendas may not prevent us to do what is vital for our country. That is to implement sustainable land reform projects without further delay.
15. We can therefore not wait a further 3 years for state departments to hold up land reform, but must proceed with innovative ways to continue implementing PALS projects. Our black farmers and beneficiaries in listed projects may as last resort consider an application to the Constitutional Court to compel state departments to comply with their

Constitutional mandate regarding land reform. We hope that such an application will not become the only option and that our new political leaders will immediately address the problems regarding service delivery in state departments.

16. Many identified beneficiaries in listed PALS projects already received training and are very dissatisfied that, despite the willingness of the white commercial farmers to implement projects in partnership with them, government departments still frustrate implementation of projects.
17. South Africa's Vice President and newly elected ANC President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa attended our PALS membership meeting last year. He was informed of what PALS does and what we stand for. Now he will hopefully lead South Africa in a new era where we can cooperate and use our resources to the benefit and advantage of all South Africans

Friendly PALS greetings

PALS Team



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**Annexures:**

- a. Farmers Weekly: *Witzenberg PALS is serious about land reform.* Glenneis Kriel
- b. Land reform in terms of the NDP: Gerrit van Vuuren
- c. CEO's message: Lennox Plaatjies
- d. Rapport Weekliks: *Grond: Waar wil ons wees?* Chris Burgess