

**Portfolio Committee**  
**National Assemblée**  
**Policy debate on Budget Vote 29: Agriculture**  
**8 July 2025**  
**Speaking notes by Honorable Davis**

Honorable House Chairperson, Honorable Minister, and Honourable Members, thank you for this opportunity to debate a budget that is central to our nation's future — the Budget Vote for

Agriculture. I rise on behalf of the ANC to speak on market access, transformation, and economic growth in agriculture.

Agriculture is not just an economic sector; it is the heartbeat of rural development, a source of jobs and dignity, and a key pillar in achieving food security and inclusive growth. Over the past few years, this sector has shown resilience and growth despite global shocks. Between 2019 and 2023,

agricultural value-added output grew by over 25%, creating more than 113,000 jobs and expanding exports by R47 billion. This performance is no accident; it is the outcome of deliberate, people-centered policies championed by the ANC led Government.

Yet, we know that growth alone is not enough if it does not include all our people. The dual structure of our agricultural sector, with a small group of large commercial players and a vast majority of

struggling emerging farmers, must be transformed. We must break this divide. Under ANC leadership, transformation is not an option; it is a moral and economic imperative.

Central to this effort is the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (AAMP) — a landmark social compact adopted in 2022. This plan aligns with the ANC's Manifesto and Medium-Term Development Plan, focusing on inclusive growth, job creation, and rural industrialization. The AAMP addresses value chains commodity by commodity, identifying barriers and unlocking opportunities for emerging black farmers.

We are already seeing impact. In the fruit industry, we have supported black growers to expand packhouses and enter export markets. The Maluti Apple Project is a shining example of

transformation in action, where black farmers now contribute to both local supply and exports.

On the international front, our agricultural diplomacy is opening doors. South African avocados are now exported to Japan, China, and India. We have secured new markets for beef in Iran and fresh produce in Vietnam. These breakthroughs empower our farmers, especially new entrants, to benefit from high-value global markets.

Domestically, we are revitalizing local markets by upgrading 21 fresh-produce markets across the country, particularly in townships and secondary towns. This strengthens food systems and supports smallholder market participation.

Transformation also demands access to finance and land. The Blended Finance Scheme, in

partnership with the Land Bank and commercial banks, has already unlocked R3.1 billion for black commercial farmers. This scheme reduces risk and enables farmers to scale up. At the same time, our land reform program is prioritizing finalizing restitution claims and strategically releasing state land for productive use. Over 1,400 restitution claims will be settled over the MTEF, with post-settlement support to ensure that beneficiaries succeed.

We are not just handing over land; we are providing training, infrastructure, and market linkages so that new farmers can thrive. The ANC rejects any notion of abandoning empowerment policies.

These programs correct historical injustices and build an inclusive economy.

Honorable Members, critics claim agriculture grew despite government intervention. The truth is clear: it grew because of targeted support, social compacts, and transformative policies. The ANC's



collaborative approach through the Master Plan has united government, industry, and farmers — big and small — around a shared vision.

We have also heard concerns about delays and bottlenecks. We acknowledge these challenges and are addressing them head-on: streamlining approval processes, improving coordination between

agriculture and land reform, tightening grant monitoring, and acting firmly against corruption.

Importantly, this budget supports agro-processing and value addition, crucial for rural industrialization. We want farmers to move beyond raw production; to add value, create jobs, and grow local economies. Through incentives and infrastructure support, we are enabling cooperatives to process dairy, fruit, and meat products. This creates employment up and down the value chain.

Furthermore, we are investing in young people. By modernizing agricultural colleges, supporting agri- tech startups, and providing internships, we are cultivating the next generation of farmers and agri- entrepreneurs. We want young people to see agriculture as a future of innovation and prosperity, not a sector of survival.

Honorable Members, agriculture has a powerful multiplier effect on the broader economy. When farmers succeed, transporters, processors, retailers, and entire rural towns benefit. By revitalizing rural infrastructure and supporting market access, this budget stimulates economic activity and reduces urban migration pressures.

In approving this Budget Vote, we are voting for a sector that uplifts, transforms, and feeds the nation. We are voting for more jobs, greater inclusivity, and stronger rural economies. We are

reaffirming the ANC's commitment to build a South Africa where no farmer is left behind and no community is excluded from economic opportunity.

The ANC has laid a solid foundation. This budget strengthens it further. Let us support it wholeheartedly and accelerate transformation together.



Let us grow South Africa together, from the soil up. I thank you.