

City Press

Land green paper 'a racial attack'

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The Green Paper on land reform is a document of racial mobilisation against white farmers, the FW de Klerk Foundation has said.

"If you have read the green paper, you will realise the degree of racial aggression that it contains ... is impossible to ignore," executive director Dave Steward told a conference on the document, hosted by AfriForum, in Pretoria yesterday.

"The inflammatory historic analysis is irreconcilable with the Constitution's goal of healing the divisions of the past."

Steward said the Green Paper's characterisation of white farmers as "colonialists" came close to hate speech.

He objected to a statement in the paper that "all anti-colonial struggles are, at the core, about two things: repossession of land lost through force or deceit, and restoring centrality of the indigenous culture".

This violated the values of equality, non-racism and human dignity, Steward said.

"It is absolutely unacceptable to state that any cultural group is more central than any other."

Steward said the document would have a great effect on commercial farming, domestic and foreign investment, and race relations.

Ninety percent of the farms which had been transferred to blacks had failed.

"It is simply a reflection of the truth that successful farming requires a great deal of capital, a great deal of experience and training, and often, a great deal of luck," he said.

"It would be the height of foolishness to embark on a land reform policy that would destroy the ability of our farms to feed our people."

If the government had any hopes for reconciliation and national unity it was imperative that all South Africans be treated fairly.

"It was unfair for whites to do this to black South Africans under apartheid, and it would be equally unfair for blacks to do so to white South Africans in pursuit of their ideology of the national democratic revolution," Steward said.

Academic Anthea Jeffery of the SA Institute of Race Relations said the national democratic revolution of the ANC had its roots in Lenin's theory of imperialism.

"This meant that the wealth of white South Africans had nothing to do with enterprise, skill or technological advantage, but derived solely from the exploitation and impoverishment of black South Africans ... this idea remains central to the national democratic revolution today."

Jeffery said the ANC's strategy and tactics documents showed that the ruling party was not aiming to eradicate inequalities by growing the "economic pie".

"Rather, by taking existing wealth from whites and transferring it to blacks," she said.

"Though progress in the redistribution of wealth has thus far been slow, the ANC expects its pace to quicken as the balance of forces shifts further in favour of this."

Jeffery said one of the consequences of the national democratic revolution would be to create an attitude of dependence on the government.

The aim was not to establish self-sufficiency and economic independence, but to ensure that people relied on the state for money, services, health care and subsidised transport.

"And the Green Paper on land reform demonstrates even further that the aim is no longer to build up a new generation of independent black farmers owning their own land," she said.

"Instead, land reform beneficiaries are to be confined to leasehold ownership, while communal land tenure in former homeland areas will be retained."

The Green Paper on land reform would bring about "incremental land nationalisation", Jeffery said.

"There will be no big bang approach, but the government will gradually assume ownership of ever more land, while more and more South Africans will find themselves without individual ownership and dependence on the state's permission for their occupation of the land on which they live or work."

- SAPA