

PUBLIC WORKS

Properties listed for land reform

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The department of public works says it has identified thousands of properties that could be used for land reform and human settlement programmes. This follows requests for land from the departments of human settlements and rural development & land reform.

The government has a property portfolio of more than 93,000 buildings and about 29,000 land parcels under the custodianship of the department of public works.

Critics of the drive to amend section 25 of the constitution to allow for expropriation of land without compensation often say the government should focus on redistributing land it owns, some of which is unaccounted for or underutilised.

In a written reply to a ques-



Thulas Nxesi

tion by Freedom Front Plus leader Pieter Groenewald, public works minister Thulas Nxesi said 3,659 properties had been identified for farming.

The properties will be subjected to a viability study by the department of agriculture, forestry & fisheries and the depart-

ment of rural development & land reform.

"The properties to be released for human settlements and land reform are identified by the requesting departments of human settlement – including provincial government, municipalities and the Housing Development Agency, as well as the Regional Land Claims Commissions through the line department of rural development & land reform," said Nxesi.

"The department of public works only facilitates the disposals once requests are received with supporting documentation from the abovementioned state organs."

The minister said that in line with the Government Immovable Asset Management Act of 2007, his department, which is the custodian of all government properties, consults the User

Asset Management Plan as well as the Custodian Asset Management Plan, which were both long-term accommodation-needs documents, to determine if there is a need for the utilisation of vacant land or properties by user departments.

"In addition, the department consults the client departments directly in order to establish their willingness and intentions to utilise identified vacant properties," said Nxesi.

"All properties that are not required by user departments are categorised as surplus properties and are then set aside for letting out for revenue generation purposes or disposal for the purpose of human settlements or land reform."

Of the 2,973 properties identified for letting, about 600 were in urban areas and 2,000 in rural areas, he said.