

LAND REFORM

State 'to redistribute unused property'

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Underused government-owned land will soon be released to expand access to land and to boost agricultural production, Deputy President David Mabuza said on Thursday.

The government has a property portfolio of more than 93,000 buildings and millions of hectares of land, which translates to about 14% of land in SA under the custodianship of the department of public works. A disputed 2017 land audit report by the department of rural development & land reform highlighted that private land ownership stood at about 94-million hectares, or 77% of SA.

President Cyril Ramaphosa in September appointed an advisory panel to guide the interministerial committee on land reform, chaired by Mabuza.

Responding to questions in the National Assembly, Mabuza said: "We are co-ordinating efforts by various departments to release the land, some of which is unused.

"Our land reform programme will be conducted in a manner that takes into account the needs of the country.

"There will be no land grabs. Land reform is one way of expanding access.

"There is a lot of anxiety that this process might open floodgates for land grabs, undermine investments in the agricultural sector and cause a decline in agricultural output. These concerns will be addressed and we will ensure that this process is handled with care."

He dodged questions from the DA and EFF on the Bosasa scandal and whether he had received funding from external donors for his campaign to become ANC deputy president.

On Bosasa "the matter relates to the president, the president has answered", he said in a reply to a question from the DA.

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14%
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under the
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of the
department
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77%
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ownership