

■ LAND ISSUE

Expropriation Bill a pressing issue

SIYABONGA MKHWANAZI

siyabonga.mkhwanazi@inl.co.za

PARLIAMENT wants to urgently deal with the Expropriation Bill as the land reform programme is a pressing issue.

At the same time, the ad hoc committee on the expropriation of land without compensation will meet on the work to be done in amending the Constitution to allow for this.

Chairperson of the portfolio committee on public works Nolitha Ntobongwana said yesterday it needed to get the work done soon and conclude the bill.

The bill was introduced in 2008, by then public works minister Thoko Didiza, but it was shelved.

It was revived by the ANC recently as it wants to fast-track the land reform programme.

The bill calls for the expropriation of land in the public interest or for a public purpose.

Ntobongwana said it would handle the bill after the committee had to be reconstituted following the elections.

“When we come back, it is one of the issues we will discuss. There is a bit of urgency in it.

“Even President Cyril Ramaphosa mentioned it in his State of the Nation address,” said Ntobongwana.

“It is in the public interest and we will ensure it reaches Parliament soon (for adoption).

“We have no alternative, we will have to do it,” she said.

Ntobongwana said it was an urgent matter and the work of the committee would be to expedite it.

However, she would not say how soon it would be concluded.

Meanwhile, the chairperson of the ad hoc committee on the expropriation of land without compensation, Mathole Motshekga, said his committee would also meet to look at the work on the expropriation of land.

His committee is tasked with amending the Constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation. This followed a report of the Constitutional Review Committee in March that suggested the Constitution be amended. Motshekga said the ad hoc committee will meet as soon as MPs return to Parliament.

The National Assembly had, before Parliament went into recess in July, passed a resolution that the ad hoc committee must finalise the amendment by March next year.

He said the National Assembly had to set up the committee and political parties submitted names of people to represent them on it.

“We are planning a workshop on the nature of public participation to ensure we are on the same page with everybody,” said Motshekga.