

'Don't be dumb about land'

Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Patricia de Lille believes people are being narrow-minded in only focusing on land expropriation without compensation.

De Lille, who helped draft the country's constitution, said people were making a mistake to not fully study the land commission's report on land reform, and only zone in on certain aspects of it.

The 144-page report, released in July, recommends that the state increase funding for land reform; it discourages individuals retaining unproductive land; and recommends a change to the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation.

"Lots of people have not read the report because they've only looked for expropriation without compensation," De Lille said.

"The whole thing is about expropriation without compensation. How dumb can you be?"

She said land reform included restitution, land redistribution, giving people title deeds and helping new farmers.

"I think we need to change our communication around land and begin to show South Africans that land reform means lots more things."

De Lille, who opposed a change to the constitution during the 2019 elections, said more consultation would have to be done before parliament considered adding land expropriation without compensation to the constitution.

"You must look at that report very carefully because, although they support expropriation without compensation, they said it must be under very, very strict circumstances," she said.

"They even take it further: that decision can only be taken by a court of law."

President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed De Lille as a minister in May – the only opposition party represented in Cabinet – after her Good party won two National Assembly seats in the May elections.

The political party was formed in December, only two months after she resigned as Cape Town mayor and left her previous party, the Democratic Alliance (DA).

De Lille said since arriving at the department, she had tried to restore *Batho Pele* (people first) principles which have been lost during years of mismanagement, and to ensure that the department paid its creditors in time.

Other short-term plans include handing over title deeds to farm owners in Limpopo, setting up the infrastructure department, and achieving a clean audit.

She said R430m, identified by the Special Investigating Unit as being lost to corruption, needs to be recovered.

– News24 Wire



We don't have the time any more; we don't have the luxury of time

Patricia de Lille

Public works and infrastructure minister