

Land reform gaining steam

President Cyril Ramaphosa says the country's land reform programme is gaining momentum, with over two million land claimants having benefitted from land restitution, resulting in the transfer of around 2.7 million hectares.

"To date, government has redistributed over five million hectares of land, totalling around 5 500 farms to more than 300 000 beneficiaries," Ramaphosa said.

He was speaking at the handing over of land and title deeds to farmers in Tafelkop in Groblersdal, Limpopo, on Saturday.

At the handover ceremony, the culmination of a land reform process, 30 black farmers were presented with title deeds.

The farmers have been successfully farming various agricultural produce for 25 years on the land and the public works and infrastructure department transferred the land on a gratis basis for land redistribution purposes.

In 2000, the then department of agriculture entered into lease agreements with the Tafelkop Farmers' Association in terms of the Land Redistribution through Agricultural Development programme.

In 2009, the former Limpopo department of agriculture recommended to the department of public works, as the custodian of the land, that the land be transferred to the farmers who had been in occupation since 1996.

The deeds were registered earlier this year in the names of the farmers who officially became the beneficiaries of the land over the weekend.

The land is currently being used to farm tobacco, cotton and fresh produce. A total of 32 households are supported by the land, with farming activities providing employment to 128 permanent workers and about 320 seasonal workers.

Ramaphosa commended the farmers for their resilience and determination, which is "an inspiration to us all".

"You have reminded us that nothing is so full of victory as patience and that where there is unity, there is always victory," said Ramaphosa. – *SAnews.gov.za*