

## ARAC UPDATE #11 .....20/10/11

Dear Farmer,

It has been a while since we circulated an update. Perhaps this should be seen as a breaking of the silence. The early part of October has seen an early start to the rainy season; in local idiom these first rains are referred to as *BVUMA RUTSA*, the *rain that washes away the dust*... well one might aptly say that the new season of our Union's work has seen significant activity to settle the dust. Our office has been busy and we hope to keep communication relevant and timely without loading you with unnecessary Junk mail!

Since our last send-out we have had to say good bye to Shayne Wells who has left to take up a position at St. George's College, where she will apply her considerable qualities to serve using her professional nursing skills. ARAC would like to both thank Shayne for her dedicated work from the outset and wish her the best for the future. You will be missed! We would also like to welcome and thank Rose Brent, who for several months has been working on our consequential loss project, for stepping in to assist.

Over the past couple of months there appears to be a growing awareness of the need to bring some positive direction into the debate on the way forward for Zimbabwe with regards to the land issue. This dialogue has been facilitated through a number of forums; in particular through seminars organised by Professor Mandivamba Rukuni. Most farmers will recognise him as being the coordinator of the land commission that took place in the early nineties. Hind sight suggests that if the full recommendations of that commission had been embraced, we would not be in the situation we now find ourselves. That said, we are fortunate to have in Prof Rukuni a respected professional who has committed himself to facilitate a dialogue for all stakeholders. He is supported in this endeavour by others anxious to break the log jam in Zimbabwe's development.

Earlier this week, I, together with VP Pete Steyl, participated in a seminar entitled "The Status of Dialogue on the Future of Land Policy Issues". Stakeholders present included diplomats, donors, technical experts, representatives from a number of critical government ministries, farmers' union representatives and MPs who sit on the Parliamentary Portfolio on Land and Agriculture.

A framework for discussion on how land impacts on society from three perspectives was outlined; namely: economic, political and governance.

The economic perspective examined the dynamics of transformation from agrarian economy to urban industrial developed economy. Generally transition from the former to the latter takes place through four steps:

1. The population is involved in primary production, after a period of capital formation the surplus money generated by agriculture goes into other investments.
2. Agriculture develops strong links with industry as the market economy develops.
3. Most of the population is urban based and finally,
4. a fully industrialised economy develops.

Land use over time requires that it is transformative: from small scale, through economies of scale, to economies of size. In Zimbabwe over 70% of the population are directly dependent on the land for their livelihood, this contrasts with around 3% in developed economies of the West.

The political framework concerning land is both important and controversial, particularly when the vast majority of the population is land dependent, it becomes a crucial part in the dynamics of power; access to it determines both social and economic status. The dynamics of land reform in Asia and South America are essentially different in that the former relates mostly to change from feudal or traditional systems whilst the latter to post colonial redistribution. Africa has both traditional and post colonial models to deal with. In Zimbabwe the process has been inherently political as the process moved from willing- buyer /willing-seller, to changing the law, to breaking the law. However the transfer that has largely dispossessed our constituency has failed to convert into economic power at either individual or national levels.

The governance framework has six essential components:

1. Land rights and tenure.
2. Land administration that facilitates registration and transfer in an accountable way.
3. Compensation for acquisition (without this no secure instruments of tenure can be issued).
4. A dispute resolution Court.
5. Land use and development planning and access to capital.
6. Land taxation (generally aimed at limiting holdings and or generating revenue).
7. The environment and the need for balance.

It is interesting to note that the process of post colonial development in North and South America was also determined to a large extent by the countries that colonised. North America was largely settled by people whose roots were originally in countries with established property rights, whilst the south was taken by Spain and Portugal which exported its feudal model. It is not surprising that the development of North America was well ahead of the south. Within Africa similar patterns were exported by colonisers. Zimbabwe's dual agrarian economy was in the commercial sector underwritten by secure tradable property rights or title whilst the communal areas remained essentially traditional. Today Zimbabwe's land is essentially under feudal control and it remains within the political domain and it is unable to deliver economic advances.

The crossroads for policy and the country's future requires a paradigm shift that recognises that both economic and political factors are dependent on governance to deliver value.

There were a number of presentations given from various perspectives and the seminar was closed with recommendations to the parliamentarians that they should deal with expeditiously in order to facilitate the administrative arrangements that can move the country's land issues through to resolution and enable agriculture to deliver fully.

Put simply the politicians must first ensure the already agreed to Land Audit is authorised and the necessary administrative structures and procedures are put in place to it make possible for all necessary records to be collected and managed. The second step that concerns Parliamentarians relates to the necessary clarification of land rights and tenure. From an administrative and governance point of view productivity will not be structurally possible without the ability to raise finance and this remains impossible without the conclusion of compensation.

From the CFU's perspective, whilst the prejudices suffered by the majority of the population in the past are acknowledged, exclusion and persecution of our constituency in the present has little value in finding a way forward. Inclusive dialogue can assist in a profound way and this should and can start between farmers unions; there is already much common ground and this should be explored in a formal way and presented to policy makers.

With best regards,

Ben Gilpin