

S.A.C.F.A

Southern African Commercial Farmers Alliance

7 Cardiff St, Belmont, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe ♦ P O Box 261, Belmont ♦ Tel: +263 9 240841 ♦ Fax: +263 9 889609 ♦ Email: sacfazim@netconnect.co.zw

FARM SEIZURES CONTINUE UNABATED

Despite the numerous pronouncements of many ZANU PF political leaders that the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) has been completed the Herald newspaper of 15 August 2015 lists a further twenty three farms for seizure.

Some arms of government are desperately trying to entice Foreign Direct Investment into the country in an endeavour to try and snap our desperately ill economy out of its comatose and near failed state. The Minister of Finance is unable to pay civil servants on time and in full and seeks ways of expanding government revenues he so badly needs to enable him to carry out his duties. At the same time the Minister of Agriculture does his level best to ensure that all investments go elsewhere.

It is now generally recognized that the Indigenization Laws are a hindrance to investors who are considering investing in Zimbabwe. The realization has dawned that demanding a majority shareholding in new ventures is an affront to the investor's rights to his property. As a result with such conditions imposed the investor prefers to invest elsewhere where his money and rights are safeguarded. What the government is unable to understand is that Property Rights underpin and form the basis of the security and safety of each and every investment in this country.

It has not yet dawned on those who are supposed to guide this country's economic policies that the entire economy collapsed sector by sector immediately property rights began to be cast aside when farm seizures began. They need to understand that until property rights are reinstated and respected this country's economy will continue shrinking. The end result will be that government revenues will shrivel to the extent that the entire administration will cease to function. An ongoing refusal to fix property rights can result quite simply in only one outcome – the self-inflicted demise of this government.

It is deceitful and fraudulent for government to suggest that everything is in order; that they will pay the many billions of dollars of outstanding compensation that they acknowledge is due "when they have money". It is now eighteen years since the FTLRP began and apart from a handful of farmers who accepted the discounted compensation offered the vast majority have received nothing; nor is there anything at all being offered. Government must realise that without their being able to pay the compensation which is due their grandiose expropriations actually do not exist. The FTLRP cannot be

reversed simply because lack of payment of compensation has never allowed them to take transfer of the land they seized. Expropriation and compensation are two sides of the same coin. Who has heard of a one sided coin?

The danger exists for us all that when the inevitable collapse occurs the resultant vacuum may be filled by warring groups each trying to gain control of the gravy train. This will spell disaster for the country and could very well disintegrate into all out civil war. What is required is a plan to be in place so that the general populace know what is necessary to right the economic shambles that this government has thrust upon us all.

In order to bring about a substantial investment into the Zimbabwe economy and at the same time empower and enrich the masses SACFA proposes that secure title be granted in the Communal Areas. Utilising modern technology we propose that Communal Areas be mapped. Diagrams will be prepared using GPS satellite expertise, computers and printers to accurately show boundaries of each and every residential holding and arable plot. Communal grazing areas too will obtain title with each family holding rights thereto being allocated their fair share.

Once this decision to grant title is taken, the intrinsic value of this vast area will immediately become embedded into the Zimbabwe economy and banking system. Individuals will become enriched as though they had physically saved their money and bought these properties in a similar way to buying titled property in the cities.

Simultaneously, respect for existing title in the Commercial Farming Areas must be reinstated. Those who have been allocated land on these properties and who genuinely desire a farming career will be given the opportunity to regularise their stay by borrowing from a low interest fund which will be set up. They will have the choice of buying their own property, whether alone or in concert with others. Conversely they can borrow from the fund to develop or expand their family holdings in the Communal Areas. Borrowings will be secured against title which means that the loans will have to be repaid. Borrowing is not a decision to be taken lightly as failure to repay will result in foreclosure by the banks. Farming is not the easy game the propagandists would have us believe.

To continue with land seizures is a certain way to economic ruin for us all.

Cedric Wilde – Chairman
Southern African Commercial Farmers Alliance – Zimbabwe.
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