

Agri SA

Mediaverklaring / Media Release

Privaatsak / Private Bag X 180 Centurion 0046, Tel +27 (0)12 643 3400, Faks/ Fax +27 (0)12 663 3178

Agri SA verwelkom vrystelling van die Internasionale Arbeidsorganisasie (IAO)-verslag oor die leef- en werksomstandighede op plase

AGRI SA WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO) REPORT ON LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS ON FARMS

- *Die verslag van die IAO is op versoek beskikbaar / The report of the ILO is available on request*

21 Julie/July 2015

Agri SA verwelkom vrystelling van die Internasionale Arbeidsorganisasie (IAO)-verslag oor die leef- en werksomstandighede op plase

Die objektiewe inligting wat versamel is in die onlangs voltooide IAO-navorsingstudie oor die leef- en werkstoestande van plaaswerkers bied konteks aan die realiteite wat beleidmakers en sektor-rolspelers in ag moet neem en aanspreek in hul pogings om die toestande van diegene wat op plase woon en werk te verbeter. Die verslag gee ook erkenning aan plaaslike en globale uitdagings waarmee kommersiële boere gekonfronteer word en wat groot strukturele aanpassings in die sektor veroorsaak en beperkend inwerk op die sektor se vermoë om hul besteding aan salarisse en maatskaplike voordele te verhoog.

Daar is reeds lank 'n behoefte aan so 'n studie wat beleidmakers met geloofwaardige inligting toerus. Na afloop van openbare verhore in die Parlement in 2011 ten opsigte van uitsettings en die lot van plaaswerkers en plaasbewoners, het die destydse voorsitter van die Portefeuljekomitee op Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondhervorming, mnr Stone Sizane, gevra vir onafhanklike navorsing oor toestande op plase en die onderliggende oorsake van plaasuitsettings.

Die Internasionale Arbeidsorganisasie (IAO) het hierop gereageer deur 'n navorsingsprojek oor hierdie sensitiewe saak te befonds. 'n Navorsingvoorstel is geformuleer met behulp van 'n oorsigkomitee bestaande uit verteenwoordigers van verskeie staatsdepartemente, nie-regeringsorganisasies, burgerlike organisasies en die georganiseerde landbou. Die voorstel is daarna op tender geplaas. Die tender is uiteindelik aan 'n konsortium universiteite toegestaan. Lessenaarstudies is gedoen, gevolg deur veldwerk op 10 gevallestudie-terreine. Gevallestudies is gekies om te bepaal tot watter mate 'n reeks faktore 'n impak gehad het op arbeidbestuurstrategieë, met inbegrip van die arbeidsintensiteit van verskillende bedryfsvertakkinge, die seisoenale aard van boerdery-ondernemings, die vermoë van verskeie sub-sektore om te meganiseer, en hul blootstelling aan internasionale markte. Die oogmerke van die voorgestelde navorsing was soos volg:

- a. Om die belangrikste tendense in die leef- en werksomstandighede van plaaswerkers te beskryf;
- b. Om die sleutel prosesse wat herstrukturering van die arbeidsmark dryf te omskryf, insluitend die beweging van werkers weg van plase af; en
- c. Om 'n ontleding te doen van die onderliggende strukturele toestande en drywers van hierdie tendense.

Die verslag is nou vrygestel. Sommige van die hoof bevindinge is as volg:

- Markderegulering en liberalisering van die handel is elemente van 'n benadering deur die staat om hom van die sektor te onttrek.
- Liberalisering van die handel het ook Suid-Afrikaanse produsente se integrasie in die globale voedselwaardekettings verdiep. Dit is gedoen op 'n tydstip toe die mag van internasionale (en plaaslike) kleinhandel toenemend gekonsolideerd en meer kragtig geword het. Die gekombineerde prosesse van mark-deregulering en supermark-konsolidering het produsente se kollektiewe bedingingsvermoë in die markplek verswak, met die gevolg dat sommige landbouwaardekettings wat voorheen deur Suid-Afrikaanse produsente beheer was nou deur internasionale kleinhandelaars beheer word. In die proses het die meeste Suid-Afrikaanse produsente prysnemers geword.

- Die sektor word toenemend gereguleer deur middel van statutêre ingryping, veral in die ruimtes van arbeidverhoudinge en grondhervorming.
- As gevolg van die gekombineerde druk soos hierbo uitgestip, het produsente verskeie strategieë begin volg om te oorleef. Waar arbeid 'n hoof kostekomponent van hul besighede was, is die werksmag geherstruktureer. Dit het aanleiding gegee het tot 'n algehele afname in die totale getal werkers in diens, maar het ook gelei tot 'n toename in loswerk en inkontraktering.
- Die dominante produsentestrategie om ekonomiese druk te verlig was om produksie uit te brei om voordeel te trek uit skaalbesparings.
- Migrasie-arbeid is goed gevestig in sekere gebiede en is aan die toeneem in ander.
- Daar was grootskaalse migrasie na landelike dorpe waar plaaslike owerhede swak toegerus is om die instroming te hanteer.
- Wetgewing en beleid wat beoog om plaaswerkers van behuising en verblyfsekerheid te voorsien blyk grootliks ontoepaslik te wees gegewe die groeiende werkersbevolking wat nie op plase woon nie.
- Wat plaaswerkers se werkstoestand betref, het die studie 'n hoë mate van nakoming in terme van erkenning van sleutelregte bevind. Daar is egter 'n tendens van laer nakoming in die geval van tydelike werkers.

Die studie bring 'n groot hoeveelheid inligting byeen oor die boerderysektor uit sensusdata, landbou-opnames, kwartaallikse werksmag-opnames en ander studies. Dit sluit in inligting oor die getal kommersiële boerdery-eenhede, die tipe boerderye, indiensnemingstatistiek, die ras-, ouderdom- en geslag-samestelling van die werksmag in die sektor, opvoedingsvlakke van werkers, besoldiging, ens. Om dié rede is dit 'n uiters handige verwysingsdokument oor die sektor.

Agri SA verwelkom objektiewe navorsing oor die sektor en erken dat daar probleme is wat aangespreek moet word. Sommige hiervan is binne die vermoë van produsente en hul organisasies, maar ander vereis 'n gesamentlike poging deur alle belanghebbendes en 'n waardeketting-benadering soos voorgestel deur die navorsers.

Agri SA het hom reeds verbind tot deelname in die ontwikkeling van 'n maatskaplike akkoord gemik op groter respek vir menseregte; verhoogde produktiwiteit; beter nakoming van arbeidswette asook gesondheid- en veiligheidswetgewing; bevordering van dialoog tussen produsente en werknemers; en bespoediging van transformasie in kommersiële boerderygebiede. Agri SA neem deel aan die *Vulnerable Workers' Forum* onder voorsitterskap van die adjunk-president, mnr Cyril Ramaphosa, en is besig om sy eie stel riglyne te ontwikkel met die oog op die versterking, beskerming, bevordering en ontwikkeling van die fisiese, maatskaplike, opvoedkundige, kulturele, spirituele, intellektuele, beroeps-, omgewings- en ekonomiese welsyn van boerderygemeenskappe. Sodanige akkoord is per slot van sake die kollektiewe verantwoordelikheid van alle belanghebbendes wat in boerderygemeenskappe aktief is en behoort progressief en sistematies te poog om deurlopend die impak van 'n reeks maatskaplike en ekonomiese risikofaktore wat negatief inwerk op die welsyn van plaaswerkers en hul gesinne en gemeenskappe te minimaliseer.

Uitgereik deur Agri SA, Direkoraat: Korporatiewe Skakeling

Navrae

Me Annelize Crosby, Adviseur Regs- en Grondsake, Parlementêre Skakeling, Agri SA, 082 388 0017

Me Elize van der Westhuizen, Senior Bestuurder: Arbeidsverhoudinge, Agri SA, 012-643 3400 of 082 388 0003

AGRI SA WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO) REPORT ON LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS ON FARMS

The objective information gathered by the recently completed ILO-research study into the living and working conditions of farm workers, gives context to the realities which policy makers and sector role players have to consider and address in their efforts to enhance the conditions of those who work and live on farms. It also acknowledges the local and global challenges faced by commercial agriculture which are causing major structural adjustments in the sector and limit farmers' ability to accelerate their expenses on salaries and social benefits.

The need for such a study, presenting policy makers with credible information, is a long felt need. Following public hearings in Parliament in 2011 on evictions and the plight of farmworkers and farm dwellers, the then chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr Stone Sizane called for independent research into conditions on farms and the underlying causes of evictions from farms.

The International Labour Organisation responded to the call and funded a research project into this sensitive matter. A research proposal was formulated with the help of an oversight committee consisting of representatives from various government departments, ngo's, civic organisations and organised agriculture. The proposal was then put out to tender and the tender was eventually awarded to a consortium of universities. Desktop studies were done, followed by some field research done at ten case study sites. Case studies were chosen to gauge to what extent a range of factors have had an impact on labour management strategies. These included the labour intensity of different commodities, the seasonality of farming operations, the ability of various sub sectors to mechanise, and their exposure to international markets. The objectives of the proposed research were:

- a. To describe the most important trends in the living and working conditions of farm workers;
- b. To describe the key processes driving labour market restructuring in agriculture, including the movement of workers off farms; and
- c. To provide an analysis of the underlying structural conditions and drivers of these trends.

The report has now been released. Some of the main findings include:

- Market deregulation and trade liberalisation were elements of an approach by the state to withdraw from the sector.
- Trade liberalisation has also deepened South African producers' integration into global food value chains. It has done so at a point in time when international (and local) retail power has become increasingly consolidated and more powerful. The combined processes of market deregulation and supermarket consolidation have served to weaken producers' collective bargaining power in the market place. As a result, some of the agricultural value chains, which were previously controlled by South African producers, are now controlled by international retailers. In the process, most South African producers have become price takers.
- There has been increased regulation of the sector through legislative intervention, particularly in the spaces of labour relations and land reform.
- As the result of the combined pressures outlined above, producers have adopted various coping strategies. Where labour has been a major cost component of their business, work forces have been restructured, leading to an overall decrease in the total of workers employed, but also increased casualization and externalisation.
- The dominant producer strategy to cope with the economic pressures has been to expand production to benefit from economies of scale.
- Migrant labour is well established in certain areas and on the rise in others.
- There has been a huge migration to rural towns and local government is ill-equipped to deal with the influx.
- Legislation and policy aiming to provide farm workers with housing and security of tenure appears to be hugely out of step with a growing, off-farm employee population.
- Regarding farm workers' working conditions, the study found a fairly high rate of compliance in terms of granting of key rights. There is however a trend of lower compliance in the case of non-permanent workers.

The study draws together a huge amount of information on the farming sector from census data, agricultural surveys, quarterly labour force surveys and other studies. These include information on the number of commercial farming units, the type of farming, employment statistics, racial, age and gender composition of the labour force in the sector, educational levels of workers, remuneration and more. As such it is a very useful reference document on the sector.

Agri SA welcomes objective research on the sector. It acknowledges that there are problems that need to be addressed. Some of these are within the power of producers and their organisations to address, but others will require a joint effort by all stakeholders and a value chain approach as suggested by the researchers.

Agri SA has already committed itself to participating in the development of a Social Accord aimed at enhancing respect for human rights, improving productivity, enhancing compliance with labour and health and safety legislation, promoting dialogue between producers and employees and advancing transformation in commercial farming areas. Agri SA is participating in the Vulnerable Workers' Forum chaired by the Deputy President, Mr Ramaphosa and is busy developing its own internal set of guidelines seeking to strengthen, protect, advance and develop the physical, social, educational, cultural, spiritual, intellectual, occupational, environmental and economic wellness of farming communities. Ultimately such a social accord is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders active in farming communities and it should progressively and systematically seek to continuously minimise the impact of a range of social and economic risk factors that impact negatively on the wellness of farmworkers and their families and communities.

Issued by Agri SA, Directorate: Corporate Liaison

Enquiries

Ms Elize van der Westhuizen, Senior Manager: Labour Relations, Agri SA, 012-643 3400 or 082 388 0003

Ms Annelize Crosby, Advisor Legal and Land Affairs, Parliamentary Liaison, Agri SA, 082 388 0017