

Press Release

RURAL REDRESS OR ELITE CAPTURE? COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO NEW LAND BILLS/POLICIES

A number of recent government policies and bills seem to suggest that land may increasingly be transferred into the hands of chiefs and other elite strategic partners, rather than to communities, who will instead have conditional tenure and perhaps remain permanent tenants of the state.

Prompted by these recent policies, NGOs, CBOs, academic institutes/centres and community members are coming together to develop a strategy and responses pertaining to communal land tenure, farm worker tenure, smallholder farmers, land redistribution, restitution, rural development and agrarian reform.

The policies/bills in question include the Revised Restitution Amendment Bill; CPA Amendment Bill; Draft Communal Tenure Policy; State Land Leasing & Disposal Policy; Recapitalisation & Development Policy; ESTA Amendment Bill; Farm Worker Tenure Policy; Agricultural Landholding Policy Framework.

Suggestions are that government is pushing these policies through its structures to have them signed into law to commemorate the centenary of the 1913 Land Act, without public consultation. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has not so far issued a request for public submissions for any of these policies.

The workshop, to be held on 3-4 October 2013 at Stay City (Berea, Johannesburg) and hosted by the Centre for Law and Society (UCT), the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (UWC), and Tshintsha Amakhaya, aims to create awareness and reach a clearer understanding of the bills and policies; examine how these laws and policies affect (rural) people and other implications; and discuss strategies on how to respond to these bills and policies. The Legal Resources Centre will also be providing legal advice at the workshop.

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