Remarks by President Jacob Zuma at the compensation and handover celebration for various land claims in KNP

Date: 2016-05-23

21 May 2016 - Remarks by President Jacob Zuma, at the compensation and handover celebration for various land claims on the Kruger National Park, Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga.

The Premier of the Mpumalanga Province, Mr David Mabuza
Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr S Nugwazi

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Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mrs Carolin Mashigo-Dlamini

Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, Ms Barbara Thomson

MEOs Chairperson of the Mopani House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi Lameshik Mokoma

Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Kgosi M.S. Dikgale.

His Majesty King Tswani Matlala of the Venda Nation.

Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District Municipality, Councillor Thulaniwe Mabibi

The Mayor of the Mabopane Local Municipality, Cllr Retsela Ramalela

The Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Mr Nomandla Mtshwa-Ododa

CEO for SANParks, Mr Footle Mkhwebane

Representative of the Mopani claimants, Mr Panyi Sambo

Representative of the Limpopo claimants, Mr MJK Oakle

Members of the Community

Fellow South Africans,

We are truly pleased to join you today for an important event in the transformation programme in our country.

We have come together about land, to restore the rights of our people who were dispossessed.

Land has been a fundamental issue in the struggle for liberation.

Former ANC President, Ali Xuma summed the importance of land accurately in his opening address to the 1941 ANC national conference.

He said: “The fundamental basis of all wealth and power is the ownership and acquisition of freehold title to land. From land, we derive our existence. We derive our wealth in minerals, food, and other essentials. On land we build our homes. Without land we cannot exist.”

“To all men of whatever race or colour land, therefore, is essential for their wealth, prosperity and health. Without land — rights any race will be doomed to poverty, destitution and lack of all life’s essentials”.

Today we are contributing to the reversal of the apartheid legacy by compensating six communities, three from Limpopo, and another three from Mopani, all who were dispossessed through harsh apartheid laws.

But as we celebrate this milestone in the history of Land Redistribution in our country, it is with sadness that we remember the recent passing away of Chief Muyenzel A few days after the approval of his community’s land claim.

Comradess

Namib’s land is the cradle of the ancestors, the motherland, the source of life. It is the place where we come from, the place where we belong. It is the place where our ancestors are buried. It is the place where our identity is shaped. It is the place where our culture is nurtured. It is our home.

Although Kruger National Park is considered a conservation flagship, its treasures also constitute a collective memory, culture and tradition of those who were dispossessed of this land.

The claims which we are settling today are part of the various land claims lodged by different communities from the Limpopo and Mopani region in respect of the Park.

These were all lodged before the first window of opportunity for the lodgement of claims, prior to the 1999 cut-off date.

In settling these claims, we are giving effect to a Cabinet decision taken in 2005 regarding equitable redress as the only option for settling all land claims on the Kruger National Park.

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in settling these claims, we are giving effect to a Cabinet decision taken in 2008 regarding equitable redress as the only option for settling all land claims on the Kruger National Park.

The Cabinet decision took into consideration the status of the Kruger National Park as a national and international asset, which needed to be conserved for the benefit of the whole nation.

The decision paved the way for engagement with the affected communities, culminating in the resolution to settle the claims in 2008.

Phase 1 involved the awarding of financial compensation, while Phase 2 will involve a Beneficiation Scheme aimed at stimulating much-needed economic activities within the affected municipal areas where the claimant communities reside.

Today we are awarding a total amount of R44 million rand to two communities as part of Phase 1 of the settlement of their claims on the Kruger National Park, in respect of land measuring in total extent of three hundred and eighteen thousand hectares.

1. In Mpumalanga Province, the Magaliesburg municipality is receiving R34 million.
2. The Mthongweni Community and Sikobi Family comprising 116 households, are receiving and a total of 12.8 million rand.

Two outstanding claims for the Phabeni and Somonolewe communities are still being attended to...
Through the kids in Parks programme, learners and their teachers are afforded an opportunity to come through the park and overnight for 3 days, learning and enjoying the environment in the park.

I was told that the programme is currently running in this park and 500 learners from neighbouring communities are actually inside.

We are also pleased that the Park continues to provide jobs in the area. On any given day, approximately 2342 workers leave their homes to come and earn a living from this park.

Thousands move into the area in other national parks and nature reserves across the South African landscape.

These communities will now benefit directly from the international tourism created by this world-revered Kruger National Park.

As government we remain committed to implementing the country’s land restitution programme.

In order to assure that everyone who lost land rights in the past as a result of past racially discriminatory laws and practices have an opportunity to benefit, the lodging of land claims has been reopened until 30 June 2019 to accommodate those who missed the initial cut-off deadline.

Congratulations to all the claimant communities for your patience and persevering spirit, let us continue to make ours a winning nation, and together let us continue to move South Africa forward.

I thank you.

Issued by The Presidency.

Pretoria.

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