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INPUTS RELATING TO

# A SOCIAL UNITY GUIDELINE FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

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## RATIONALE

A Social Unity Guideline is an action plan for agrarian communities with an aim to promote community wellness and accelerate socio-economic development in rural areas. Furthermore, a Social Unity Guideline seeking to strengthen, protect, advance and develop the physical, social, educational, cultural, spiritual, intellectual, occupational, environmental and economic wellness of agrarian communities is of critical importance for South Africa.

Various social risk factors such as underdevelopment, intergenerational poverty, unemployment, high levels of substance abuse, low levels of education, lack of higher order skills, acrimonious labour and race relations, high levels of inequality, poor living conditions, lack of opportunities to build a career path, to grow wealth through property acquisition and pension accumulation, income disparity, limited assistance and access to basic social services, high levels of violent crime, weak moral fibre and related socio-economic ills do have significant detrimental effects on community wellness.

In addition various economic factors such as policy uncertainty, high direct and indirect costs, unrealistic demands, droughts and climate change, unskilled labour force and high turnover, labour strikes, unfair labour practices, poor and unethical management, weak commodity prices, loss of agricultural assets and produce, low productivity, increased international competition, dumping of produce at prices below the cost of production, margin risk, cash-flow, compliance, ever increasing direct and indirect costs and a constantly changing retail environment that drive up cost with adverse and unfavourable effects on labour and prices of domestic food have significant harmful effects on community wellness.

A Social Unity Guideline must progressively and systematically seek to continuously minimise the impact of these social and economic risk factors. Moreover, it must inspire and hold to account all stakeholders to work hand in hand in order to create conducive circumstances for community wellness in all spheres to flourish and to attain specific physical, social, educational, cultural, spiritual, intellectual, occupational, environmental and economic wellness outcomes.

It is important though to know that a Social Unity Guideline is not only about attaining social and economic outcomes, but it is also a national constitutional and developmental imperative. A Social Unity Guideline for agrarian communities must therefore be aligned with the socio-economic developmental values, principles and objectives contained in the Bill of Rights. Furthermore, the Social Unity Guideline will be informed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and National Development Plan and will be reviewed to remain in line with overarching policies. Lastly, this Social Unity Guideline does not seek to assume the duties and responsibilities of government as stated in the Constitution, but emphasizes the commitment of Agri SA's membership to upholding and adhering to the legislative framework as applicable to farming operations.



## AGRI SA COMMITMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Agri SA and its affiliates publicly commit themselves to developing a Social Unity Guideline, the guiding principles of which will be the following:**

- Respect for human rights in farming communities;
- Opportunities for constructive dialogue between farmers and farmworkers, local associations and rural communities and provincial and national structures of organized agriculture and government and other stakeholders;
- Compliance by Agri SA affiliates and their members with all legislation and particularly labour legislation and land reform legislation;
- Promotion of compliance with codes of best practice developed by various commodity groupings and sharing best practice within the agricultural industry;
- Promotion of community involvement within rural areas aimed at addressing poverty, joblessness and inequality.
- Capturing the deficiencies (service delivery, infrastructure, healthcare, education, business profit margins and related issues and cultivable land) that hinder progress towards social cohesion in rural areas. Few farmers wake up one morning and deliberately give staff a raw deal in healthcare, education, housing or security of tenure for example. There are enablers that must be identified and backed by research.

**Effect will be given to this commitment through the following actions:**

- Actively promoting a culture of respect for human rights through our communication channels with members, illuminating the meaning of the various rights contained in the Bill of Rights and ensuring that all our own documents and policies are in line with the Bill of Rights;
- Constructive dialogue will be promoted amongst other things through active participation in relevant structures by members of affiliates of Agri SA at grassroots level;
- Compliance with legislation will be promoted, e.g. through internal communication such as information documents, newsletters and internal magazines, through training where possible and through existing sector industry codes of best practice;
- Where codes of best practice exist in commodity organisations, these may be studied and promoted within other commodity groupings and where possible adapted and implemented in other commodities as well. Commodity specific realities need however to be taken into account;
- Agri SA will develop a platform to share ideas and examples of successful land reform models, upliftment initiatives in rural areas and farmer-driven community projects and promote these amongst members.



## ALIGNMENT WITH LEGISLATIVE AND DEVELOPMENTAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS

### **National Constitution**

South Africa's National Constitution states that our country is founded on the following values:

- Human dignity.
- The achievement of equality.
- The advancement of human rights and freedoms.
- Non-racialism and non-sexism.
- Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law.
- A multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness.

The Bill of Rights in addition enshrines subject to limitations each and every citizen's social rights in terms of the following:

- Equality
- Human Dignity
- Life
- Freedom and security of the person
- Not to be subjected to Slavery, servitude and forced labour
- Privacy
- Freedom of religion, belief and opinion
- Freedom of expression
- Assembly, demonstration, picket and petition
- Freedom of association
- Political rights
- Citizenship
- Freedom of movement and residence
- Freedom of choice in terms of trade, occupation and profession
- Labour relations
- Environment
- Property
- Housing
- Health care, food, water and social security
- Children
- Education
- Language and culture
- Cultural, religious and linguistic communities
- Access to information
- Just administrative action
- Access to courts
- Arrested, detained and accused persons



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In September 2015, the leaders of 150 nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. These are to be achieved by 2030:

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Source: UN

These goals seek to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity, and free the world from extreme poverty. It provides measurable time bound targets and serves as a blueprint to deal systematically with the most pressing development challenges of our time.



## NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Government appointed the National Planning Commission, advisory body consisting of 26 private and public sector experts in May 2010 to draft the national development plan.

The Commission's Diagnostic Report released in June 2011, clearly outlined South Africa's achievements and shortcomings since 1994. It outlined nine primary challenges and identified failure to implement policies and absence of broad partnerships as the main causes for slow progress:

- Too few people work
- The quality of school education for black people is poor
- Infrastructure is poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained
- Spatial divides hobble inclusive development
- The economy is unsustainably resource intensive
- The public health system cannot meet demand or sustain quality
- Public services are uneven and often of poor quality
- Corruption levels are high
- South Africa remains a divided society.

The damaging effects of the abovementioned challenges do have a significant detrimental effect on community wellness and has inspired the National Planning Commission to develop a multi-dimensional framework underpinning a virtuous cycle of development with progress in one area such as economic growth supporting advances in others such as human development.

The National Development Plan seeks to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. It wants to enable citizens to have the capabilities to grasp the ever-broadening opportunities available and to change the life chances of millions of our people, especially the youth.

By 2030 the National Development Plan wants to eliminate income poverty by reducing the proportion of households with a monthly income below R419 per person (in 2009 prices) from 39 percent to zero and wants to reduce inequality in lowering the Gini coefficient from 0.69 to 0.6.

### **Important enabling milestones outlined in the National Development Plan**

- Increase employment from 13 million in 2010 to 24 million in 2030.
- Raise per capita income from R50 000 in 2010 to R120 000 by 2030.
- Increase the share of national income of the bottom 40 percent from 6 percent to 10 percent.
- Establish a competitive base of infrastructure, human resources and regulatory frameworks.
- Ensure that skilled, technical, professional and managerial posts better reflect the country's racial, gender and disability makeup.



- Broaden ownership of assets to historically disadvantaged groups.
- Increase the quality of education so that all children have at least two years of preschool education and all children in grade 3 can read and write.
- Provide affordable access to quality health care while promoting health and wellbeing.
- Establish effective, safe and affordable public transport.
- Produce sufficient energy to support industry at competitive prices, ensuring access for poor households, while reducing carbon emissions per unit of power by about one-third.
- Ensure that all South Africans have access to clean running water in their homes.
- Make high-speed broadband internet universally available at competitive prices.
- Realise a food trade surplus, with one-third produced by small-scale farmers or households.
- Ensure household food and nutrition security.
- Entrench a social security system covering all working people, with social protection for the poor and other groups in need, such as children and people with disabilities.
- Realise a developmental, capable and ethical state that treats citizens with dignity.
- Ensure that all people live safely, with an independent and fair criminal justice system.
- Broaden social cohesion and unity while redressing the inequities of the past.
- Play a leading role in continental development, economic integration and human rights.

### **Critical actions outlined in the National Development Plan**

- A social compact to reduce poverty and inequality, and raise employment and investment.
- A strategy to address poverty and its impacts by broadening access to employment, strengthening the social wage, improving public transport and raising rural incomes.
- Steps by the state to professionalise the public service, strengthen accountability, improve coordination and prosecute corruption.
- Boost private investment in labour-intensive areas, competitiveness and exports, with adjustments to lower the risk of hiring younger workers.
- An education accountability chain, with lines of responsibility from state to classroom.



- Phase in national health insurance, with a focus on upgrading public health facilities, producing more health professionals and reducing the relative cost of private health care.
- Public infrastructure investment at 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), financed through tariffs, public-private partnerships, taxes and loans and focused on transport, energy and water.
- Interventions to ensure environmental sustainability and resilience to future shocks.
- New spatial norms and standards – densifying cities, improving transport, locating jobs where people live, upgrading informal settlements and fixing housing market gaps.
- Reduce crime by strengthening criminal justice and improving community environments.

**Chapter 6 of the National Development Plan stipulates the following key all-encompassing objectives:**

- Rural communities require greater social, economic and political opportunities to overcome poverty.
- To achieve this agricultural development should introduce a land-reform and job creation / livelihood strategy that ensure rural communities have jobs.
- Ensure quality access to basic services, health care, education and food security.
- Plans for rural towns should be tailor-made according to the varying opportunities in each area.
- Intergovernmental relations should be addressed to improve rural governance.

According to the National Development Plan rural areas are still characterised by great poverty and inequality and many households are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment.

A Social Unity Guideline can play an instrumental role in strengthening, protecting, advancing and developing promoting economic wellness. In order to achieve this ideal it is important to determine the areas of focus, the social and economic indicators and activities or projects to be implemented and to structure a Social Unity Guideline accordingly.



## STRUCTURING A SOCIAL UNITY GUIDELINE

AREAS OF FOCUS	SOCIAL AND OR ECONOMIC INDICATORS	PROJECT/S
All stakeholders working together to support and promote physical wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to nutritional food</li> <li>• Healthy and disease-free lifestyle</li> <li>• Attention to personal hygiene</li> <li>• Active in sports and other physical activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and community food schemes</li> <li>• Developing community gardens</li> <li>• Identifying links with established wellness programs</li> <li>• Employer supported clinic services</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote social wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol and drug free communities</li> <li>• Crime free communities</li> <li>• Respect for law and order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying links with existing alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment programs</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote educational wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-schooling</li> <li>• Primary and high schools</li> <li>• Skills development</li> <li>• Tertiary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School management training programmes</li> <li>• Teacher development programmes</li> <li>• School dropout prevention programmes</li> <li>• Agriculture skills and technology programmes</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote cultural wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development via indigenous languages or an international language</li> <li>• Practice healthy cultural practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurial programmes based on indigenous cultural practices</li> <li>• Establishment of cultural clubs</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote intellectual wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to libraries</li> <li>• Culture of reading and debating</li> <li>• Access to ICT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and supporting community street libraries</li> <li>• Computer training</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote spiritual wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious activities</li> <li>• Counselling services</li> <li>• Family values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling services in collaboration with churches</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote occupational wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job opportunities</li> <li>• Career advancement</li> <li>• Ongoing learning and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand agricultural value chain to increase jobs</li> <li>• Drive the National Development Plan at district level with regards to job creation</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote environmental wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good labour and race relations</li> <li>• Healthy environmental and living conditions</li> <li>• Environmental conditions conducive for personal growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give input regarding the integrated development plan (IDP) and promote collaboration with all state and community entities to bring about a conducive and healthy environment</li> </ul>
All stakeholders working together to support and promote financial wellness of agrarian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property ownership</li> <li>• Pension benefits</li> <li>• Housing and medical support</li> <li>• Shared benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive the National Development Plan at district level with regards to land reform, economic growth, investment, etc</li> </ul>



## IN CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of a Social Unity Guideline requires high level, committed, accountable and servant leadership to solve the many complex societal issues facing agrarian societies. However, leadership who has an in-depth grasp of the sociological complexities, political intricacies, economic interests and future aspirations embedded at various levels of society and who can play a leading role in establishing and cementing such a healthy mix of conditions can bring about community wellness. Leaders are the heart of a Social Unity Guideline. The essence of leadership means inspiring a group to come together for a common goal. Leaders motivate, console and work with people to keep them bonded and eager to achieve their goals. That means setting a direction, communicating it to everyone and keeping people committed when deeply challenged by the environment.