

'Recognition mechanism'™ will entice farmers

'The land reform redistribution mechanism driven by the state has presented many frustrations, specifically among aspiring young black farmers.' So says Professor Johann Kirsten, from the Bureau for Economic Research at Stellenbosch University, in the second part of an analysis of how land reform should be undertaken following the recent report by the presidential advisory panel on land reform and agriculture ([See part 1: 'Time for a radical but simple and clear plan'](#) in [Legalbrief Today](#)). In an analysis in [Business Day](#), Kirsten argues that government should focus on policy incentives that could 'efficiently' bring about a sustainable land reform process and growing agricultural sector. **The panel, he notes, proposes the introduction of a 'recognition mechanism' (page 63) that could have a 'significant and sustainable impact on the land reform process without costing the government a cent'**. All those who participate could receive a certificate of recognition so that their contribution is recorded. 'Guarantees regarding future tenure security for contributing farmers will go a long way in attracting more commercial farmers to participate.' Kirsten says such a mechanism could encourage the delivery of land through the voluntary release of land by corporations, state-owned enterprises, mines, churches, etc. Land could also be obtained from larger commercial farming operators – which could either donate land without any conditions attached; subdivide their land and allocate a viable portion to workers; or set up joint ventures with privately identified beneficiaries. 'The commercial farming sector should create a process whereby well-located farmland is identified and committed for land reform, beneficiaries are selected, and finance, mentorship and support are put in place. With this we ensure that all elements for successful and sustainable land reform are in place concurrently and immediately without having to wait for lengthy bureaucratic approval processes and the unsynchronised delivery of all complementary inputs.' Kirsten says this would allow the fast and easy subdivision of land while at the same time modernising and digitising the land administration system to create the 'virtual' land repository. He adds this would result in 'much-needed' progress on the land reform issue – all at minimal cost. Most importantly, he says, it would increase private sector participation, 'which could bring some level of efficiency to the process to the benefit of the beneficiaries'.