



Submission on ‘Regulations Regarding Control Over The Sale of Organically Produced Products In South Africa’

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Surplus People Project (SPP) is a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) that facilitates land and agrarian reform in the Western and Northern Cape. SPP’s main objective is to work towards the transformation of rural areas to ensure that poor black women and men gain access to, and ownership of land, natural and productive resources to improve their socio economic condition. SPP currently works with 61 emerging farmer groups and farm dwellers in the Western and Northern Cape.

SPP welcomes the opportunity to comment on the “Regulations Regarding Control Over The Sale Of Organically Produced Products In South Africa”(hereinafter referred to as the regulations).

We believe that the Regulations have to be located within the broader objective of agrarian reform of which agricultural reform should be a critical component. Thus agricultural reform should seek to empower emerging farmers and farm dwellers to ensure that agrarian transformation contributes towards the development of the rural economy in a sustainable manner. It is our contention that the policy further has to be located within a sustainable agricultural approach that considers the environment, ecologically friendly and ensures the future use of our natural resources. This requires a move towards a new agricultural framework that shifts away from an industrial chemical agricultural bias to guarantee the sustainability of the environment. This defines the broad contours in which our comments on the “regulations” have to be located.

In this regard we want to raise the following issues that should be considered by the National Department of Agriculture for the regulations:

- A) The regulations should be incorporated into a broader agricultural reform framework that can address the problem of poverty, food sovereignty, unemployment and rural economic development. Moreover a new framework for agriculture has to be developed that shifts away from a chemical industrial agriculture to ensure the

sustainability of the environment for future generations. In this regard SPP would support regulations for organically produced products that are part of the broader transformation of the agricultural sector.

- B) The dual nature of the agricultural sector in South Africa necessitates that resource poor black small- scale farmers would need state support to enter the organic industry. Thus resource poor black small – scale farmers would be unable to enter the industry because of the cost of certification. The resource deficit of these poor farmers requires that support mechanism, i.e. financial and institutional resources, be put in place to ensure more entrants into the industry. Thus there should be a different cost of certification for resource poor black small- scale farmers.

- C) Organic farming be central within the new agricultural reform framework that should be the core mandate of the Department of Agriculture. Extension officers should be trained in a variety of agricultural practices, not just restricted to industrial (chemical) agriculture. Emerging farmers should be given options and choices on the different agricultural practices. This requires that research and development should be considered to support the industry. Training of both extension officers and small- scale farmers should be in organic agriculture.

- D) Organic farming should be an integral part of the philosophy and practice of the Department of Agriculture that should be mainstreamed into the entire organisation.

In conclusion SPP wish to state that the “regulations” are important and necessary but has to be located within the broader agrarian transformation agenda, of which agricultural reform is a critical part. It has to take into consideration the resource deficit, land inequalities and concentration, rural poverty and food insecurity of the agrarian sector of our society.

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