

## Joint media statement: SAPS and Agri SA

**Pretoria: 7 August 2020** – The South African Police Service led by Divisional Commissioner of Visible Policing, Lieutenant General MD Sempe, on 28 July 2020 met with the leadership of Agri SA, to strengthen the working relations between the organisations and also to address the challenges emanating from the ongoing implementation of the Revised National Rural Safety Strategy.

The National Rural Safety Strategy was initially implemented in 2011 and then reviewed during 2018 and 2019 after exhaustive consultation with stakeholders that included organised agriculture, farm workers unions and relevant government departments. The Minister of Police, General Bheki Cele, officiated at the launch of the reviewed National Rural Safety Strategy on 11 October 2019 in Limpopo, Makhado, where various stakeholders signed a pledge of commitment to rally behind the implementation of the Strategy

Agri SA which is one of the key critical partners in the revised Rural Safety Strategy appreciated and thanked the police for the work done in this regard as well as for the opportunity to be a strategic role player in the development and implementation of the strategy. Both parties agreed that the effective implementation of the strategy should however be supported by the necessary resources. For this reason a task team was agreed upon to unpack the strategy and do a strategic analysis of resources required.

Both organisations expressed their concerns regarding the ongoing farm attacks and general criminality affecting the citizens of the country. Some of the proposed initiatives were:

- To increase visibility to curb farm attacks by both the police and farmers through the blue and white light patrols.
- To focus on an aggressive recruitment process of reservists.
- To initiate some changes on the reservist learning programme which will encourage more farmers and farm workers to be part of the reservist system.
- This may include reducing the length of the learning programme.
- To ensure that all farm watches and neighbourhood structures operate within the framework of the law and policies at all times.
- A more concerted approach by all parties must be expended towards revitalizing the rural safety committees at the lower levels and to ensure participation at the level of Provjoints and Natjoints priority committees
- To seek a long lasting solution to the challenge of illegal hunting with dogs.
- To this extent a joint working group was set up to deal with these issues.

The parties expressed commitment to work together and to mobilize other agricultural unions such as Transvaal Agricultural Union and others in ensuring an enhanced implementation of the National Rural Safety Strategy to create a crime-free environment conducive to the reduction of serious and violent crime such as farm attacks and stock theft.

Agri-SA acknowledged the difficult conditions posed by Covid19 and expressed condolences to the members of the police who lost their lives as a result of Covid19 and best wishes for those that are still sick and recovered. In a similar vein the SAPS appreciated the immense role which the farming community is playing in this country and to the fight against crime with their own resources and for being ready to be activated at any given time to foil criminal activities.

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