

According to the Ministry, the Integrated Programme "reflects consultative processes between the Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs; between the Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs and Provincial Departments of Agriculture; and between Government and key stakeholders" (p.1). This statement is misleading on a number of points. The latest policy appears to have emerged from a prolonged struggle between the Department of Land Affairs and the Department of Agriculture, now nominally united under a single minister. Since the Minister's Policy Statement of February 2000, DLA staff have been developing draft policy documents around issues such as commercial black farmers, the food safety net, farm equity schemes and municipal commonage. Simultaneously, the Department of Agriculture has been preparing what it calls an Integrated Programme of Land Redistribution and Agricultural Development, in which the Food Safety-Net is presented as merely the low end of the grant designed for commercial farmers (requiring a minimum R5 000 own contribution per household), municipal commonage is eliminated and assistance for land for settlement purposes is explicitly excluded. There has been inadequate consultation with rural communities and NGOs involved in land and agricultural matters, and the resulting proposals show no signs of being influenced by any of the stakeholders involved in land reform in South Africa.

Close inspection of the new Programme reveals that it is closely modelled on the World Bank's recent land reform experiments in Brazil and Columbia. The South American experiments are themselves very recent, allowing little opportunity to assess their success. Conditions in Brazil and Columbia diverge greatly from those in South Africa, both in terms of the nature of land demand and the nature of land reform applicants. The South American experience is centred on delivering land for commercial farming, and is clearly targeted at those with significant resources at their disposal. Applicants are presumed to be able, from their own pockets, to engage the services of planning agents to assist them file applications. This is a most unlikely scenario among the hundreds of thousands of poor rural households in South Africa, many of whom do not currently aspire to becoming commercial farmers.