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Action plan against corruption welcomed, but policy uncertainty over land and drought crisis remains a concern

Agri SA welcomes President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address delivered Thursday evening. Agri SA emphasizes and commits itself to President Ramaphosa's assertion that it is every South African's responsibility to ensure progress.

"The President's commitment to steer the South African ship out of difficult waters can be praised," said Dan Kriek, Agri SA's President. "The State of the Nation Address must be seen against the backdrop of large-scale corruption, a weakened economy, the dismantling of institutions and the dire state of semi-state institutions such as Eskom that have characterized South Africa for years. Now is the time to take hands and work together."

However, it is a pity that the policy uncertainty about land, rural safety and the drought crisis has not been addressed.

"It is worrying that he did not mention the severe and ongoing drought that affects several provinces and made no mention of the increasing violent crime in rural areas," Kriek said. "Farmers are under pressure due to policy uncertainty and the effect of criminality and drought. The President must give the sector the support to be sustainable. "

President Ramaphosa, however, has given recognition to the agricultural sector and its valuable contribution to the economy. He says the sector is well-developed, resilient and diversified - and that it can serve as a basis for growing agriculture and the economy.

"Building up and restoring the economy must now be placed at the forefront. We need to have policy certainty to attract investors to our sector and South Africa."

Agri SA is committed to agricultural development and reform and will continue to strive for a sustainable agricultural sector. Agri SA once again calls on the President and the South African government to provide policy certainty on troubling issues, including expropriation without compensation and drought assistance. In this way we can ensure food security and progress for all South Africans.