1. BACKGROUND TO COMMEMORATION EVENT

Sol Plaatje, founder of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) (now the ANC), described the Natives Land Act, No. 27 of 1913 (also known as the Bantu Land Act and the Black Land Act of 1913) as the “most cruel and abominable law ever conceived since the introduction of White Rule in South Africa”.

This act was the first major piece of legislation passed by the country’s white government that dispossessed the majority of the population of their land and livelihoods. While various other laws restricting African ownership and use of land preceded this piece of legislation, passage of the 1913 Act marked the first comprehensive and unified national move toward colonialist and later apartheid legislative efforts at territorial racial segregation of South Africa. This legislation instigated a long and devastating history of forced removals and evictions of Africans from their ancestral lands in which a new system of land tenure was introduced that dispossessed the majority of South Africans of the right to own land.

The impact was far-reaching, not only dispossessing individuals, families, churches and communities of land, but also excluding them from economic opportunities, access to heritage resources and causing community and social structures to disintegrate and dilute.

2. OBJECTIVE OF COMMEMORATION EVENT

The year 2013 marks the centenary of the signing into law of the Natives Land Act. Whereas the celebration of the passing of the act would be inappropriate, the
commemoration and reflection on what it brought to bear has been highlighted as a priority of the department.

In addition, it will put the department on a strategic direction towards the reversal, not only of the legacy of this particular piece of legislation, but decades of systematic dispossession of land, limits to access to land and spatial restructuring that left more than 1/3 of the country’s black citizens living in the former homelands with the concomitant impoverished and overcrowded conditions of today’s communal areas.

3. PREPARATORY WORK DONE

During October 2012, a national workshop was held by the Department of Rural Develop and Land Affairs where the objective and approach to the commemoration was unpacked. The planned impact and broad methodology to roll-out of the commemoration was discussed and agreed to.

During the workshop a mandate was given to the Chief Land Claims Commissioner to project manage and lead a team of executive managers in the department to ensure that the 4 main streams of activity.

The 4 work streams identified were:
- Communications
- Research and seminars
- Spatial and information management
- Youth

Apart from the preparatory work done and the mandate emerging from the workshop, the following clear directives were given:

- The Reversing the Legacy Project, albeit managed by the Chief Land Claims Commissioner, should not be a project that exclusively deals with restitution and land dispossessions, but should rather focus on all the various projects of the Department.
Therefore the nature of events to be showcased should be of national importance and reflect national themes throughout the commemoration period,

The longer term focus would be to inform the strategy of the department towards comprehensive reversal of the legacy of apartheid in respect of land and as such the project plan should build up towards 19 June 2013 but roll-out thereafter to feed into a longer term departmental strategy.

4. CONCURRENT AND RELATED MATTERS

The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights as one of the main pillars of the Department will be engaging in the re-opening of the land restitution claim process which will be announced in the budget speech of the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform. This comes at a key time, 100 years after promulgation of the 1913 Land Act. It is therefore crucial that the planning must be geared to be able to highlight the role of the Commission in reversing the Legacy of the 1913. We however intend to look at and reflect on the current land claims and as well as the potential future claims. As such, whatever activities are planned must and will be aligned with the re-opening.

The legislative process

The Department is also engaged in Policy formulation and drafting of legislation which will be presented to Parliament as part of the department plans in Reversing the legacy.

5. TASK TEAMS PROGRESS

Communication

The Communication Task Team under the leadership of Mr Paul Davids, Chief Director: Communication started a process of engagement with provincial PSSC heads, other senior managers in the line functions and provincial communication units and as a result put together a detailed programme of events and tasks to be executed during this period starting December 2012.

The roll-out of the communication plan is well under way with various communication events being held across all provinces.

Whereas the national communication roll-out has been an upscale of the normal communication activities of the department, it was agreed that the communication strategy should span even wider than just these upscaled activities related to the department and include wider national strategic activities and endeavours that speak to reversing the legacy of the 1913 Land Act.
Each month we highlight specific focused themes

These themes will be identified and communication events linking up to these themes will be showcased and given national exposure. In addition, smaller events will link and replicate the themes throughout the Provinces.

The period between the State of the National address (14 February 2013) and the commemoration day of the signing into law (19 June) is targeted during phase 1.

**PHASE 1**

Proposed themes are as listed below:

March – Restoring dignity

The main theme to run through all these events during March is the restoration of dignity. A number of hand-over of restored land celebrations are planned. It is anticipated that the reburial of an evicted labour tenant in North West will be showcased nationally to represent the restoration of dignity to citizens.

April - Freedom

The main event for Freedom month is a home-coming celebration in Claremont, Cape Town, which will take the shape of a street festival proclaiming the reshaping of Cape Town as an inclusive and free city where citizens can be free to live, work and play despite their race, creed of economic status.

May – Workers month

The focus could possibly be on farm workers as well as a focus on black commercial farmers and job creation in the agricultural sector. Beneficiation in value streams e.g. sugar cane and forestry could also be showcased.

June – Youth
June is celebrated as youth month. All events during this month will carry a strong theme of youth development and ensure the inclusion of youth in the activities. The main event is planned in Red Location, Port Elizabeth, which is the oldest township in South Africa with a rich history of the struggle against Apartheid and has, over the past few years, developed in a cultural and historical hub of contemporary urban development.

**PHASE 2**

The second phase sees the continuation of the Provincial events, however the National events still have to be conceptualised in detail and is not yet complete. Possible approaches for selected months are elaborated upon below:

August – Women’s Month

August will highlight the role of women in the struggle against oppression and women in forced removals. An idea has been mooted re the Battle of Langeberg where women were moved to Vryburg.

September – Heritage and culture

Heritage and culture will be highlighted in September and possibly aligned to natural resources, national parks and reserves. It is possible to showcase success stories in land restitution project where tourism lodges have been transferred to beneficiary communities and successful tourism products are operated. Celebrations at or near heritage sites such as Mapungubwe, the Cradle of Humankind and/or uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park is possible. The South African Heritage Council will be engaged on this further.

It is anticipated that the programme will be rolled-out up to at least mid-2014. The Communication Task team will have to work closely with the various HOD’s in executing the Provincial focussed Events

**Spatial and information management**

The greatest physical manifestation of the 1913 Natives Act is in the land holding patterns in South Africa, the relative location of rich and poor and 16 years after democracy, areas still largely occupied by people from one particular homogeneous race.

A key objective of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is to reshape the spatial inequalities current present in the South African landscape.
As part of the 1913 project, the department has commenced the plotting of land restitution projects onto maps. Not only will this enable the department to give management information about where and how much land is claimed and restored, but also support information that will required when engaging with the new restitution process.

The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Bill (SPLUMB) has been earmarked to be enacted in February 2013. This law will have a positive impact on the spatial development and planning. Guidelines on the development of rural towns will be published in the second half of 2013 and will be showcased as part of this project.

Research, Publications and seminars

Given the significance and impact of the 1913 Act, various universities, research institutions and NGO’s are planning to hold seminars and colloquiums to discuss the consequences of the Act and implications that government policies post 1994 have had and may have in future.

In this regard the department has undertaken its own research to be able to provide substantiated information regarding the programmes in place and the impact to date and lessons learnt. This work stream is led by Hilton Toolo Chief Director Policy.

Furthermore we plan we hold a National Colloquium which will be used as a focal point of discussion of all relevant policy to date and their impact in Reversing the legacy on the 1913 Native Land Act.

Both expects and lay people will be engage to contribute articles that will be used to document the history of the Native Land Act and the inroads made towards reversing the legacy.

Other research endeavours include the research underway to inform policy development for the possible reopening of Restitution land claims Process as well as providing diagnostic information to research all current outstanding claims.

Youth Development

During the workshop that was held on 24 and 25 October 2012 we identified the three following themes:
The three themes were selected as relevant due to the nature of the 1913 Project. Awareness will be created amongst youth about the 1913 Natives Land Act and the effect that it had and still has on people in South Africa.

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in .... established NAREYSEC which is a youth development initiative that seeks to provide development and ..... Specifically for unemployed youth in rural areas. The program with thus be used as a foundation to implement these suggested themes in all the provinces.

Once the awareness is created the youth can then be mobilised to build different structures to mark the milestone of a 100 years. They will be encouraged to create new legacies for the future generations. Training would provide youth with the relevant skills needed to execute the project.

Short term training will be used to create skills in story writing, plays, poetry, etc. Youth coming from affected communities will be identified and involved in the training. Participation from the communities is essential. Restitution and Land Redistribution projects will be targeted to identify the NARYSEC youth involved. Legacy projects such as the construction of monuments or community facilities and/or houses will be implemented.

6. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Risk management

During the workshop held in October various risks and threats to the project were raised. Much of the risks related to institutional and reputational issues but risks such as human resources (inter alia, to execute the project), information management and service delivery

The risks that could potentially have bearing on this project are all contained in the existing operational risks register. However, some work still needs to be done to measure the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls put in place. Additional work has to be done on the risk register related to the re-opening of claims

7. WAY FORWARD
A number of endeavours are still planned to ensure that the plan is comprehensive, covers all possible programmes related to the commemoration and also covers all activities by all role-players.

The department has a meeting scheduled with the GCIS who will assist in directing the communication strategy. There is also a plan to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the SABC to assist facilitate the communication of the Project.

Provinces are invited and encouraged to forward suggest events and focus areas to be show-cased so that they are incorporated into the national roll-out. Significant historic events, heritage and cultural sites/ and or events to be celebrated should be identified for inclusion into the national plan. Provinces are expected to assist in coordinating the roll-out with other provincial departments; the Office of the Premier must be kept informed.

Furthermore, communities must be engaged and co-opted to be part of the process at all times.

Once these inputs have been integrated into the national programme, the next step would be to communicate the detailed project plan and project-manage and monitor the execution.