



AFRA Association For
Rural Advancement

Press statement

12 March 2008

Landless Farm Dwellers March for Access to Justice

When: 14 March 2008

Where: Ladysmith

The Association For Rural Advancement fully supports the protest march organized by the landless farm dwellers in uThukela District. We applaud their decision to take to the street to highlight their neglect by government in respect of still being denied many socio-political and economic rights on farms in the uThukela area in particular and in KZN general. This form of protest is a significant part of the process of claiming citizenship rights by farm dwellers, in particular their rights of access to justice. For too long farm dwellers have been the forgotten citizens.

The regrettable closing down of civil society¹ legal support is bound to expose farm dwellers to further abuse and evictions by farmers. We believe that the right of access to justice is enshrined in the South African constitution and that farm dwellers should also be afforded that right in a manner that will secure their tenure rights.

As AFRA we call on all progressive organs of civil society and other formations of landless to join this campaign of claiming access to justice by participating in the March which will take place in Ladysmith on the 14 March 2008. We further call on government in particular the department of justice to ensure this becomes a reality for landless farm dwellers.

Issued by – The Association For Rural Advancement

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***** Please note that for those who wish to follow up on this matter there will be a public meeting with farm dwellers at the Newcastle Farmers hall on Saturday the 15th March at 9am and another meeting with Utrecht farm dwellers on Sunday 16th March at 9am at Doornkop farm in Utrecht. These meetings will discuss future access to legal services by farm dwellers in those areas.

For more details please contact Thabo Manyathi.

¹ Such support has been provided in KZN by AFRA, the Community Law and Rural Development Centre (CLRDC) and the UKZN Campus law clinic in Pmb as an attempt to fill the gap created by the states failure to accommodate farm dwellers in their provision of legal services to the indigent on civil matters like land rights. This civil society collaboration, established in 2001, was meant as a short term measure to assist farm dwellers and to give the state time to create a sustainable and effective service. To date the state (DLA and Dept of Justice) have failed to address this issue and the civil society collaboration has no choice now but to close its own service due to financial constraints affecting its effectivity.