Press Release

Caravan campaign to mark centenary of 1913 Land Act

The enactment of the Native Land Act in 1913 was one of the most significant events in South African history, affecting thousands of rural communities and the lives of millions of South Africans. To mark its centenary, Tshintsha Amakhaya (TA), an alliance of NGOs in land and agrarian reform, and Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA), will journey through the rural areas of South Africa in two Mayibuye iAfrika Caravans to show how after 100 years the 1913 Land Act continues to impact on the lives of rural people.

The caravans will depart from Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg on 1 June 2013, each traveling to TA partners’ sites to share experiences and campaign for the rights of farm workers/dwellers, smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, and mining communities. Both caravans will meet up in Pretoria for a rally and petition hand-over at the Union Buildings on 8 June.

100 years since the promulgation of the infamous Native Land Act of 1913 and nearly 20 years into democracy, South Africans are faced with a changing social environment and increasingly polarised society. As an alliance of civil society organisations, we are particularly concerned with the lack of progress in land and agrarian transformation.

The government’s failure to implement land reform is well documented. Our research has shown that skewed land ownership patterns and insecure tenure compound to the high levels of poverty and unemployment prevalent in most rural areas. Fuel prices continue to escalate the price of food and the general cost of living. Multinational agrochemical companies and national supermarket chains dominate the agro-food value chain at the expense of small scale farmers. The commodification of food from seed to table and monopoly of large agri-businesses keep micro- and small-scale farmers on the margins, while rural households still go to bed hungry.

To highlight the lack of land reform and agrarian transformation and provide a platform to unite people, the journey of the caravans will demonstrate the various ways in which dispossession and patterns of accumulation play themselves out in the lives and struggles of rural people. As the caravans engage with the various sectors and collect stories of those who face daily challenges in reclaiming rights to land, healthy food, control over natural resources and lives of dignity. The picture of what is needed to realise agrarian transformation will become clearer.
The caravan is symbolic to South Africans’ bid to reclaim their heritage and rights to land and livelihoods. This campaign is also an opportunity to showcase the potential of a vibrant and prosperous rural countryside where people live with secure tenure, take control over their own food and determine their own future. The caravans will end in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, where a submission, videos and testimonies will be presented to the decision makers with demands for pro-active action towards agrarian transformation.

Caravan routes

ROUTE 1 TREK FROM THE CAPE - Western and Eastern Cape

This Caravan will set off from Cape Town where the Dutch settlers first set foot on South African soil.

June
1 Cape Town – send-off event
   Citrusdal - Farm workers, farm dwellers and people living on church land (SPP)
2 Rawsonville – Women farm workers (WFP)
3 Suurbraak – Smallholder farmers and Act 9 community (TCOE)
   Hessequa - Commonage and Act 9 communities (SCLC)
4 Keiskammahoek – Betterment restitution and smallholder agriculture (BRC)
5. Travel to Mthatha
6 Hobeni – Fishing communities (TRALSO)
7 Travel to Pretoria and prepare for rally with other caravan and groups
8 Pretoria - March to Union Buildings

ROUTE 2 TREK FROM THE BERG – Kwazulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo

This caravan will set off from Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal Province, named after Piet Retief and Gert Maritz who led the Voortrekkers across the Drakensberg mountains into Natal and the Transvaal.

June
1 Pietermaritzburg – send-off event
2 Bergville – Communal grazing and land reform (FSG)
3 Amajuba – Farm dwellers/labour tenants (AFRA)
4 Moutse – Land reform community and traditional authorities (LAMOSA)
5 Ngwaabe – Mining, land reform, and game reserve (LAMOSA)
6 Mokopane – Mining community (Nkuzi)
7 Travel to Pretoria and prepare for rally with other caravan and groups
8 Pretoria – March to Union Buildings

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