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Govt not moved by criticisms of plans to allocate 20,000 hectares of land to Kenya — Minister Phiri

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 English

Government will not be discouraged by criticisms following the decision to allocate Kenya 20,000 hectares of land for large scale farming.

Agriculture Minister Reuben Mtolo said government would not be dissuaded from attracting foreign direct investment.

Phiri has therefore indicated that next week they would meet to identify qualified farmers who will take part in the winter maize initiative to support Kenya's need of one million metric tonnes of maize.

A few days ago, Mtolo held talks with the Kenyan Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary Mithika Linturi over the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to allocate Kenyan farmers 20,000 hectares of land for large scale farming.

This news has however not been received well by local farmers

Responding to the criticisms, Mtolo said the Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) will next week hold a meeting with farmers to discuss the way forward.

He said at the ZANACO and European Investment Bank meeting in Lusaka on Thursday.



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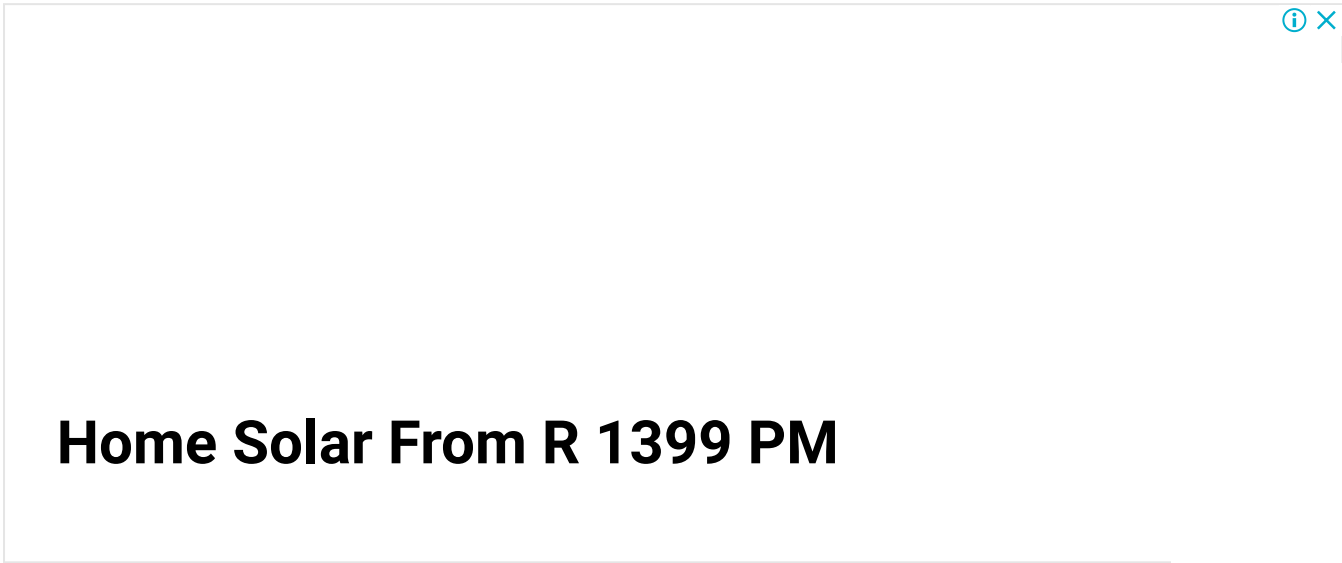
Phiri warned that government would not be discouraged to take up such initiatives as they encouraged foreign direct investment in the agriculture sector.

He however pointed out that government would not leave out Zambians without land.

“When you hear that the agriculture minister has given huge chunk of land to Kenya and other countries, read in between the lines, it should not be misinterpreted. What we are doing across the globe inviting those who can come and farm in our country and utilise the land which we have in our country.

 English

“We want them to utilise the water that we have and good soils. So let us look at the positive side, we should not shoot ourselves in the feet by denying other people who can come and invest. So we will not be dissuaded from that path. will not stop and be swayed off,” Phiri said.



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He said giving out huge chunk of land to Kenya or other countries should not be misinterpreted as Government was only inviting investment.

Phiri stated that Kenya was in need of one million metric tonnes of maize immediately which could not be produced by local small scale farmers.

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