



Business & Economy

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Zimbabwe Bio Energy sets the record straight regarding Nuanetsi Ranch

Written by Chantal Riley

{pp}Following recent inaccurate media reporting, Zimbabwe Bio Energy (ZBE) wishes to set the record straight with regards to Nuanetsi Ranch.

The Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ) has entered into a joint venture with Zimbabwe Bio Energy with a view of unlocking the true economic value of Nuanetsi Ranch. The DTZ acquired title deed ownership of Nuanetsi Ranch in 1989 from the Imperial Cold Storage Company of South Africa.

The ranch has been starved of capital and for some years now has been searching for a credible investment partner. Since the early 1990s numerous international investment companies have courted the DTZ for investment opportunities in Nuanetsi. These investment efforts failed to create sources of water within the arid ranch and therefore the proposed partnerships of the Nuanetsi Ranch never materialised. The joint venture terms between ZBE and the DTZ have given the company land utilisation powers but the land remains the property of the trust.

Contrary to media reports, ZBE has not acquired the land; Nuanetsi Ranch title deeds have remained within the hands of the DTZ. Zimbabwean law dictates that indigenous property is protected from redistribution in the framework of fast track land reform. Because of the indigenous ownership of the Nuanetsi Ranch as a property of the DTZ, the land has never been acquired by government for redistribution or earmarked as such.

“Inaccurate press reports earlier put the total figure of families resettled within Nuanetsi Ranch at 10,000, when in fact only 232 families illegally settled themselves on the ranch in 2003,” said Dr Liberty Mhlanga, Executive Director of Zimbabwe Bio Energy. “To date they have not legalised their stay within Nuanetsi’s boundaries. However, the DTZ and ZBE have set aside 60,000 hectares for resettlement purposes as part of its social responsibility programme and the 232 families will be catered for within this initiative.”

Nuanetsi forms part of the Zimbabwean lowveld belt which experiences scorching temperatures throughout the year with minimum summer rainfall. Any form of cropping within the ranch is rendered unfeasible unless there is irrigation, which is why ZBE will be constructing water infrastructure first. Following the conclusion of the joint venture deal with the DTZ two years ago, ZBE has rolled out a multi-billion US dollar investment programme which includes crocodile farming, sugarcane growing, cattle ranching, and game keeping within Nuanetsi. Dr Mhlanga went on to explain that the target in cattle ranching is to increase the current head of cattle from 5,000 to 25,000, creating the potential to provide an ample meat supply for Zimbabwe. The crocodile section currently has more than 100,000 crocodiles on site and at the current breeding rate, this figure will treble to over 300,000 in the next three years.

The benefits of crocodile farming include the supply of crocodile meat and leather products for domestic use and has export potential for international markets. “The crocodile department alone has already created more than 2,000 jobs within the Mwenezi district in Zimbabwe and redefined the investment value of this area as more companies are setting up shop here. Econet Wireless for instance have seen it fit to boost connectivity in the area because of the population pull into the project,” continued Dr Mhlanga. Some hundreds of hectares have already been cleared ahead of cane planting which will commence when water infrastructure has been established. He confirmed that ethanol production is also on the cards for Nuanetsi which will see the production of 500 million litres per year, far more than what the Zimbabwean market is able to consume, making it another ideal export product for the country to benefit from.

The game section is well on track and has been stocked up with a variety of wild animals and a further 1,000 buffaloes have been bought from the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife management authority. "The Nuanetsi partnership between Zimbabwe Bio Energy and the Development Trust of Zimbabwe is proving how public private partnerships can create solutions that provide both economic and environmental benefits to the country and its people.

This win-win outcome has the potential to improve Zimbabwe's environmental management practices and to stimulate economic growth," concluded Dr Mhlangu. The company also wishes to reiterate that President Robert Mugabe and his Defence Minister Munangagwa are not linked to this project in any way and the Zimbabwean company shareholding register reflects this accordingly. With regards to Billy Rautenbach's involvement, he is purely a promoter of this project as he realises the immense value this project can hold for Zimbabwe as a whole.

Contact information:

Issued by: PR Worx

+27 11 896 1818

info@prworx.co.za

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Chantal Riley
chantal@prworx.co.za

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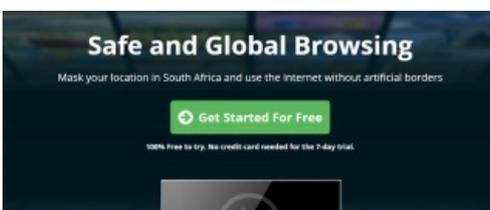
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Type	Target	New Check	Interval	Time	Result
HTTP	A Broken Web Site	ERR	1	10:21:38	FAIL
SMTP	A Mail Host	ERR	3	10:20:24	PASS
HTTP	A Sausage Web Site	ERR	1	10:21:34	PASS
DNS	Example DNS Check	ERR	1	10:20:35	PASS
HTTP	Example HTTP Check	ERR	15	10:20:34	PASS
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SSL	SSL Validation	ERR	1420	10:20:35	PASS

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