

Women on Farms Project (WFP)

PO Box 530 Stellenbosch 7599 SOUTH AFRICA wfp@wfp.org.za T: (++27-21) 887 2960/1/2 F: (++27-21) 887 2963 www.wfp.org.za

PRESS CONFERENCE INVITE / RELEASE

HANDS OFF WOMEN ON FARMS

12 March 2007

13 March 2007 at 11h000 DATE & TIME:

Provincial Legislative Steps, Wale Street, Cape Town **VENUE:**

SPEAKERS:

Fatima Shabodien (Women on Farms) Tony Erenricht (COSATU Western Cape) Hassan Lorgat (SANGOCO) Mercia Andrews (Alliance of the Land & Agrarian Reform Movements (ALARM)

Wendy Pekeur (Sikhula Sonke)

Nosey Petersen (BAWSI)

Sharron Marco-Thysse (Center for Rural Legal Studies (CRLS)

On 23 February 2006, it became known through the media that a group of 4 farmers had hired Neil van Heerden, a private investigator working for the George Fivaz & Partners, to investigate the activities of the Women on Farms Project (WFP).

It is not known why WFP is being investigated, nor what these farmers are hoping to uncover through the investigation. What is abundantly clear is that WFP is being targeted because of its very visible work in fighting for the rights of women farm workers.

In a telephonic exchange with Fatima Shabodien, director of WFP, van Heerden confirmed that since the placement of his advertisement, he has been "flooded with offers of financial support" from other farmers to "get WFP". It is of course very ironic that these very farmers who often claim poverty as the reason why they are unable to pay farm workers the measly R48,06 per day due to them, now have enough money to engage a private investigation agency for a 6-month period.

If farmers have nothing to hide – as they always claim – why would they be threatened by a small women's organisation? Our challenge to these farmers is: Come forward and show your faces! We invite you to come to our press conference and explain to South Africa why farms should be exempt from the constitutional provisions of South Africa?

WFP has nothing to hide and we're not afraid of this investigation. We want to assure these farmers that we are not going anywhere. We are here to stay for as long as the rights of women farm workers in South Africa are not respected.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Fatima Shabodien - Director: Women on Farms Project on 072 7955 857 Ms. Nwabisa Siyongwana - Communications Officer: Women on Farms Project 083 238 6547 or (021) 887 2960/1/2