

18 February 2026

Mr V. Hlabisa, MP
Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
Private Bag X804
PRETORIA
0001

Email: XXXXXXXXXXXX@afriforum.co.za
XXXXXXXXXXXX@afriforum.co.za

Dear Mr Hlabisa

URGENT REQUEST FOR THE OFFICIAL DECLARATION OF NATIONAL STATES OF DISASTER

AfriForum is a non-profit civil rights organisation with the primary purpose of protecting the constitutional rights of its members and the communities to which they belong. We act on behalf of our members who live across South Africa and have mandated AfriForum to address the pressing concern about the failure to officially declare states of disaster in respect of the following recent classifications:

- GN-7009, 22 January 2026 – severe weather and floods.
- GN-7084, 4 February 2026 – drought and the possible interruption of water provision
- GN-7133, 13 February 2026 – foot-and-mouth disease outbreak

As you know, a **classification** determines the appropriate sphere of government responsible for leading and coordinating the response. It is therefore not equivalent to a **declaration (of a state of disaster)**. In the absence of a formal declaration under the Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002, the accelerated procurement measures, emergency funding mechanisms, regulatory interventions, and coordinated national response measures provided for in the Act cannot be fully activated. As you are aware, when more than one province is affected by a disaster, it is regarded as a national disaster, which is indeed the case with the three classifications referenced above.

June 2024

Address: 58 Union Avenue, Kloofsig, Centurion • **Tel.:** 086 10 200 30

Member Affairs – Email: ledesake@afriforum.co.za • **Directors:** Ms A. Bailey, Mr P.J.W. Buys, Dr H.K. Coetzee, Mr P.L. Dekker, Mr F.J.D. de Klerk, Mr G.R. de Vries, Dr D.J. Hermann, Mr W.G. Human, Mr C.M. Kriel and Dr R. Pretorius • **Company Secretary:** Mr W.A. Vogel.

Registration number: 2005/042861/08 • **NGO number:** 054 - 590

Meanwhile, foot and mouth disease continues to spread uncontrollably, with severe implications for the agricultural sector, food security, trade and rural livelihoods. Similarly, communities who are affected by severe flooding remain vulnerable without the benefit of the full statutory mechanisms that are intended to ensure rapid and coordinated relief.

AfriForum is also deeply concerned that the mere classification of disasters (without the subsequent formal declaration) effectively restricts the practical implementation of the legal remedies and extraordinary measures that are envisaged in the Act. This situation undermines the purpose of the legislation, which is specifically designed to enable swift and decisive state intervention during times of crisis.

The Disaster Management Act provides, *inter alia*, for

- the declaration of a national state of disaster where existing legislation and contingency arrangements are inadequate to effectively deal with the disaster.
- the promulgation of regulations and directions to address the disaster.
- the release and reprioritisation of emergency funding.
- the implementation of special procurement measures.
- enhanced intergovernmental coordination and national oversight.

These mechanisms in terms of the Act are indispensable in addressing the current foot and mouth disease outbreak, the national water crisis that is linked to severe drought conditions, and the widespread damage that were caused by recent floods.

A classification alone is insufficient. You are required to urgently sign and publish a formal declaration to give effect to the full legal framework contemplated by the Act.

AfriForum therefore urgently calls upon you, in your capacity as Minister, to

1. formally declare the foot and mouth disease outbreak, the national drought and water crisis and the recent severe floods as official national states of disaster.
2. publish the necessary regulations and directions in terms of the Disaster Management Act.
3. activate the full spectrum of statutory mechanisms to ensure an effective and coordinated response to these crises.

You are hereby afforded seven (7) working days to respond to this request.

We trust that you will treat this matter with the urgency and seriousness that it demands in the interest of all communities that are affected.

Kind regards

Tarien Cooks

Disaster Management Specialist

AfriForum

~~061 000 567 1112~~

~~Email: tarien.cooks@afriforum.co.za~~