

Manifestos

National Election Manifesto

Together we have won the right for all South Africans to vote.

15 March 1994

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On 27 April, for the first time in our history, all of us will stand tall and proud as equal citizens in our common home.

South Africa's first democratic elections are about our common yearning for freedom, peace and a better life for all. They are about a past of oppression and despair and a future of hope and democracy.

Proud of Our Past – Confident of the Future

When the African National Congress set out its vision for a non-racial society on 8 January 1912, we did not know how long it would take to achieve it. What we knew was that we would not rest until these ideals were realised.

For over 80 years, the ANC has led the struggle to bring about a South Africa that belongs to all the people.

The ANC is a home for all South Africans. Our strength flows from our roots among the people. That is why we inspired people`s resistance during the darkest moments. That is why we initiated and led the negotiations process. Our programme reflects years of people`s struggles and is informed by their aspirations.

A Clear Plan

To build a better life for all requires clear goals and a workable plan. Any solution to the crisis of apartheid needs an approach which rises above narrow interests and harnesses all our country's resources. It requires:

- a democratic society based on equality, non-racialism and non-sexism;
- a nation built by developing our different cultures, beliefs and languages as a source of our common strength;
- an economy which grows through providing jobs, housing and education;
- a peaceful and secure environment in which people can live without fear.

These are the principles which will guide us as we work together to build a new society. The detailed framework is contained in our Reconstruction and Development Programme.

The ANC is ready to govern: we are ready to listen. In developing our policies over the years, we have consulted widely, most recently in People's Forums. We have also discussed with role players in the economy, education and other areas.

While others throw up their hands in despair or point fingers, we want to roll up our sleeves and tackle the problems. We are aware that eliminating the mess created over decades by the National Party will not be easy. But we know that you can make a difference. If we all work together, we are capable of achieving even more.

A Government of the People

One of the most urgent challenges facing South Africa is the adoption of a new democratic constitution. In the Constitutional Assembly, whatever our majority, the ANC will strive through consultation and debate to reach national consensus.

The ANC has always stood for basic democratic principles which include:

- a constitution and Bill of Rights which guarantee human rights for all, including the right to a minimum standard of life;
- the right of all people to elect a government of their choice in regular, free and fair elections in a multi-party democracy;
- democratic government at provincial and local levels, with the powers and resources to meet people`s needs;
- an independent judiciary and constitutional court protected from any government or party political interference;
- freedom from discrimination on racial, gender or any other ground;
- freedom of association and the right to worship.

A Good Beginning

Through negotiations and struggle, the ANC has ensured that South Africa`s new constitution will be drafted by democratically-elected representatives.

We firmly commit ourselves to the Constitutional Principles agreed to in multi-party negotiations as a basis for drafting a new democratic constitution.

The interim constitution is an important first step towards democracy. However, the new democratic constitution and Bill of Rights need to be truly democratic. The challenge is to make democracy a living reality.

An Open Society

The ANC will strive for an open society that encourages vigorous debate. People must be free to express their views without fear, including criticising the government of the day. Freedom of the media will be essential for a flourishing of democracy.

Unity in Diversity

All South African languages will have equal status. No one culture will be promoted over another. Traditional leaders will be accorded the status they deserve in line with the principles of democracy. Freedom of religion and worship will be a basic right: Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and all others – none will be discriminated against.

A New Style of Government

Government administration exists to serve the people. It must be answerable to them. The ANC will encourage private citizens to use the independent Public Protector to investigate corruption, dishonesty or violation of rules of conduct on the part of government officials – those found guilty will be dealt with. Forums representing government and workers, business, education and other groups will be strengthened to help in policy formulation. In government, the ANC will continue the tradition of People`s Forums – meetings in which ordinary people can voice their opinions.

Improving the Quality of Life

Democracy means more than just the vote. It must be measured by the quality of life of ordinary people – men and women, young and old, rural and urban. It means giving all South Africans the opportunity to share in the country`s wealth, to contribute to its development and to improve their own lives.

For years, our economy ran for the benefit of the minority, with opportunities and facilities limited to a few. While all parties speak of improving the quality of life, only a government that represents the majority can be trusted to do this.

Jobs and Better Incomes

The millions of people without jobs will be at the top of the ANC government's agenda. In establishing a dynamic and growing economy we will employ various means to create more jobs and opportunities.

A Growing Economy

As a legitimate government, the ANC will be able to work with others to create an environment of peace and stability, boosting investor confidence. The international community is already responding positively to our call for massive investments.

A new trade and industry policy will focus mainly on job creation, strengthening our manufacturing capacity and industries that export goods.

Our economic programmes will take into account the need for sustainable development which does not destroy our natural resources. Tighter controls will be introduced to preserve our environment for future generations.

Public Works Programme

An ANC government will immediately start a national public works programme which will address community needs and create jobs. Through this programme alone we will aim to provide employment and training for about 2.5-million people over the next ten years, building roads and providing water, electricity, schools, clinics, housing and meeting other needs.

Opportunities for Small Business

Our programme will create more job opportunities by making it easier for people to start their own businesses. An ANC government will change licensing laws, provide training and access to loans, and, in particular, assist women. The government will give the small business sector some of its contracts to help them grow.

Workers` Rights

The ANC is committed to full rights for all workers in both public and private sectors, including domestic and farm-workers, to organise, bargain collectively and be represented by trade unions. The democratic government will:

- outlaw all discrimination;
- protect and extend hard-won employment standards, maternity and child-care rights;
- introduce Adult Basic Education and more opportunities for specialised training for workers and the unemployed, especially youth and women;
- promote centralised bargaining and strong trade unions;
- guarantee the right to strike;
- raise and enforce standards of health and safety.

A Just Tax System

An ANC government will ensure that South Africa has an efficient tax system. The income that ordinary people earn will not be lost through unfair taxes. We will:

- end VAT on basic foods like flour, milk and sugar;
- reduce income taxes on people earning under R4,000 a month;
- end unfair taxation of women, married and single;
- ensure through efficient collection that every business pays its fair share.

Ending Rural Poverty

In addition to opportunities which our programme will open for rural people, an ANC government will introduce a rural development programme.

Most people in the rural areas – the majority of whom are women – live in poverty. Central in the development programme will be job-creation through industrial development and opportunities for small business, alongside land reform. We will focus on provision of water, clinics, schools, toilet facilities, electricity, telephones and roads.

Land Reform

South Africa belongs to all who live in it. To make this a reality, an ANC government will:

- guarantee women equal rights to land and special assistance;
- assist small farmers to get access to training, credit and markets;
- encourage large-scale farming, and ensure security of tenure and all basic rights for farm workers;
- restructure development agencies and marketing boards to serve the farmers and consumers;
- guarantee victims of forced removals restitution, which should be carried out fairly through a Land Claims Court;
- use state land in the implementation of land reform.

Opening the Doors of Learning

An ANC government will make education a priority. The challenge is immense, but it will not require finding more money. We need to ensure that the R23-billion set aside is used for the benefit of all.

For too long, the NP government has denied too many people the right to education or the proper conditions for learning and teaching.

Emphasis will be placed on teacher training and upgrading and improving their conditions of service. Above all, we will encourage a culture of learning and teaching, and introduce a new curriculum which promotes both technical quality and humane ideals. .

An ANC government will:

- introduce one education system that provides ten years of free and compulsory education for all children;
- start utilising all existing school facilities;
- provide more classrooms and repair and modernise inadequate facilities;
- double the number of free text-books within one year;
- allow mother-tongue instruction and education in the language of choice;
- provide a national bursary and loan system;
- provide adult literacy programmes;
- assist youths who have not been able to complete their education;
- focus on ways of providing pre-school educare;
- give special assistance to women.

Housing and Services for All

A roof over one`s head and reasonable living conditions are not a privilege. They are a basic right for every human being.

For over two decades, the National Party stopped the building of houses for Africans in the urban areas. Influx control and a lack of urban planning have resulted in a crisis that is at the very root of many of our social problems. Women were denied the right to own houses. Decent family life has been denied to millions of people.

We will focus on the 7-million squatters and the homeless, and the upgrading of townships. We will upgrade hostels to meet the needs of the residents as part of a programme to eliminate the apartheid migrant labour system. The ANC will work with building societies and other banks and financial institutions to ensure that people have the loans and means to build their own houses. Consumers will be protected from fly-by-night building contractors and unfair lenders.

Housing plans will take into account the need for people to stay close to where they work and the need to build efficient transport systems and to provide recreational and other basic facilities.

The ANC will ensure democratic, efficient and open local government which works closely with community structures in providing affordable housing and services.

We have calculated that, within five years, the new government can:

- build one million homes;
- provide running water and flush toilets to over a million families;
- electrify 2.5-million rural and urban homes.

Health: Caring for All the People

South Africa has more than enough health resources to care for all its people.

Under apartheid, these resources were used to care for a small portion of society on the basis of race and wealth. Deaths of young babies through poverty-related diseases has reached levels that no self-respecting nation can tolerate.

The aim of the ANC`s health policy is primary and affordable health care, to ensure that all South Africans are guaranteed basic treatment.

Prevention will be the priority, and resources will be directed especially at rural areas and poverty-stricken communities.

An ANC government will, in its health programme, do the following:

- promote safe motherhood and play a major role in caring for the nation`s children through programmes of immunisation, nutrition and free health care for children under five;
- introduce measures to make medicines more affordable;
- direct major resources at combating TB, AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases, cancer and other plagues;
- facilitate the integration of traditional health practice.

Welfare and Pensions

A caring approach to children, senior citizens, the disabled and victims of violence will be central to our welfare policy.

An intensive programme will be devoted to homeless children.

All people deserve to grow old in dignity and with security. Government will assist in the provision of facilities for the aged.

Pensions and grants due to people will be assured and allocated through post offices, banks, building societies or other outlets which are easy for rural people to use.

In consultation with the disabled, the ANC will eliminate discrimination against them in the provision of services and jobs. They will be assisted to develop their full potential. Attention will be given to the removal of obstacles which make access to places of work and learning difficult.

Eliminating Discrimination – Affirmative Action

It is not enough to talk of equality. Especially when the vast majority of our people have been left behind by a system that excluded them by law and deprived the country of the contribution they could have made.

Opportunities must be opened to all who were discriminated against as Africans, Coloureds and Indians, as women, the disabled and as people staying in rural areas.

This will not be done at the expense of others; nor lead to a lowering of standards. Special emphasis will be placed on their training and upgrading so they can rise to higher levels in business, civil service, skilled jobs and other areas.

South Africa as a whole will benefit if all levels of society represent the broad spectrum of its people. It is essential to the growth of our economy and the flourishing of our culture that more people are skilled and that they feel part of the national effort.

Making the Plan Work

We know that financing and implementing the programme of reconstruction and development will not be easy. But it is an opportunity to set the economy on a path of sustained growth and development.

By putting people first, we will be investing in jobs, housing and education at the same time as helping our country grow. More jobs and higher incomes will bring the government more revenue for expenditure on basic needs in future years.

An ANC government will increase public expenditure and encourage the private sector to put money in productive ventures. We will establish a reconstruction fund and seek beneficial international aid and loans.

Our objective is to use resources more efficiently and not to increase the tax burden. Large sums of money already go to education, health and other areas. But the results are poor. Money has been used on a racial basis and squandered in corruption and bureaucracy. This will be done away with.

Peace and Security for All

Our country needs peace. We need an end to the violence against communities and to the abuse of women and children. We must end the culture of violence created by apartheid. This hope and prayer of the overwhelming majority must be realised.

As the organisation that represents the victims of apartheid we understand the difference between a government that intimidates, and one that cares. We all deserve to live in a safe environment. Together with communities, an ANC government will ensure that criminals are dealt with to the full extent of the law.

What is required is:

- a government that represents all the people and implements a programme to create jobs;
- a government committed to dealing firmly with violence and crime and one that does not simply point fingers;
- a programme to promote political tolerance, respect for the country's constitution and laws, and peaceful ways of handling political differences;
- a gun control programme to minimise the number of guns in the hands of individuals and to eliminate gun smuggling;
- a police force accountable to the communities in which it is based;
- a programme which emphasizes rehabilitation instead of vengeance.

Security Forces

All security forces will be reformed to reflect the national and gender character of our country. They will be non-partisan, professional, uphold the constitution and respect human rights.

A new volunteer army will deal with the defence of the country and not internal political matters. It will also be used for productive purposes and upgrading skills of the youth.

Criminal behaviour in these forces will not be tolerated. Those serving today will be encouraged to continue, in line with the new culture. Like other civil servants, security personnel will be guaranteed their pensions on retirement or resignation. They will also enjoy fundamental human rights.

Equality Before The Law

For the anti-crime measures to succeed, it will be necessary to have a court system that broadly reflects society's racial and gender composition and provides fairness and equality for all before the law. Detention without trial will be done away with. The system of justice will be made more accessible, cheap and fair to everyone.

Taking Our Rightful Place in the World

The ANC and its leaders enjoy recognition and respect worldwide as upholders of democracy and human rights. An ANC government will take South Africa fully back into the world.

South Africa will play its part in the worldwide campaign for democracy, human rights, peace and nuclear disarmament. It will accede to all international agreements which protect human rights, including the rights of women and children, and it will co-operate fully with human rights groups.

An ANC government will work for just economic and social relations between the developed industrial nations and the developing countries. We will encourage relations between South Africans and the peoples of the world in fields such as sport, culture and tourism.

Our Region and Our Continent

Our destiny is intertwined with that of Southern Africa. An ANC government will build closer co-operation and economic integration in the region. We will take active part in the Southern African Development Conference and other regional institutions on the basis of equality.

An ANC government will build extensive links with countries of Africa and work with other states to ensure that the continent is not ignored by the rest of humankind.

South Africa will become a full member of the Organisation of African Unity, United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and other international bodies.

A Pledge

These policies of the ANC lay the foundation for us to work together to change South Africa for the better.

The ANC recognises the depth of our country's crisis. We are convinced that political will, an environment of peace and stability and a technically sound programme are the sure foundation for reconstruction and development.

The ANC pledges to spare no effort to realise these ideals. We are ready to tackle the problems.

Above all, the ANC believes that the plan will succeed only if it is based on the active participation of all, a tradition we will carry into government. Together as South Africans – men and women of all colours, young and old, urban and rural – we have the power to build a better life for all.

Together let's change South Africa. So that, once and for all, our country can know peace and security. So that we can join the rest of humankind as a proud and united people working together for a better world.

Now is the time!

God bless South Africa!