

AZAPO'S

ELECTION MANIFESTO:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTIONS

2021



AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Local government is the sphere of government that is closest to the people. Its delivery or failure to deliver, therefore, has the most immediate impact on the lives of communities. Despite the immediacy of local governments to communities, this sphere of government has been in crisis for a significant period of time. The consequences for South Africans are that:

- People continue to live in squalor,
- Crime is rife in communities,
- Municipal childcare facilities are almost non-existent,
- Municipality health services are scanty, under-resourced and, disorganised
- Municipal infrastructure is crumbling,
- Municipal public transport remains a wish for most people , and
- There is no true economic development that has positively and fundamentally changed the lives of our people.

In response to the dire circumstances faced by communities, thousands of protests against poor service delivery, corruption and the unresponsiveness of councils and councillors have taken place throughout the country.

AZAPO's participation in these forthcoming Local Government Elections is to bring about clean administration; to have people dealt with in a fair and dignified way; to expose and root out corruption; and to encourage community members to get involved in discussions and decision-making in matters affecting their lives; and in this way, strengthen democratic conduct in the administration of public affairs.

AZAPO intends to change the dire situation described above. We aim to restore the importance and centrality of local government. AZAPO will field candidates that will pledge to put their communities first; candidates that have the necessary skills and commitment to guarantee service delivery. AZAPO will empower communities by working to introduce recall in South Africa's system of governance. AZAPO will also work to ensure that mayors are directly elected so as to ensure that their loyalty is always with the people not the party. While the efforts to introduce recall and direct election of mayors will be protracted, in the mean time AZAPO pledges to remove any of its elected officials if the majority of the community call for his/her recall.

To achieve what we set out to do AZAPO needs your support. We need you to vote for AZAPO candidates and to speak to your neighbours and friends about AZAPO's intentions. Through this manifesto AZAPO invites you to join us in finding solutions to problems facing our communities and for you to **TAKE BACK YOUR POWER AND RESTORE YOUR DIGNITY.**

2. MAKE LOCAL GOVERNMENT THE PILLAR OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

AZAPO continues to recognise local government as the pillar of service delivery and participatory democracy.

To this end AZAPO continues to campaign for the abolition of Provincial Governments, which should be replaced by administrators answerable to national government. Once the wasteful and unnecessary duplication caused by Provincial Governments is done away with, part of their huge budgets and skilled personnel will be redirected to Local Governments where they are needed most.

AZAPO has always championed participatory and meaningful democracy where citizens are afforded opportunities to make meaningful contributions to decision-making. For AZAPO local government should present an opportunity for communities to come together and discuss issues affecting them.

Part of empowering the citizenry is to give them access to information and the deployment of technology and access to sources of information is crucial. To this end AZAPO will make available free WiFi in all municipal offices, libraries and community centres. In rolling out WiFi accessibility to communities, due consideration will be given to using schools in communities as hubs, only if this does not disturb learning and teaching. Municipal offices and libraries will also have internet terminals accessible to the public.

To further empower communities AZAPO will campaign for the introduction of recall in South Africa's system of governance and the direct election of mayors. This approach to governance will allow communities to reclaim their power and stop the reign of corrupt and unresponsive councillors. It will also ensure that mayors remain accountable to communities that elected them. This will effectively put a limit on the political party's power to willy-nilly change mayors as it has been the case.

3. ELECT COUNCILLORS THAT WILL SERVE YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Nepotism, corruption, unresponsive councillors and a self-serving ruling party are what have come to characterise governance in South Africa. The State and its institutions have been used and manipulated to serve individual and party political interests. This manipulation of institutions occurs at the expense of strengthening and protecting the legitimacy of such institutions. The result is the inability of these institutions to bring about meaningful development and delivery of services.

To change this situation AZAPO will do the following:

3.1 APPOINT COUNCILLORS WHO WILL PLEDGE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE AND NOT ABUSE THEIR POSITION FOR PERSONAL GAIN.

AZAPO will mandate its councillors to interact with the communities they serve through ward committees and other community organs, such as street committees, community policing fora, and where these do not exist or are inadequate, AZAPO councillors will assist the community in creating them.

No AZAPO councillor will live outside the community/ ward they represent

Within the limits of the current governance system, AZAPO will recall any councillor or councillors the community wants removed due to poor performance.

3.2 ROOT OUT CORRUPTION

Corruption means the diversion of much needed resources for service delivery and development to the unjust enrichment of individuals or organisations. Therefore corruption is far from being a victimless crime, its victims are the thousands of people who need the state to deliver much needed services.

To root out corruption, AZAPO will ensure that municipalities have strong internal and external supervision, and controls. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against those guilty of corruption.

AZAPO will establish independent municipal ombudsmen who will investigate transgressions and complaints submitted by individuals and community organisations within a municipality.

3.3 PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE TENDER AWARDING PROCESS

The present system through which tenders are processed and awarded is open to abuse. AZAPO proposes that Tender Committees should be freed from party political influence and be set up to consider all tenders purely on merit. These tender committees will also be open for public scrutiny. Councillors and employees of municipalities and their companies will not be allowed to tender for

delivery of goods and services in the municipalities where they are employed.

3.4 FIGHT NEPOTISM, DEFEAT TRIBALISM AND ERADICATE RACISM

Favouritism and preferential treatment, particularly in employment, has robbed the civil service of much needed skilled personnel. Jobs for pals, families, tribesmen and tribeswomen and comrades is a key contributor in the failure of government to deliver.

After more than 100 years of the struggle for liberation tribalism and racism are a scandal in a modern democratic dispensation, especially in a post-apartheid South Africa!

In order to eliminate nepotism, job interviewing panels will comprise persons who are not councillors. All employees shall be appointed on restorative merit basis which looks at both the skills and the restorative effect of the appointment. AZAPO will remove the veil that currently covers appointment of senior officials, AZAPO led councils will put in place measures to enable unsuccessful candidates to seek reasons for their non-appointment.

3.5 STAMP-OUT FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT AND INCOMPETENCY

Financial mismanagement by many municipalities is one of the contributory factors that lead to poor service delivery. Financial mismanagement and misappropriation of funds has led to the situation where most of the service delivery projects remain unfinished or not implemented at all. The problem is compounded by serious incompetency and lack of skills leading to poor revenue collection and poor financial planning.

AZAPO will, therefore, ensure that efficient and effective financial management and controls are implemented and complied with. In addition, the appropriately qualified personnel will be employed to manage the financial affairs of municipalities. Incorrect billing will be a thing of the past in AZAPO-led municipalities and thus encouraging citizens not to default on the payments.

4. BUILDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT THAT SERVES THE PEOPLE

Local government is at the centre of service delivery. It is the one tier of government that is closest to the people and has the most immediate impact on people's lives. For the past five years, communities experienced nothing but failure of local government to improve their lives. Therefore, the spontaneous and countrywide service delivery protests should come as no surprise.

4.1 WATER

In many communities access to water is an unfulfilled dream. Communal taps with inconsistent water supply are the norm in rural areas. In addition, the water quality (particularly its state of cleanliness) is a problem facing communities. All these issues are indicative of the failures of municipalities.

AZAPO-led municipal councils will work to ensure that all communities have consistent access to clean water. They provide free basic water supply to all households. Installation of approved water collection and storage mechanisms will be subsidised. AZAPO councils will mandate that new buildings will incorporate mechanism for effective reuse of grey water. Pre-paid cards for water will not be imposed on the people. Privatisation of water will be abolished. AZAPO-led municipal councils will constantly embark on aggressive campaigns highlighting the proper use and preservation of water.

4.2 SANITATION AND REFUSE REMOVAL

Provision of sanitation services is one of the key functions of municipalities. Currently the failure of municipalities to provide such services is a sad reality. In townships refuse collection is sporadic if it does exist. Raw sewage runs openly because of lack of proper maintenance of the sewage system. A large number of communities still rely on pit toilets and the bucket system. This situation exists not because municipalities lack financial resource but because of poor management.

AZAPO will ensure that municipalities are managed efficiently with proper allocation of resources so as to ensure adequate provision of sanitary facilities. Maintenance of existing infrastructure will be improved and new infrastructure developed. Quality service will be provided for all citizens, irrespective of where they stay. Therefore, both townships and leafy suburbs will receive the same high quality service.

AZAPO will make sure that all communities get to live in hygienic conditions.

4.3 MUNICIPAL CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Municipalities have generally failed to provide municipal childcare facilities in townships. The lack of municipal childcare facilities has negatively affected poor and working families. Mothers are unable to be gainfully employed because they have to look after children. Those parents who are gainfully employed have to rely on privately owned childcare facilities, which charge high fees.

AZAPO will ensure that municipal childcare facilities are provided and managed properly, particularly in poor communities. Municipal childcare facilities will be subsidised to ensure that they are affordable to poor working families. The staff at these facilities will be trained in early childhood development. These facilities will help prepare children for commencement of their formal education.

4.4 MUNICIPAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Municipalities are supposed to provide a functional and reliable municipal public transport system. Again it is unfortunate that, many municipalities have abdicated this responsibility to private providers. The result is that poor people have had to rely on unsafe and costly transport. In municipalities where municipal public transport exists, it is not comprehensive and does not extend to townships.

AZAPO-led municipalities will extend municipal public transport to all communities within that municipality. The municipal transport system will be adequate, reliable, affordable and properly managed in line with the needs of residents in a specific municipality. AZAPO-led municipalities will subsidise public transport for school children, the elderly, the infirm and disabled.

4.5 HOUSING

The inability to provide affordable and decent housing remains a major failure of previous and current Governments – local and national. The failure of these spheres of government is evidenced by mikhukhu and the sub-standard brick versions built by the current government.

AZAPO believes that local government has an important role to play in ensuring that decent houses are built for our people. Under the current system AZAPO-led municipal councils will work with the Provincial and National Departments to build affordable and decent housing. This will be done on reasonable land space to allow those that want to extend to do so. There will also be sufficient provision of land for the construction of public amenities.

AZAPO is of the view that a state housing company should be formed to provide medium and low cost housing in the country for both purchase and renting. This will ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the building of houses. Shacks and other forms of sub-standard housing would be a thing of the past.

To support the Housing Company, AZAPO will establish a Housing Fund whose primary mandate will be to finance housing and human settlement in an innovative and imaginative way that will be efficient, effective and restorative of the dignity of the people of South Africa.

AZAPO will encourage the formation of housing co-operatives which will, in conjunction with a State Housing Company and Housing Fund build decent houses for rent by people living in the townships, towns and cities. People will be able to change from renting to buying once they can afford it or acquire automatic ownership after renting for a stipulated period.

4.6 MUNICIPAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

A large number of South Africans still suffer from preventable diseases. The provision of proper Municipal Health Care Services could lessen the effect of such diseases. A well-managed and professionally run municipal healthcare system that is able to assist with investigations of outbreaks of disease, monitoring of the environment and health promotion could have a major impact on the overall health of most South Africans. Despite provision of municipal healthcare being a constitutional dictate, local governments have failed to provide these services adequately.

AZAPO recognizes the provision of Municipal HealthCare Services as a first line of defence against diseases and illness. Therefore, AZAPO-led councils will make sure that Municipal Health Services are improved through the appointment of qualified environmental health workers and municipal clinics will be staffed by qualified nursing staff. Funding of Municipal Health Care Service will receive priority in AZAPO-led councils.

Working with communities, AZAPO led councils will develop plans for fighting substance abuse and addiction. Municipal healthcare services will receive the necessary capacity in order to provide support to individuals and communities in treating addiction. Working with other spheres of government, AZAPO municipalities will expand the availability of substance abuse rehabilitation facilities.

The growing incidences of life style based diseases pose a threat to the country's healthcare system. Educational campaigns will be developed and implemented to educate communities about the dangers of lifestyle diseases, obesity and the need to pursue an active lifestyle.

4.7 PROVISION OF ELECTRICITY

Provision of electricity supply to households is a key function of municipalities and it is one of the areas in which municipalities have failed. Many households still rely on unsafe cooking and lighting methods. In rural areas individuals still have to dedicate hours of their day to collecting firewood as opposed to using that time for self development.

AZAPO-led councils will ensure that they put in place the necessary infrastructure to give all households access to electricity supply. Assessment of the level of free basic electricity will be done every year to ensure that needy households receive adequate supply. Based on a means analysis, poor households will receive free electricity up to a maximum of 120 kWh. AZAPO believes that poor households need more than four lights and a two plate stove, currently provided for, in order to live lives set towards extricating themselves from poverty. Power supply lines will be serviced on a regular basis, and a pool of engineers contracted to carry this out.

AZAPO led municipalities will encourage and, where feasible, subsidize households that are installing approved means of generating electricity. Where households generate electricity exceeding their needs, such electricity will be bought by AZAPO led municipalities.

4.8 FIGHTING CRIME

AZAPO believes that the exercise of democracy and freedom in any country is necessarily associated with the safety of person and property. The high level of crime in South Africa inhibits the free exercise of our freedoms. Driving one's car without fear of it being hijacked, leaving your house without being afraid that it will be broken into and walking down the road without concern of your personal safety. These are normal expectations that have long been forgotten by most South Africans. Crime and fear therefore has become a major influence and shaper of how we live our lives and which personal and public spaces we occupy. Yet despite this, very little has been done to empower municipalities so that they can contribute in the fight against crime.

AZAPO-led municipalities that can afford to, will apply to set up municipality police services. Communities will be engaged in the fight against crime, community formations and initiatives fighting crime will be given support and training. AZAPO will campaign to have the requirements for setting up municipality police services reduced for small municipalities, particularly proof of financial sustainability should be for only 15 years and gradual phasing in of a 24 hour municipal police service should be accepted. AZAPO will also encourage the declaration of certain segments of municipality

employees as peace officers. AZAPO will also agitate for an increase in the number and distribution of Community Courts. This will ensure a speedy conclusion of court cases and will help with the backlog and free other courts to deal with more serious offences. AZAPO-led municipalities will encourage greater cooperation between South African Police Service, Municipal Police Services and Communities with aim to prevent crime.

4.9 RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

Delivery of services to rural communities is one of the major failures of the outgoing local governments. Rural communities are still to experience the fruits of the post 1994 South Africa. Most schools in rural areas are a sorry sight in comparison with township schools, which are themselves in a shocking state. Learners in rural areas still have to walk long distances to school. There are neither recreational facilities for farm workers nor health care facilities. Finally, there is also no public transportation system in rural areas.

To improve the situation AZAPO will pay special attention to rural municipalities. AZAPO will ensure that its councillors in rural communities work to make sure that there are municipal health facilities. Schools – (although not a direct competency of local government under the current system) will be built through greater cooperation between the various tiers of government. AZAPO-led municipalities will ensure that there are recreational facilities for rural communities. Transportation costs are a huge drain on already meagre salaries earned by farmworkers, AZAPO councils will work to introduce municipal public transport in rural areas. Communal Property Association will in AZAPO-led municipalities, be included in the integrated development plan of municipalities.

Rural economic development will be the touchstone of all the work that will be done by AZAPO councillors in rural municipalities. Part of the work done in developing rural economies will be provision of support to small scale farmers in the form of tractors to plough their fields, seeds, veterinary services and low cost transportation of their goods to markets. Municipal roads linking with regional and national roads will be built and maintained to ensure efficient connection of rural areas to economic hubs in the country.

AZAPO respects and values the contribution made by traditional authorities. Therefore, AZAPO municipalities will work closely with traditional authorities in ensuring effective delivery of services. AZAPO will ensure there is a marked improvement in the quality of lives of rural communities.

4.10 BUILDING LOCAL ECONOMIES THAT WORK FOR THE PEOPLE

South Africa is one of the countries with the highest levels of inequality and poverty in the world. The major cause of poverty in this country is the unacceptably high level of unemployment, poor human capacity development and poor access to factors of production such as land and capital. AZAPO believes that municipalities have an important role to play in improving the economic conditions of their communities. However, corruption and poor management have made current local governments ineffective in improving the economic situation of the communities.

AZAPO-led municipalities will place particular emphasis on local economic development. All their efforts will be aimed at building sustainable local economies that are geared to, primarily, service local needs. This approach will inform the work that will be done to develop and support local SMMs and in developing local human capacity. AZAPO-led municipalities will use their procurement spend to stimulate local economies through using local SMMs and local human resource. Joint ventures will be encouraged where the requisite skill is not available in the municipality. AZAPO recognises that each municipality is different from the other and, therefore, adopting an approach based on servicing local needs to economic development will ensure that our local economic development strategies are cognisant of the local context and, therefore, far more likely to succeed.

Human capacity development will be a corner stone of our local economic development. The first step would be, working with communities and other spheres of government, to keep young people in school. In AZAPO led municipalities, trade centres and business incubators will be established where technical skills and business management skills can be imparted to entrepreneurs, particularly the youth. The incubators will offer in addition to training and mentorship space for business to operate. For this purpose old and unused municipal building will be used for business space.

Based on need, AZAPO led municipalities will establish bursary schemes for residents whose interests and the careers they want to pursue align with the need of the municipality

In addition to offering support to entrepreneurship aim at setting up for profit establishment, AZAPO led municipalities will be of greater support and encouragement to social entrepreneurs who bring to bear creativity, enthusiasm and determination to resolving social issues and bring about social value. Support offered to social entrepreneur will range from provision of information of problems they are tackling to access to municipality officials working in areas of concern.

Working with informal and formal business sectors, AZAPO led municipalities will identify regulations and by-laws that are an unnecessary impediment to their conduct of business. Informal traders will be given support to expand and formalise their business. The support offered would range from access trading space that are safe and close to their markets.

Access to land, particularly in rural municipality, is a serious impediment to communities who can uplift their wellbeing through agricultural business. Working with other spheres of government, AZAPO led municipalities will identify land to be reappropriated and such land will be allocated to cooperatives that can make productive use of such land. AZAPO led municipalities will encourage and support the creation of cooperatives aimed at economic upliftment of communities..

5. CONCLUSION

These local government elections present an opportunity for communities to reverse the betrayal, restore the land, reclaim their power, and ensure that the councillors they elect will prioritise their needs. AZAPO views Local Government as a layer of government closest to the people. It is for this reason that AZAPO is putting forward competent and knowledgeable candidates who know what it means to struggle alongside the masses.

Through this Manifesto, AZAPO urges you to Take Back You Power,
To Reverse the Betrayal and
To Vote AZAPO!



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