



Congress of the People

COPE

MANIFESTO

**GOVERNMENT OF
THE PEOPLE BY
THE PEOPLE FOR
THE PEOPLE
WITH THE
PEOPLE**

CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

CHARACTER

The Congress of the People is a social democratic party established after the attainment of our democracy, which believes that South Africans can only live fulfilled lives in a society that intrinsically values justice underpinned by a constitutional democracy.

The Party is proactively committed to widening opportunities for everyone, particularly the poor and marginalised.

VISION

A prosperous South Africa whose people– united in their diversity – eliminate want in society and are at peace with themselves, the rest of Africa and the world!

MISSION

To govern for a continuously improving quality of life for all South Africans and create conditions for developing a sustainable middle-class quality of life for the majority, especially the poor and marginalised.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACCOUNTABILITY	8
AUDITS	9
BUDGET DEFICITS	9
BLOATEDNESS OF GOVERNMENT	11
CORRUPTION	12
CADRE DEPLOYMENT	13
CLIMATE CRISIS	14
CONSTITUTIONALITY	15
DEBT EXPANSION	16
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND GROWTH	18
EDUCATION	26

ELECTORAL REFORM	33
ELECTRICITY & ENERGY	44
FISCAL DEFICIT	61
GRAFT	66
RENEWABLE ENERGY	62
HEALTH	67
HOUSING	78
IMMIGRATION	80
ISRAEL - PALESTINE	81
JOBLESSNESS	85
JUSTICE	98
KLEPTOCRACY	100

LAND ISSUES	103
LAWLESSNESS	105
MUNICIPALITIES	107
NATION BUILDING	110
OVERSIGHT	112
POLICING AND PROSECUTIONS	116
QUESTIONS IN THE LEGISLATURES	119
RECALL	121
REFORMS	123
RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE MITIGATION	125
RULE OF LAW	135

SERVICE DELIVERY	136
SERVICE DELIVERY	138
TOWNSHIP TRANSFORMATION	146
TRANSPORT	159
UNPLANNED MOTHERHOOD	162
VANDALISM	164
WATER	165
WOMEN	170
WORKERS	175
XENOPHOBIA	187
YOUTH	188
ZEALOTRY	192

INTRODUCTION

This book is a manifesto of a very different kind.

After 30 years of democracy, our country faces a heap of problems.

We need to diagnose these problems properly to apply the proper remedies. We need to know the nature and extent of our difficulties to rectify them.

We also face the prospects of a coalition government. We certainly don't want to repeat what has happened at the municipal government level. Ruining a municipality is a massive disaster, as the people of Joburg and some other metros can attest. Allowing bickering politicians to ruin a whole country, already half destroyed by the ANC government, will be mass suicide.

This manifesto, therefore, sets out the issues we believe must be agreed upon by all political parties and endorsed by a large body of voters so that a coalition government has a charter to work on. No time can be wasted with it harming all of us.

We don't want politicians to spend months jostling for positions and neglecting their work while being paid handsomely by taxpayers. We need them to get on with the job from day one.

This manifesto, with improvements, should be a manifesto for the people. As such, every party that wishes to serve the people should adopt it.

Voters must use this manifesto to engage political parties to get real solutions to our real problems.

COPE'S A-Z OF WHAT VOTERS MUST ENGAGE POLITICAL PARTIES ON

1. ACCOUNTABILITY

Enforcing accountability has become problematic because of power play and political parties demanding that public representatives toe the line. If a party says a swimming pool is a fire pool, every public representative must echo that view.

Voters must demand the strengthening of bipartisan efforts to prioritise accountability over partisan party interests. Cross-party collaboration on oversight mechanisms is 100% in the public interest.

Inadequate checks and balances allow misconduct to go unchecked. Weak parliamentary oversight, ineffective audit processes, and limited civil society engagement contribute to this problem. When accountability mechanisms fail to impose consequences, wrongdoing persists. The lack of swift and severe penalties for misconduct undermines the deterrence effect.

A free press and protection for whistleblowers are essential for exposing wrongdoing. Media freedom must be strengthened, and robust whistleblower protection laws must be enacted.

Voters must demand a more accountable and responsive government for the benefit of all citizens.

2. AUDITS

Audits play a critical role in enhancing governance. They allow for the systematic scrutiny of government actions, decisions, and expenditures to ensure adherence to rules and procedures and that resources are appropriately managed.

Voters must insist that rigorous audits are conducted regularly to identify irregularities and enforce consequences for non-compliance.

Auditor General Audits have continuously revealed inefficiencies, wastage, and mismanagement, and voters should ask why politicians are not using this information to implement audit recommendations to streamline processes, eliminate waste, fight fraudulent activities and corruption, and undertake forensic auditing so that wrongdoers are prosecuted. Robust internal controls are established and implemented.

Voters must engage political parties on what they are doing to use audit reports to empower parliamentary committees, ombudspersons, and civil society to hold the government accountable.

3. BUDGET DEFICIT

A budget deficit refers to the annual shortfall between what the government gets as tax revenue and what it plans to spend.

If the government's spending exceeds the tax revenue it collects during a given year, it must borrow money. To do so, it will sell government bonds (gilts) to the private sector.

A budget deficit, therefore, contributes to an increase in national debt. When deficits persist year after year, government debt increases over time, as does the interest it must pay.

As explained below, these interest payments can become a significant portion of the budget.

If the government increases taxes while increasing spending, Aggregate Demand (AD) decreases the economy.

When governments run deficits to finance infrastructure projects (e.g., roads, railways, airports, housing), such investments can enhance long-term productivity and economic growth, creating jobs.

Over many years, the ANC-led government has registered a budget deficit because its expenditure proposals have continued to exceed revenue. The government should have spent the money it borrowed on infrastructure development. It spent money on the consumption side, and there, it has nothing to show for all the borrowed money.

That is why the economy has slowed down and taxes remain high.

The 2023 GDP growth estimate was revised to 0.6% due to widespread power cuts, operational and maintenance failures in freight rail, and high living costs.

Real GDP growth in 2023/24 is projected at 1.4% because people are struggling economically and won't be able to spend more. Also, fixed investment is not taking place because of high sovereign credit risk and bad government policy choices.

The budget deficit for 2023/24 is estimated to worsen from 4% to 4.9% of GDP compared to a year ago. This means debt-service costs will absorb more than 22% of the budget in 2024.

Spending on debt-service costs now exceeds social protection, health, peace, and security budgets. This is huge. It will not stop there.

Voters must question political parties about why the budget deficit is not being addressed more vigorously. The more state debt grows, the more service delivery shrinks.

4. BLOATEDNESS OF GOVERNMENT

Between the fourth quarter of 2009 and the fourth quarter of 2019, the size of South Africa's government grew from 1,780,553 to 2,108,125 civil servants, an increase of 327,572 civil servants in 10 years.

Finance Minister Tito Mboweni announced main budget non-interest spending cuts totalling R300 billion between 2021 and 2024 on Wednesday, 28 October 2020. This

was his boldest move to slash government spending, especially around the state's bloated wage bill. According to Investec Banking, Mboweni and the National Treasury finally bit the bullet.

South Africa's government employee wage bill is among the highest among emerging markets.

The minister's cabinet, comprised of the President, Deputy President, Ministers, and Deputy Ministers, was 72 people until recently. It now includes 64 members. With our economy being as anaemic as it is and the public debt at 77% of GDP, such a large cabinet needs to be more affordable.

Voters should ask political parties how they plan to address this intolerable situation.

Besides the high cost, decision-making processes have become slower, and holding a minister accountable has become difficult, as we saw regarding who was responsible for our electricity woes. Overlapping functions and duplication of efforts hinder effective governance, and allocating resources becomes complex.

Voters must demand that the cabinet be reduced in size and its functions streamlined to save costs and enhance its efficiency and accountability.

5. CORRUPTION

Corruption in government persists as a significant challenge, impacting various sectors and eroding public trust.

Corruption involves maladministration (18%), Procurement shenanigans (16%), abuse of authority where officials misuse their power or exert pressure on civilians (16%), fraud (14%), misappropriation of resources (12%), dereliction of duty (8%), bribery or extortion (8%) and employment corruption (8%).

South Africa has a CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) score of 44/100, indicating high corruption within our public sector.

Corruption occurs because politicians and administrators often prioritise personal, factual, and private interests over other considerations. As a country, it is estimated that we lost R1.5 trillion to corruption between 2014 and 2019.

Voters must demand that independent bodies be established, empowered, and resourced to investigate corruption cases without political interference. Voters must also demand that new parliamentary procedures support the Auditor-General's efforts in auditing government spending and holding officials accountable.

Voters must also demand stricter laws be enacted and offenders brought before special courts to expedite corruption cases. They must threaten to punish parties at the polls for failing to root out corruption.

6. CADRE DEPLOYMENT

Cadre deployment has negatively impacted governance, public institutions, and the overall functioning of the state.

Cadre deployment refers to a political party (such as the ANC) placing its loyal members or activists in key positions within state institutions. By bypassing merit-based appointments, impartiality and professionalism are severely compromised.

Prioritising loyalty to the party over competence and integrity leads to corruption and nepotism, and incompetence affects service delivery and public trust.

In their best interest, voters should use the power of their vote to demand an abrupt end to cadre deployment and the implementation of the professionalisation of the civil service.

7. CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate crisis poses a significant threat to South Africa; extreme weather events such as droughts, heat waves, and severe flooding impact livelihoods, landscapes, and culture.

The damage to crops and infrastructure is severe. It also threatens biodiversity, which will affect livelihoods and food security. These events' increasing frequency and intensity will threaten food insecurity and lead to even higher unemployment rates as agricultural exports diminish and ecotourism declines.

The government should invest in resilient systems to cope with inevitable extreme weather events, including floods, but the kitty needs more money to support this.

The UN World Economic Situation and Prospects Report 2024 predicts extreme weather and global conflicts will worsen South Africa's debt crisis and depress the local economy.

Voters should demand the enforcement of existing and new climate policies, promote sustainable agriculture, and work to achieve biodiversity conservation. They should also urge political parties to support investments in renewable energy and implement policies to quickly reduce reliance on fossil fuels so that our country keeps pace with international efforts and complies with new international requirements demanded by exporters.

The climate crisis will stay with humanity forever. The only issue is how serious and dangerous we want it to be. If we act now, we can contain its severity and destructiveness. If we don't act now, we will suffer so intensely that living will not be worth our while.

8. CONSTITUTIONALITY

Our foundational legal document shapes our nation's governance, rights, and responsibilities. At the very outset, our Constitution declares: -

1. The Republic of South Africa is one sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:
 - a. Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the

advancement of human rights and freedoms.

b. non-racialism and non-sexism.

c. Supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law.

d. Universal adult suffrage, a national everyday voters' roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness.

2. Supremacy of Constitution

This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and its obligations must be fulfilled.

3. Citizenship

All citizens are:

a. equally entitled to citizenship rights, privileges, and benefits; and

b. equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

The RSA Constitution was adopted in 1996, marking a pivotal moment in our country's transition from apartheid to democracy. It embodies the aspirations of a united, inclusive, and just South Africa. It also enshrines a comprehensive Bill of Rights that safeguards fundamental human rights, freedom of expression, equality, dignity, and access to education, healthcare, and housing.

The Constitution exists to promote social justice and equality. We, as citizens, must use our Constitution to claim our rights. It is not the Constitution's fault that we are not enjoying the rights we should.

The Constitution is our shield because it ensures that no single entity becomes too powerful and abuses its authority. We have a legal right to hold our leaders accountable.

Our Constitution deserves respect because it represents the collective vision for a just, democratic, and inclusive society. Supporting and adhering to it ensures a brighter future for all South Africans.

9. DEBT EXPANSION

The South African government has caused a significant expansion in public debt over the past decade, particularly between 2014 and 2024. Low economic growth and state capture at Eskom, Transnet, SAA, and other State-Owned Enterprises required repeated bailouts and debt restructuring, but with no positive outcome. It has been a considerable amount of money down the drain.

As tax revenues declined, borrowing to cover necessary and unnecessary expenditures has climbed. The government prioritised social spending, including healthcare, education, and grants. Meeting these commitments required additional borrowing.

As of December 2023, South Africa's national government debt reached R5 trillion Rand. If not

managed effectively, the debt-to-GDP ratio of 77% will lead to fiscal instability.

The Institute of International Finance (IIF) warned South Africa's debt-to-GDP ratio could reach 95% by 2024. Voters should be highly alarmed about this happening. Every political party should be quizzed on what each party will do to stop this from happening. The debt-to-GDP ratio in South Africa has fluctuated over the past decade. As follows:

2014 39.64%.

2015 52.65%.

2016 53.74%.

2017 56.26%.

2018 59.26%.

2019 64.72%.

2020 77.53%.

2021 75.62%.

2022 71.12%

2023 73.67%

2024 74.07%

A high debt-to-GDP ratio means more money is spent on interest payments—this year, 22% of the budget—reducing funds for essential services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. A rising ratio can jeopardise long-term economic stability, and if the debt burden becomes unsustainable, it will lead to

financial crises, such as the country defaulting on debt payments. A default will cause panic in both the domestic and international markets. Growth will be hindered, and poverty will increase.

COPE strongly recommends the urgent downsizing of the government, cracking down on corruption, using AI to control procurement, professionalising the public service, attracting fixed investments, amending legislation to allow interns to benefit from the Skills Levy and creating policies that will encourage the re-industrialization of the economy.

10. ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND GROWTH

Several vital actions are essential to achieving economic transformation and sustainable economic growth in South Africa (RSA).

Firstly, structural reforms must be undertaken, and direct fixed investments must be continuously secured from domestic and foreign sources. This must be done by creating an attractive business environment through streamlining regulations, reducing bureaucracy, and providing appropriate incentives.

By downsizing the government, tackling corruption, and improving procurement processes, more money will be available to invest in roads, energy, and digital connectivity.

The government must emphasise productivity, facilitate domestic and international trade, and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship.

The government must also focus on education and developing marketable skills among youth so that they can participate in a modern economy and help expand the workforce.

Value-added manufacturing and the diversification of the economy beyond resource extraction will have to be actively supported. Achieving inclusive growth and job creation on a scale will bring youth and marginalised groups into the economy.

Small and Medium Enterprises will need considerable support as they will play a crucial role in employment generation and economic diversification. Investments in agriculture and agribusiness will be necessary to boost rural development, enhance food security and increase exports.

Redistribution must be done equitably so that all resources and opportunities are available. To ensure transformation and economic growth, the following will have to happen: -

1. strengthening social safety nets,
2. transforming the townships and the township and rural economies,
3. It is pragmatically addressing historical land injustices.
4. promoting land ownership for previously disadvantaged communities,

5. promoting Innovation and Technology,
6. investing in research,
7. embracing digital technologies,
8. transitioning toward a sustainable, low-carbon economy,
9. investing in renewable energy sources,
10. conserving natural resources and biodiversity,
11. strengthening institutions to combat corruption and promote transparency,
12. ensuring stability in policy frameworks to attract long-term investment, fostering collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society, and
13. We are engaging with labour unions to create an environment conducive to economic growth.

Achieving economic transformation and sustainable growth in RSA will require a holistic approach that addresses structural challenges, promotes inclusivity, and balances financial, social, and environmental priorities.

Every voter should be greatly concerned about economic transformation and growth because these issues will always affect us. Voters must place a significant emphasis on two issues in particular:

1. the rapid economic transformation of townships.
2. the massive repair and restoration of all State-Owned Enterprises.

We will have social stability if the townships see economic transformation, and our economy will remain collapsed while the State-Owned Enterprises collapse. These are meant to be the national jewels. Our very prosperity depends on these two issues.

Voters should, therefore, engage political parties on these two issues very vigorously and get clarity on what these parties support and do not support regarding these issues. This election should be, first and foremost, about economic transformation and economic growth.

The Economic Sector ought to have had a significant involvement in selecting candidates for the national and provincial parliament so that elected MPs and MPLs would have had their backing and be fully accountable to them and not to the political parties they belong to.

The South African economy has been facing steep challenges over the past fifteen years because of structural inequalities, wrong policy choices, cadre deployment, serial unemployment, and increasing poverty. Inadequate or unmarketable skills, low levels of investment and growth, a lingering energy crisis of massive proportion, revenue leakages, and a spiralling budget deficit.

The management of public debt will need urgent attention. A new government must be able to adhere to

a fiscal consolidation path, drastically reducing consumption-side expenditures, substantially improving expenditure efficiency and control, and strengthening revenue mobilisation by widening the net.

South Africa's gross loan debt ballooned from R2.5 trillion in the 2017-2018 financial year to a staggering R5 trillion in 2022-2023. This means the government borrowed an additional R2 trillion from domestic and international investors between 2017 and 2023.

Labour-intensive agriculture, tourism, and construction employment are vital to reducing poverty and inequality. The South African policy environment must make labour more intensive through balanced worker protection to stimulate employment creation. Steps must be taken to increase agricultural jobs, as this has enormous implications for social cohesion. Agricultural workers should have a portion of each farm reserved for production as a derived benefit and incentive.

All employers must be encouraged to take on staff at decent wages and reduced non-wage costs. Instead of paying a Skills Development Levy (SDL) of 1% of their workers' pay, employers could do the training in-house where possible and desirable and prepare their employees for recognised examinations.

The public service should also be subjected to the exact requirement. The People's Republic of China's Civil Service has been a well-established administrative system for centuries.

For ages, the members of the Chinese civil service have been selected through competitive examinations. RSA must learn from China. A new government must achieve macroeconomic stability, substantially revitalise the jobs market, and dramatically improve the investment climate to achieve a more inclusive economy. The broadening of the tax base will have to happen.

Increasing private participation in every state-owned enterprise is necessary to inject innovation, new ideas, and new capital. The SOEs, however, must balance private involvement while continuing to serve the public interest. During apartheid, SOEs played a significant role in supporting the country's industrial and economic capacity. SOEs can collaborate with private entities strategically. Joint ventures, public-private partnerships (PPPs), and concessions will allow private participation while maintaining public control.

SOEs should prioritise their social mandate over profit. This means ensuring essential services (such as energy, water, and transportation) are accessible, affordable, and reliable for all citizens. SOEs should contribute to equitable wealth distribution, job creation, and skills development. The state should decrease its holding by 50%.

Just as Dubai has been a hub for startups in the Middle East and North Africa, South Africa must envision the same for itself. A new government must also launch half a dozen guides to help startups in RSA do business. These guides should cover critical sectors such as

Fintech, Healthcare, Transportation, Education, Social Impact, Sustainability, Travel, Tourism, and hospitality.

The government must provide relevant data, statistics, opportunities, and requisite legislation for entrepreneurs launching startups in each sector. Facilitation should be provided to meet regulatory requirements.

As in Dubai, we, too, should provide a comprehensive list of business incubators and accelerators that can help entrepreneurs grow their startups, as well as events and conferences that will focus on their specific sectors.

For example, RSA (Road, Sea & Air) Global is a Dubai-based company specialising in chemical logistics, supply chain integration, cold chain supply, traditional freight logistics, and warehousing facilities. The Company has over 800 employees and has expanded its operations to 30 countries. It has successfully provided end-to-end supply chain solutions to its clients. RSA Global has also ventured into e-commerce and launched an online platform called RSA (Road, Sea and Air) Mart, which offers customers a range of products and services. All of this information is in the public domain. We only need to access, use, and acknowledge the sources.

Our country can learn from Dubai's startup ecosystem by creating a supportive environment for startups. We can also learn from Dubai's approach to diversifying its economy by investing in different sectors. Furthermore, we can also learn from Dubai's approach to innovation and technology by investing in research and

development and collaborating with universities and research institutions.

An essential lesson from Dubai is that foreign investment can be attracted by creating a business-friendly environment and incentivising foreign investors.

Our country's young people face acute unemployment. We need to stimulate entrepreneurship and self-employment. Our most significant job creation opportunity is with startups, especially in the digital sector. We need to strengthen the ecosystem and implement policy measures that target labour market outcomes, which can make a difference in the pace of employment recovery.

All this information is in the public domain. An economy like ours, struggling so much, requires urgent structural reforms. We need to make product and labour markets more efficient. That is what will support economic growth.

One-stop centres must be set up to streamline government services and reduce bureaucracy. By providing a single point of contact for businesses to access government services and information, one-stop centres will help reduce the time and cost of doing business, which can attract more investment and create more jobs.

How Home Affairs has been operating at present is antagonistic to job creation. There must be no tolerance for such incompetence and sluggishness.

In all its divisions, the economic sector must be involved in creating the best policy and environment for a strong economy in South Africa. The sector's input must be continuously invited.

Voting for parties A, B, or C will not help one iota. Voters must vote for economic growth, public debt reduction and the restoration of the SOEs. The SOEs must not be a drain on the economy. They must spur the economy. That is why we should make their restoration a national priority.

Let's grow our economy together!

11. EDUCATION

The Education Sector must always be involved in selecting candidates for the national and provincial parliament so that elected MPs and MPLs will have the requisite education on top of other experience to provide quality leadership and effectively oversee the executive.

Legislators must also have proven expertise to understand the problems facing education and have innovative ideas about improving the quality of education in public schools. Education lays the foundation for a properly functioning society. If no one is left behind and a massive pool of skills is available, investments will flow into the economy faster.

Legislators must also understand the sociology of formerly disadvantaged groups, their welfare needs, and their educational challenges. The welfare of

learners in rural areas should also be understood and addressed.

The South African education system faces several challenges affecting teachers and learners.

Teachers must be supported with excellent resources and various technical tools. Hence, they are well-equipped with lesson notes to teach and facilitate learning and software to undertake administrative tasks quickly and easily.

Teachers must be able to handle preparation, marking, teaching, examining, and recording data. However, they must cope with huge classes and experience burnout. While teacher assistants will ease their burden, other support should also be in place.

One major problem in education is the need for more understanding of the socio-political environment of the previously deprived communities and what should be done to change their mindset and improve their expectations to advance themselves, their environment, and the country in general. The gestalt approach must be encouraged.

In-service courses must be continuously offered to teachers to provide opportunities for ongoing teacher growth and achievement of teacher excellence. Education for life must begin with teachers exemplifying its truth.

Colleges of Education must be brought back to emphasise practical rather than theoretical teaching.

The curriculum of the teachers' colleges should be revised to include, amongst other things, a South African and African philosophy on child upbringing in a modern world.

Teachers must also have continuous training in understanding the impact of social problems such as HIV/Aids, poverty and lawlessness on learners and to gain insight into the amount of abuse children experience in their homes and neighbourhoods. Issues such as HIV/Aids, poverty and lawlessness could be alleviated through an improvement in the socio-economic environment. Left unattended, these will affect education adversely.

With state support, whole communities must be involved in strengthening and improving school infrastructure so that all children have access to extensive, modern classrooms, quality libraries, laboratories, computer rooms, and study areas.

Communities should be encouraged to feel a sense of ownership of school property to protect the buildings. Professional security guards, not mere untrained job seekers, should also work with communities to safeguard schools.

Teacher assistants must be available in each classroom so that more learners can get personal assistance and guidance.

Morning assemblies, with religious leaders from different faiths practised in the community, should occasionally be invited to conduct brief devotions. People standing

in the communities should also occasionally be asked to address learners to motivate them positively.

Departments of education should ensure that learning materials are adequate and attractive, reading materials are screened to keep up with community values, and the curriculum considers career opportunities for learners and keeps pace with the technological changes occurring in the world.

Each provincial education department should assess what skills are in demand in a given area so that the curriculum can be fashioned to create the necessary skills pool to support investments and local economic growth.

Learners who leave school should know that job opportunities will await them. They must see school as the place that will equip them with the skills and capabilities necessary to meet the challenges of a world where artificial intelligence rules and life, as we know, require adjustment.

Parents must support their children's education. The educational system must provide for parents' ongoing education to adjust to a world where AI will destroy old jobs and create new jobs.

Regular meetings should occur with parents so that they have a better understanding of the use of artificial intelligence and how AI influences work opportunities.

Schools must become centres of arts, culture, and sports. This is important for personal growth, community

cohesion, and new career avenues. A budget must exist for coaches. Parents should assist with ideas, planning, and conducting school activities with their children's teachers. Children's education should be a whole community affair, something other than something left entirely to teachers.

Community-based pregnancy prevention programmes must involve the school as well as providing outreach and support services to teenagers so that they have access to high-quality sexual health services and information which will help prevent teenage pregnancies. Community support must be garnered for this purpose. Parents and teachers must work in collaboration with professionals to help stem the rising tide of pregnancies among schoolgirls. Regular visits by social workers will assist in this regard.

As 24% of the national budget is already spent on education, parents who have the means must pay school fees or volunteer their services to make schools functional. Fundraising will be a requirement for every school. School concerts, bazaars, camps, and many other fund-raising activities should be revived with the involvement of parents. The government needs to have more capacity to meet all educational demands.

The crisis in education will have to end with all role players in the different economic sectors participating in democratic and meaningful decision-making. A recent international study found a startling revelation: Eight out of 10 South African schoolchildren face difficulties in reading by age ten.

We are also grappling with a need for more qualified and motivated teachers. The inadequate number of teachers will exacerbate learners' challenges, particularly in the townships and rural areas.

One of the most effective strategies for addressing inequality in South Africa and breaking the cycle of poverty would be to get more children from low-income families into education early and ensure they receive the same quality of teaching and learning infrastructure as children from wealthy communities. Teacher education must be vigorously supported. Education is a dynamic field, and considerable change is occurring constantly.

Conducting subject-specific competency tests of all teachers and providing intensive teacher training will be very helpful to them and will allow them to be promoted. Teachers must be brought on board for such an idea to be implemented.

In this regard, pay increases should be linked to improved competency and qualifications. Minimum standards must apply for new teachers, with the eventual goal of all teachers having the kind of bachelor's degree suited to a school's needs. Each province should have an annual conference where education is assessed, and a road map is laid for tailoring tomorrow's education to tomorrow's needs.

TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Personnel appointed to teach at TVET colleges must be highly qualified professionals. Lecturers should enrol in

online courses annually. Staff should also be afforded time to work in places related to their teaching to benefit from up-to-date theory and practice.

TVET colleges should be under the umbrella of a Technicon. Their role in meeting the chronic deficiency in technical skills among youth, leading to high unemployment rates, merits severe political attention. TVET colleges should actively collaborate with industry partners, as their input is essential for developing relevant and up-to-date curricula that align with the job market's needs.

The 2024 elections must be primarily about economic growth, and every cog in the machine must work smoothly and effectively. A skills pool will support investments, and investments will support job growth. Graduates must leave TVET colleges able and ready to enter the workforce. Employers, for their part, should prioritise work placements to gain practical experience and complete their training.

HIGHER EDUCATION

There are critical challenges that need addressing:

1. Socio-economic disparities have perpetuated inequitable access to education, and therefore, the challenge of bridging this gap and ensuring equal opportunities for all students must be met.
2. Insufficient financial resources exacerbated by a shortfall in

revenue and an increasing budget deficit will hinder HEIs' ability to provide quality education, maintain infrastructure, and support research. This is going to be a steep challenge to overcome.

3. Addressing disparities in infrastructure, resources, and teaching quality across institutions must be addressed creatively and strategically.

4. Making education affordable for all through adopting new strategies and partnering with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which offers a vast array of online courses, will have to be resolved in a conference of all institutions. The question of high tuition fees and related costs must be examined.

5. As education increasingly moves online, ensuring reliable internet connectivity for students and educators will be vital. It will be necessary to establish data donation initiatives, collaborate with telecom providers to facilitate these donations and ensure efficient distribution, Partner with educational content providers to zero-rate access to their platforms during specific hours, negotiate with internet service providers (ISPs) to exempt educational websites and apps from data charges, and set up community Wi-Fi hotspots in areas with limited connectivity will be issues that political parties will have to resolve.

6. Higher learning Institutions must take the lead in balancing traditional exams with innovative approaches to enhance the evaluation processes for testing learners.

7. Providing robust support services and bringing experts together to resolve accommodation issues must be urgently addressed.

8. HEIs must invite robust and regular evaluations, accreditation, and benchmarking to assure everyone that they are among the best in the world.

9. Supporting faculty members through professional development programs, research opportunities, and competitive salaries is very important.

10. We must embrace AI and technology tools like ChatGPT in education to enhance teaching, personalise learning, improve learning efficiency, increase competitiveness, facilitate administrative processes, and assist with research and research output.

Education at every level is essential for revitalising our ailing economy. The more educated and skilled our youth are, the better for them, their families, and society.

12. ELECTORAL REFORM

Electoral reform in South Africa is crucial to enhancing governance and fostering economic growth. It is a big MUST. Electoral reform is required to make politics 100% about the people and not 100% about political parties and their interests, as is happening presently.

The President has to be directly elected by the voters, not by a political party. Electoral reform must ensure that citizens' voices are accurately represented.

A reformed electoral system will enhance accountability. When MPs are directly accountable to specific constituencies, they are more likely to address local concerns and respond to citizens' needs.

In his last speech to parliament in 1999, Nelson Mandela called for a review of the electoral system. While he did not prescribe specific reforms, his advocacy signalled the need for change to ensure a more representative and accountable system.

After leaving office, former President Kgalema Motlanthe chaired the High-Level Panel on Assessment of Key Legislation and Acceleration of Fundamental Change. The panel proposed amending the Electoral Act to create an electoral system that combines proportional representation with defined constituencies for MPs in national elections to enhance accountability, strengthen representation, and contribute to better governance.

Voters must demand that the sound recommendations made by Nelson Mandela and the panels led by van Zyl Slabbert, Pregs Govender, and Kgalema Motlanthe be implemented immediately so that citizens can have a more significant say in how they are governed.

Numerous panels have made their recommendations. They are excellent recommendations. Voters now must compel political parties to commit earnestly to these electoral reforms. Voters should shun those parties that refuse to support these recommendations.

Political parties cannot be given power without being accountable to the public, making our democracy a paper democracy.

COPE has a parliament bill ready to effect wide-scale electoral reform. It has already been gazetted, and the Speaker is required to release it for public scrutiny and comment.

Most political parties will not agree to support this Bill. Citizens, on the other hand, will find the Bill very attractive. Intense pressure from voters will allow the Bill to go forward. It will be so good for South Africa to engage with it. You can find the Bill here:

<https://www.parliament.gov.za/bill/2294692>.

While the closed-list proportional Representation continues to be our electoral system, many people will mistakenly believe that the Constitution is an obstacle to meaningful economic transformation and wealth redistribution. This negativity arises from people not having enjoyed the hoped-for dividends of democracy.

The problem is the electoral system.

The Constitution is not the root cause of our country's problems. Instead, political negligence, corruption, and mismanagement because of a lack of accountability have led to the terrible situation we are witnessing and experiencing.

The constitution can entirely change the lives of most South Africans if it is earnestly upheld and the provisions

of the Bill of Rights are progressively implemented. For that to happen, electoral reform has to happen.

The Closed List Proportional Representation electoral system gives political parties too much power and rope. It allows politicians to be self-interested and permits the erosion of accountability to the people.

Hundreds of parties have been registered with the IEC. Why this great interest?

It pays handsomely to be the head of a political party in RSA. Once elected to parliament, a leader can remain a leader for 30 years, unchallenged, as has been happening routinely.

For as long as anyone can remember, politics in South Africa has been a sphere of contestation. Even after the advent of democracy, people did not universally welcome constitutional democracy without reservation.

Unfortunately, and regrettably, there was no negotiation on the electoral system. Nothing at all. The assassination of Chris Hani forced the announcement of the date of the 1994 elections without any voter's roll. Many governments appointed panels after 1994 to recommend electoral reform, as mentioned. Still, political parties were so comfortable with the closed-list PR system that no changes were tolerated.

The Closed List PR system made President Zuma a virtual dictator during his term of office. Even though R246m of state funds were unlawfully diverted to building his Nkandla homestead, ANC MPs and Ministers defended

the expenditure in the silliest, most bootlicking way possible.

Recently, the ANC Secretary General publicly accepted that ANC MPs knowingly lied to parliament that a swimming pool was a fire pool. The Public Protector's "Secure in Comfort" report exposed the glaring impropriety and blatant corruption at Nkandla. In the interval, on eight different occasions, ANC MPs and Ministers staunchly and arrogantly defended Zuma each time a motion of no confidence was tabled in the NA.

Disgusted with the behaviour of ANC MPs, the UDM on 15 May 2017, supported by the DA, EFF, IFP, NFP, Cope, FF+, ACDP, AIP, Agang, PAC, and the APC approached the Constitutional Court to rule that the Speaker was constitutionally empowered to prescribe voting by secret ballot when a motion of no confidence was before the National Assembly.

On 22 June 2017, the apex court pointed out that "South Africa is a constitutional democracy – a government of the people, by the people and for the people through the instrumentality of the Constitution." It clarified that central to this vision was "the improvement of the quality of life of all citizens and the optimisation of the potential of each through good governance." The court also recognised that "since constitutions and good governance do not self-actualize, governance structures had to be created to breathe life into our collective aspirations."

The court noted that in this regard, “knowing that it is not practical for all fifty-five millions of us to assume governance responsibilities and function effectively, we the people” designated messengers or servants to run our constitutional errands for the common good of us all. These errands can only be run successfully by people who are unwaveringly loyal to the core constitutional values of accountability, responsiveness, and openness. And this would explain why all must swear obedience to the Constitution before assuming office.”

Even though the opposition parties succeeded in the Constitutional Court, a mere 31 ANC MPs voted to oust Zuma in a secret ballot despite state capture reaching its zenith. Just how harmful the Closed-list PR system has been to our country was made clear by the fact that a president could hand the keys of the National Treasury to the Guptas.

The ANC caucus supinely and fawningly looked on. They betrayed their oaths of office. They betrayed South Africa.

It wasn't as if the ANC didn't know that the Closed List PR system was a problem. On 26 March 1999, President Nelson Mandela, making his farewell speech in the National Assembly, left MPs and South Africa to ask whether the time had not come “to re-examine our electoral system, to improve the nature of our relationship, as public representatives, with the voters!”

In 2002, the cabinet appointed a team under the leadership of Frederik van Zyl Slabbert to investigate

electoral systems that would best suit South Africa. That team's main recommendation was for South Africa to have a mix of proportional representation and a constituency-based system. That would have been a small start to answer Madiba's question.

However, in 1996, at the Arniston Bosberaad, the ANC retained the Closed List PR system for the 1999 general election. It was tailor-made for careerist politicians and corrupt individuals.

In 1998, the Eisa Roundtable on electoral reform discussed a mixed-member proportional system (MMP) with single-member constituencies (SMCs). Unfortunately, political parties still had no appetite to deal with President Mandela's challenge.

In 2006, the National Assembly appointed an independent panel, chaired by former MP Pregs Govender, to investigate electoral reform. The panel found that the electoral system needed urgent reform and recommended a mixed system that should attempt "to capture the benefits of both the constituency-based and proportional representation electoral systems."

Self-serving and self-interested politicians were resistant to grasping the nettle. Their interests prevailed, not those of the people.

Another investigation was launched to investigate what was wrong in South Africa. In November 2017, the Motlanthe High-Level Panel Report was published. On page 568, the following most telling point was made:

"Two of the major challenges with the current electoral system are the weakness of the proportional representation system in holding politicians to account to the electorate and its propensity for generating factionalism of a type that led to an insurrection in Gauteng and Kwa Zulu-Natal. Members of Parliament are appointed not directly by voters but rather by their party, based on candidate lists submitted to the Electoral Commission before the elections. This makes them accountable to the party and its leadership rather than voters, and places party politics and loyalties ahead of effectiveness and delivery."

Despite the report being signed off by no less a person than Kgalema Motlanthe, neither President Ramaphosa nor the Speaker did anything to act on what was recommended.

The ANC politicians were determined to milk the state to the fullest and for a more extended period.

Once again, the Constitutional Court was left to declare that the electoral system was defective. On 16 April 2019, the court allowed the New Nation Movement to access the ConCourt directly on the right of independent candidates to stand for election. The court heard arguments on 25 August 2019.

On June 11, 2020, Constitutional Court judge Mbuyiseli Madlanga ruled that the Electoral Act was deemed, in part, to be unconstitutional because independents were precluded from standing for election. Parliament

was given two years to fix it. The trigger was finally pulled.

Here's what should have been legislated had public interest been put before party political interests: -

- a. The President, Premiers, Mayors, and their deputies should be directly elected by the people and thus be accountable to them.
- b. The number of seats in the National Assembly should have been reduced from 400 to 350 (the Constitution permits this).
- c. Reduce the seats in the provincial legislatures by 65%.
- d. Introduce a mixed system of elections: constituency-based plus proportional representation. Replace the Closed List PR system with an Open List PR system. Reserve a minimum of one-third of the seats in every legislature for women; more will be very good.
- g. Introduce electronic voting.
- h. Give centrality to the Bill of Rights to reduce inequality and poverty.
- i. Ensure that optimal accountability prevails.

As most political parties have shown no interest in doing what Nelson Mandela and the different panels have been recommending, Mosiuoa Lekota took it upon

himself to introduce a private member's Bill: Electoral Laws Second Amendment Bill (B34-2020).

Even though it was a gazette, it is lying in parliament with no attempt to have any public participation regarding it.

If we agree that “the people shall govern,” let the people decide whether to support the Bill. This Bill proposes to make our democracy work entirely in the interest of citizens. Voters should support it going forward for public discussion. It will do so much good for all of us.

Citizens with strong public support and civic action must initiate the electoral reform process. The Bill can be accessed here:

<https://www.parliament.gov.za/bill/2294692>.

In a constituency-based system, voters elect representatives from their local area to represent their interests in the legislature.

Our Constitution, in sections 46(1) and 105(1), requires that members be elected to the National Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures using an electoral system that “results, in general, in proportional representation.” Our electoral system, therefore, must provide for proportionality, but constituency representation can also be accommodated.

In a closed-list PR system, such as in RSA, voters must choose to vote for a political party as the party packages its candidates. People have no say in who

represents that party. This is why the ANC felt comfortable placing six senior ANC party members in its 2024 election list despite being fingered for acts of corruption by the Zondo Commission.

These individuals were found to have connections to corrupt activities, yet their names remain on the party's list submitted to the Commission of South Africa.

It is alarming that the Zondo Commission report flagged 97 members and leaders of the ANC in connection with state capture. However, only four ANC members have been declared ineligible to stand as public representatives. How can the ANC ever fight corruption with so many of its leaders and members continuously and secretly seeking self-enrichment in whichever way they can?

Under the Closed List PR system, accountability is to the party leaders at the head office. There is no accountability to the people. Parties protect their leaders irrespective of their criminal actions, as has been the case with the ANC.

Since all of the political parties in parliament, bar (COPE), have yet to show any spirited eagerness to effect fundamental and far-reaching electoral reform, voters must take it upon themselves to demand a change in the electoral system to improve the conditions of their lives.

It will be a brilliant and essential thing to do.

This election allowed voters to choose candidates sector by sector and segment by segment to get capable and accountable MPs and MPLs. In a sector-based system, without it even having to exist in legislation, voters could have chosen people who would have made our economy grow through their initiative, knowledge and experience. We could have elected representatives based on their profession, occupation, industry, or social segmentation. COPE would have accommodated such independent candidates. Unfortunately, this chance went begging.

The economy needs fixing, as does the government, education, health services, electricity supply, transport, township transformation, SOEs, women's abuse, youth's future, and a whole list of other things.

Our society in 2024 needs specialists from each sector to fix the problems in that sector. A parliament full of people with little or no specialisation in each industry and segment will mean that very little will be fixed.

Without the infusion of new blood and specialists, parliament will once again have the ANC, the DA, the EFF and other parties, and it will be business as usual. Politicians have no magic wand to make their promises into horses people can ride.

Voters should consider the Electoral Laws Second Amendment Bill, which is gathering dust in parliament, a perfect solution and demand that it be released for public comment.

While political parties stifle electoral reform, everyone must endure many hardships and dangers.

For a better future, let us do what Nelson Mandela urged and demand electoral reform. Every voter needs to demand electoral reform. It is as simple as that.

13. ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY

In South Africa, just under 90% of the population is connected to the energy grid. However, South Africa's population is experiencing universal energy poverty because of serial load-shedding.

According to the news media, there were 778 hours of load shedding over 335 days. This happened despite Eskom receiving R242 billion in bailouts and an additional R254 billion to alleviate its immense debt burden.

Furthermore, the Minister of Finance allowed Eskom to create an additional debt of R25 billion in the 22/23 budget. Throwing money at Eskom in this way hasn't helped at all. If anything, the situation at Eskom has worsened for all of us.

The estimated cost of load shedding was around R35 billion. In 2023, Eskom burned R35 billion worth of diesel to keep the lights on for short durations. How could the ANC government have allowed this?

Loadshedding is inconvenient, damaging to equipment, and very costly for businesses. Electricity is essential for people working online and from home or students who

must study. It is also crucial for hospitals, universities, courts, and factories.

Loadshedding impacted the economy very negatively. Many jobs were lost because of load shedding. People who can afford it are investing in solar solutions. Many people have also invested in batteries and inverters.

According to Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, introducing rooftop solar feed-in schemes for corporate and residential buildings across South Africa could immediately relieve the national grid, align with climate change commitments, and stimulate investment in solar installations.

Vietnam, for example, has tackled its electricity crisis by adopting rooftop solar power. The Vietnamese government created conditions for deploying rooftop PV systems in at least half of the country's commercial and residential buildings through net metering.

We, too, have seen a significant increase in rooftop solar capacity over the past year, with a 349% increase in installed rooftop solar PV capacity from March 2022 to June 2023.

Besides a rebate scheme that allowed individuals who installed new panels onto their homes to claim rebates equal to 25% of the cost of the panels, tax breaks were also used to increase rooftop solar take-up.

The government must streamline the process of obtaining permits and approvals for rooftop solar

installations to make it easier and faster for individuals to install solar panels.

Better financing options for rooftop solar installations will make rooftops more affordable for more individuals. Investments in research and development will undoubtedly improve the efficiency and affordability of rooftop solar technology.

According to data from Eskom and Professor Anton Eberhard, South African households and businesses have installed an estimated 4,400MW of rooftop solar PV. This is double the solar capacity procured under Eskom's four bid windows. The country's installed solar rooftop PV increased from 983 MW in March 2022 to 4,412 MW in June 2023, a 349% increase in just over a year. South Africa imported over R16.5 billion worth of solar panels in the first nine months of 2023, equal to over 4,500 MW in generation capacity.

From the beginning of 2023 to the end of 2025, the private sector will have added over 6,000 MW to the grid. From 2025 to 2030, it will add a further 19,300 MW. This is the way to go.

France, Germany, the UK, the USA, and the EU will provide \$8.5 billion in development assistance over the next three to five years to help South Africa achieve net zero by 2050; easy and cheaper funding for rooftop solar must happen.

According to the South African Wind Energy Association (SAWEA), South Africa has outstanding conditions for generating wind energy. More than 80% of the country's

land mass has wind conditions that produce high load factors (more than 30%). Experts estimate that technological advancements, among other factors, will help reduce the cost of wind energy by between 17% and 35% by 2035.

According to official Eskom data, 34 operational wind farms add a combined capacity of more than 3,400MW to South Africa's electricity grid. The only Eskom-owned wind power station is the Sere Wind Farm near Vredendal in the Western Cape, which contributes roughly 105MW. Large wind farms have capacities between 135MW and 140MW.

Unfortunately, the high concentration of renewable power stations in the Cape provinces has led to Eskom running out of transmission capacity in this part of the country. In 2022, not a single additional megawatt of wind capacity was added to the grid due to this limitation.

A solution would be to use advanced conductors on our country's transmission lines, with carbon and composite cores instead of the steel wire cores used for conventional conductors. This would enable the carriage of increased capacity to overcome grid constraints and simultaneously maintain better performance at higher operating temperatures.

Another solution is for the government to provide legislative and financial support for municipalities to invest in battery storage or pumped hydro. Every KW of electricity should either be used or saved. The fact that

Eskom will require R210 billion to increase grid capacity means that alternatives must be found.

The Presidential Economic Advisory Council recently took a tough stance on the woeful state of the electricity system because ministers had failed over the years to make necessary investments in infrastructure, delaying the release of bid windows and not focussing on creating transmission lines. The failure of the ANC government in this regard has been mind-blowing.

While Eskom has built 4,300km of transmission lines in the past ten years, 14,000km of new high-voltage power lines will still have to be built by 2032. The ANC government's failure must count as a dereliction of duty.

The grid only accommodates about 20,000MW across Mpumalanga, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo. No generation capacity is available in the three Cape provinces, the most favourable areas for wind and solar power generation.

Eskom anticipates a significant electricity generation shortfall throughout 2024. According to its forecasts, there will likely be a 2,001-megawatt (MW) deficit for the entire year. This means that Eskom could stay within its generating capacity by at least two load-shedding stages during 2024.

Therefore, we can expect load-shedding throughout the year. Time will reveal just how bad the situation will be. We can expect politicians to do little to solve the problem after the elections.

Electricity is the backbone of our country's entire energy system. Governments will need capable people to introduce new technologies, innovative business models, and creative thinking and working methods.

Whether we like it or not, the need to move to 100% fossil-free electricity is here. This will have to happen to alleviate the climate crisis, improve people's health near power stations, lower prices for all consumers, and preserve a future for our children. Both sustainability and resilience goals will have to be met urgently.

Importers from our big markets are already starting to demand carbon-free production from us as suppliers. This is because they are becoming more aware of the environmental impact of their supply chains and want to reduce their carbon footprint.

The World Trade Organization has also recognised the importance of decarbonising international trade and has worked on initiatives to promote sustainable trade. Transitioning to carbon-free production is a necessary step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the effects of climate change. Many companies are already pursuing this goal by investing in renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and adopting sustainable practices.

Transitioning to renewable energy will have to happen very swiftly, and it will be better to leapfrog and be in front to enjoy the rewards rather than lag and be penalised. After the 2024 elections, the government will have to play catch up in dealing with: -

- a. increasing renewable resources,
- b. expanding energy storage,
- c. instituting advanced distribution and management of electricity,
- d. modernising the grid and grid control and optimising the transition to electric vehicles or vehicles using clean fuel.

Policymakers can also support the use of suitable-sized microgrids. This must be seen as a valuable addition to our hopelessly inadequate national grid. Microgrids are self-contained power systems operating independently or in conjunction with the primary grid. Renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, wind turbines, ocean buoys or float systems, can power them.

Microgrids can help reduce energy losses in transmission and distribution, further increasing the efficiency of the electric delivery system. About 2-4% of energy is lost in the transmission lines, 1-2% during the step-down, and 4-6% during distribution.

South Africa already has some experience with microgrids. Hitachi Energy, for example, commissioned microgrids in Longmeadow, Johannesburg, in 2016 and on Robben Island in 2017. These are still operational in 2024. They enable Robben Island to integrate renewable solar energy into its isolated grid and stabilise the power supply.

Solar energy can be produced on-site at roughly half the price Eskom currently charges, making it attractive. According to the World Bank, microgrids' electricity costs could be meagre. The spread of microgrids can benefit poor communities.

Microgrids and green energy are promising technologies that must be thoroughly and expeditiously investigated, with the involvement of communities and all stakeholders. Such a move will help improve energy resilience and sustainability in South Africa.

We must take resilience very seriously. We will all need to be resilient to survive in the years to come. Microgrids can also help reduce the risk of power outages and blackouts, which are now common in South Africa.

A modern distributed power generation system must combine solar, wind, hydro and mega batteries in a coordinated manner to meet commercial, industrial, and residential needs. This must materialise quickly.

We must develop national and municipal plans to deploy energy storage to ease the current electricity crisis and reduce the need for load shedding during periods of peak power demand. Energy storage will require grid batteries and pumped hydro to balance electricity supply and demand, improve grid stability, and boost energy providers' financial returns.

Municipalities in South Africa have already integrated 282 MW of embedded power, mostly rooftop solar, into their networks. This is a positive step towards

decentralising energy supply and embracing the transition.

Some municipalities have already approved tariff frameworks for small-scale embedded generation (SSEG) and are seeing benefits. The benefits range from securing clean energy at a cost equal to or below the Eskom tariff to releasing unused municipal land for energy production. Such a move supports local economic development, enterprise initiatives and job creation.

Installing mega municipal batteries can help store excess energy generated by rooftop solar panels and make them available when needed. This will make rooftop energy generation more attractive, effective, and beneficial to everyone.

Achieving large-scale energy storage at a municipal level will solve the problem of intermittent wind and solar electricity generation. It will also optimise the use of congested grids and contribute to the better use of existing power plants.

As such, it can be a cost-effective and immediate alternative to grid expansion, where we need to catch up. Utilities worldwide have ramped up their storage capabilities using supersized batteries that can store anywhere between 100 and 800 megawatts (MW) of energy.

The national government must encourage municipalities to begin a phased installation of mega batteries on a public-private sector basis, with a governance model

requiring transparency, responsiveness, and accountability.

Eskom is also considering battery storage. To address the challenges of insufficient grid capacity, it has identified Northwest province as the ideal location for the second 615MW battery storage project. Eskom has selected eight transmission substation sites in the Northwest: Mercury, Carmel, Hermes, Ngwedi, Midas, Marang, Bighorn, and Ararat.

KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Free State are the other provinces suitable for battery storage. The six criteria used were: -

- a. availability of capacity,
- b. reduction in losses,
- c. system strength,
- d. the concentration of storage and facilitation of renewable energy and decongestion of the transmission network.

In the Cape provinces, more and bigger batteries are required. Pumped storage would also be feasible. Creating hydrogen would also be an option. The Hive hydrogen plant at the Coega Special Economic Zone aims to produce 950,000 tons of green ammonia annually. It will use a 1000 MW solar plant and a 56 MW battery storage component on-site. It will also draw electricity from a 400 MW wind farm built further away.

Every town and city can store or use excess electricity differently via new technology. With the support and a legal framework, many towns and cities can start with public-private enterprises to create storage facilities or support hydrogen production.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research aims to develop low-cost lithium-ion batteries and supercapacitors using locally mined manganese and titanium ores.

There is also collaborative research to use minerals like gold to synthesise nanomaterials for application in photovoltaics. South Africa needs a government to drive industrial development with ability and purpose.

Solid-state sodium-ion batteries, currently in development worldwide, will be safer than Li-ion batteries because they are non-flammable and can operate effectively across various temperatures. They are projected to have lower costs than lithium-ion batteries because they use cheaper materials. Many view sodium-ion batteries as a way to scale energy storage to new levels.

The time for rapid growth in industrial-scale energy storage is at hand. The race is on for the next generation of batteries. Which other political party will be able to seize the initiative to benefit our country?

Regarding hydropower and pumped storage, South Africa has a potential of about 14,000 GWh/year from hydroelectricity. About 90% has already been

developed. The following are Eskom-operated hydropower stations: -

- a. Colley Wobbles (42 MW),
- b. Gariep (360 MW),
- c. Second Falls (11 MW),
- d. Vanderkloof (240 MW),
- e. First Falls (6 MW),
- f. Ncora (1.6 MW),

The following are municipal-owned hydropower stations:

-

- a. Steenbras Hydroelectric Power Station (180 MW),
- b. Thaba Chweu local municipality-owned grid-connected station (2.6 MW)

Private sector-owned stations connected to the national grid are: -

- a. The Neusberg Hydro Power Station (10) MW),
- b. Clanwilliam (300 kW),
- c. Freidenheim (2 MW), Merino (4 MW)

Some of the small hydroelectricity schemes are:

Schemes such as the Kwa-Madiba micro-hydropower plant, located next to the Thina Falls along the Titsa River

in the Eastern Cape, have the potential to be employed.

At present, 3,586 MW of hydropower is produced annually in South Africa. With 2,832 MW of electricity from pumped storage, 4,750 GWh of electricity is produced. However, this only accounts for about 2% of the national supply.

CSIR and Stellenbosch University researched wave energy in South Africa, and the university's Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies (CRSES) published a report on the available data on South African wave power resources.

Developing an ocean wave energy industry in South Africa should begin in phases. Countries like Scotland, Australia, China, Denmark, Italy, Korea, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States are all developing wave energy. Scotland is the leader in wave energy development, with several active projects underway.

The World Economic Forum has highlighted the potential of wave energy to help meet the increasing global electricity demand.

HYDROGEN

South Africa must turn to natural and green hydrogen to switch quickly from fossil fuels to clean energy.

Hydrogen is increasingly being regarded as the fuel of the future for South Africa's energy sector. We certainly

have an opportunity to capitalise on the rapidly developing global hydrogen economy and revolutionise our economy by supplying green hydrogen to the world.

Hydrogen is critical to achieving global decarbonisation as it offers an unparalleled solution for transporting, storing, and efficiently utilising clean energy. With the rapid growth in renewable electricity and falling costs of wind and solar power, the opportunity to produce zero-carbon hydrogen has caught the attention of global energy players. Switching to hydrogen production would be another solution for using excess electricity.

The Africa Green Hydrogen Alliance was launched in May 2022 to foster collaboration among role players. Opportunities to transform the Bushveld complex and larger region around Johannesburg, Mogalakwena and Durban into a Hydrogen Valley must be given impetus. Three catalytic green hydrogen hubs have already been identified in South Africa's Hydrogen Valley. These locations have a high concentration of future hydrogen demand and are well-placed to produce hydrogen. The launch of the hydrogen economy in the Hydrogen Valley can't wait another minute.

ELECTRICITY IS BECOMING TOO EXPENSIVE

Nersa is currently changing how Eskom is allowed to determine its future price hikes – and one of the most significant proposed changes is dropping the revenue guarantees that have been hugely beneficial to Eskom.

Under the current MYPD methodology, clawbacks and recoveries have led to Eskom applying for increasingly higher tariff hikes yearly. The regulator proposes a new tariff structure, the Electricity Price Determination Methodology (EPDM) rules.

Whatever happens, electricity generated by Eskom will be expensive. People will need affordable electricity, which is possible if correctly tackled.

TRANSITIONING SWIFTLY FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO RENEWABLE FUELS

The climate crisis is real; it is here, and it is very destructive. South Africa has to begin abandoning fossil fuels at its own pace. It can do so by quickly reducing oil imports by 50% and introducing regulations for strategic rationing. At the same time, support for the electrification of transport must be ramped up. Alternatively, we should seek to go the hydrogen route.

This can be done by making retrofitting affordable by removing import duties on electric engines and waiving VAT throughout the conversion process. A comprehensive plan with medium to long-term commitment will be required. Investment in recharging infrastructure or hydrogen refuelling must be accelerated. More private investment must be encouraged.

Investment in electric/hydrogen buses and passenger trains will improve public transportation. The time has also come to consider subways. These measures will

help reduce the number of cars on the road and decrease the country's dependence on fossil fuels.

Incentives such as tax credits and subsidies will have to be provided to encourage using electric/hydrogen vehicles. Minibus taxis must also be encouraged to go electric. This will help reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels for transportation, and the cherry on top will reduce transport costs for millions of citizens.

South Africa must collaborate with international partners to acquire knowledge and resources for the renewable energy transition. China and India have a lot from which we can learn. Ambitious targets for transitioning to renewable energy will have to be set because the climate crisis will demand that we move swiftly in that direction. This will help to create a sense of urgency and commitment to the transition.

China is the country South Africa has to emulate. It is a BRICS partner. It has the world's most extensive electric public transportation system, with over 420,000 electric buses. Shenzhen, a city in China, has the most prominent electric public. The world's transportation system has 16,000 electric buses and 22,000 electric taxis. This is only the beginning of a flying start China has made. We can't just wait in the meantime and be in the very rear of other nations. Our politicians have been sleeping while some have been busy stealing.

CONCLUSION

Everyone in the energy sector must look beyond Eskom and fossil fuels because the climate crisis is accelerating,

and the price of fuels will continue to rise. South Africa needs a comprehensive energy policy that will benefit everyone and allow our country to move quickly towards net zero carbon emissions. We will have to do this, and it will pay to be very proactive and take advantage of grants and cheap funding.

We invite everyone in the energy sector to contribute to a solution that will take us forward, promote affordability, and help create jobs at scale.

We understand that an estimated 92,230 people are employed in the coal industry. New energy sources like bioenergy, end-use renewables, and supply chain resources could create up to 3.3 million jobs by 2030. This will offset the 2.7 million jobs expected to be lost in the fossil fuel sectors. We should have deep public engagements on this so there are winners.

To ensure that people in the fossil fuel industries find replacement jobs in the renewable sector quickly, the focus should be on providing specialist skills in renewables and clean energy alternatives. Learning about batteries is the way to go. This is where massive job creation can take place.

The South African Energy Skills Roadmap 2023, a collaborative work of the South African National Energy Association (Sanea) and Wits University, identified skills gaps for the energy sector of the future and recommended that training institutions offer specialist degrees—both undergraduate and postgraduate—for renewable energy (such as solar, wind, biomass) and

clean energy (such as green hydrogen, automation, and robotics).

Legal and financial skills, social scientists, engineers, and environmental and climate scientists will be needed.

Training for retrofitting vehicles and installing, repairing, and maintaining renewable energy plants must begin quickly. This is an important emerging area with significant implications for local enterprise and community skills development.

Workers will require specialised skills for these clean energy technologies (such as green hydrogen and energy storage solutions). In addition to technical specialists who can work with solar PV and wind technologies, others, such as electrical engineering and non-electrical technical skills like boilermakers, welders, and mechanical skills, will be needed.

All this information is available to everyone in the public domain. We are sharing what others have freely shared on the internet. RSA should also consider providing training for supportive roles for the just energy transition, which must consider socioeconomic factors.

These include policy development, research, legal skills, forecasting, and modelling. Mathematical and statistical considerations will also be essential for energy planning. We will require development practitioners who can work with communities affected by the transition to renewables. When the lights keep going out, the darkness gets longer and longer.

Businesses suffer, and many close. Jobs need to be recovered. Equipment is destroyed. The economy remains on its knees.

All of this is unnecessary. It requires politicians to have plans to be put on the table right after the elections. These can be improved, cost, and implemented quickly. People and businesses need affordable and reliable electricity, which can be done if political parties are willing to use the knowledge readily available on the internet.

14. FISCAL DEFICIT

A fiscal deficit arises when a government spends more than its total income, including revenue and capital receipts. To do this, it must keep borrowing more than it already borrows. In other words, the fiscal deficit considers all government expenditures (revenue and capital) and compares that to all receipts (income and capital).

Our government has faced a fiscal deficit for many years. From 2013 to 2022, the government experienced a sizeable budgetary deficit because it spent much more on debt servicing, bailouts, social programmes, services, and infrastructure than collected through taxes and other revenue sources.

Meanwhile, massive corruption was also eating into state resources and worsening the situation. The government, therefore, was maxing out its credit cards. Further borrowing will become ever more challenging.

Our economy has been on the edge of a recession, and the economic downturn has caused tax revenue to decrease. With less income and uncontrolled public spending, a fiscal has become an annual occurrence. Public debt, which the government is creating and asking us to take responsibility for, is rising rapidly yearly. Our share of the debt, as individuals, is therefore also increasing.

High debt levels are straining government finances, crowding out private investment, and increasing interest payments. The cost of servicing the debt is eating up 22% of the budget; next year, it will be more. The danger for all of us arises when fiscal deficits are consistently financed through money creation, in other words, printing more notes.

This will fuel inflation, and when the stage of hyperinflation or galloping inflation occurs, as in Zimbabwe, million Rand notes will be printed, and prices for goods and services will rise by the hour. Our money in the bank will become helpful and valuable when money is printed wildly.

Widening fiscal deficits will also lead to tax hikes, reduced services, investor uncertainty, and stock market volatility. We will be whacked from all sides, and we do not want to experience that.

Voters must get clarity from political parties on how they plan to manage the fiscal deficit and stop the trend of unwarranted and uncontrolled borrowing. Furthermore,

voters must ask political parties how they plan to keep inflation in check.

The 2024 fiscal framework and revenue proposals, tabled in parliament on 13 March 2024, contained the following shockers:

1. The economy needs investment to grow and create jobs, but investors are shying away because of the dreadful situation of public finances.
2. No structural reforms are taking place to improve state capacity; therefore, the environment for public and private investment will be badly lacking.
3. The National Treasury cautions that nothing can be done to “reverse the consequences of operational, maintenance and governance failures at State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) responsible for electricity, rail, and ports.” What a severe indictment of the ANC government.
4. The gross loan debt-to-GDP trajectory is about 16 percentage points higher than the median emerging market level. This is terrible news.
5. The National Treasury says that reducing the debt-service cost is critical for growth and development. As this is projected to increase, economic growth and development will not happen, and job creation will not occur.
6. Our economic decline will also be made worse by the supply-side constraints to economic growth: a sharp

decrease in commodity export prices, increased borrowing costs for the government and consumers and the impact of high interest and inflation rates on consumption spending. RSA is facing an economic nightmare.

7. The government's revenue collection has deteriorated substantially over the past year due to weak economic conditions. Compared with the 2023 Budget, the National Treasury predicts a revenue shortfall of R56.1 billion in 2023/24. There will be a very slight increase in revenue collection over the medium term from Personal Income Tax increases of R15 billion in 2024/25.

8. Consolidated expenditure will amount to R2.4 trillion in 2024/25, way more than the projected revenue. Our country is going deep into the debt trap.

9. The 2024 Budget has added R57.6 billion to expenditure over the medium term, mainly to cover the costs of the 2023 public-service wage agreement. This increase will be funded with more borrowing.

10. Gross loan debt is projected to reach R5.2 trillion, or 3.9 per cent of GDP, in 2023/24. The debt keeps climbing.

11. The total approved guarantees to SOEs are expected to increase by R33 billion to R503.3 billion by 31 March 2024.

12. Most SOEs are distressed due to weak governance, financial strain, and poor operational performance

(2024 Budget Review). Even so, they get more and more money and guarantees without anything being improved.

13. But the biggest shocker is this: The debt service costs will rise from R382 billion per annum to R440 billion in 2026/27. That will be R1.2 billion per day gone.

14. Finally, the Personal Income Tax tables and medical tax credits do not include a provision for inflation adjustments. Thus, the government will receive R16.3 billion through bracket creep, which it should not accept.

Voters should organise house and public meetings to unpack and adequately digest this information. The National Treasury is laying before us the problems our economy will face. These are severe problems that must be tackled and resolved. If we don't do that, the economy will shrink, and thousands of jobs will vanish.

Political parties, meanwhile, are making many extravagant promises. The fact is that there will be no money to make those promises into reality.

For too long, we tried not to understand government finances. We grudgingly paid our taxes and hoped for the best.

Now, hoping for the best will not help us. The time has come to expect the worst. Nobody likes bad news, and it is unwelcome.

The problem is that we will receive even worse news if we don't deal with the bad news. A disease that is not fought worsens very quickly. We should remember that.

15. GRAFT

In the context of corruption, Graft refers to bribery and other corrupt practices used by corrupt individuals to induce state officials and politicians in power to secure illicit advantages or gains in politics or business. It involves exploiting a position of public trust or confidence for personal benefit.

Bribery involves intentionally offering, promising, or giving any undue financial or other advantage to an official or decision maker. The most straightforward method to secure preferential treatment is to provide money in large amounts in black bags or briefcases.

Bribes can also be gifts, expensive items, or paid-for trips overseas. In many cases, officials receive a percentage of the profits from a contract or project. In some cases, officials demand bribes under threat of adverse consequences. Bribes often involve collusion between multiple parties. Bribery undermines trust in government institutions, distorts fair competition, and perpetuates inequality.

Combating corruption involves strengthening legal frameworks, promoting transparency, and holding government officials accountable. Understandably, graft affects people because corrupt officials prioritise personal gain over public welfare. Money meant for

people with low incomes or infrastructure development vanishes without delivering a service or product.

Graft enables the rich to get richer while the vulnerable suffer. This is what happened with the Guptas. During Jacob Zuma's presidency, corruption-tainted almost every corner of public life. Unemployment and crime soared, and essential services suffered.

Media reported that in 2024, South Africa's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) stood at 41. This score reflects the public perception of corruption within the country and is a two-point drop from the previous year's score of 43. Unfortunately, in the view of commentators, this decline marks South Africa's fifth consecutive year of worsening corruption perceptions in our 30 years of democracy.

This score reflects global concerns about governance and corruption challenges in our country. It is the lowest our country has ever received. We as citizens should also be very concerned. After all, our tax money is being stolen from the government. The more money stolen, the more taxes we will be called upon to pay. At the same time, our infrastructure will collapse, and services will decline.

The public must not tolerate corruption, which perpetuates inequality, weakens institutions, and undermines society's well-being. We uphold justice, fairness, and the common good by rejecting corruption.

16. HEALTH

The issue of health services in our country is very complex and challenging. Some citizens can get world-class health services, while others struggle with inadequate or poor-quality services. It may even be none. Below are issues that should be of concern to all of us: -

HEALTH BUDGET

The 2022 budget for the health sector was R259 billion. It was split as follows: -

R105.5bn for district health services.

R51.4bn for other health services.

R44.1bn for central hospital services,

R38.1bn for provincial hospital services, and

R9.7bn for facilities management and maintenance

2. CHALLENGES THAT THE HEALTH SERVICES FACE: -

Poverty, inequality, and the burden of disease intersect to create significant challenges for South Africa.

1. POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

More than 50% of our population lives in poverty, and this affects their access to necessities such as food, clean water, and healthcare. Poverty levels remain

unrelieved among black South Africans, particularly women, people with disabilities, and rural folk.

We also remain one of the most unequal societies globally as the legacy of apartheid continues to perpetuate social and economic inequalities.

Inequitable access to quality healthcare perpetuates health disparities.

Unequal access to education and employment opportunities further widens the gap between different socioeconomic groups.

2. BURDEN OF DISEASE:

Our country faces a quadruple burden of disease:

- a. HIV/AIDS and TB remain significant health challenges.
- b. High maternal and child mortality rates persist.
- c. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, mental illnesses, and chronic lung diseases add to the burden.
- d. Injury and Trauma because of violence and injuries contribute to the overall health burden that the public health system struggles to deal with, considering how strained resources are.

3. HOW CAN THE HEALTH SYSTEM BE FIXED?

All stakeholders, including healthcare personnel, providers, and the private sector, must have legislated roles in developing a comprehensive strategy for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of health services.

A strategy for supporting human resource capacity in health facilities must be worked out through consensus. The partnership between the private and public sectors must be strengthened. The governance structures must be fully democratic, transparent, and responsive. The information system must be continuously enhanced.

4. HOW TO MAKE THE BUDGET GO FURTHER?

Centralised procurement of goods via open tenders; addressing poverty and inequality improving management; management must be professional, competent, democratic, transparent and accountable; annual evaluation of senior managers has to be undertaken; social innovation in health will have to be pursued through the development and implementation of new ideas, services, and models of care that address health needs and improve access to quality healthcare in a transformative manner.

5. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation must be significant in ensuring that health services are tailored to the community's needs, that resources are used effectively and efficiently, and that healthy behaviours and lifestyles are promoted.

6. NATIONAL CORE STANDARDS

National Core Standards for Health Establishments must be followed to improve the quality of care in public health facilities. The Quality Improvement Guide must be followed to provide tools to assist quality coordinators, managers, and supervisors of both hospitals and clinics to ensure quality care in the healthcare delivery system.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Clinics and hospitals must have sufficient healthcare providers in public clinics and hospitals. Every effort must be made to recruit more healthcare providers, retain existing ones, and provide them with the necessary training, support and attractive remuneration.

Clinics and hospitals should allow qualified doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and therapists, among others, who are unemployed to work in these clinics and hospitals as private practitioners after all advertised posts have been filled so that patients have a further option at an affordable fee. Such doctors and nurses will erect offices and facilities as part of the facility at their own cost.

Clinics and hospitals must encourage qualified doctors from here and worldwide to volunteer their services and advance their training and expertise. Doctors waiting for an appointment and sitting at home should be allowed to work in clinics and charge a fee of R100.00 per consultation.

8. INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

Public clinics and hospitals must be equipped with the necessary infrastructure and equipment to provide quality care to patients. Adequate space, water, electricity, medical equipment and supplies must be provided.

Private individuals and companies must be permitted to offer services, such as machines and equipment, that clinics and hospitals cannot provide so that patients can afford them. Community involvement in expanding facilities and purchasing equipment must be supported and facilitated in every way.

9. CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

Effective clinical governance systems must be in place to monitor and improve the quality of care in public clinics and hospitals. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems must also be in place.

10. PUBLIC PRIVATE SECTOR

Collaboration between the public and private sectors is necessary to improve the quality of services in public clinics and hospitals. This includes strengthening the partnership between the public and private sectors and improving the current governance structures and information systems. The private sector and NGOs must be considered stakeholders in providing quality health services.

11. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A robust healthcare system that is equipped with modern technologies and infrastructure is required to deal with notifiable diseases such as mumps, poliomyelitis, Haemophilus influenza Type b (Hib), meningococcal disease, Rubella ("German measles"), measles and pertussis ("whooping cough"). Early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of infectious diseases are vital so that the public knows the symptoms to watch out for and the actions people are advised to take.

Awareness campaigns to educate people about the importance of hygiene, sanitation, and vaccination must be ongoing. Collaborating with international organisations must be ongoing so that our health sector can access the latest research, technologies, and best practices in dealing with infectious diseases.

In today's world, leveraging modern technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and big data analytics is essential to develop predictive models for infectious diseases. This can help in the early detection and prevention of outbreaks. Investment in research in infectious diseases must be made so that new vaccines can be created, better diagnostic tools can be developed, and treatment can be more effective.

12. ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Citizens must be aware that every government has limited resources, and the government and citizens must work together to ensure equitable access to health care.

Diseases such as HIV and TB impose heavy burdens on the government, as do diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke, asthma, and cancer. The involvement of communities in the management of healthcare will be both pre-emptive and supportive.

Younger families must have Saturday morning training in a community facility to help prevent diseases and care for and support sick people in their families or neighbourhoods.

13. VACCINATION

Prevention is better than cure. People should have a great deal more information on vaccination. There is considerable doubt about some vaccines and everything that should be done to dispel these fears. Some vaccines were developed and approved quickly, raising concerns about their safety or side effects. Some fears arise from historical and political distrust.

People will want to know if the vaccines they are being encouraged to take have been tested enough. Vaccines have saved millions and are one of history's most important public health interventions.

14. DIABETES

According to the International Diabetes Federation, South Africa has one of the highest prevalence rates of diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 4.2 million adults suffering from diabetes. Regular exercise, healthy eating habits and weight management can help prevent diabetes. Regular screening for diabetes

should happen at school, tertiary institutions, the workplace and via mobile clinics.

15. OBESITY

Approximately 31% of men and a staggering 68% of women in South Africa are obese. Among children aged one to five, the obesity rate is 13%, which is twice the global average of 6.1%. The rise in obesity rates is influenced by several factors, including food insecurity, inequality, and the availability of ultra-processed, high-sugar, and high-sodium foods that are often more affordable.

Rapid urbanisation has shifted from traditional diets to diets rich in calorie-dense foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, and high-fat, high-carb options.

On World Obesity Day, the World Health Organization highlighted the global obesity crisis, emphasising the failure of food systems to provide nutritious diets for children. Inequality exacerbates the situation in many contexts, from pervasive marketing to inadequate healthcare coverage, leading to environments that encourage weight gain. Experts emphasise the need for regulation of the food environment to address the obesity surge in South Africa.

16 COMMUNITIES LENDING A HAND

Community members must be encouraged to help so clinics and hospitals can do more with smaller budgets. They can volunteer their time and skills to support healthcare providers in public clinics and hospitals by

assisting with administrative tasks, providing emotional support to patients, and helping maintain health facilities.

Communities can collectively donate medical equipment and supplies to clinics and hospitals to reduce the burden on the healthcare system and thus ensure that patients can receive the care they need close to where they live.

17. MOBILE CLINICS AND MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Mobile health clinics can help reduce the costs of medical services by eliminating absences from work or the need to find transport to facilities. They can also help diagnose, improve condition management, and reduce patients' exposure to infection risks associated with hospital visits.

Telemedicine, using mobile technology, can also improve access to healthcare for all. Remote consultations and patient monitoring can be game changers. Another area that can benefit from mobile clinics and mobile technology is providing health education and promoting awareness campaigns.

18. SELF-CARE

We must utilise the guidance released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on how people can actively make decisions for their health and the health of their loved ones. The new WHO Consolidated Guideline on Self-Care Interventions for Health provides diverse interventions such as –

self-sampling for human papillomavirus (HPV);

improving cervical cancer screening,

self-administration of injectable contraception to prevent unintended pregnancy.

I am selecting a plant-based diet with moderate portions.

We are organising regular physical activity.

Prioritising healthy sleep,

not smoking or using drugs,

using alcohol in moderation,

taking steps to master stress.

Every family must have a wall chart that shows which items are commonly available at home and can be used for common ailments.

19 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

KIOSKS

AI kiosks can significantly improve self-care interventions and reduce the burden on clinics and hospitals. As self-service kiosks are interactive via digital touchscreens, they can provide patients with a wide range of services to people who may not otherwise receive care, including urgent care, primary care, and preventive health support. AI kiosks can help patients

with self-care interventions by providing personalised health information, such as medication reminders, health tips, and exercise routines. They can also offer patients access to telemedicine services, such as remote consultations with healthcare providers.

AI and equipment-equipped kiosks can help with testing for sugar, pressure, and other health issues. For example, Versicles Technologies, a Kerala-based startup in India, has introduced a groundbreaking digital health kiosk called Prognosis that claims to deliver instant and highly accurate basic diagnostics such as blood pressure, blood sugar, and heart conditions at low prices.

20. BETTER HEALTH FOR ALL

The government should prioritise the health and well-being of South Africans. Here are some key actions that can improve health in South Africa. The government must invest in improving healthcare infrastructure, including upgrading existing facilities and building new ones where needed. Ensuring adequate staffing, medical supplies, and equipment is crucial.

The government should work towards guaranteeing quality healthcare for every South African. No person should be left behind, and efforts should be made to address disparities in access to healthcare. Promoting health literacy is essential. The government should educate the public about preventive measures, healthy lifestyles, and disease management. Exploring innovative methods for chronic medication dispensation can enhance accessibility and adherence. Telehealth

services can play a significant role in this regard. Collaboration across sectors, including public-private partnerships, is critical. By working together, various stakeholders can contribute to a cohesive and efficient healthcare system.

The question of NHI should be deeply considered before it is pursued and health care for everyone destroyed. What is to be wished for is one thing; what can be delivered is another.

17. HOUSING

Innovative housing solutions will have to play a crucial role in addressing South Africa's housing challenges.

Various options must exist to expand houses upward or to select affordable homes. The number of people who qualify for government housing must be widened or supported to get mortgages and access housing opportunities.

The government must partner with private companies to broaden choices.

By implementing innovative housing solutions, the government will allow for bright, environmentally friendly, and cost-effective building designs to influence the construction of houses that optimise space, energy efficiency, sustainability, safety, and comfort for residents.

The National Housing Act should be amended to remove the 8-year prohibition on selling government-subsidized houses, allowing owners to leverage their assets to generate capital.

An amendment to the Prevention of Illegal Evictions Act should be considered to address: -

- a. the issue of illegal land grabs,
- b. allowing for expropriation with reasonable or reduced compensation in keeping with circumstances, and
- c. jumping the housing queue.

Informal developers should receive appropriate facilitation and guidance so that they, too, can offer a potential solution to the housing shortage.

It is only through innovative approaches approved by law that more housing units can be created to complete formal development,

Utilising vacant land or converting underutilised properties into housing units will maximise existing resources and provide more comprehensive affordable housing options.

Cooperative housing models must also be encouraged in our country. The involvement of residents collaborating to own and manage housing complexes would be cost-effective and rewarding.

Homes that can be incrementally built or incrementally enlarged will also assist in creating living spaces over time.

Finally, temporary shelters or transitional housing must exist to bridge the gap while permanent solutions are developed.

Innovative housing must be popularised as the climate and economic crises will create enormous challenges.

18. IMMIGRATION

Immigration issues pose a multifaceted challenge. On the one hand, the government has had limited success in attracting highly skilled immigrants who are desperately needed because of the failure of the visa system.

The problem worsens because the government has no shared understanding of managing immigration effectively. While our country can't get the immigrants our economy wants, many immigrants are pouring across our borders with limited skills.

These immigrants compete with locals for scarce jobs—corruption, of course.

Managing both undocumented immigrants as well as asylum seekers has become very complex. We will have to address intelligence failures and improve policing. Specialised Courts should be established to handle

immigration issues with the competencies and speed required.

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) should streamline its processes for verifying and documenting migrants. Currently, there is “administrative violence” faced by both migrants and South Africans due to delays and inefficiencies in processing documentation.

Verification of undocumented status should be done promptly by DHA officials, ensuring that individuals receive proper documentation or deportation notices.

Voters should ask political parties what reforms will be undertaken to create immigration laws that allow faster processes, greater clarity, and more humanity.

Addressing immigration issues requires thoughtful legislation that balances national security, humanitarian concerns, and economic interests.

Some general ideas that political parties might consider when crafting immigration laws are: -

- a. creating a comprehensive framework that supports legal immigration,
- b. implementing steps to prevent illegal immigration by enhancing border security, and
- c. laying down clear pathways to speedy citizenship.

Voters should ask what clear guidelines they will establish for South Africa to grant asylum and refugee

status in a streamlined and speedy process. Voters should also ask whether political parties will create laws that prioritise family reunification by expediting visa processing for family members.

19. ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

The horrible war between Hamas and Israel is full of such intense hatred between them that neither an end game nor any path to a lasting solution is in sight. As of 13 March 2024, the death toll in the ongoing conflict follows:

A total of 3272 had lost their lives in the Gaza Strip due to Israeli attacks. Approximately 332 Israelis have been killed, including soldiers, Shin Bet agents, and police officers. Around Arab and Israeli citizens, they also lost their lives. Experts are saying that there is evidence that Israelis and Palestinians have been involved in actions that could be classified as crimes.

Amnesty International documented Israeli attacks in the occupied Gaza Strip. These attacks, including indiscriminate bombings, caused heavy civilian casualties. Survivors and eyewitnesses have reported the devastating impact on Palestinian families, with entire families wiped out in some cases. Over 15000 children have been killed.

On 26 January 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel must take all necessary measures to prevent genocide. While the court did not immediately order a ceasefire, it explicitly mandated that Israel must

prevent any actions that could be considered genocidal. South Africa argued at the court that Israel's deliberate denial of humanitarian aid to Palestinians could constitute one of the prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention.

Despite the ruling, Israel has failed to comply with at least one measure. The court ordered Israel to enable the provision of urgently needed essential services and humanitarian aid in Gaza. The situation in Gaza, therefore, remains dire, with warnings of "catastrophic conditions."

War crimes have been committed on both sides. Hamas fired thousands of rockets at Israeli towns and attacked and killed civilians — including children, women, and older adults. It also kidnapped hundreds of people.

The Israeli military, for its part, has mercilessly flattened significant parts of Gaza with airstrikes and blocked deliveries of food, water, fuel and electricity.

For 56 years, Israel has militarily occupied the West Bank and Gaza. For the last 16 years, Israel has enforced an air, land, and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip. Israeli right-wingers have willfully destroyed Arab homes in the West Bank and caused continuous provocations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Both Israel and Palestine need to recognise each other's right to exist as sovereign states. This mutual recognition is essential for any lasting peace to be achieved. Ensuring security for both Israelis and Palestinians is

crucial. Addressing security concerns can build trust and pave the way for coexistence.

As many as 139 out of 193 UN member states have recognised the statehood of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which declared its nationhood on 15 November 1988.

This recognition allows Palestine to be an observer state in the United Nations General Assembly. In contrast, 165 countries recognise Israel.

Among the G20 nations, Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey have recognised Palestine as a state. Indonesia and Saudi Arabia recognise Palestine but not Israel as a state.

While Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States have not officially recognised Palestine as a state, they do support a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. They want Israel and the Palestinian Authority to sit around a negotiating table.

It's important to note that recognising Palestine as a state is a complex and politically sensitive issue, and different countries have varying stances based on historical, geopolitical, and diplomatic considerations.

To get every nation on board, it is imperative that the warring parties sit down, as we in South Africa did at CODESA, and reach a settlement.

Mexico's advocacy for a two-state solution that emphasises cooperation and power-sharing between Israel and Palestine has a good chance of working. South Africa should partner with Mexico to move forward with that plan. Interdependency is a requirement for Israel and Palestine to coexist.

The Abraham Accords provided an opportunity for talks to start. Unfortunately, the brutality in the present conflict will have scuppered a rapprochement.

In response to a request for an advisory opinion by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the ICJ held hearings from 19 to 26 February 2024 regarding the legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. This verdict will very likely have significant implications.

COPE's position is that South Africa should partner with Mexico and begin getting support for Mexico's idea of settlement so that the situation does not become so impossible, so bloody, and so intractable that countries will be forced to take positions they will regret.

20. JOBLESSNESS

South Africa provides social grants to nearly 18 million people, or about a third of the population. Helping grant recipients become more self-sufficient and fully involved in economic growth and development at the local level is extremely important. Recipients must be allowed to receive their average grants and

supplement their income through involvement in the local economy.

In 1994, there were around 300 townships and informal slums in the country; today, there are nearly 2,700. People living in townships and informal settlements need big help quickly. This can happen if the government at all three levels creates an environment conducive to economic growth and development for the millions of jobless people.

Investments in infrastructure must be made, access to resources must be provided, a supportive regulatory environment that encourages community involvement must be put in place, and entrepreneurship and innovation must be supported and encouraged.

By doing so, each sphere of government can help create a virtuous cycle of economic growth that benefits everyone in the community and society.

Therefore, in every ward of every town and city where joblessness and widespread poverty are rife, the law must require that a large tract of land be set aside and serviced to build a Self-Help, Skills Training, and Social Support Centre.

All role players must pitch in, be paid, and volunteer to ensure the development gets off the ground quickly. That will ensure the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. This will be the developed site where jobless people can gather to get training and help to use their talents and capabilities to help one another and themselves. Finding jobs and creating jobs will be stimulated by

having an S3 centre (Self-Help, Skills Training, and Social Support).

The issue of unemployment is dealt with more entirely under “employment”.

STATE MUST CONTINUE TO PAY GRANTS

Grants must still be paid as usual. In addition, these Self-Help, Skills Training, and Social Support centres must add an economic dimension to the grants paid by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) to millions of people to provide them with social assistance. Poor people can't live on grants alone. They must get their grants while accessing skills and economic opportunities.

The grants which must continue are: -

- a. disability grants,
- b. grants for older persons,
- c. war veteran's grants,
- d. foster child grant,
- e. care dependency grant, and
- f. the child support grant.

Over and above that, grant recipients must have the right to supplement their income without any restrictions. They must also enjoy new economic opportunities to top up what they get.

SELF-HELP, SKILLS TRAINING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT CENTRES (**S3 CENTRES**)

A self-help, skills training, and social support centre in every poor ward of every town and city will help the poor and jobless become better skilled, more self-reliant and enjoy greater dignity.

Before the pandemic, the unemployment rate (including people who had given up looking for work) for people aged 15 to 24 was just under 70%. Two years later, the rate had increased to 74%. This is a crisis of monumental proportions.

South Africa must treat joblessness as an enemy at war inside our country.

The fastest way to tackle joblessness and youth empowerment is by economically transforming the apartheid-created townships, which are far from city centres.

Work must be brought closer to people's homes. If correctly managed, tax benefits for industries located in the townships can achieve that goal.

The next best thing is to support self-help and skills training and amplify social support by putting resources into the S3 Centres. These centres will be able to provide a variety of training courses funded by different role players, enable individuals with essential skills to become economically productive and allow the formation of small groups of contractors.

The S3 centres will be able to offer a variety of courses such as: -

- a. life skills,
- b. welding,
- c. carpentry,
- d. sewing,
- e. , knitting,
- f. vegetable gardening,
- g. horticulture,
- h. plumbing,
- i. building,
- j. fashion designing,
- k. toy making,
- l. bread baking,
- m. beekeeping,
- n. computer literacy,
- o. recycling,
- p. massaging
- q. hairdressing
- r. catering
- s. crafts making
- t. acting, singing, and dancing,

By acquiring marketable skills, such as those listed above and many more, grant recipients and all jobless people

in each area can become active within their geographical community to earn an income or enhance a small income and thus better provide for themselves and their families.

In addition to skills training, these centres can offer support services such as counselling, mentorship, marketing, and job placement assistance. These services will help individuals overcome barriers to self-employment and formal employment. Financial stability and independence must be fostered assiduously.

DEVELOPMENT OF S3 CENTRES

Once the municipality sets aside a large tract of land as a newly crafted law requires, it must be levelled and serviced. This will then happen in each ward where unemployment and poverty are widespread.

Plans will be created in consultation with experts and communities, budgeting will be secured, and building works will be started using unemployed labour in the area. People who wish to improve their skills will also be invited to join as volunteers with a stipend for their efforts.

These buildings at an S3 centre will include workshops, halls, shelters, kitchens, offices, and shops. At these centres, the unemployed can join others and begin small enterprises.

These S3 buildings must also be attractive to tourists.

A competent manager with the right skills and qualifications must be appointed democratically. The manager will coordinate activities and call for the twinning of their ward with another ward in the town or city where residents are economically better off. Such twinning will allow Ubuntu to manifest itself.

This twinning will be for social and economic reasons. Surplus food and unwanted but valuable items in one ward can be continuously transported to its twin ward. The same can happen with donations and fund-raising.

As relationships are built up, the one ward can approach the manager to help find builders, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, domestic workers, caregivers and so on for them. It will become a win-win situation for people in both wards. Twinning will be mutually beneficial.

When the jobless gather in one locality in a ward, it is easy to match them to labour market demands in that ward and elsewhere.

CULTURAL PROMOTION

S3 Centres will also be able to work with cultural leaders and icons to support the organisation of festivals, fetes, galas, and other events, where they will have the right to set up stalls and participate. They would also be able to help filmmakers meet the demand for extras in public scenes.

Cultural activities must be seen as a crucial component of sustainable development. In Brazil, for example, they

have become an essential part of the country's economy. According to UNESCO, the cultural and creative industries are among the fastest-growing sectors in the world, accounting for 6.1% of the global economy.

Globally, they generate annual revenues of US\$2,250 billion, the equivalent of R42 billion, and create nearly 30 million jobs, employing more people aged 15 to 29 than any other sector. With joblessness among youth in RSA exceeding 50%, this is the way to go.

We have every reason in South Africa to strengthen the creative economy and encourage cultural diversity. Staging cultural activities will promote sustainable development and help communities lift themselves out of poverty. By tailoring development goals to the unique histories of each community in each targeted ward, solutions will become longer-lasting and more impactful.

Local cultures contribute to building a sense of local identity and solidarity. As such, they become a viable tool in shaping the effectiveness of regional development options for the entire community. For example, the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival is a historic cultural celebration with a vibrant annual street parade on 2 January. It enjoys great popularity.

Harnessing cultural heritage must play an essential role in addressing challenges of high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in every ward where joblessness and poverty are serious issues.

In summary, poor communities can play a significant role in cultural matters by embracing cultural diversity and heritage.

POVERTY AND HUNGER ALLEVIATION

S3 Centres will also be able to partner more effectively with an organisation like Siyabonga Africa, which alleviates poverty and hunger because it is involved in skills development and community upliftment services.

S3 Centres will help jobless people, especially the young jobless people because they will be one-stop centres for skills training, support, facilitation, and mentoring. Young people don't have to be left alone to find a job or start their own.

These centres can be trusted destinations for donations and valuable unwanted goods from the more affluent twin wards. For better security, they should also offer night and longer-term rented shelters. Such centres can operate markets and be a desired drawcard for tourism.

For example, the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children in Cape Town provides a 24-hour emergency shelter, short and medium-term residential care, childcare services, counselling, mental health support, legal and economic empowerment services, children's counselling, research in gender-based violence, job skills training, and legal advice. Every S3 centre can do the same.

The Soul Outreach and Upliftment Centre in Brakpan, South Africa, similarly provides shelter, skills

development, job-seeking assistance, and other social assistance to ensure that individuals become independent and build lives for themselves.

Self-help centres have been established in various parts of the world to help poverty-stricken people become self-reliant and lead dignified lives. One example is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which provides microcredit to poor people, especially women, to start their businesses. Micro-credit must be provided, which is better than in an S3 centre.

Another example is the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, which provides a range of services to poor women, including microfinance, health care, childcare, and legal aid.

The Kudumbashree programme in Kerala, India, is another successful self-help program that has helped women become self-reliant by providing them with training, credit, and marketing support.

Economic empowerment is crucial in all these instances. These examples demonstrate that self-help programmes can be effective in helping people become self-reliant and lead dignified lives. Jobless people can quickly create jobs by combining grants, microlending, and doing everything else.

S3 CENTRES FOR THE PROMOTION OF ARTS

Community-based S3 Centres can become great places for arts, crafts, music, and tourist attractions. For example, the Community Arts Project (CAP) in Cape

Town was established in the 1970s as a space for artists to create and exhibit their work. It has since evolved into a community centre offering various services, including art classes, exhibitions, and workshops.

The Transforming Community Development through Arts and Culture initiative in the United States seeks to showcase how community development leaders, organisations, intermediaries, and funders learn to partner with artists, incorporate cultural lenses into their thinking, and address some of the most challenging issues in communities with newfound creativity.

Cultural and artistic activities can transform South Africa significantly. Fusion is an idea waiting to be fully harnessed.

The talent available in South Africa is enormous. All these talented young people need is a place to exhibit those talents. S3 centres can do that for thousands of young singers, musicians, dancers, actors, and artists.

S3 CENTRES MUST SUPPORT THE CREATION OF COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives can be a great way to create jobs and promote economic growth. According to research by David Fourie and Cornel Malan from the University of Pretoria, co-operatives have traditionally been highly flexible in addressing broad social and financial needs. The South African National Development Plan (NDP) also envisioned the creation of more than eleven million jobs, predominantly in the small and medium business

environment, and co-operatives could play a significant role in achieving this goal.

For cooperatives to succeed and be sustainable, they must have access to resources, business management skills, and the ability to manage the cooperative relationship between members. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that cooperatives have adequate access to resources, training, and skill development programmes.

The Energy and Water Sector Training Authority in South Africa has supported various training initiatives for co-operatives within the energy and water sector. These initiatives must be learned from, and new training must be added.

S3 CENTRES MUST RECEIVE STATE SUPPORT TO SET UP MICROGRIDS

Microgrids can be a game-changer in a township ward. Microgrids are small-scale power grids that can operate independently or in conjunction with the primary power grid. They can provide reliable and affordable electricity to a training centre.

Deploying microgrids will provide the unemployed with experience with renewable energy and very cheap electricity for setting up small enterprises. Borrowing for this is far better than giving bailouts to Eskom.

A NEW OPERATION PHAKISA MUST BE OPERATIONALISED VIA S3 CENTRES

One way to tackle joblessness at scale and very quickly is to create an ecosystem that encourages widescale skills development, entrepreneurship and innovation. A new Operation Phakisa has to be operationalised immediately so that unemployed people and unemployed youth, in particular, can find millions of job opportunities locally in: -

- a. Construction: With the increasing demand for infrastructure, buildings, transportation systems, waste management, and power supply, the construction sector is expected to increase in the coming years,
- b. Healthcare: The healthcare sector is expected to grow due to the ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases,
- c. Education: The education sector is expected to grow due to the increasing demand for skilled workers,
- d. Information Technology: The IT sector is expected to grow due to the increasing demand for digital transformation,
- e. Tourism: The tourism sector is expected to grow due to the increasing number of tourists visiting urban areas,
- f. Retail: The retail sector is expected to grow due to the increasing demand for goods and services,

- g. Transportation: The transportation sector is expected to grow due to the rising demand for efficient transportation systems,
- h. Finance: The finance sector is expected to grow due to the increasing demand for financial services,
- i. Manufacturing: The manufacturing sector is expected to grow due to the rising demand for goods; j Energy: The energy sector is expected to grow due to the increasing demand for renewable energy,
- k. Chemicals: The chemical sector is expected to grow because its products enable the “world of things.” In the next few years, e-mobility will cause a surge in chemical demand.
- l. The waste sector is poised to increase due to the increasing amount of waste generated by rapid urbanisation and economic growth.

Self-help initiatives can certainly create millions of jobs if they have state and private sector support. S3 Centres can provide training and support for the above sectoral opportunities.

Developing local businesses in the above sectors will help create a sense of community ownership and pride and stimulate economic growth.

Many jobs exist, but people with the required skills are required to fill those jobs.

Schools, colleges, and universities are essential. At the same time, having S3 Centres in each ward is necessary to tackle joblessness expeditiously and broadly. This is how job creation and businesses can be born on one's doorstep.

If the right people with expertise and commitment are sent to parliament, they can push for what this manifesto sets out.

Voters must vote for detailed new and innovative plans.

If voters vote for big and empty promises without a novel strategy and relevant details, they will get another five years of joblessness and poverty.

In each ward where jobs are needed, a serviced site, various buildings, tools to use freely or to hire trainers, and cheap electricity generated on-site are required. Then, presto, jobs will start to spring up in huge numbers!

21. JUSTICE

Our criminal justice system grapples with several critical issues that demand urgent attention. These failures undermine the notion of justice and hinder our progress toward a fair and effective system.

The use of minimum sentences has been a contentious issue. While harsh punishments for criminals, especially those who commit violence against women, are essential, minimum sentences have proven ineffective in curbing crime and have diverted resources from more efficient solutions.

Our country has one of the highest incarceration rates globally, coupled with a high recidivism rate (estimated between 60% to 90%). There were 157,056 incarcerated people in March 2023.

More than 24,000 prisoners were probably released last year, and as many as 3,000 people were to be deported. Prisoners enter jail and leave via the “revolving doors” to enter prison again.

Standard practice in South African courts involves unnecessary postponements. Lawyers and judges share responsibility for this issue, leading to delays in justice delivery.

Voters should note that political leadership needs more coherent decision-making. This has affected the implementation of policies and the advancement of justice system reforms.

The Department of Correctional Services remains a problem area of great concern. It is ineffective and inefficient and fails to perform its duties to rehabilitate offenders. This must change by implementing the correct policies that can guarantee effective rehabilitation.

Another area for improvement is the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), an institution with a critical role in our justice system. However, the NPA has been in crisis for a very long time, and consequently, the prosecution of suspects is being impeded. While courts review decisions to prosecute, the decisions not to prosecute are taken in secrecy. This lack of

transparency is concerning and affects the institution's accountability.

The NPA's performance measured in prosecution throughput is dismal. At the height of state capture, the NPA's failure to act swiftly and vigorously against those involved demonstrated a dereliction of duty. Criminals are being arrested, but many are not being prosecuted. We should all be thoroughly alarmed about this.

Voters should vigorously ask political parties why they have not addressed this matter in the last 15 years.

South African courts, however, have been playing a crucial role in upholding justice, interpreting laws, and safeguarding constitutional rights. Their generally good reputation is shaped by their decisions, adherence to principles, and commitment to justice.

Courts often face resource limitations, affecting their efficiency. Overburdened caseloads delay justice. As much as courts do what South Africa expects, unequal access to legal representation and court services remains challenging for many citizens. Unfortunately, instances of corruption or unethical behaviour by judges or magistrates have eroded public confidence somewhat.

Voters should be very concerned about the following: -

- a. the serial failures and ineptitude of the NPA,
- b. declining public confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole,

c. ineffectiveness of the system in responding to domestic abuse cases,

d. delays in court processes with court orders being handed down long after the conclusion of a hearing—sometimes up to two years later—or delivered without the judge providing reasons for the decision, and unreliable online records at the Constitutional Court.

22. KLEPTOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Many people in our country believe that we transformed very quickly from a democracy into a “kleptocracy” under President Zuma's leadership.

Kleptocrats are politicians and state officials who exploit their power and influence to amass personal wealth and political influence, often at the expense of citizens and national resources. South Africa's journey toward kleptocracy has raised concerns about its resemblance to countries notorious for authoritarian rule and corruption.

The scourge of kleptocracy is no longer limited to the “third world”; it has become a global issue, threatening democracy worldwide.

Voters should demand that political parties commit to strengthening existing anti-corruption laws and enacting new legislation to combat corruption more effectively.

Voters should also demand that a separate prosecuting office be established to exclusively handle political

cases involving government officials, executive branch members, and legislature members. This specialised office must focus on cases related to corruption, fraud, and other offences committed by politicians.

The appointment of a special prosecutor could be left to either the Chief Justice or Parliament. This mechanism would ensure that decisions to appoint a special prosecutor are made independently, reducing the potential for interference.

Voters must also press for recovering assets stolen through corruption and ensure that what is recovered benefits the public.

Voters must ensure political parties prioritise anti-corruption efforts and hold leaders accountable during elections. Citizens should vote for parties committed to fighting corruption and kleptocracy.

LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN RSA

Both local and foreign investors have the confidence to invest in South Africa because of a failure in governance and a lack of transparency in key sectors. Foreign investors are rapidly offloading local equities. They sold a net R103bn of equities in the first ten months of 2023. A year earlier, they sold R73bn.

The failures of Eskom, Transnet, and the Port Authority, the greylisting by the Financial Action Task Force, and the continuing failures of the government in many spheres are also turning off investors.

It is no wonder that the JSE has been among the worst-performing bourses in emerging markets and globally. JSE-listed companies have declined from 600 in 2000 to 287 in 2023.

Investors will be attracted if the government is stable, fiscal consolidation occurs, and competent managers manage the SOEs.

The loss of confidence in South Africa as a safe investment destination has significantly affected our economy and employment. The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Sacci) reported a severe decline in business confidence, which affects investor sentiment and economic stability.

Some economists estimated that load shedding cost the country R17 million per hour due to disruptions to operations. The shakier the investment climate becomes, the more job losses will increase, and the creation of new jobs will be hindered. Investors divesting from existing ventures will affect thousands of households.

The loss of confidence in South Africa as an investment destination has a multi-faceted impact, affecting business growth, employment opportunities, and overall economic stability. Urgent solutions are needed to restore confidence and foster sustainable development.

Voters must ask political parties why they allowed the problem of divestment to become so acute and what plans they have to make RSA a haven for investors.

Everyone will understand that investments create growth and jobs. Divestment has the opposite effect. With jobs already so scarce, what will people do to earn a living?

22. LAND ISSUES

A novel, just, and productive approach to addressing South Africa's land contestation will require careful consideration of historical context, social justice, economic viability, and ecological sustainability.

Some key elements that must be considered are:-

Community-Driven Land Reform:

Involve local communities in decision-making processes related to land reform. Communities should actively participate in identifying land needs, preferences, and sustainable use practices.

Establish community land trusts or cooperatives that collectively manage and benefit from redistributed land.

Customary Land Rights Recognition:

Acknowledge and protect the land rights of indigenous and traditional communities. Customary land tenure systems should be integrated into formal legal frameworks.

Ensure that land reform policies respect cultural practices and ancestral connections to the land.

Equitable Redistribution:

Prioritise land redistribution to historically disadvantaged groups, including black South Africans who were dispossessed during colonial and apartheid eras.

Implement a fair and transparent land allocation process, considering need, historical injustice, and economic viability.

Productive Land Use:

Promote sustainable agricultural practices, agroecology, and diversified land use. Encourage crop rotation, mixed farming, and reforestation.

Invest in infrastructure (irrigation, roads, storage facilities) to enhance land productivity.

Support small-scale farmers and provide training in modern farming techniques.

Ecological Sustainability:

Assess the ecological health of land before redistribution. Some degraded land may require rehabilitation before productive use.

Consider climate change impacts and prioritise fertile and resilient land under changing conditions.

Compensation and Restitution:

- a. Provision must be made to award just compensation to current landowners during expropriation. While the compensation has to be fair and based on market value, it must also consider historical injustices perpetrated against the original owners of the land in question.
- b. Facilitation of land restitution must occur for those who were forcibly removed from their land while ensuring that the productive use of the land remains ongoing.
- c. Collaboration and partnerships must exist, allowing for engagement with private sector stakeholders, NGOs, and international organisations to mobilise resources and expertise.

- d. Collaboration should also exist between government, civil society, and academia to develop innovative solutions to settle the land issue that benefit affected people and have economic value.
- e. Commitment must exist to achieving reform that will balance justice, productivity, and sustainability.

24. LAWLESSNESS

Over the past decade, we as citizens have experienced widespread lawlessness like rampant corruption, violent protests, robbery, vigilantism, gangsterism, murders, kidnapping and extortion. Lawlessness reflects the failures or absence of government.

Citizens expect government (at all levels) to perform efficiently and effectively in delivering essential services. However, the wave of public “service delivery” protests—especially since 2004—reveals the government's failure to meet these expectations and fulfil election promises.

The Auditor General highlighted that 70% of municipalities couldn't prove they delivered promised services.

Witnessing corruption, experiencing ineffective governance, and feeling let down by unmet election promises, peoples' trust in government institutions has been eroded. This has undermined social cohesion and stability.

People are feeling unheard of and marginalised. They feel compelled to resort to extreme measures to express their grievances. Their violent actions disrupt economic activities, deter investments, and even damage the economy.

Political parties must indicate to voters what legislation will be tabled to ensure that all government sectors deliver on election promises and face consequences if they don't. This is a pivotal matter.

Our Constitution requires government to be accountable, responsive, and transparent. Political parties must indicate to voters how this requirement will be enforced across government and the civil service.

To stem lawlessness, the whole government must tackle poverty, unemployment, and inequality, particularly in the townships. Political parties should also indicate whether they will promote civic education at school to educate children about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of adhering to the law.

Voters must demand answers from political leaders on how they will ensure effective governance. Voters must clarify to political parties that restoring trust, promoting accountability, and addressing socioeconomic challenges are critical steps toward curbing lawlessness and building a more stable South Africa.

25. MUNICIPALITIES

If there is one thing most South Africans can agree on, it is the heartache created by municipalities. Local government is the epicentre and the coalface of service delivery.

This is where the state interacts directly with citizens. It is essential for efficient governance to ensure the adequate provision of services, as mandated by the Constitution and the Municipal Systems Act.

Municipal governance in South Africa involves a complex interplay of legal frameworks, administrative structures, and the critical task of meeting the needs of local communities. Unfortunately, many municipalities are not viable.

Municipalities are perceived to be “poor relations” compared to other tiers of government, so they often have councillors with limited capabilities and officials who lack the necessary skills.

They, therefore, need help to provide essential services. Many municipalities fail in the following ways: -

- a. financially unstable
- b. inept governance,
- c. poor financial management,
- d. lack of infrastructure,

- e. neglect of maintenance,
- f. failing service delivery,
- g. political tension

Many municipalities need more income to cover operating expenses and debt commitments, allow for growth, and maintain service levels.

Section 139 of the South African Constitution empowers provinces (and the national government) to intervene when a municipality cannot fulfil its executive obligations. At present, 32 cities across South Africa are under administration. 66 out of 257 are 'dysfunctional', and 229 are distressed.

This means that 90% of municipalities are not fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities: -

- a. weak administration,
- b. poor budgeting,
- c. inadequate or incorrect planning processes to prioritise the fundamental needs of their communities and promote social and economic development,
- d. the inability to provide essential basic public services such as water, electricity, refuse disposal, sewerage, public health facilities, and public transport.

Voters must ask political parties why they should have taken the structuring and working of municipalities back to the drawing board. Why were political parties not

responding to the many failures of municipalities and the protests they engender?

Voters must ask why so little has been done over decades to deal with municipalities' failure to comply, leading to irregularities and fruitless and unauthorised expenditures.

Suppose political parties don't commit to taking this aspect of government back to the drawing board. In that case, people will suffer intensely, businesses will close or move away, as Clover did from Lichtenburg, causing 330 job losses, and investors will shy away. The municipal government in South Africa is in crisis, and politicians cannot allow this situation to become toxic.

Amendments to the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998, and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000, are crucial to enhancing municipal governance in South Africa.

Political parties must seek to formalise the establishment and powers of the Municipal Public Accounts Committees (PACs) to empower their oversight functions considerably. This will allow them to deal with matters referred to the Committee by the Council and any councillor, both concerning what has already transpired and concerning what is currently in progress as a funded project.

Amendments to legislation must be introduced that address questions around the division of roles between municipalities' executive and legislative arms in the same way that happens at the provincial and national

levels. This will ensure a strict separation of powers in local government and empower councillors to hold each executive member directly accountable.

Legislation must also be introduced to impose a two-year prohibition on councillors found guilty of breaching the Code of Conduct for Councilors to enhance ethical behaviour, orderliness, and accountability.

A fundamental reform will be to introduce amendments to the legislation to clarify the formula for the composition of an executive committee and the need for at least one member of the main opposition to serve on that committee. Reform must also take place to amend legislation to deal with: -

- ☛ inefficient use of external consultants,
- ☛ insufficient Investment in infrastructure creation, management, and maintenance,
- ☛ ineffective financial planning,
- ☛ failures to implement adequate compliance controls,
- ☛ operating with unfunded budgets and
- ☛ serially failing to provide essential services and keep the area under its jurisdiction clean and acceptable.

26. NATION BUILDING

Unfortunately, nation-building, which involves fostering a sense of unity, shared identity, and common purpose

among diverse groups within a country, stalled after President Nelson Mandela left office. President Mandela's departure marked a significant leadership transition. The momentum in nation-building lapsed.

Despite progress, South Africa remained deeply divided along racial, ethnic, and socio-economic lines. Historical injustices, inequalities, and mistrust persisted.

Economic disparities and unemployment remained pressing issues. Building a cohesive nation involves equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Economic growth and development are essential for social cohesion. The collapse of State-Owned Enterprises and the failure of the government to embark on a programme of transforming the townships into viable economic entities pushed nation-building to the back of the line.

Now, we are seeing political fragmentation. Maintaining consensus on nation-building goals across diverse political ideologies is only possible with solid societal pressure. Rising populism, corruption, and social unrest threaten social cohesion, and renewed efforts at nation-building are required. Bridging the generational gap is crucial for continuity efforts in nation-building.

In an interconnected world, national unity is essential for economic growth, stability, and international relations. South Africa's ability to address global challenges hinges on its internal cohesion. Sustaining nation-building efforts requires consistent leadership, addressing historical divisions, investing in education, promoting

symbols of unity, and recognising the evolving context. Mandela's legacy remains a beacon, but collective efforts are needed to build a resilient and inclusive South African nation.

Voters must consider this matter seriously because our society's stability and economic progress depend on it. Voting in our country is primarily race-based, with very few exceptions. That being so, voters must accept that policies will be race-based, too. We get what we sow.

We will enjoy greater inclusivity if we manifest our desire for nation-building in our actions.

27. OVERSIGHT

Oversight is a crucial responsibility of the South African Parliament. The Constitution grants Parliament the power to oversee all state organs, including those at provincial and local government levels.

Oversight is a function the Constitution grants to monitor and oversee government actions. It involves monitoring and ensuring that government actions meet legal and constitutional requirements. Parliament is under a constitutional obligation to focus on the following areas:

- a. Implementation of laws.
- b. Application of budgets.
- c. Strict observance of laws of Parliament and the Constitution.

- d. Effective management of government departments.

By overseeing government actions, Parliament ensures service delivery, improving citizens' quality of life.

Oversight must occur for the following reasons: -

- a. Detect and prevent political abuse.
- b. Prevent illegal and unconstitutional conduct by the government.
- c. Protect citizens' rights and liberties.
- d. Hold the government accountable for taxpayers' money.
- e. Enhance transparency and public trust in the government.

The Role of the Two Houses of Parliament:

National Assembly (NA):

- a. Represents the people and ensures government by the people under the Constitution.
- b. Holds all executive organs of state at the national level accountable.
- c. Maintains oversight over national government authority and legislation implementation.

National Council of Provinces (NCOP):

- a. Represents provinces and considers provincial interests in the national sphere.
- b. Exercises oversight over national aspects of provincial and local government.

Parliament oversight is essential for a robust democracy, ensuring government accountability and effective governance.

The Zondo Commission highlighted several reasons for Parliament's failure to prevent state capture during the Gupta-Zuma era.

- a. The ANC refused to agree to an inquiry that would thoroughly investigate the allegations of state capture. Despite numerous opportunities to do so, it protected its leaders and knowingly hindered Parliament's ability to take decisive action against state capture. The evidence presented during the Zondo Commission was clear: Parliament possessed the authority to intervene. However, it failed to utilise its powers effectively.
- b. The ANC tolerated the exertion of significant influence over government officials, including the head of state. Payments to politicians and corrupt officials were used to bend the rules and regulations in favour of advancing the business interests of the Guptas and others.

Chief Justice Raymond Zondo emphasised that nothing substantial had changed since the commission's reports were submitted to President Cyril Ramaphosa.

If another group attempted to pursue state capture, Parliament would still be ill-equipped to stop it. The lack of implementation of recommendations from the State Capture Commission reports is a severe indictment on the ANC and the opposition parties that did not press for action.

Voters will agree that there is a pressing need for a small-scale, budget-limited, anti-state capture and anti-corruption commission to sit every three years. Such a commission will better hold government officials accountable and ensure transparency. The savings realised will fund the commission.

Parliament must establish robust oversight mechanisms and change the electoral system to achieve this.

The Van Zyl Slabbert Commission's recommendation that 75% of all members of Parliament (MPs) should be directly elected by voters is crucial. This will allow citizens to have a say in selecting their representatives and free public representatives from being straitjacketed by the political parties they belong to.

The current system concentrates power in party headquarters, limiting citizens' ability to remove MPs. Reforming the Electoral Act to empower voters and reduce party control over MPs is essential. Accountability to the people must prevail.

Voters must demand that 50% of all parliamentary committees be chaired by a highly qualified and senior opposition party member to ensure proper oversight. They must also demand that conscience voting be allowed so that they can vote independently on specific issues, even if they diverge from the party line. This will promote individual responsibility and prevent unquestioning loyalty to the party.

Voters must demand that each public representative's oath of office is honoured, and consequences should apply if that oath is violated.

Parliament must have programmes to educate citizens about their rights, the MPs' role, and the importance of oversight. An informed electorate will demand accountability, a decisive factor in suppressing corruption.

A combination of electoral reform, more robust oversight mechanisms, intraparty democracy, and active citizen engagement can help mitigate the limitations of the closed-list PR system.

South Africa can strengthen its oversight and uphold constitutional requirements by empowering voters and holding MPs accountable.

It is in the interests of citizens to have a parliament that can effectively oversee the running of the government. MPs and MPLs cannot be straitjacketed by politicians who will be subject to their oversight.

28. POLICING AND PROSECUTION

Modernising and improving policing and prosecution are critical requirements for the safety of citizens, the survival of law and order, and the encouragement of investors to come to our country.

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 provides a roadmap for enhancing policing in South Africa. This comprehensive plan, developed by the National Planning Commission (NPC), is dedicated to “building safer communities.”

The plan acknowledges the decline in police professionalism due to poor appointments of senior and middle managers over the years. It recommends measures such as better recruitment practices and training to address this.

Voters can see the merit of this without any difficulty and should, therefore, demand that political parties commit to regulating this. Strengthening community policing is essential. Coordinating patrol schedules and emergency response procedures can reduce workforce burdens.

Additionally, regulations must compel private security agencies to support poorer neighbourhoods and have formal monthly meetings with the police and other role players. The importance of cooperation between law enforcement and private security in South Africa has never been greater. This is a low-hanging fruit. The question is, why is this not being done?

Political parties must agree to table legislation to allow the private security industry to cooperate with the

police, dealing with issues of trust, governance, powers and responsibilities, training and information, intelligence gathering, etc.

In 1829, England's Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, contended that the public is the police, and the police are the public. This is an eminently sound idea. The public must have a more significant legislative say in creating safer communities.

“Government Policy in terms of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), 1996 and the White Paper for Safety and Security, 1998, refer to the community's partnering and the communities' responsibility to respond to the crime threat. “These interventions involve communities responsible for crime prevention in their neighbourhoods. Such interventions include localised programs, which mobilise various interest groups to address crime prevention on a town or city basis. Projects should include improving surveillance through schemes, such as car guards or community marshals.”

Why is this policy not being made into law? Improving forensic work will also lead to better case resolution.

The NDP calls for an integrated safety strategy involving collaboration across government spheres.

Policing is the second part of the solution. The first part must address the social and economic conditions underlying criminality in given locations. The NDP acknowledges that reducing crime and violence requires more than just policing. However, it also

recognises the need to address the deterioration in police professionalism.

Voters fed up with crime in their area have an opportunity, one that comes every five years, to ask political parties to put their plans for creating safer communities before them. Voters must get commitments now or wait for another five years.

While improving policing and security is essential, it is equally important to fix the prosecution side. According to the National Prosecuting Authority's annual report, prosecution rates of severe offences have plummeted to as low as 2%. After reading that, I think political parties should have been throwing their toys out of the cot. It is incomprehensible that they didn't. The situation is dire.

Legislation must be passed to foster better cooperation and communication between law enforcement agencies, including the police and the NPA. The police must be trained to undertake thorough and efficient investigations. Forensic expertise is needed to gather solid evidence that can withstand scrutiny in court.

The police and prosecutors must update their qualifications annually so that they understand technology, legal developments, case law, and best practices. Mentoring must be a legislated requirement. The use of artificial intelligence will help to streamline case management processes and thus reduce delays and backlogs.

Specialised units should be created to handle complex cases like corruption, organised crime, and cybercrime.

Voters must demand that the National Prosecuting Authority Act of 1998 be reinstated so the Scorpions can be active again.

Voters will see that much needs to be done in this vital area of citizen well-being, and it is only by exerting extreme pressure on political parties that they will do what is necessary to create safe communities. Gang-infested areas should be raising the loudest clamour in this regard.

29. QUESTIONS IN THE LEGISLATURES

Question time in legislatures plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability and transparency. To enhance its effectiveness, the following strategies must be implemented: -

- a. a clear agenda for question time should be defined, focusing on specific topics or ministries. This should be done to prevent randomness and ensure relevant questions are addressed.
- b. Sufficient time should be allocated for question sessions to accommodate follow-up questions.
- c. Questions should be put randomly to prevent predictability so that ministers are kept on their toes.
- d. Mechanisms for follow-up questions should be established so legislators can pursue unsatisfactory initial answers, and ministers must provide details and clarifications.

- e. Public input during question time should be allowed since we believe that “the people shall govern” and that parliament is the people’s parliament. Citizens’ queries will enhance accountability and provide diverse perspectives.
- f. Time limits should prevail for ministers to answer questions, and procedures should be created to deal with ministers failing to provide answers within the prescribed time limits.
- g. Additional question time should be provided for where defaulting ministers must be present to answer any questions they have been dodging.
- h. In India, the first hour of a sitting session in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Indian Parliament) is devoted to question time. Such a system will keep the government on its toes.

Voters must recognise that robust question time strengthens democracy by ensuring the government remains answerable to the people. Therefore, it is in voters’ interest to quiz political parties about question-and-answer sessions and what recourse legislators and the public will have when ministers dodge questions or refuse to provide answers.

30. RECALL

Recall is a democratic tool for active citizen participation. When corruption surfaces, or failures occur, voters can remove elected officials from office before their term ends.

In 2003, California recalled Governor Gray Davis.

Recall empowers citizens to hold officials accountable.

Recall has real advantages for our country in the context of widespread criminality, corruption, and ineptitude.

Recall -

1. discourages corrupt practices,
2. ensures direct control over officials (direct democracy),
3. deters undesirable behaviour and misconduct,
4. promotes transparency and responsiveness, essential requirements in our Constitution,
5. ensures officials serve if they have the support of the people and
6. prevents unchecked power concentration.

Peruvians actively use recall referenda to remove subnational politicians. Chinese can recall members of the Local People's Congress.

Le rappel (or recall) in French politics was introduced during the French Revolution as an imperative mandate. This concept allowed citizens to demand accountability from elected officials.

It has been in a state of dormancy for decades.

The Yellow Vests movement recently revived discussions about introducing a recall mechanism in France. Some candidates in the 2017 presidential election also supported this option.

Given this context, discussions continue how a recall process could be designed in France.

The challenge lies in balancing accountability with the existing institutional framework.

Most South Africans, seeing how municipalities are becoming failed institutions leading to a collapse of service delivery, will be interested in promoting the idea of recall to do what the national government has repeatedly failed to do: turn things around.

Our use of the Closed-list PR system protects corrupt politicians and even allows them to assume dominant positions in government. A recall system would take that power away from political parties and give it back to the people, strengthening direct democracy.

If we believe that the people shall govern, it is right to give people the power to demand accountability, responsiveness, and transparency.

Election time is a perfect time to press for reforms. Critical reforms are essential to propel South Africa toward a brighter economic future. These reforms must squarely and urgently address historical inequalities, unemployment, and poverty while fostering equitable and inclusive growth.

Modernising and reforming Network Industries and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) is vital. During the era of apartheid, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) played a significant role in uplifting the white population, mainly. SOEs employed white South Africans, particularly Afrikaners. SOEs were involved in infrastructure projects, such as building roads, railways, and power plants. These projects created jobs and economic opportunities, benefiting white workers and communities.

SOEs also provided training programs and apprenticeships for white workers. This investment in education and skills development enhanced the employability of white individuals. As SOEs controlled critical resources such as water, electricity, and telecommunications, white communities had better access to them, contributing to their overall well-being.

SOEs also facilitated business ventures for white entrepreneurs. Contracts, licenses, and concessions were often awarded to white-owned businesses. Afrikaner businesspeople leveraged these opportunities to accumulate wealth. SOEs must play an equally pivotal role in redressing the wrongs of the past and

doing for the black population what it achieved for white communities.

Network industries, such as telecommunications, energy, and transportation, play a pivotal role in economic development. By modernising and reforming these sectors, RSA can enhance efficiency, encourage private investment, and improve service delivery. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) need restructuring to operate efficiently and transparently. This includes addressing governance issues, streamlining operations, and promoting competition.

Political parties should be pressed hard to reform State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). A CODESA should be called to map out the reforms needed to bring the SOEs back into health. RSA should rethink its trade policies to boost exports.

The energy supply industry requires restructuring to ensure reliable, low-cost power. Addressing energy challenges, such as load shedding and inefficiencies, is crucial for sustained economic growth. Exploring alternative energy sources, promoting renewable energy, and improving energy infrastructure are vital steps.

Once again, CODESA is needed to map out what should happen in the energy and climate alleviation arenas. Leaving these matters to political parties would be suicide.

We will also have to reprioritise infrastructure development to support economic activities.

Investments in transportation, water supply, sanitation, and digital infrastructure will improve quality of life and enhance productivity and competitiveness.

Skills visas and policies that improve access to education and training are essential. A skilled workforce drives innovation, productivity, and economic diversification. RSA must invest in education, vocational training, and lifelong learning to equip citizens with relevant skills for the modern economy.

Our country's path to prosperity lies in bold reforms that address systemic challenges, promote sustainable growth, and create opportunities for all.

Voters can call the shots and put South Africa on the path to prosperity. If this opportunity is missed, it will be another five years of misery and probably much worse.

32. RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE MITIGATION

To sleep is to lose. To let the fear of job losses delay the transition is to lose jobs very heavily in the future. Yesterday's jobs will soon be gone. Tomorrow's jobs will be the jobs workers will have to train for and occupy.

Energy Transition is Key to Achieving Carbon Neutrality. Neither nature nor emerging economic forces will allow for any dilly-dallying. Swift action must be taken. The pressure is on. Most of our greenhouse gas emissions come from the energy sector. Like China, we must follow a "Carbon Peaking Action Plan before 2030." Every country will have to do the same.

China wants the proportion of non-fossil energy to reach more than 20% in 2025. The 2030 target proposed in the 13th Five-Year Plan has been brought forward to 2025. The energy sector has to undertake rapid structural transformation to achieve carbon neutrality, which means the energy structure will have to shift to renewable-based energy in rapid strides.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), South Africa could supply 49% of its electricity mix from renewables by 2030. Key actions will have to be taken to scale up renewables, including increasing the share of renewable energy in the power sector, expanding the use of renewable energy in the transport sector, and increasing the use of renewable energy in the industrial sector.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) also highlights that the transition to renewables promises to deliver vast socio-economic benefits by improving energy access, creating jobs, and boosting energy security. South Africans are yearning for a cheaper and more reliable supply of electricity.

WHY WE SHOULD TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY QUICKLY

Renewable energy is becoming increasingly popular around the world, and there are many reasons why South Africa should transition to renewable energy sources. Here are some of the most compelling reasons:

1. Climate change mitigation: The most pressing reason for transitioning to renewable energy is to

mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce the occurrence of large-scale natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and wildfires.

2. Energy security: South Africa relies on imports and is vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply disruptions. Reducing our dependence on other countries for our energy needs is in our interest.
3. Improved public health: Fossil fuel combustion is a significant source of terrible air pollution, causing severe health problems for people close to power stations that emit smoke and spew dangerous chemicals.
4. Increased energy access: South Africa has some of the best solar irradiation in the world and plenty of wind. By investing in renewable energy infrastructure, we can have cheaper, more reliable electricity with severe pollution.
5. Technological innovation: The transition to renewable energy will drive technological innovation in South Africa in energy generation, distribution, and storage. Numerous countries are massively researching the development of batteries.
6. Reduced dependence on imports: Our country needs to reduce our dependence on foreign oil from politically volatile areas.
7. Improved energy efficiency: The transition to renewable energy will encourage South Africans

to become energy producers. We will all be motivated to improve our energy efficiency and lower or eliminate our energy costs.

8. Sustainability: Renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and wave energy are sustainable and can be replenished regularly. Thus, we can ensure a sustainable energy future for ourselves.

COUNTRIES THAT ARE LEADING THE RACE

According to the World Economic Forum, the following countries are transitioning from fossil fuels at an incredible pace:

Sweden: Sweden has the most robust energy performance, with Norway, Denmark, and Switzerland closely behind.

China: China is the world's largest producer of renewable energy and has been investing heavily in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power.

India has set a target of achieving 450 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 and has been investing heavily in solar power.

Germany has been phasing out nuclear and coal-fired power plants and investing heavily in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

The United States has been investing heavily in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar

power and has set a target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

WHY RSA SHOULD TRANSITION AWAY FROM INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINES

Our transport sector produces almost 55 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, more than 10% of RSA's national gross emissions. To reduce greenhouse gases in the transport sector to zero, 15% to 20% of road traffic must move to rail. This will require the rail system to improve safety, reliability, and efficiency.

According to a report by the National Business Initiative (NBI), in partnership with Business Unity South Africa and Boston Consulting Group, a move to net zero will also require around 750,000 electric vehicles (EVs) on South Africa's roads by 2030, with a complete ban on the sale of new internal combustion engines (ICE) cars by 2035.

ICE vehicles will become stranded assets sooner than anyone expects. Banks that lend money for ICE motor car purchases will find thousands of borrowers defaulting. They will take possession of cars nobody will want.

For immediate next steps and no-regret actions, import tariffs on EVs must be waived for five years. The same must happen with EV changes and kits for retrofitting today's vehicles. Transitioning to e-mobility and banning new ICE vehicles is crucial to achieving our climate change commitments and moving towards a sustainable and less hazardous future.

MITIGATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Combating climate change effectively and quickly will become increasingly urgent each month. We will have to play a significant role in mitigating the climate crisis. Here are ten things that can be done to combat climate change effectively and quickly: -

1. **Transitioning to renewable energy sources:** We must shift from heavy reliance on coal to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, wave, and hydropower to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change.
2. **Investing in public transportation:** Public transportation must be popularised significantly to reduce the number of cars on the road and emissions. An increased investment in public transportation infrastructure will also create jobs and stimulate economic growth without increasing emissions.
3. **Promoting energy efficiency:** Encouraging energy efficiency and solar installations in homes and businesses so that more electricity is produced and better utilised for all benefit.
4. **Protecting forests and other natural resources:** Forests and other natural resources play a critical role in mitigating climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Protecting these resources can help reduce carbon emissions, prevent heat islands from forming in built-up areas, and preserve biodiversity.

5. Promoting sustainable agriculture: Agriculture significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Promoting sustainable agriculture practices such as crop rotation, conservation tillage, and agroforestry can help reduce carbon emissions and improve soil health. If agriculture is healthy, our food security is assured.
6. Encouraging electric vehicles: Electric vehicles produce fewer emissions than traditional gasoline-powered vehicles. Encouraging the use of electric cars can help reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.
7. Investing in carbon capture and storage technology: In a short time, industries will have to spend money undertaking carbon capture and storage. Cement producers and steel manufacturers, amongst others, will have to do this to support climate change mitigation.
8. Promoting sustainable waste management practices: Landfills are a significant source of methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas. Promoting sustainable waste management practices such as recycling and composting will be needed to reduce methane emissions and lower carbon emissions.

9. Encouraging green building practices: Green building practices such as energy-efficient design, sustainable materials, and incorporating renewable energy sources will be compulsory requirements to reduce carbon emissions from building construction and operation.
10. Raising awareness and promoting education: Raising awareness about the impacts of climate change and promoting education about sustainable practices must either encourage or compel individuals and communities to take action to mitigate the effects of climate change.

PENALISING EMISSIONS

It cannot be business as usual. The climate crisis is going to cause massive destruction, spread famine, endanger lives, create health risks, and make life very difficult in numerous ways.

It is, therefore, necessary to make polluters pay. Here are five things that will need to be done: -

1. Imposing Carbon taxes: Companies emitting greenhouse gases must pay carbon taxes. Companies must be incentivised to reduce their emissions and invest in cleaner technologies. The revenue generated from the tax will be used to fund climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.
2. Ending fossil fuel subsidies: Subsidies for fossil fuel companies will be ended. The money saved from

ending these subsidies will fund renewable energy projects.

3. **Divesting from fossil fuels:** The state must sell its shares in fossil fuel companies. The market must know that fossil fuels are no longer a viable investment. It would also reduce the amount of money fossil fuel companies can access.
4. **Holding polluters accountable:** Polluters are made to pay for violating environmental regulations. A financial disincentive must exist for companies to continue polluting. The cost of pollution must shift from society to the companies that cause it.
5. **Investing in renewable energy:** Public-private investments in renewable energy projects must soar. This will create jobs and reduce the demand for fossil fuels. It will also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change.

THE COST OF DELAYING ACTION

Delaying climate mitigation measures will undoubtedly lead to higher costs for taxpayers. The cost of climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires could increase enormously, leading to higher insurance premiums and taxes to fund frequent disaster relief costs.

Additionally, the cost of healthcare will increase. Any further reliance on fossil fuels will lead to higher and higher electricity bills and fuel prices.

According to the IMF, the cost of delaying climate mitigation measures will not be limited to financial costs. The environmental and social costs of climate change will be significant and lead to irreversible damage to ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, and displacement of communities.

Either we agree to short-term pain for long-term gain or stick with short-term indulgence for suffering in perpetuity.

COMPULSORY PHASING OUT OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINES

As the climate crisis intensifies and the scale of environmental and infrastructure destruction becomes impossible to manage, governments worldwide must advance the phasing-out targets for ICEs.

Manufacturers and buyers of ICE vehicles must be keenly aware of this risk. They could become stranded assets in a very short time. Unforeseen developments will force stricter regulations or outright bans on ICEs into effect. The risks of continuing with ICE vehicles are rising daily because of extreme weather and government decisions.

The rapid technological advancement in battery development, the spread of charging infrastructure, falling costs and the self-supply of electricity will also

accelerate the shift away from ICEs. Foresight must prevail, and changing circumstances must be fully considered.

33. RULE OF LAW

The rule of law ensures that all citizens are subject to the same legal framework regardless of their position or status. No one, including government officials and leaders, is above the law. Where the rule of law prevails, the arbitrary use of power by those in authority is prevented. Legal regulations are applied consistently and impartially.

Even the creation of laws is legally regulated, ensuring that the government operates within defined boundaries. The Constitutional Court can strike down laws that do not pass constitutional muster. The rule of law ensures that citizens and government are bound by the same legal principles, promoting fairness, accountability, and justice.

Our Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It establishes the framework for governance, individual rights, and the functioning of institutions. Citizens, businesses, and institutions can rely on a predictable legal environment when the rule of law is upheld. This stability encourages investment, economic growth, and social cohesion.

The rule of law safeguards our fundamental rights and freedoms. This protection extends to civil liberties, property rights, due process, and access to justice. A robust legal system provides checks and balances on government power. It prevents arbitrary decisions, abuse of authority, and corruption. Public officials are accountable for their actions or lack thereof.

Legal norms promote social justice by addressing historical injustices, discrimination, and inequality. Many people believe that our constitution is optional. With it, the fight for justice is possible.

Upholding the rule of law enhances our reputation globally. It signals a commitment to democratic values, human rights, and fair governance, influencing foreign relations, trade agreements, and diplomatic ties. The rule of law is not merely a legal concept but the bedrock upon which a just, stable, and prosperous society is built. The rule of law ensures that justice prevails for all its citizens, regardless of circumstances.

34. SERVICE DELIVERY

Service delivery in our country is worsening yearly, and it is intolerably impacting citizens' lives. If it's not electricity outages, it's taps without water. Refuse is not removed, roads are in disrepair, queues are overlong, and payments are not made on time.

One of the critical reasons for service delivery failures is the gross mismanagement of public funds. Resources allocated for essential services are often diverted or misused. Procurement is rife with corruption.

Infrastructure development is left unattended, and maintenance needs to be improved.

Government at every level is not prioritising service delivery, as anyone who listens to debates in parliament, the provincial legislatures or council chambers will attest. The provision of essential services such as the supply of water, the improvement of sanitation, the supply of housing, and the establishment of healthcare services should be given the attention they deserve.

The legacy of spatial segregation and unequal development continues to dog administrations. While certain areas receive good services, others continue to be neglected, as in the past. Inequality still prevails. Old infrastructure collapses, maintenance needs to be regularly undertaken, and corruption and rent-seeking are potent impediments to service delivery.

Political parties in parliament should make it their business to ensure that funds allocated for service delivery are transparently managed. They should focus on increasing audits and building better accountability mechanisms to stop misappropriation in its track.

Political parties in parliament should ensure an adequate budget for water, sanitation, housing, and healthcare and that capable and qualified managers handle the budget professionally.

Legislation must focus on reducing spatial disparities. COPE wants R750 billion over five years to be ringfenced for the economic transformation of the townships. Such an investment will bridge the gap between affluent and

underserved communities and serve as a stimulus to the economy with a multiplier effect.

Political parties in parliament must make it their duty to monitor government departments responsible for service delivery more constantly and thoroughly. Holding officials accountable will only lead to better service delivery.

As much as public participation is good for legislation, inviting communities to participate in discussions on service delivery is vitally important. Why this is not happening is difficult to comprehend.

Political parties must take steps to develop legislation which facilitates community participation in service delivery. If it is agreed that "the people shall govern" as they must, it must be seen and felt to be so.

In summary, addressing service delivery failures requires a multifaceted approach involving transparency, prioritisation, infrastructure investment, and active parliamentary involvement. By taking decisive action, South Africa can improve the lives of its citizens and uphold their fundamental human rights.

35. SPORTS

Sports play a pivotal role in a nation's development, and the government's active promotion of sports at various levels is crucial for several reasons.

Stimulating interest in sports at schools and raising funds for sports equipment are crucial.

Sports stars can play the following roles in exciting interest in sports among school children: -

- a. serve as powerful role models for young athletes and inspire students to pursue sports and strive for excellence,
- b. ignite passion and interest in sports among students by visiting schools to conduct workshops and coaching sessions and sharing their experiences,
- c. increase participation in sports programs,
- d. motivate students to join sports teams, attend training sessions, and participate in competitions when they see their idols endorsing sports,
- e. participate in fundraising events, charity matches, or campaigns to raise funds for sports equipment,
- f. attract sponsors, donors, and community groups to support and benefit schools with limited resources.
- g. encourage physical fitness, mental well-being, and a healthy lifestyle,
- h. foster community engagement and create a sense of unity and shared purpose,
- i. Ensure equitable access to sports across all schools, including those in underserved areas.
- j. foster teamwork, discipline, and character building,

k. helps students develop essential life skills that extend beyond the classroom,

l. help children and communities transcend cultural, racial, and economic boundaries and thus foster unity and social cohesion,

m. encourage children to participate in team sports to learn to collaborate, respect diversity, build lasting friendships, and allow talent identification to target promising athletes for training and development.

When the government at every level encourages the creation of a thriving sports ecosystem, jobs will be created for coaches, administrators, and equipment and apparel manufacturers, and tourism will be boosted through events and tournaments.

While the National Sport and Recreation Plan aims to maximise access to sport, recreation, and physical education in every school, it hasn't taken off.

This is on account of: -

a. unequal access to sports facilities and proper infrastructure,

b. inadequate funding for coaching, equipment, and facilities,

c. academic pressures often overshadow sports' importance and

d. failure to identify and nurture talent

Here's how Australia achieves success in sports: -

- a. it boasts a well-established sports infrastructure, including training centres and academies to support grassroots development and high-performance training,
- b. school sports are integral to the Australian system, and children are made to participate in various sports actively, fostering talent identification and skill development,
- c. many very robust talent identification programs exist, and promising athletes are picked out to receive specialised coaching and support,
- d. the Australian government allocates substantial funds to sports development, including funding for grassroots programs, elite athlete pathways, and major sporting events,
- e. clear pathways exist from grassroots to professional levels to allow athletes to progress through local clubs, state teams, and national squads, and
- f. athletes are celebrated as ambassadors.

Similarly, South American countries, particularly Brazil and Argentina, have a rich tradition of excellence in soccer because: -

- a. Soccer is deeply ingrained in their culture, with streets echoing with the sound of kids playing barefoot, honing their skills from an early age,

- b. Street football is a breeding ground for creativity, as kids learn to play in tight spaces, improvising with flair and individual skill.
- c. countries like Brazil have quality soccer academies where players are groomed for the European market, combining flair with discipline,
- d. legends like Pelé, Maradona, and Messi go on inspiring generations.
- e. The samba playing style mixes fluidity, attack, and expressiveness, captivating fans worldwide.

Sports and fitness centres, community halls, parks, libraries, and cultural centres play a crucial role in youth development. These facilities can reduce gangs and anti-social behaviour by providing positive alternatives for young people.

Investing in township sports will be a powerful strategy to counter gangsterism and related issues. By providing accessible and engaging recreational opportunities, the government can empower youth, promote physical and mental well-being, and foster community.

A comprehensive approach is required to combine sports, arts, education, mentorship, and economic development.

The government must: -

- a. involve local communities in planning, decision-making, and implementation of sports

programs so that their input can ensure relevance and sustainability,

b. prioritise building and maintaining sports facilities in townships so that fields, courts, and gyms for essential grassroots development are accessible,

c. establish structured youth programs that focus on skill development, character building, and mentorship to nurture talent from an early age, reintroduce physical education (PE) into school curricula and increase exposure to sports at school to encourage participation and allow for potential talent to be identified,

d. cultivate a culture of volunteer coaches and mentors so that sustainable sports development can occur,

e. promote sports that cater to diverse interests and abilities to encourage participation regardless of gender, age, or background,

f. use sports as a platform to educate communities about health, nutrition, and fitness,

g. leverage sports to bridge cultural and ethnic divides as inclusive sports programs are known to reduce violence and promote cooperation,

h. collaborate with private organisations, sponsors, and NGOs to fund and support sports initiatives and

i. Develop a comprehensive national sports strategy with consistent investment and commitment that spans decades.

Our fairly vibrant sports culture, combined with the actions above, will transform townships into thriving hubs of athletic talent and community pride.

As a sports-loving nation, we have immense potential to elevate our sporting landscape and broaden opportunities for our talented young people. Josh Anderson, a young sensation playing for Trinity House, recently scored an unbeaten 357 runs in a 50-over inter-schools match against St John's U14B. Kwena Maphaka: is another rising star. He made waves during the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024. His six-wicket haul helped South Africa secure a thumping 119-run victory over Sri Lanka in the Super Six stage encounter.

As much as sports has been a male thing, the government will need to do much more to encourage women's participation in sports by establishing professional leagues, providing equal opportunities, and addressing gender disparities.

Government policies must promote inclusivity and diversity across all sports.

Establishing high-performance centres where elite athletes can receive specialised coaching, sports science support, and access to cutting-edge technology must be supported via a public-private venture.

Collaborating with universities and research institutions is essential to advancing sports science and enhancing athlete performance. Offering tax incentives to businesses that invest in sports development will go a long way toward attracting funds.

Rugby has been pivotal in driving change and inclusivity within the sport over the past three decades. SA Rugby has recognised that continual growth is vital for the future of rugby in our country. As such, it focuses on establishing sustainable rugby clubs to encourage participation. Investments in coaching, refereeing, and administrative training programs are ongoing.

In South Africa, the SAFA oversees soccer organisations across various levels. It is responsible for managing both amateur and professional football activities. Established in 1996, the PSL features renowned clubs like Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates, and Mamelodi Sundowns.

Football is the most watched and beloved sport in South Africa. The South African national football team has achieved some notable success and many failures, much to the chagrin of soccer lovers.

Cricket is the third most popular sport in South Africa, following football and rugby union. It transcends racial boundaries, with participation from English-speaking Whites, Indians, Coloureds, and the Black community.

High-Level Participation: Nearly one million people engage in cricket at a high level annually, making it a beloved sport in the nation.

National Team: The South African national cricket team, known as The Proteas, competes internationally and has enjoyed high success and some dismal failures.

South Africa's sporting culture is rich and diverse, with other sports like cycling, athletics, wrestling, basketball, boxing, rallying, and swimming also contributing to our nation's passion for athleticism.

We love our sports. By investing more in them, the government will ease its burdens and resonate more with citizens across our country.

As with the IPL in India, sports, art, and music can all be combined to give citizens the kind of entertainment they love. It would allow many talented people to ply their skills and earn a good living.

36. TOWNSHIP TRANSFORMATION

One of the great injustices of our past, perpetrated on brown and black people, was their forced removal to relatively distant locations from city centres to dormitory townships lacking economic prospects. Sadly, the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG) is being decreased when it should be increased. The fact that the National Treasury is running out of money because of the many government failures will perpetuate the townships' serial neglect even further.

Apartheid's legacy of townships as dormitory areas needs to be ended with determination and purpose. It deprived millions of people of economic opportunities close to where they stay, forcing them to travel to and from work and creating circumstances for gangsterism to take root, for cultural norms to be ruptured, for economic stagnation to prevail and for violent crimes to continue unabated.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP GRANT (NDPG)

The Minister of Finance announced the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG) in his budget speech in February 2006. It was created to stimulate investment in neglected townships and neighbourhoods in South Africa.

The NDPG was meant to be a public-private partnership that aimed to provide strategic public sector investment in the periphery of towns and cities, where low-income housing estates were located, to develop: -

- a. public facilities,
- b. infrastructure and is ready to implement plans on-site with planning clearances. Improved transport.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENTS IN TOWNSHIPS

The idea was that by investing in planning, creating infrastructure, and erecting facilities in poor and under-served residential neighbourhoods, the

government at all three levels would stimulate sustainable private sector investment.

Investments in the townships must be stimulated and accelerated through technical assistance and capital grant financing so that municipal projects with a distinct private sector element or an intention to achieve private sector involvement can be achieved. The NDP was always meant to be an investment catalyst and a stimulus to development.

TACKLING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The NDPG's fundamental aim was to address socio-economic challenges through partnerships, innovation, equity, and community empowerment.

Giving occupants of homes title deeds would improve the value of township properties and the collateral value of township properties. New owners with title deeds could secure bank loans to improve their properties and increase the size of their houses to accommodate a growing family or to let out rooms. This is the first step in wealth creation.

Many township dwellers have years of experience in building and construction, so they could contribute "sweat equity," something strongly advocated in the NDPG, to build an upper story to their houses. People who own a property will have a strong sense of place and community.

Although the social and economic redevelopment of the townships has been identified as a national priority, it

has yet to be supported as such. No major political party has ever shown a determination to make townships into viable towns.

DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF TOWNSHIPS

With 60% of our population residing in townships, an imperative has always existed to use the vast amounts of underutilised social and economic potential to stimulate each township's economy and improve the quality of life for its residents.

Without the transfer of titles to each occupant, houses in the townships will remain "dead" capital, and wealth creation will not occur. An appropriate legal and regulatory environment must be created to promote manufacturing and encourage productive activities.

Developing economic infrastructure and clustered enterprises will stimulate entrepreneurship. Township regeneration and redevelopment plans have been implemented yearly for thirty years.

ENHANCING THE TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENT

According to the National Treasury, township environments are of low quality and are generally characterised by pollution, low levels of greening, and a lack of 'sense of place'.

Several initiatives can be taken to enhance the township environment. Some of these include: -

- a. Greening the township: Planting trees and vegetation in the townships will help beautify the area, reduce air pollution, provide shade, especially now that the climate crisis is creating heat islands, and create a more pleasant environment for residents.
- b. Improving infrastructure: Upgrading infrastructure such as roads, drains, water supply, and sanitation can help to improve the quality of life for residents.
- c. Waste management: Proper waste management can help reduce the township's litter and pollution. This can be achieved through recycling, composting, and other waste reduction strategies. Another example is the City of Cape Town's Integrated Waste Management By-law, which promotes sustainable waste management practices in the city's townships. The by-law provides guidelines for waste reduction, recycling, and composting and aims to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. Cash for waste projects are in operation.

PROMOTING TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC GROWTH

The historical realities of exclusion by design say the National Treasury has limited the potential for leveraging investment in townships. By design, the state should

actively reverse this limitation so that investments can flow into townships.

Tourism, sports, festivals, and jamborees must be used to bring people into townships. Many people in a city have probably never been inside a township, which remains an exclusion zone.

Entrepreneurship in the township must be encouraged by creating an enabling environment for township businesses to thrive and stimulate the economy.

The Gauteng Township Economy Revitalisation Strategy 2014-2019 encapsulates ideas for every township to promote economic growth and development. Soweto is regenerating. Most other townships look much like they were at the dawn of democracy. Soweto is one of the most populous townships in South Africa and is home to informal businesses and small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).

A report by the 2021 SA Township Marketing Report indicated that spaza shops contribute 5.2% to South Africa's economy and employ 2.6 million people. How long must spaza shops serve townships?

Townships have restaurants, numerous taverns, small retailers, guest houses, and some individuals providing services. However, more is needed. Government policies must change, as happened when the National Party came to power and did what its constituency required.

New urban planning must be undertaken for each township; rezoning must occur, conditions must be created to attract private sector investment and urban renewal must be fast-tracked.

The regeneration of townships requires a comprehensive approach involving the government, private sector, and civil society. Endlessly dealing with backlogs merely sees the backlog growing.

Townships need forward-looking nodal development plans and large-scale, multi-faceted property development projects lined up in the townships that could attract investors. Townships, by design, must be transformed into vibrant and economically functional neighbourhoods that are pleasant to live in.

By design, spatial restructuring has to occur, specifically the diversification of land use. Townships cannot remain dormitories forever.

The promotion of black property ownership is of utmost importance. The government must ensure that 'dead' capital in residential stock is vitalised. When that happens, a secondary property market in the townships will emerge.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Informal settlements are growing. No one is happy with them sprouting anywhere and everywhere.

Laws must be made to ensure that the urban poor have agency and are the main actors, not mere objects, of

development. Regulations on establishing and governance of informal settlements must exist and be enforced. Targets for upgrading established informal settlements must be set and monitored. Every upgrade must begin with the oldest informal settlements.

While the urban poor may lack money, they may have skills that could be used to upgrade informal settlements continuously. Municipalities must, by law, open a register of skills in each informal settlement.

Municipalities, by law, must also undertake skills training in informal settlements to equip dwellers there to be active participants in the upgrade of their settlements. On-site job creation must occur. Empowering local action and monitoring target attainment has to be an integral part of each local government's integration.

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) should be independently audited each year. Municipalities must plan to zone the sites where informal settlements have sprung up.

In areas that can be formalised for dwelling, households should be given security of tenure, and an address should be provided without delay. The idea would be to encourage residents to improve their homes and take responsibility for protecting the environment.

The quality of life in townships. Ensuring that these services are available and accessible to all residents can help to promote a sense of dignity and well-being.

Youth development: Investing in youth development programs can help to promote positive values and behaviours among young people. This could include initiatives such as after-school programs, mentorship programs, and skills development programs.

Cultural guard rails such as these will improve and make life safer for everyone. Stronger and more resilient communities will emerge by promoting respect, tolerance, and inclusivity.

CLINICS AND OTHER HEALTH FACILITIES

An adequate number of clinics and health facilities must be provided to ensure the well-being of the townships' communities.

Clinics and hospitals must provide free and paid services. At present, 500 doctors are unemployed. Such doctors should be allowed to build offices within the health premises to offer affordable health care as a secondary service.

This will allow for a broader range of services and greater convenience. Every qualified doctor should have a job.

Community clinics are instrumental in bridging the healthcare gap in many underserved communities. By offering various medical services, including primary care, dental care, and mental health support, these

clinics ensure residents have access to essential healthcare close to their homes.

Preventive care must be the cornerstone of the services that community clinics will have to provide. The early detection of diseases and quick intervention will help to prevent more severe health issues from arising.

Mobile clinics should provide regular check-ups, vaccinations, and health education programmes. Community clinics must be adequately resourced to facilitate collaboration with hospitals, specialists, and public health agencies. Community clinics must also foster a sense of belonging and community.

TRANSPORT ISSUES FOR TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

The state must prioritise spatially connecting township residents to areas of mainstream economic activity and services and invest in reliable public transportation infrastructure.

Constructing railway lines, stations, bus and taxi terminals, new roads, or expanding and renewing old infrastructure must be given priority.

If improved and modernised, transport can speed up township transformation. Residents' location so far from town and city centres is no fault of their own. It is the moral duty of states to invest in transport infrastructure to compensate for a historical injustice.

Investment in technology should also be undertaken so that time is well spent getting from one place to another.

EFFECTIVE POLICING IN TOWNSHIPS

Ensuring better township policing is crucial to enhancing security and preventing violent crimes.

The police mandate must be the following: -

- a. reducing murder hotspots,
- b. effectively preventing domestic violence,
- c. implementing targeted and evidence-based interventions to reduce violence significantly,
- d. using multimodal community and police engagement interventions to reduce violent crime,
- e. improving communication between law enforcement administrators and the public through new technology and social media,
- f. educating the public about the tenets of intelligence-led policing and the limits imposed upon law enforcement by court rulings and regulations,
- g. invite volunteers from the public to assist at the front counter,

- h. use apps to complete documents correctly and efficiently,
- i. Establish an intelligence centre in each town or city where information can be fed safely on illegal activities such as: -
 - i. drug trafficking,
 - j. possession of illegal guns and weapons, k. brandishing of firearms in public
 - l. suspicious activities

Township residents should select capable candidates with an advanced understanding of business and economics and support them during the election period.

Remember that independents can stand as candidates and that COPE has a strategy for accommodating such candidates. For change to happen for the better, the impulse must come from township residents. The ideas in this document can be interrogated, and new ideas can be added. Significant changes will occur when people vote for what they want and choose suitable candidates.

PROVIDING CHEAP OR FREE WI-FI TO PEOPLE IN THE TOWNSHIP

Township residents need Wi-Fi connectivity for many reasons. Network operators such as Vumatel, Telkom, Metrofibre, Frogfoot, eKasi Fibre, Lokshin WiFi and Illitha

Telecommunications, amongst others, must be supported to bring prepaid fibre services to townships across the country.

The state must play a significant role in providing free or cheap Wi-Fi to township residents. In 2019, the South African government launched the SA Connect initiative. It aimed to provide broadband connectivity to all South Africans by 2030. This initiative should be monitored annually to gauge the progress being made.

The state must also partner with the private sector to provide free Wi-Fi in public spaces such as hospitals, clinics, police stations, libraries, schools, and community centres. The state must also provide tax breaks or subsidies to companies that offer free or low-cost Wi-Fi to townships.

To provide free Wi-Fi to townships using the bandwidth of big companies during non-business hours, the following steps can be taken:

The state must also identify big companies with excess bandwidth during non-business hours and be willing to share it with the community. The state can assess the technical requirements, legal implications, and costs involved and negotiate the terms of sharing the bandwidth.

The municipalities must deploy necessary infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi access points and routers, to provide free Wi-Fi to the community. Google in Nigeria is providing free high-speed Wi-Fi to catalyse socio-economic development there.

The state must also investigate the feasibility of community-owned wireless networks to help residents of poor communities compete on a level playing field for jobs, education, and business opportunities. In today's world, people must have access, as a right, to information, education, and job opportunities so that socioeconomic development can occur and a better quality of life for all can materialise.

MICROGRIDS AND CITIZEN ENERGY CO-OPERATIVES

The Township Energy Fund was established by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) in South Africa to provide grant funding to township, small town and rural enterprises negatively impacted by the energy crisis. The fund was created in response to the severe electricity crisis affecting the country since 2007, which has resulted in rolling power cuts of up to 8 hours a day, impacting households, factories, businesses, and farming operations. The fund aims to provide capital equipment, limited operational expenses, technical support, and training for end beneficiaries, aggregators, and direct clients.

The fund was launched in 2023, and the IDC is making R200 million in grant funding available to end beneficiaries through strategic implementing partners (SIPs) and Innovative agglomeration/aggregation solutions.

Citizen energy co-operatives should be established in the townships. Provided proper regulations are in place, funding will be available from many sources.

Eskom sees microgrids as an opportunity to contribute to social upliftment. Cooperatives can own microgrids and operate them in partnership with Eskom.

Microgrids are local power grids that can be operated independently of the primary electricity grid in an area. They can be used to power a single building, like a hospital or police station, or a collection of buildings, like an industrial park, university campus, military base or even a township in part or whole.

In the USA, microgrid projects are concentrated in Alaska, California, Georgia, Maryland, New York, Oklahoma, and Texas.

CONCLUSION

Township residents must no longer wait indefinitely for their townships to be transformed. They must look at this manifesto to improve it and make it their own.

Then, by selecting and supporting capable and business-minded candidates in the elections, they will have representatives in the legislature to push for the transformation that has to happen.

Voters have the power to transform the townships.

37. TRANSPORT

Most people know enough about the transport issue and don't need to be told more about it.

Improving transportation in South Africa is crucial for both passengers and freight.

Minibus Taxis account for 80% of public transport trips in South Africa. Formalising the industry and integrating it into the public transport system is essential. State support for the sector must also be clear.

These are matters affecting millions of people and the economy. A CODESA will allow for a lasting solution. It is incomprehensible that political parties continue to put this problem on the back burner.

Some bold and decisive action needs to be taken with all role players, passengers, and freight users included.

The passenger rail system has suffered due to corruption and poor management. A revitalised rail sector is crucial for efficient and sustainable transportation.

There needs to be more integration between different modes of transport. Coordinating buses, trains, and taxis will enhance connectivity and convenience for passengers and freight. It will also help the economy. If this is done with determination and focus, it will be a win-win situation.

Adopting new technologies like EVs will reduce emissions, help mitigate the accelerating climate crisis, and improve efficiency. Integrating electric vehicle fleets into the transport system is a step toward sustainability and environmental responsibility.

With South Africa's abundant solar irradiation, investing in green hydrogen as an alternative fuel source is a no-brainer. It will bring down the cost of transport, save

RSA billions in importing oil, boost the economy, and help the environment.

Implementing a national ticketing system will simplify travel for passengers and enhance efficiency. Why can't such a matter be resolved quickly?

Involving the private sector in passenger rail and other operating services will bring innovation and investment to the transport sector. Competition must be allowed so that affordability is not compromised.

Politicians' job is to improve policies and regulations to create an environment conducive to efficient transport services.

On these issues, South Africa can create a more efficient, sustainable, and passenger-friendly transport system for the future.

To ease traffic congestion, using low-capacity modes of transport, such as private vehicles, must be better regulated, provided that proper public consultations occur.

The following big problems in transport are freight and port difficulties. In 2023, congestion at major South African ports severely affected import and export operations. For instance, Pepkor Holdings, a large local retailer, reportedly had up to 700 million rands worth of stock stuck at sea during November and December due to backlogs outside the Port of Durban.

Between the 23rd and 30th of November 2023, approximately 79 vessels and over 61,000 containers were forced to remain at an outer anchorage near Durban due to operational challenges, equipment failures, and adverse weather¹.

The Port of Cape Town also faced logistical woes, leading to congestion along the Eastern Cape coastline. An estimated 46,000 containers were stuck outside the Ports of Ngqura and Gqeberha.

Optimise logistics processes: To streamline operations and implement technology-driven solutions, such as digital freight forwarding platforms. These platforms simplify complex logistical tasks, enhance communication, and reduce costs.

Political parties must deal with the issue of freight. Collaboration with private companies has to take place to rescue the struggling freight and rail sector. The government developed a comprehensive plan titled "Roadmap for the Freight Logistics System in South Africa. Public consultation on this document is an urgent necessity.

An independent and competent regulator for ports and rail must be established. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising port operations in the Middle East, particularly in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We should learn from their experience.

Opening rail access to private companies is not desirable, but it has become necessary. If state logistics

can't reform itself, it will have to seek support from the private sector.

Stabilising leadership and improving governance considerably are crucial to restoring efficiency.

The CODESA-type engagement will help bring all the key players together to solve a problem the government still needs to solve.

logisticsmiddleeast.com technologyreview.com
fanack.com mckinsey.com

38. UNPLANNED MOTHERHOOD AND ABSENT FATHERS

While the law in South Africa already prohibits sexual activity with children under the age of 16 and criminalises sexual activity with children under the age of 18 by people in positions of authority, it is important to raise these limits by between 3 and 4 years. Punishment under the law must happen for every infringement, and DNA testing must be performed in each instance.

Programmes to educate youth about their rights and help prevent teenage pregnancy must be launched at the beginning of each school year. Access to sexual and reproductive health rights services must be provided in hot-spot localities.

Every girl, whether in school or not, should be provided with knowledge of menstruation, the implications of having sex, how to prevent pregnancy and the laws regarding unlawful sex. Preventing early, unintended, ex-nuptial motherhood in urban areas must receive the

attention it deserves. Attention must be drawn to the barriers girls will encounter in their education when they become pregnant while still in an educational institution.

NGOs and registered civic action groups in communities must have legal support to press for law enforcement agencies to act swiftly against those who impregnate minors and then abscond to escape responsibility.

CULTURAL GUARD RAILS

To make life better and safer in townships, it is vital to have cultural guardrails that promote respect, tolerance, and inclusivity in a culturally practised way. These guard rails should foster a strong sense of community and belonging among the residents. Some examples of cultural guard rails that could be implemented in townships are: -

- a. Community-led initiatives: Encouraging community-led initiatives that promote social cohesion and inclusivity can help to build a sense of community and belonging. This could include initiatives such as community gardens, sports clubs, and cultural festivals.
- b. Education and awareness: Education and awareness campaigns can help to promote respect and tolerance among residents. This could include campaigns that promote gender equality, anti-racism, anti-discrimination and anti-violence.
- c. Community policing: Community policing initiatives, such as neighbourhood watch programmes

and community policing forums, can help improve township safety and security.

d. Access to essential services: Improving access to basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity is necessary.

39. VANDALISM

Vandalism in South Africa has become a pressing issue with far-reaching consequences; therefore, it must be urgently addressed.

1. Extent of Vandalism:

Extreme levels of vandalism have been observed, particularly about load shedding. In the Cape metropolitan area, for example, load-shedding-related vandalism has wreaked havoc on critical infrastructure, including power facilities in places like Wynberg, Mitchells Plain, Gugulethu, and Philippi.

The destruction of essential infrastructure extends beyond power facilities. It includes the theft of cables, railway lines, water distribution equipment, electricity substations, and sewerage.

2. Harm Caused by Vandalism:

Vandalism disrupts essential services, leading to outages, delays, and backlogs in addressing service requests. Repairing vandalised infrastructure incurs additional costs for sourcing replacement materials and labour.

Damaged infrastructure poses safety risks to the public and can lead to accidents or injuries.

Vandalism affects communities by undermining access to essential services.

3. Responsibility to Stop Vandalism:

Communities and local authorities play crucial roles in preventing vandalism. Reporting suspicious activities and promoting awareness can help deter vandals. Police and security agencies must actively investigate and apprehend vandals.

Eskom, Transnet, and other state-owned companies must enhance security measures and collaborate with communities to safeguard infrastructure.

South Africa is a constitutional democracy that, after 30 years, needs to enhance democracy for women. For one thing, it is vitally essential for our democracy to ensure women's full and equal political participation and economic advancement. More robust decision-making and representative governance materialise when women lead equally in politics.

40. WATER

Our country faces significant and alarming water supply, wastewater treatment, and storage challenges.

Our water supply is under strain due to a combination of factors: -

The climate crisis is leading to prolonged periods of heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and changes in precipitation patterns.

The degradation of Wetlands is also contributing to a decline in the availability of water sources.

The sediment accumulation and siltation of our dams is decreasing water storage capacity.

Population growth, economic expansion, and urbanisation are increasing water demand.

Inefficient water usage and changing lifestyles are increasing demand for water in an unsustainable manner.

Insufficient investment in water infrastructure maintenance over many years has compounded the crisis.

Recurrent droughts driven by climatic variation have further strained water resources. Between 2015 and 2018, Cape Town experienced one of the worst droughts on record. The decline in rainfall pushed the city to the brink of becoming the first major city in the world to run out of drinkable water. That is how bad the situation had become. The recent water crisis in Soweto, which lasted three weeks, must be a stark warning to us not to take water in our taps for granted.

Inequities in access to water and sanitation because of apartheid policies continue unrelieved 30 years into our democracy.

Environmental degradation and resource pollution have also worsened the water supply situation.

Current State:

The interim Blue Drop Watch Report for 2023 highlighted concerning aspects of South Africa's drinking water quality:

Chemical Compliance: 71% of the sampled water systems were not chemically compliant.

Microbiological Findings: 51% had poor or bad microbial results.

Predictions are that the water demand will exceed the available supply within seven years.

Seven out of the thirteen major water systems in South Africa are projected to run out by 2040. What will we do then?

The following are the problems we face at the municipal level: -

1. Decaying Infrastructure is the biggest problem. Our water infrastructure is ageing and often needs better maintenance, affecting storage facilities, supply networks, and treatment plants.

2. Inefficient water resource management, including inadequate planning, insufficient financing for maintenance and replacement, and challenges in demand for potable water created by rapid urbanisation, have all become significant problems.

3. drinking water quality has declined, with nearly 46% of water supply systems posing acute health risks due to pathogens or bacteria. Additionally, over 67% of wastewater treatment works are close to failure.
4. Approximately 47% of clean and treated water is lost through leaks or causes that must be accounted for.
5. Lack of proper monitoring and compliance have been hindering the identification of problems, and therefore, the issues have been allowed to become bigger and even endemic
6. Corruption within government agencies responsible for water management has prevented the implementation of solutions.
7. Funds allocated for water projects have frequently been diverted or misused, leading to inefficiencies, delays and even water supply collapse.
8. Disagreements and power struggles among different levels of government have hampered coordinated efforts to address water challenges.
9. Lack of collaboration between municipalities and national authorities has also exacerbated the crisis.
10. The R115 billion allocated in the 2023 budget for 11 strategic water projects is insufficient to address all infrastructure needs comprehensively.

Short-Term Solutions:

1. Emergency Repairs must be undertaken, and critical infrastructure maintenance must be stepped up to prevent further deterioration.
2. A robust leak detection programme to minimise water losses must be implemented immediately.
3. Effective monitoring systems must be implemented.

Medium-Term Solutions:

Every level of government must find money for infrastructure upgrades, including repairing and expanding water storage facilities, pipelines, and treatment plants.

Qualified and capable personnel should be employed to operate and maintain water systems competently and effectively.

Wastewater must be treated and reused for non-potable purposes, such as irrigation or industrial processes because South Africa does not have ample water.

Long-Term Solutions:

Developing comprehensive strategies is essential to use the best-limited water availability in high demand and deepening the climate crisis.

Investment in Research and Innovation must be prioritised so water availability remains sustainable via advanced water treatment, storage, and distribution technologies.

Public Awareness and Education must be ongoing so that citizens understand the problem of water scarcity and appreciate the need for water conservation, responsible usage, and the importance of safeguarding water resources.

Policy reforms will be needed to strengthen water governance, enforce regulations, and hold all authorities accountable.

The government, communities, and stakeholders must collaborate to address South Africa's water crisis quickly and effectively.

Voters must prioritise the issue of water supply. We can't live without water, and we can't tolerate corruption and ineptitude that contribute to our water woes.

41. WOMEN

Therefore, women as a sector will have to play a significant role in directing what should go into the manifesto so that their hopes and aspirations can become policy after the 2024 general elections. We encourage women to help enhance this document so they can own it and forcefully push for implementing what it contains as a united front.

South Africa must emulate Rwanda, which has women occupying 61% of seats in parliament, the highest percentage of legislators anywhere in the world.

The role of women as homemakers is precious to a nation as it contributes overwhelmingly to the well-being of families and society. Homemaking provides social benefits that must be prized and appreciated.

Even so, women's participation in the economy must be significantly increased so that gender equality and women's empowerment in the workforce can materialise. The United Nations has set a goal of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by 2030. This is a goal we should set for ourselves as a nation.

Recognising the value of homemaking and supporting women in whatever roles they pursue, whether in the home or the workforce, is essential. By doing so, we can work towards a more equitable and just society. The key to a better life for all is a better education. With the broad reach of modern technology, governments must now ensure Wi-Fi accessibility for all. Wi-Fi accessibility is essential for women who are homemakers but need to be involved in the economy.

According to the World Bank Group, broadband internet access is not a luxury but a basic necessity for economic and human development. It is a powerful tool for delivering essential services such as education and healthcare. Broadband internet access will also increase women's empowerment and environmental

sustainability opportunities. More importantly, it will compel government transparency and accountability. Women must have significant clout to get the attention they deserve.

Digital technologies and the Internet offer “leapfrog” opportunities for women. They will empower women and girls by building their confidence, increasing their economic power and independence, and improving their access to information and services. Wi-Fi will give women access to information, job opportunities, and online platforms for selling their products or services.

It will also help them acquire new skills and knowledge, which they can use to start their businesses or to improve their existing ones.

Besides empowering women with the skills to succeed in life, promoting economic empowerment of women also has to happen at scale and with speed. This has to be done by providing women with access to credit, facilitation, and the creation of community co-operatives. This will help women start their businesses and become financially independent.

The Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant must be upscaled so that every family inhabiting a dwelling in a township not registered to anyone else must receive title deeds for that property before the end of 2024. Every ward will have to have a temporary Deeds Registration Office to swiftly conclude the transfer of title.

This will serve as a wealth creation process and enable the new owner to offer collateral to a bank to secure a loan.

Strengthening support services for women who are victims of violence must be a priority. This can be done by giving leading women in communities leadership roles through legislation and by -

- a. increasing the number of shelters and safe houses.
- b. promoting public campaigns.
- c. providing counselling and legal services and ensuring women access medical care.

Strengthening legal protection is very important. The government must enhance legal protections for women by enacting laws that protect women's rights and ensuring that perpetrators of violence against women are held fully accountable and legally liable for the harm and pain they cause. Abusers must pay a high enough price to deter their violence.

The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security needs to be reviewed and improved. It must ensure the creation of a safer and more peaceful South Africa for women, girls, and gender non-conforming persons. This will be done through meaningful representation and agency rights for women. They must drive the process.

Investment in healthcare infrastructure must occur to ensure that women have access to quality healthcare services. Hospitals, clinics, and health centres must be built with sweat equity from communities.

Communities must have scope to contribute to creating and supporting health infrastructure. Through a joint effort, affordable and quality healthcare services can become available.

Mobile clinics must be provided in rural areas. This will help ensure that women in remote areas access healthcare services.

The need to promote awareness about women's health issues and the importance of regular check-ups cannot be overemphasised. To prevent escalating teenage pregnancies, comprehensive sex education should be provided at school and through long-held customary practices within communities. Sex education must be culturally responsive and inclusive. It is essential to create a safe and supportive environment for adolescents to ask questions and discuss their concerns about sex and relationships by having access to girls who are older than them and who have the necessary education to share their experiences and serve as mentors.

Providing access to resources such as books, websites, and hotlines will help adolescents feel more comfortable and confident in acquiring knowledge about sex and relationships. Planned parenthood must be the goal of every young woman. Adolescent girls

who have early and unintended pregnancies face many social, educational and financial barriers.

Encouraging girls to stay in school is essential for their empowerment, growth, and welfare.

Men who impregnate adolescent girls must face heavy legal consequences and financial obligations as well. The legal system must be strengthened to ensure women have access to justice. This can be done by increasing the number of courts and judges, providing legal aid to women who have been abused or impregnated and abandoned, and ensuring that cases of violence against women are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Communities must be supported in leveraging cultural, arts, and sports resources to help women enjoy a better quality of life and even create economic opportunities for them. Organised sports, festivals, and cultural events must be essential to women's lives in a community.

Girls' confidence, self-worth, and self-esteem are raised by allowing women a regular platform to showcase their skills, creativity, and excellence. They will also have a more positive body image and experience higher psychological well-being than girls and women who do not play sports or participate in festivals.

High school girls who play sports and are involved in cultural activities are also less likely to be involved in an unintended pregnancy. More importantly, they are likely to get better grades in school and more likely to

graduate than girls who don't participate in extra-curricular activities.

Festivals can bring people together, promote cultural exchange, and foster a sense of community.

Women of South Africa should play a vital role in choosing capable candidates from among themselves and supporting them to be elected. In this way, those who become MPs and MPLs will be fully accountable to them, not their political parties. When this happens, a new chapter in women's history in South Africa will be written.

Power to the women of South Africa.

42. WORKERS

The unemployment rate in South Africa is a significant concern. The official expanded unemployment rate is close to 50%, but it could be closer to 70%. This is shocking!

This high unemployment rate is the cause of widespread poverty, hunger, and a growing sense of hopelessness, and they must be addressed with conviction and commitment by all role players.

Barriers to employment must be examined afresh to reduce the risks of hiring relatively young, fresh-out-of-school, and inexperienced employees.

DEVELOPMENT

Fundamental reform of primary education and training must occur so that the skills crisis is resolved and skills immigration is encouraged. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has also emphasised the importance of solid skills development systems, policies, and strategies –

- a. to improve the employability of both women and men,
- b. promotes equal access to employment opportunities,
- c. increases incomes and
lead to more inclusive and sustainable growth.

The World Economic Forum's Reskilling Revolution initiative focuses on developing future-ready skills.

The key competencies that every worker should have are -

1. Language – especially that which is used in education and is widespread locally
2. Digital literacy
3. Personal development
4. Emotional intelligence
5. Communication
6. Critical thinking
7. Creativity

8. Business acumen
9. Technical Capabilities
10. Managerial capabilities
11. Interpersonal skills capabilities
12. Specialization
13. Collaboration and Teamwork
14. Safety
15. Responsibility
16. Accounting
17. Negotiation skills
18. Conflict resolution
19. Marketing
20. Quality Monitoring

Young people should have opportunities to acquire a wide range of marketing skills at school and outside school.

Workers who are already employed should be given incentives to improve their skills in all of the above.

BURSARIES FOR WORKERS

The Skills Development Element, set out in Statement 300 of the BBBEE Codes, introduces a separate bursary target and increases the cap on informal training from 15% to 25%.

Businesses, individually and collectively, must be encouraged to provide employees with opportunities to access bursaries to fund their further education.

This is an essential investment for the rapid transformation of our economy across South Africa.

Companies will score points on the BBBEE front. By providing bursaries, they can also secure tax breaks.

Bursaries fall under category A of the learning programmes matrix. The new amendments set bursaries at 2.5% of the leviable amount target (6%) for four points.

There is no cap on stipends, accommodation, catering, or travel expenses. The remaining 3.5% must still be allocated to qualifying learning programmes, which may also include additional bursary expenditure.

Technical institutions should appoint career guidance officers to help workers get bursaries and improve their education and skills.

BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS

Workers must enjoy working conditions and an environment conducive to their physical and

psychological well-being. Comfortable temperatures, good lighting, and appropriate ventilation must prevail.

The terms of employment must be fair and just.

Workers' health, safety, and mental and physical well-being must be handled when they participate in decision-making.

The working hours and work patterns must be reasonable and in compliance with all laws.

Wages and benefits must reward all who are involved in the production of goods and services.

Job security must be a priority, and all workers must be helped to understand how they can help to ensure their job security.

Opportunities for growth and development must be ongoing so today's floor worker can become tomorrow's supervisor, manager, or CEO.

Health and safety risks must be assessed regularly and involve all role players.

Every worker should be imbued with purpose when coming to work.

Rapid digital transformation in workplaces must allow for internal reskilling so that job replacement can occur and job displacement is avoided.

A holistic approach must address the substantial challenges facing the labour market today. This will

require education providers, skills trainers, workers, employers, and government officials to collaborate extensively to ensure that no one is left behind and rendered unemployable.

ONLINE ADVERTISING OF JOBS & SEARCHES FOR JOBS

Citywide portals for employers to advertise job or training opportunities should be created as a joint public-private enterprise.

This must allow job openings and job searches to be posted online for free and accessible to all. These sites must allow employers to post job openings and training opportunities and job seekers to post the job opportunities they seek.

REMOTE WORK

Online services can be an excellent way for employers and employees to connect and find jobs.

Remote work has become a widespread and increasingly standard workplace practice, and it must open up numerous new opportunities for job seekers.

Employers can access a broader talent pool and achieve improved employee retention rates.

Remote work can offer employees greater flexibility, better work-life balance, and reduced commuting costs. Work can be anywhere in the world.

Job seekers must be supported in searching for jobs by location, industry, and other criteria.

RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The rise of AI is expected to bring about significant changes in the workforce beyond 2024.

New skill requirements will continue to grow in importance. To keep up with the changing job market, workers must develop soft skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

INNOVATION TRAINING

Innovation training programs will equip workers with the knowledge and skills to understand and leverage innovation theories, frameworks, and techniques.

Such training can stimulate strategic thinking, improve team performance, and enable organisations to reach their potential.

Innovation skills are essential for individuals and organisations to stay competitive in today's fast-paced world. These skills include creative thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, among others.

PROTECTION FOR SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS

Strict regulations must apply regarding the employment of foreign nationals in South Africa.

Where all requirements are equally met, the South African job seeker must have precedence over a foreign national.

Quotas must be imposed relatively to limit the number of foreigners employed in South Africa and protect employment opportunities for South Africans.

Foreign nationals must perform the work they are specifically employed in, and the quid pro quo should include a skills transfer plan for the position in which a foreign national is used.

As amended, the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 must be enforced.

Refugees and asylum seekers must be allowed to contribute to the South African economy and be seen to be creating jobs and not left with the only option of engaging robustly in the informal economy.

A continuous assessment must be made to determine whether the economic impact of refugees and asylum seekers is positive or negative and to adjust policies to mend the situation fairly and justly.

BRAIN DRAIN AND BRAIN GAIN

Losing scarce skills is prejudicial to the economy, and everything must be done to retain skills.

It is essential to prioritise specific sectors that need urgent critical skills unavailable in South Africa.

Migrant labour conditions of employment.

Improving social protection of migrant labour

AUTOMATION OF JOBS

AI will automate many jobs, which could lead to job losses. However, it is also expected to create new jobs that require skills that are not yet in demand.

Skills that will be required are: -

- a. scripting,
- b. collaboration,
- c. source-code management,
- d. security,
- e. testing,
- f. monitoring,
- g. network management
- h. hardware support and maintenance

Privacy concerns: Using AI in the workplace raises concerns about privacy and data security. Companies must protect employees' data while leveraging AI to improve their operations.

AI is expected to create new opportunities, requiring adapting and learning new skills.

Kubernetes (K8S)

We now address a very technical issue which cannot be avoided. This relates to computers having to do more than single or multiple computers can do.

Kubernetes (K8S) involves having one computer with virtual computers sitting on each other to maximise the benefits for large corporations and state structures.

Kubernetes is a large, portable, open-source platform for managing computer workloads and services productively without a hall full of computers.

Until recently, organisations ran software applications on different computers and physical servers. Some applications ran better than others, where one giant computer was used because a single computer could not equitably support every application. Many applications, therefore, underperformed.

To overcome that problem, each application had to have its own server. This was expensive for organisations and still left many gaps.

Now, Virtual Machines (VMs) can run on a single server. This allows for a higher level of security as the information of one application cannot be freely accessed by another.

Schoolchildren must learn how numerous Virtual Machines operate on a single computer. This is the kind of skill that young people must acquire.

THE FUTURE OF WORK IS IN THE HANDS OF TODAY'S WORKERS

Workers of South Africa must focus on global trends and select and support candidates to serve as MPs and MPLs who are knowledgeable about what kind of

labour will be required and what kind of labour will be redundant.

Trying to hold back progress will cost South Africa its competitive edge, and even more jobs will disappear. Work security will be guaranteed with the right kind of people in the legislatures who will be accountable to workers.

Slogans will not help. Artificial Intelligence will rule, and both workers in employment and those seeking employment must know what to learn and which skills to acquire to find and be secure in those jobs.

It is in the interest of workers to have the best policy framework and the best representatives to get the best outcome for themselves and others who will be queuing up for jobs. Too many people are out of jobs, which must be reversed quickly. It is the voters who can help to make the difference.

Using AI in the workplace raises concerns about privacy and data security. Companies must protect employees' data while leveraging AI to improve their operations. AI is expected to create new opportunities, requiring adapting and learning new skills.

We now address a very technical issue which cannot be avoided. This relates to computers having to do more than single or multiple computers can do.

Kubernetes (KBS) has one computer with virtual computers sitting on each other to maximise the benefits for large corporations and state structures. It is a

large, portable, open-source platform for managing computer workloads and services most productively without a hall full of computers.

Until recently, organisations ran software applications on different computers and physical servers. Some applications ran better than others, where one colossal computer was used because a single computer could not equitably support every application.

Therefore, many applications still need to be performed. To overcome that problem, each application had to have its own server. This was expensive for organisations and still left many gaps.

Now, Virtual Machines (VMs) can run on a single server. This allows for a higher level of security as the information of one application cannot be freely accessed by another.

Schoolchildren must learn how numerous Virtual Machines operate on a single computer. This is the kind of skill that young people must acquire.

THE FUTURE OF WORK IS IN THE HANDS OF TODAY'S WORKERS

Workers of South Africa must focus on global trends and select and support candidates to serve as MPs and MPLs who are knowledgeable about what kind of labour will be required and what kind of labour will be redundant.

Trying to hold back progress will cause South Africa to lose its competitive edge, and even more jobs will disappear. Work security will be guaranteed by the right kind of people in the legislature who are accountable to workers.

Slogans will not help. Artificial Intelligence will rule, and both workers in employment and those seeking employment must know what to learn and which skills to acquire to find and be secure in those jobs.

Workers should have the best policy framework and representatives to get the best outcome for themselves and others queuing up for jobs. Too many people are out of work, and this situation must be reversed quickly.

44. XENOPHOBIA

Citizens have diverse opinions about xenophobia, and it's essential to recognise that perspectives do indeed vary widely. While some individuals may believe that xenophobia cannot be entirely avoided, others remain hopeful and committed to combating it.

With our complex history marked by apartheid, racial tensions, and economic disparities, we as a people are generally distrustful of other people from other races and other regions of the world. These historical factors contribute to a sense of mistrust and fear, which can fuel xenophobia.

High unemployment rates and limited resources can lead to competition for jobs, housing, and services. Some South Africans may, therefore, perceive immigrants as threats to their livelihoods, exacerbating xenophobia.

Media coverage also often highlights adverse incidents involving immigrants, reinforcing stereotypes. This portrayal can shape public opinion and perpetuate xenophobic attitudes. Hillbrow, for example, has become a hub for certain immigrants. It was once a vibrant area but is now associated with crime, drugs, and prostitution.

Foreigners who are involved in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, sex slavery, and internet scams have fueled resentment among South Africans.

Perceptions of aggressiveness, dishonesty, and the infamous "419" scams have further contributed to negative perceptions.

People who are facing fierce competition for scarce jobs and are subjected to dishonesty and scams overlook the contributions of immigrants and the benefits of diversity they create.

Politicians should never exploit xenophobia for their agendas. Fear of "the other" can be used to rally support or distract from other issues.

The influx of immigrants has challenged existing norms and cultural practices, leading some to resist and harbour xenophobic sentiments.

In this book's section on Immigrants, we discuss what should happen to create better policies regarding immigrants.

45. YOUTH

Young people in our country are facing some of the steepest challenges they have faced in the past 30 years. As a sector, youth will have to play a significant role in directing what should go into any manifesto so that their hopes and aspirations can become policy after the 2024 general elections. We encourage young people to help enhance this document so they can own it and forcefully push for implementing what it contains as a united front.

The global economy is expected to slow down for the third year in 2024, dipping to 2.4% from 2.6% in 2023, indicative of the callous times ahead. According to the World Bank, the global economy is set to record its worst half-decade of GDP growth in 30 years by the end of 2024.

A severe complication for youth will be the impact of the climate crisis. This will cast a shadow over the lives of today's youth and teenagers, bringing forth a trifecta of formidable challenges:

- a. Increased precipitation, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events will lead to devastating floods. Coastal regions will be particularly vulnerable, threatening homes, livelihoods, and safety. For young people today, floods will mean displacement, disrupted

education, and trauma. The loss of cherished places and memories will be a scar they must bear.

b. On the other hand, the weather, intensified by prolonged droughts and higher temperatures, will cause wildfires to ravage forests, homes, and communities. Smoke inhalation will pose a severe health risk. Today's young people will live in tomorrow's damaged world complex. They will be filled with growing anxiety about their environment as they witness landscapes transforming into charred tracts. Fear for loved ones and uncertainty will loom large.

c. Heatwaves will be more frequent and severe. Heat-related illnesses will escalate, affecting physical and mental well-being. Tomorrow's teens will have to endure stifling classrooms, playgrounds too hot to be on, and homes that will be like ovens. Their dreams and aspirations will burn under the relentless sun.

That will not be the only challenge. Youth must also be ready to embrace Artificial Intelligence while effectively dealing with the intensifying climate crisis. Because of AI, old jobs in many spheres will vanish, and new AI jobs will be required.

According to the United Nations Environment Program, AI can help design more energy-efficient buildings, monitor deforestation, and optimise renewable energy deployment. It can also help measure, reduce, and

remove emissions more effectively, support communities and economies adapting to the changing environment, and support overall climate action through research. Incorporating AI in finding new solutions will be pivotal to the growth of our economy.

Our youth must be as ready as possible for the Summit of the Future, which will occur between 22 and 23 September 2024. This event will unite UN Member States, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), academic institutions, the private sector, and youth under the theme 'Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow'.

The summit is necessary because of the critical challenges that youth will face. What happens at that summit must inform policy developments in South Africa so our youth can be better served in every sphere of life.

Our youth may not know this, but today's youth constitute the largest generation of youth the world has ever seen. According to the World Health Organization, adolescents and youth (aged 10 to 24) currently total 1.8 billion out of 8 billion.

The kind of education they receive, the employment opportunities they must have, and the social policies that must support them must be crafted with massive youth involvement. The world of tomorrow will be very different from the world we have known thus far.

Youth must be heavily involved in tailoring the school-to-work transition, requiring vision and

imagination. The most innovative policies regarding investments in education, training, and employment opportunities must be implemented.

A youth council has to be established to ensure that young people have a voice in policy decisions that fundamentally affect their lives. Business, as usual, will be fatally flawed and leave young people without the capabilities that tomorrow's world will require.

Leveraging educational, digital, electronic, technical, cultural, arts and sports resources will be very important.

The youth of today are the future of tomorrow. As such, they are the ones who will inherit the world and must face the steepest challenges ever. It is, therefore, vitally important for them to be involved in politics as voters and candidates in the general election. After all, it is they who will possess unique perspectives on the issues that are going to affect them seriously. They must use new knowledge and bring fresh ideas for solutions to the table. Tomorrow's problems will be too complex for most people beyond fifty years of age.

Yesterday's political experiences will be of little or no avail in solving the political problems unfolding in the future.

We will have to develop policies and legislation and use resources to respond to the specific needs of the younger generations. Youth participation has to occur to ensure that their interests are represented in all decision-making processes in the legislatures of our country.

The young people of South Africa below 35 must play a vital role in influencing politics.

We trust that the youth of our country will engage with this document critically and help to make it one that youth will fully own and use to advance their roles in society and achieve the goals they set. No one else and no political party can do this for them. Destiny lies in the hands of our youth.

46. ZEALOTRY

Zealotry refers to extreme and uncompromising views or actions driven by strong beliefs.

Fervent and unwavering commitment to a cause or ideology has played a significant role in our history.

The arrival of the Dutch in 1652 made slavery and forced labour integral to the colonial model in South Africa.

Enslaved people were brought to the Cape Colony from 1653 until 1822, and many South Africans today are descendants of these enslaved individuals.

European colonisers zealously pursued economic gains through the slave trade.

The trade-in of enslaved people took a toll over 400 years, affecting societies differently.

In the 1600s, South Africa also witnessed the introduction of territorial segregation, a policy that laid the groundwork for apartheid.

Apartheid, implemented from 1948 to 1994, was a system of racial segregation and discrimination enforced vigorously by the South African government.

It perpetuated racial inequality, restricted the movement of the Black population, and denied them their fundamental rights.

The anti-apartheid movements zealously fought for equality, justice, and freedom. Leaders like Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and Albertina Sisulu exemplified unwavering commitment to the cause of liberation.

Mandela preached reconciliation to free us from racism and uncompromising views. Radical political factions at present are not averse to resorting to violence to undermine stability, destroy social cohesion and upend reconciliation.

The legacy of apartheid still affects the country. Zealots who harbour racial prejudices can exacerbate tensions between racial and ethnic communities.

Hate crimes and xenophobia are genuine threats.

Zealots who advocate for radical economic policies or engage in violent protests can destabilise the nation.

Addressing zealotry requires fostering dialogue, promoting tolerance, and addressing underlying issues quickly. Finding common ground and building a more inclusive and peaceful society is crucial; voters should see this as very important.

4