

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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ADDRESS BY ANC PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA AT THE 2021 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS MANIFESTO LAUNCH

CHURCH SQUARE, TSHWANE

'Building Better Communities Together'

Fellow South Africans,
Comrades and Friends,

We are gathered here in the City of Tshwane to launch our election manifesto and to ask the people of South Africa to vote for the ANC in the Local Government Elections on the 1st of November.

On behalf of the leadership of the ANC, I wish to recognise the presence of former ANC President Thabo Mbeki and former ANC Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe.

I also want to send greetings to former President Jacob Zuma and wish him a speedy recovery.

As we ask for your vote today, we are mindful of the difficult times we face as families, communities and as a nation.

All of us have lost friends, colleagues and, in some cases, family members to COVID-19.

The country has recorded nearly 90,000 COVID-19 deaths and is approaching three million confirmed cases of the disease.

Nearly two million South Africans have lost their jobs, many businesses have closed and many people face financial hardship.

Through a massive social and economic relief package, we have provided much-needed support to businesses, workers and poor households affected by the pandemic.

In the midst of all these challenges, and building on the relief provided by national government, people want local government to deliver the services they need and support the local businesses that provide jobs and livelihoods. They want protection against crime and gangsters who extort money from infrastructure projects and companies. Local businesses want protection from unfair competition from unregistered businesses and they do not want to pay expensive license fees which eats into the little profit they make.

The South African people want water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal.

They want faulty substations, burst pipes and overflowing drains fixed on time.

They want tarred roads and pavements and potholes filled to avoid accidents and burst tyres.

PRESIDENT CM Ramaphosa	DEPUTY PRESIDENT DD Mabuza	NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON G Mantashe	SECRETARY GENERAL ES Magashule	DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL JY Duarte	TREASURER GENERAL P Mashatile
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They want illegal dumps removed and parks with safe facilities where their children can play.
In the face of hardship, people have been calling for strong leaders who put the people and their needs first; leaders who are not corrupt and who will not divert money meant for service delivery.
People want councillors they know and trust, who will be responsive to community concerns and available when problems arise.
And people want a united, renewed and revitalised African National Congress.
They want the ANC to correct its mistakes and, once again, to selflessly serve all the people of South Africa.
We are gathered here in Tshwane – and in many places across the country – to answer that call.
This evening, we present to the people of South Africa our manifesto for the 2021 local government elections – which is our plan and our solemn pledge for the next five years.
This evening, we pledge to you – the people of South Africa – that we will do better.
We have not always done the best that we were meant to do.

We have made mistakes.

We have not always put the best people in positions of responsibility.
Too often, we have been slow to act when our public representatives and leaders committed wrongdoing, when they abused their position or failed in implementing the mandate that you gave them.
In the two years since the ANC was given a clear mandate to renew and rebuild, we have been fighting to restore our movement and remove the obstacles to progress towards a better South Africa.
We have made important advances, but there is much more we need to do.
As the governing party, the ANC has been driving many critical developments at a national level.
We have, and are, revitalising institutions and agencies that have been weakened by years of state capture and corruption.
We can see the progress in the work that is being done by the South African Revenue Service, the National Prosecuting Authority, the Special Investigating Unit the Hawks and other law enforcement agencies.
Corruption is being thoroughly investigated, stolen funds are being recovered and returned to the fiscus, and those who are alleged to be involved in these crimes are being arrested and prosecuted.
After years of impunity, the ANC as the governing party is leading a new era of accountability and consequences for wrongdoing.
Under new leadership, state owned enterprises have been tackling corruption, have recovered billions of rands of stolen money, and are now clearly focused on delivering on their respective mandates.
Even in the midst of the worst global health emergency in over a century, we are reforming our economy and creating opportunities.
In the last year alone, we have implemented a massive public employment programme that is historic in its scale and pace of roll-out.
We have undertaken far-reaching reforms in the electricity sector, which will significantly expand our generation capacity and mobilise much new investment.
We are implementing reforms in ports, rail and telecommunications that will improve efficiency and increase our country's competitiveness, while attracting substantial investment in this vital public infrastructure.
We are making changes in the management of our water resources that will improve the security of supply for all South Africans.

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Now, with the forthcoming elections, we have an opportunity to bring this renewal to local government.

Together, we have an opportunity to turn local government around.

We have come a long way since the dawn of democracy.

The ANC has made sure more people have access to water, electricity and other basic services.

We have also made sure that these services are available for free to poor households.

In 2019, more than 3 million households benefited from free basic water services, while more than 2 million households benefited from free basic electricity.

But the quality of water supply is poor in many areas and there are many communities that still lack access to water and sanitation.

That is why, working with national and provincial governments, we are going to improve the maintenance of water and sewerage infrastructure and reduce water leaks.

We will ensure that all poor households receive the free basic water allocation to which they are entitled.

Thanks to the ANC, around 85 per cent of South African households have access to electricity.

However, many communities still experience unstable electricity supply, infrastructure is not properly maintained, there is a problem of illegal connections and electricity is sometimes cut to homes without warning or explanation. As part of the ongoing work to provide a safe, affordable and reliable supply of electricity to every South African home, we will significantly increase the contribution of renewable energy through a just energy transition that creates new economic opportunities for workers and communities.

We will reduce the time that households wait for new electricity connections and invest in the infrastructure that municipalities need to supply homes and businesses.

Working together, over the last 25 years we have redistributed over 8 million hectares of land, but millions of people still need land for farming, housing and running businesses.

That is why we are speeding up the programme of land reform, agricultural support and rural development.

As the ANC-led government, we have expanded access to housing for around 4 million households, upgraded a number of informal settlements and moved people to better-located accommodation in many parts of the country.

We will continue upgrading informal settlements and change municipal zoning practices to better integrate housing, recreation facilities and economic opportunities.

Our central task as a nation is to create jobs and sustainable livelihoods for the 12 million unemployed people in South Africa.

Our priority must be to create opportunities for young people as first-time entrants into the jobs market at a much faster rate.

It is our intention to ensure that skills development programmes are more closely aligned to the job opportunities and economic development programmes in communities.

The ANC will amend or repeal restrictive by-laws on trading, land-use, urban production of crops and other regulations that prevent people from earning a living.

We will reduce or remove the licence fees that many small and informal businesses have to pay in order to ply their trade.

The ANC is uniquely placed to ensure that all three levels of government work together to grow the economy, increase jobs and reduce poverty for local communities.

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The ANC will drive local economic development through faster implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plans.

Drawing on the successes of our response to the economic effects of COVID-19, we will continue to strengthen social security measures for vulnerable groups.

We will link these measures to mass employment programmes to get as many people into work as fast as possible.

We will continue to provide special COVID-19 grants and various support measures for workers and businesses.

Through the District Development Model, we are successfully bringing all three spheres of government together to plan better, budget and monitor implementation of our programmes.

The ANC will use the District Development Model to enable municipalities to unlock the economic potential of each district to ensure food security, accelerate skills development, support local industries and create jobs.

Through this model, we will coordinate the roll-out of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water, electricity and digital platforms, eliminating duplication and waste.

Many people in our country go to bed hungry.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made this situation worse.

The ANC will work with communities to fight hunger.

We will make sure school feeding schemes and soup kitchens function properly.

We will support community and cooperative food gardens, making municipal land available for such projects to support schools and the poor.

The ANC will link food production to support small-scale farmers and local procurement.

In particular, we will ensure the unrestricted development of urban and pavement gardens where crops can be planted to increase food security

One of the biggest pledges the ANC makes to you is that we are doing things better and differently to make sure the best people run municipalities.

Unlike any other party in this country, the ANC has involved communities in the selection of its ward candidates.

As a result, the candidates we are fielding in this election enjoy the confidence of the people they are expected to serve, they are rooted in communities and have a strong record of service.

Almost half of our candidates are women, and more than a quarter of our candidates are young people.

These young candidates will be joining hands with an experienced cadre of older councillors, enabling us to build on the gains that have been made, learn from our mistakes and take local government into a new era.

We are committed to making sure that municipal staff are competent, experienced and have the necessary support to execute their duties in service to communities.

As part of the renewal of our movement, and to strengthen local government leadership, we have implemented a rigorous interview process to select ANC mayoral candidates.

This is to ensure that every person who is placed in this crucial leadership position in ANC-led municipalities has the experience, capabilities and commitment to fulfil that responsibility.

Many municipalities are confronted by corruption and mismanagement, which divert crucial resources needed to meet the needs of the people.

Over the last two years, we have made important progress in ending state capture and fighting corruption.

We have done this both within government and within the ANC.

We are committed to make this happen at local government level.

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We will subject any and all representatives and officials who fail to do what they are meant to do, to disciplinary action or other corrective measures.

Where necessary, people will be removed from their positions.

Where there is evidence that a crime has been committed, the matter will be referred to law enforcement.

We pledge to act speedily against officials conducting business with municipalities and against those implicated in maladministration

Within our own ranks, the ANC will continue to apply the 'step-aside' rule for any members that have been charged with corruption or other serious crimes.

Any ANC member facing allegations of wrongdoing must appear before the ANC Integrity Commission to explain themselves.

Too many local government functions are still outsourced.

This weakens the ability of municipalities to fulfil their basic functions and creates more room for corruption and malfeasance.

We will end the outsourcing of essential local government functions, end the practice of labour broking and work to create sustainable municipal jobs.

The ANC will work with communities and law enforcement to build safer communities and fight crime and substance abuse.

Even as I address you this evening, the people of Tshwane are mourning the tragic and brutal killing of Tshepo Motaung, an ANC candidate for these elections and a local councillor in Mabopane.

We extend to his family, his colleagues and comrades our deepest sympathies.

As with every violent crime in our communities, we call on the police to spare no effort in finding those responsible and ensure that they face the full might of the law.

As part of promoting social cohesion, we will rebuild and rehabilitate sports and arts and culture facilities to create programmes and opportunities, especially for young people and women.

Programmes of infrastructure development, basic services, housing and local economic development must address the specific needs of women, people with disabilities, the elderly and children.

We must intensify our work to make homes, public spaces and places of work safer for women and children.

The fight against gender-based violence is our collective responsibility.

The ANC will continue to tackle violence against the LGBTQIA+ community with the same resolve that we tackle other hate crimes.

No-one must be discriminated against or attacked on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In all our programmes and in all our activities, we need to ensure that we empower women economically, socially and politically – so that we can steadily advance towards the achievement of gender equality and a non-sexist society.

Comrades and friends,

As the African National Congress, we are well aware that many people here in Tshwane and elsewhere in the country decided not to vote for us in the 2016 local elections.

We understand that you were disappointed with the ANC, discouraged by our shortcomings and angry about allegations of state capture and corruption.

As a result, a number of cities and towns, including Tshwane, have been governed other parties for the past five

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years.

This has caused great hardship for the residents of Tshwane.

People living in Atteridgeville, Laudium and Hammanskraal, for example, have faced long periods without water.

Just last week, water in Laudium and Atteridgeville was cut off yet again for nearly eight days.

Once more families could not wash, could not flush their toilets.

Parents could not cook for their children or wash school uniforms on time.

In many areas of this city, rubbish is not collected regularly and lies in huge dumps attracting flies and rats.

Informal settlements have not been upgraded and the city has failed to make land available so that residents can access serviced stands and move out of inhumane settlements on dolomitic land.

Throughout the city, infrastructure funds are diverted while residents living in coloured, Indian and African communities face burst pipes, over-flowing sewage, roads filled with potholes and dilapidated parks and sports facilities.

Informal traders attempting to make an honest living are harassed and intimidated.

And so, we come to you today, and call on you to come out and vote for the ANC so that we can again govern here in Tshwane and in many other towns and cities.

We ask this so that we are able to put the programme of social and economic transformation back on track.

We have come a long way in our young democracy, but much remains to be done.

Working together, we will build a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.

We will achieve this goal, if we build each and every community according to these fundamental values.

We cannot and will not accept islands of privilege in an ocean of despair.

But we cannot do this alone.

We now know that unless you, the voters actively partner with us in our mission to build better communities we will not be able to achieve the pledges we make in our manifesto.

And so today we ask you to go out and vote on the 1st of November.

We ask you to give the ANC a resounding mandate to fix Tshwane, our capital city, and every other city, town, village and rural area in the country.

Vote for South Africa.

Vote ANC.

I thank you.

END

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