

24 November 2021.

Comrade Jessie Duarte,
ANC Deputy Secretary General,
Chef Albert Luthuli House,
Johannesburg.

Dear Comrade Jessie,

Re: Urgent Tasks of the Movement.

The outcome of the November 1 Local Government Elections (LGE) represents a serious reversal for the progressive movement and a significant advance for the right wing forces.

I would like to believe that all of us in the ANC have fully taken on board the hard and incontestable truth that we carry much of the blame for this outcome.

It is obvious that if nothing changes with regard to the conditions and factors which helped to produce this outcome, and certainly if matters get worse, this will certainly lead to a strategic defeat of the progressive movement and an historic victory for the right wing.

As you know, this eventuality would pose a direct threat to the democratic revolution itself. I refer here to the strategic task of this revolution to achieve the fundamental transformation of our country by ensuring the realisation of the goal of the creation of a truly non-racial and non-sexist democratic society of shared prosperity.

The recent LGE outcomes have drawn especial focus to the imperative facing the ANC - to live up to its long-established task to defend the democratic revolution as well as further expand and entrench the democratic gains!

Again as you know, the ANC Constitution prescribes that one of the '*Aims and Objectives*' of the ANC is:

"To end apartheid in all its forms and transform South Africa as rapidly as possible into a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country based

on the principles of the Freedom Charter and in pursuit of the National Democratic Revolution..."

After protracted discussions starting in 1914, the ANC adopted its fully-fledged Constitution in 1918. Among others, that Constitution said that one of the 'Objects' of the ANC was:

"To agitate and advocate by just means for the removal of the 'colour bar' in political, education and industrial fields and for equitable representation of Natives in Parliament or in those public bodies that are vested with legislative powers or in those charged with the duty of administering matters affecting the Coloured races..."

What all this means is that the ANC has never existed for itself or simply to perpetuate its own existence. This means that during the democratic era it cannot be that it exists merely to access power and remain in power.

The reversal represented by the November 1 LGE demands that the ANC should identify and pursue relevant immediate tasks. This letter seeks to contribute to this important and urgent matter.

I suggest that the objective national situation demands that the ANC National Executive Committee should identify and act immediately on the Four (4) Urgent Tasks:

- A: attend to the ***Renewal of the ANC***;
 - B: direct Government to ensure that the Social Partners produce the required ***Implementation Plan for Economic Reconstruction and Development***;
 - C: direct Government to ensure that the country has a truly ***Capable Developmental State***; and,
 - D: ensure that wherever the ANC is the governing party, in all three spheres of Government, it ***Implements its Manifesto Commitments to the People***.
- *On the Renewal of the ANC*:

With regard to this important matter we must recall the decision of our 54th National Conference which says:

"Organisational renewal therefore is an absolute and urgent priority, and we may go as far as to say, to the survival of our great movement."

The Conference explained why this renewal was '*an absolute and urgent priority*', namely that, among others:

there is "loss of confidence in the ANC because of social distance, corruption, nepotism, arrogance, elitism, factionalism, manipulating organisational processes, abusing state power, putting self-interest above the people...(because of) leadership weaknesses and loss of integrity, characterised by competition to control state resources, factionalism, conflict, ill-discipline and disunity...(and) leaders who have difficulty driving our programmes or commanding respect from society and our supporters."

In this context, it would serve the ANC well if it draws the necessary lesson from what the *Communist Party of China* says on the matter of the quality of the members of the Party, that:

"The quality of its members is the core element for the Party's long-term development...If those who neither perform the member's duties nor qualify the member criteria are not timely eliminated from the Party, the overall impression of the people about the Party will be damaged."

We will also have to take into account an alert which was sounded as long ago as in the document on *Strategy and Tactics* adopted by the 1997 50th ANC National Conference which, among others, discussed the threat of counter-revolution. In this regard it said:

"The networks used by the regime, especially in its "dirty war" both within and outside South Africa remained intact, either burrowed within the state machinery, or concealed in front companies and other private enterprises..."

"Uppermost in the immediate objectives of these counter-revolutionary forces is to disorganise, weaken and destroy the ANC, the vanguard of the NDR, both from within and from outside its ranks. It is in the interest of these elements that the masses of the people should be left leaderless and rudderless, and thus open to manipulation against their own interests."

"In this sense, therefore, the democratic movement will be committing a monumental blunder — a historical error of great proportions — to lull itself into a false sense of security. Maximum vigilance is required."

I understand that sometime ago, the *ANC Veterans League* offered to help the NEC by taking on the task of the renewal of the ANC, thus to help implement the Conference Resolution, working under the direct supervision of the NEC.

It is perhaps time to take up this offer if it is still in place.

- *On the Implementation Plan for Economic Reconstruction and Development:*

In this regard the ANC has a duty to implement the commitment it made to the people in our 1 November 2021 Local Government Manifesto, "*Building Better Communities Together*", that:

"We must urgently finalise the social compact between the social partners to achieve our country's fundamental social transformation to reduce and eradicate the plague of unemployment, poverty, and inequality."

This reiterates a commitment which our Government has already made as when Comrade President Cyril Ramaphosa said in October 2020:

"At this time, durable social compacts are more important than ever. It is through consensus-building between government, business, labour and civil society that we have been able to develop a common programme, and the same spirit of collaboration and partnership must guide us in the difficult days ahead..."

All this honours the approach approved by the 54th National Conference when it adopted the document on Strategy and Tactics which, inter alia, says:

"More and more of the privileged do seem to appreciate that their interests are closely linked to those of society as a whole. This confluence of circumstances presents a unique opportunity to forge a social compact to move the nation to greater social heights. The current phase of transition demands decisiveness, speed and dogged determination."

However, despite these Movement positions, I am aware that some of us feel uneasy about the idea of our working closely with private capital. This underlines the need for the ANC thoroughly to engage such important questions to ensure its principled cohesion. For instance, the particular and important matter of working with private capital features in the 1996 Discussion Document entitled '*The State and Social Transformation*' which says:

"The democratic state has got a developmental and a transformative responsibility. Among other things, this responsibility has to do with the central question of the creation of material conditions to ensure that the people as a whole benefit from this process through a rising standard of living and a continuous and all-round improvement in the quality of life. This responsibility would be impossible without a similarly continuous process of increasing productive investment in the economy, in both absolute and relative terms..."

"Objectively, this places the process of investment, as an inalienable component part of material development, formally among the historic driving forces of progressive social change and transformation..."

"Proceeding from the objective reality of the place and role of private capital (as the biggest investor in our economy), the correct strategic decision the democratic movement must take is that the democratic state must establish a dialectical relationship with private capital as a social partner for development and social progress. The defining element is a working and harmonious, even at times, conflictual relationship between the democratic state and capital. It is a relationship which is necessarily complex and dialectical rather than simple and linear."

- *On the Capable Developmental State:*

The South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) launched by Comrade President Ramaphosa in October last year makes this important observation and commitment:

"The successful implementation of the Plan will also depend on a capable, ethical developmental state with the capacity to plan and to implement in a coherent and integrated manner across the three spheres of government. Accordingly, strengthening the capacity of the state will be among the priority areas of focus."

The 2002 51st ANC National Conference reflected on this matter of a capable developmental State. The relevant Document issued ahead of the Conference sought to address the matter of the required capacities or capabilities and said:

On the matter of Capability, (we need) "a state capable of effective policy making, implementation and review; coordination and planning; intervention on behalf of the poor and marginalised; redistribution of power and resources so as to impact sustainably on the elimination of poverty; effective management and development, specifically re financial and human resource; and building NGO capacity for the development agenda."

In addition, our 54th National Conference resolved as follows:

"The building of a capable and developmental state at all three spheres of government must be achieved through the following measures:

- i. strengthening political institutions to deliver on their mandate;*
- ii. ensuring the state plays an important role in driving the economy and society;*
- iii. building effective, integrated planning and service delivery systems;*
- iv. ensuring civil society works with the state in achieving these goals;*

v. strengthening and professionalizing Public Administration, particularly top management and the delivery sectors; and,
vi. building the educational feeder system to produce developmental skills, technical and professional personnel."

- On the task to Implement ANC Manifesto Commitments to the People.

Our 2021 Local Government Manifesto includes an important Message from our President, Comrade Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa. Among other things he says:

"As the ANC, we admit that progress has not been sufficient. Many municipalities have not delivered as they should have. There is corruption, waste and under-spending. We are getting rid of corrupt and self-serving councillors..."

"Together, let us choose the best leaders to improve our cities, towns and communities..."

"We are mindful of the mistakes we have made. In the last elections, in 2019, we promised that we would spare no effort to renew the ANC, to end state capture, crime and corruption, create jobs and work to meet the needs of our people...."

"We pledge:

- *to deploy honest and competent local leaders;*
- *to deliver services promptly and consistently;*
- *to stimulate local economies;*
- *to be available to our people;*
- *to remain accountable; and,*
- *to spare no effort in rooting out corruption and all forms of nepotism and malfeasance in our organisation and all levels of government.*

"Let's build better communities together. Let's build a better life for all."

The 54th National Conference had already said that among its tasks, the ANC would:

"• select and deploy capable leaders and public representatives, with integrity, capacity, the correct orientation and expertise to drive and implement our programmes; and,

"• develop Cadres, schooled in our values and policies, with the capacities to be agents of change wherever they are deployed."

In our 2019 Election Manifesto for the General Election, 'Let's grow South Africa Together', we said, among others:

"The ANC acknowledges that we made mistakes and veered off course.

"As a nation, we have learned the harsh impact of corruption on society and the economy. We have witnessed the loss of integrity in some of the institutions of state, business and political and other organisations. We have learned hard lessons about the vigilance needed to stop lawlessness, greed and selfishness from taking root.

"We are resolved to work with our people to address this cancer in our society.

"After a difficult time, we are on the cusp of a new era of hope and renewal – the New Dawn is upon us...

"The commitments we make in this Manifesto are in the spirit of Thuma Mina that inspires the New Dawn...

"We have shown the capacity to self-correct where mistakes have been committed. We are a movement with experience in governance and a clear resolve to advance an agenda of radical socio-economic transformation."

These commitments, made in 2019, remain relevant to this day.

We owe the masses of our people an absolute obligation to show them through our deeds that we are determined truly to honour our promises and commitments.

The results of the 2021 LGE underline in the most emphatic manner the imperative to respect the people and therefore the need to honour the commitments we made in the 2019 and the 2021 Election Manifestos!

To illustrate the importance of this matter, one of our commitments in all our Manifestos, is seriously to fight crime and therefore radically improve the safety and security of all our citizens. This must be done!

In our Manifestos we say '*we remain committed to a better Africa*'. And yet, practically, we have no coherent Africa Policy to give expression to that commitment. It is imperative that we have this Policy, given the reality that we share a common destiny with all our fellow Africans.

- Conclusion.

It is self-evident that the ANC should do everything necessary in the aftermath of the LGE to constitute the necessary municipal governments as quickly as possible.

When that is done, the ANC must focus on the critically important matter of its historic mission.

As stated in one of the 'Aims and Objectives' in the Article from the ANC Constitution I cited, that historic mission is – "To end apartheid in all its forms and transform South Africa as rapidly as possible into a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country based on the principles of the Freedom Charter..."

Serious practical attention to The Four Urgent Tasks I have mentioned would indeed both constitute such a focus by the ANC on its historic mission and convey exactly the message that the Movement has become, once again, a dependable agent for people-centred progressive change.

Central to all this will be the genuine Renewal of the ANC which the 54th National Conference called for and therefore its capacitation to focus on its historic mission.

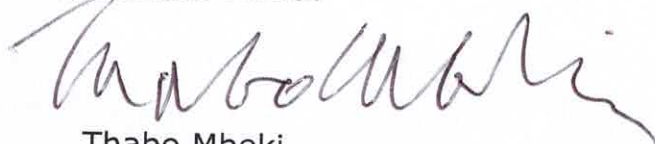
Dear Deputy SG,

I sincerely hope that we will consider the suggestions contained in this letter as soon as possible. Indeed, it may be that there might be other suggestions to replace the ones I have made.

Whatever might be the case, the critical point is that the ANC must seriously and practically refocus on its historic mission, fully mindful of the historical reality that its strategic task is – to serve the people of South Africa!

Please accept the assurance of my support as you continue to lead us.

Amandla! Matla!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Thabo Mbeki', with a stylized, flowing script.

Thabo Mbeki.

cc Comrade President Cyril Ramaphosa
Comrade Deputy President D.D. Mabuza
Comrade Chairperson Gwede Mantashe
Comrade Treasurer General Paul Mashatile