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CYRILRAMAPHOSA2017

Build • Renew • Unite
7 July 2017
No.7
www.ramaphosa.org.za



REFLECTIONS ON THE POLICY CONFERENCE

IN THIS ISSUE

This week we take a look at discussions held during the recent **ANC National Policy Conference**, and how some of the organisation's challenges, laid bare in the **Diagnostic Report** of SG Gwede Mantashe, are to be addressed. We also outline proposals and processes that were put on the table, all of which should lead to a **revival of the ANC** as a people's movement. This **Tambo Friday** the spotlight is on **Ruth Mompoti**.



Ruth Mompoti 1925 – 2015

#TamboFriday

Fondly known as 'Mama Ruth', Ruth Mompoti worked as a typist in Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo's law practice between 1953 and 1961, during which time she joined the ANC and was elected to the NEC of ANCWL.

She was a founding member of the Federation of SA Women and one of the leaders of the historic Women's March of 9 August 1956.



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POLICY CONFERENCE ADVANCES PROGRAMME OF RENEWAL

*The effort to **unite, renew and rebuild** the ANC has received a massive boost with the deliberations of the ANC's **National Policy Conference**.*

Over the course of six days branch delegates from across the country confronted the challenges facing the organisation and signalled their determination to address these.

Some of the most immediate challenges were laid bare in a **diagnostic organisational report** presented to the conference by Secretary General **Gwede Mantashe**. It noted a growing trust deficit between the people and the movement, perceptions that the ANC is inherently corrupt, a decline in the quality of branches and membership and the existence of divisions and factions. It also pointed to a lack of trust among comrades and a decline in ideological outlook. Significantly, the discussion document on Strategy and Tactics for the first time in the ANC's history looked at the organisational **capacity of the liberation movement to bring about a national democratic society**.

The discussions on **organisational renewal** dealt directly and openly with the weaknesses in the

ANC and came up with practical proposals on how to address these. Importantly, the conference was not willing merely to lament about the problems, but took a serious look at how to **correct the shortcomings**. The proposals on organisational renewal will, together with the other outcomes, now be circulated to structures for discussion before being adopted at the **ANC's 54th National Conference** in December.

Just as important as the discussions was the mood inside the conference. A small but vocal section of delegates was clearly intent on using the conference to fight a proxy battle over leadership. Their efforts received wide coverage and much encouragement in the media. However, the overwhelming majority of delegates were intent only on **strengthening and uniting the ANC** and ensuring that it developed policy proposals that would address the needs of the poor. In the end, the efforts of the majority prevailed. The outcomes of the conference reflect a movement that is aware of its serious weaknesses and is determined to fix them.



The DIAGNOSTIC REPORT presented by **Secretary General GWEDE MANTASHE** on the opening day of the policy conference describes many of the **challenges** in the organisation. These were also captured in the **Political Report** by the President and the reports from the provinces. Many of these challenges are not new and many of the negative practices were dealt with by the 2015 National General Council. Chief among these are:

The conference was forthright in describing these **severe** and **deeply entrenched weaknesses** so that it could put forward an effective response.

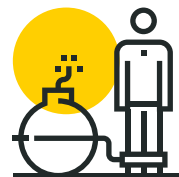
CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES



- **A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE ANC** because of social distance, corruption, nepotism, arrogance, elitism, factionalism, manipulating organisational processes, abusing state power and putting self-interest above the people. Even the strongest ANC supporters agree that the sins of incumbency are deeply entrenched. Many organisations and thought leaders have become critics of the ANC and its leadership and it is losing much of its influence and appeal among students, young intellectuals and the black middle class.



- **LEADERSHIP WEAKNESSES AND LOSS OF INTEGRITY**, characterised by competition to control state resources, factionalism, conflict, ill-discipline and disunity and the use of state institutions to settle differences. Slates and vote buying has delivered leaders who have difficulty driving the ANC's programmes or commanding respect from society and ANC supporters.



- **A LACK OF PLANNING, COORDINATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY** for the work in government and the achievement of policy goals. The ANC has serious weaknesses in achieving economic growth, overcoming education challenges, and in the effective combatting, prevention, investigation and prosecution of crime and corruption.



- **ORGANISATIONAL WORK** has focused more on mobilising members to support specific factions or individuals with increasing negative practices like **GATE-KEEPING** and **BUYING OF MEMBERSHIP**.

REVIVING THE ANC AS A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT



In response to the challenges in the organisation, the conference adopted a number of proposals on how the ANC could be revived as a **people's movement** that is responsive and **accountable to the masses**.

It said the **external role of branches** working in the community **must be reinforced and supported**. All branches should have sub-committees that focus on sectors, community issues and campaigns. The ANC should be involved in every issue that concerns people and should **drive campaigns** without gate-keeping and trying to control the people.

An **electronic automated membership system** should be introduced so that people can join and renew their membership by SMS and on the internet. The membership list should be in the cloud and available to any executive member. Every branch should have a **recruitment strategy** to target all sectors of society and different motive forces.

All ANC members must do the **membership induction course** during their probation period to be trained in the goals, values, principles and structure of the ANC. Induction courses should also be **available online**.

Communication to branches should be **improved** and include more topical political and news analysis. **Radio Freedom** and platforms like podcasts should be used to spread the ideas of the ANC. A professional and permanent election capacity should be established at national and provincial level.

The **Policy Institute** should be set up as a matter of urgency and given the capacity needed to drive research, policy development, coordination of NEC Policy sub-committees, and monitoring and evaluation.

Public representatives must enjoy good standing in the community. The ANC Electoral Committee must revise the **selection guidelines** to overcome manipulative practices such as parachuting candidates by PECs and RECs, influencing screening committees and packing community meetings.

To combat corruption, the authority, integrity, standing and capacity of the **Integrity Committee needs to be strengthened**. Its selection, powers and authority should be incorporated into the ANC Constitution. There was a strong view that it should **remain independent**, call anyone that it wishes to account and inform the leadership of its decisions.

CHOOSING THE BEST CADRES TO LEAD TRANSFORMATION



The Policy Conference paid specific attention to the process of election of ANC leadership. It noted that there was a need to **elect leaders** according to the principles of service, track record, capacity, integrity, discipline, honesty, trustworthiness, and representivity as outlined in the 'Eye of a Needle' document.

The current **distortion of the election process** through factional practices like slates, vote buying, patronage, intimidation and exclusion deny the ANC the best possible collectives of leaders.

The conference acknowledged that the current electoral college system can be easily **manipulated by influencing a core of influential people**, like branch, regional and provincial secretaries, who manage the membership and deployment system. This makes the **ANC's democratic process vulnerable to corruption** by business, internal factions and outside interests. There was also concern about the lack of representation of **motive forces** among ANC leaders and the predominance of people deployed to government. The conference therefore proposed that an **Electoral Committee be established** to set the rules and procedures for elections, deal with disputes, screen candidates, order lifestyle audits if needed and oversee the management of the nomination and election process.

This **Electoral Committee** should be elected by the NEC and report to the NEC, and should be **made up of comrades** with no direct interest or conflict of interest in leadership positions.

Nomination processes should make **slate nomination impossible** by limiting the number of leaders that each branch can nominate for positions in NEC, PEC and REC. Slate voting should be **outlawed** and practices that allow for unifying voting should be encouraged.

There was also a suggestion that the system of elections be reformed.

One option was to consider a **direct membership vote** in NEC, PEC, REC and BEC elections, giving every ANC member in good standing a vote in an **open election** before conference or at a Branch AGM. Conference will then focus only on **policies and programmes** and holding leadership accountable.

These reforms are necessary to ensure that the poor quality of leadership identified in the **Diagnostic Report is addressed** and that many of the practices that contribute to **factional behaviour are eradicated**.



“In memory of Comrade Ruth Mompoti, let us build and strengthen the Progressive Women’s movement. Let us deepen our struggle against patriarchal domination, and intensify, on all fronts, the struggle for a completely non-sexist society”. – SACP