

Founding Document - For the sake of our future (25th October 2016)

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For the Sake of Our Future

THE ANC STALWARTS DOCUMENT PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE TOP FIVE OFFICIALS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

1. We, the undersigned, are longstanding stalwarts and cadres of the African National Congress (ANC). We have come together out of a profound sense of commitment to our organisation, the ANC. We remain devoted to the principles that have been the hallmark of the ANC for over one hundred years;
2. We are fully aware that throughout its history the ANC confronted many serious challenges including the possibility of divisions and splits. Its leadership, cadres and members, however, rose to the occasion - protecting, defending and upholding the core values of the ANC. This was repeatedly manifested in the ANC becoming the leading force in the revolutionary struggle as well as in building and consolidating a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa. These dearly held values continue to be encapsulated in the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of South Africa;
3. We have on different occasions spoken about the departures from the ANC's values, and counselled a process of introspection that could contribute to the ANC reclaiming its honoured position as the trusted leader of our people
4. We have recently watched as the ANC abdicated its historically earned position as the 'leader of society' to opposition parties and other civil society entities, as the defender of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution of South Africa;
5. We have observed the ill-begotten wealth among some of our leaders at all levels and the resulting ruinous effects on the organisation's moral and political fabric and on society as a whole;

6. We have watched as the leadership of the ANC became mired in a cycle of infighting occasioned not by any ideological or political difference but personal interest;

7. We believe that many of the factors outlined have contributed significantly to the political assassinations to which we are sadly becoming accustomed, two decades after the defeat of apartheid;

8. We have watched somewhat helplessly as the once commanding position held by the ANC in elections has been eroded - the recently held local government elections and the results thereof point to the frightening prospect of the potential demise of the ANC. The losses we suffered have brought into sharper focus the issues raised by many of us who have previously sought audience with the leadership about the problems and challenges facing the organisation

9. We have observed the NEC statements in which the leadership's expressed "collective responsibility" for the results in the local government elections as well as the leadership's intention to interact with the membership to consider and possibly reposition the organisation. There is however no consensus among the leadership about the causal factors for the unprecedented electoral losses or the state of the organisation. The broad opinion within and outside the ANC is that the statements obscures more than it illuminates and importantly appears to shield the current leadership from accountability for well-known commissions and omissions.

10. We wish to caution against the constant refrain that the ANC has the inherent ability to self-correct. These refrains are dangerously complacent and provide cover for the perpetuation of gross misdemeanours. They also serve to demobilise the membership from taking the necessary corrective measures with the required vigour and urgency because the false impression is created that there is no need for action since self-correction is inevitable.

11. It is our considered view that if the "listening campaign" is to be of any effect, it must be conducted in a radically different way from the way it is being contemplated.

12. We have been and remain deeply concerned at the state of the ANC and are concerned that the values that the Movement has carefully developed are being systematically undermined and progressively eroded. The leadership of the ANC as a collective has failed the people of South Africa. It has presided over the downward spiral of the organisation and given rise to widespread national anxiety by defending, among other things, the personal interests of some leaders at the expense of the public good and the credibility of the organisation.

13. In summary we believe that the leadership of the ANC has-

Ø pre-occupied itself with defending personal interests, interests of colleagues, families and friends, at the expense of the people of South Africa, particularly the poor, and the ANC; this has contributed and impacted negatively on the moral pedigree of the ANC and thus compromised its standing in society;

Ø failed to act decisively against corruption, nepotism, factionalism, arrogance and election slates in the ANC and the Alliance;

Ø placed the ANC in the National Assembly and Parliament generally in the unenviable position of breaching the Constitution of the Republic;

Ø supported the politically, morally and legally wrong defence of the President for the exorbitant and questionable spending of public money on his personal house in Nkandla;

Ø maligned and cast aspersions on the Office and person of the Public Protector and appeared not to provide support for the Public Protector's recommendations. This conduct has placed the organisation in the unenviable position of breaching the Constitution of the Republic and undermining democracy itself;

Ø undermined the intended purpose of the Integrity Commission by failing to implement its decisions as agreed at the 2015 NGC;

Ø inadequately responded to allegations of corruption; the "capture" of sections of Government by interest groups, especially and including State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) – this allegedly to enrich individuals, specifically some

leaders of the organisation and their families, at the expense of the people, particularly the poor and powerless;

Ø appeared to collude in the removal of the former Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, in December 2015 which had a serious impact on the economy as a whole;

Ø failed to act in relation to the unfolding saga involving the Hawks and Minister Pravin Gordhan. The perception in and outside the ANC is of a government at war with and against itself;

Ø contributed enormously to the unprecedented nation-wide loss in the recent local government elections;

Ø displayed poor crisis management over and over again; and

Ø confirmed the perception by members and supporters of the ANC that the leadership has failed and lost the ability to lead by example.

14. We believe to restore the confidence of the people in the ANC before the 2019 National Elections, that the organisation has to be seen to take radical decisions that will change its current trajectory and return the ANC to its culture, tradition and values of serving and acting in the interest of people in everything it does.

15. Among others, the radical positions the organisation should take must include:

Ø Acceptance by the leadership, as a collective, of their shortcomings in general, and not only specific to the local government elections. This acknowledgement of failure of the leadership has to be led by the President himself together with the top officials. This must be done unreservedly;

Ø Support the call by a number of structures of the ANC to allow Veterans of the organisation who have a track record of standing for and/or defending the tested culture, values and traditions of the organisation to lead the process of self-reflection and introspection and to develop a turn-around strategy for the organisation;

Ø Adoption of processes of self-reflection and introspection that must include:

I. Open and transparent discussion by members in Branches and other structures and in open public meetings facilitated by Veterans of the organisation;

II. a national 'listening campaign' similar to the one conducted by the ANC before the 1994 elections, and possibly using the model utilised when the Freedom Charter was developed; where inputs would be consolidated for further discussion by branches. This 'bottom-up' approach will be important if this is not to be seen as just a way for the leadership to pacify the people;

16. The veterans must be empowered to convene and facilitate a National Consultative Conference, similar in structure to the historic Morogoro Consultative Conference. The Consultative Conference must reflect on all aspects of the state of the organisation and prepare for the 2017 National Conference. The Conference will also need to discuss the selection and election of credible leaders – free of blemishes, factionalism and corruption based on the precepts expounded in the ANC document "Through the eye of the Needle". The deliberations and resolutions of the Conference should contribute to the leadership that leads the ANC to the next national election.

17. Veterans must be empowered to facilitate conversations among the people of South Africa as a whole to identify social and political issues that require urgent, medium and long-term solutions. This can take the form of a Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) using traditional and contemporary mass mobilisation platforms and tools.

Objectives and Next Steps

18. To argue and call for a **consultative conference** which must address all the critical issues that would lead to the rebuilding and renewal of the movement. This consultative conference must precede the 2017 elective conference.

19. To create a **credible** ANC platform; to save its legacy so that it can contribute positively to the future of South Africa's democracy.

20. To revitalise thinking inside the ANC so as to reconnect with its historic capacity to act as pioneer in fresh thinking about how to enable the country to move forward.

21. To call for all genuine members of the ANC from all walks of life and structures, to return to the branches of the ANC.
22. To ensure that elected leaders are not products of manipulated elections. This must be done in terms of resolutions taken at the last National General Council (NGC) of the ANC.
23. To ensure that the elective conference, following on the Consultative Conference will be an important platform to begin the process of renewal for the ANC and also mark the beginning of the process to “win back the confidence of the people”. Members of civil society and organisations must be encouraged to support the renewal effort.
24. To work with the ANC Youth League, so that young people are enthused and motivated to support the ANC ensuring sustainability and growth into the future. The ANC needs to close the credibility deficit that now exists with young people.
25. To build worker unity. The current process of fragmentation of the Trade Union movement has weakened the ANC, and made it more difficult for the ANC to pursue the strategic objective of transforming our society to better the lives, particularly of the poor.
26. To do everything possible to protect and defend state entities.
27. To rid the organisation of corruption, ill-discipline, factionalism, arrogance, abuse of state power and resources.

We stand ready to avail our collective political and organisational experience at the disposal of the ANC in realising these objectives. We will do this as cadres committed to improving the quality of discourse in the ANC and to promote purposeful dialogue with all sectors of South African society.