



ANC Whip

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WESTERN CAPE CAUCUS: Enhancing oversight on service delivery, govt accountability

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ANC CHIEF WHIP

The Provincial ANC Caucus is an important platform through which we should reaffirm the ANC as the political centre of power and authority. Its National Executive Committee (NEC) is the highest decision-making structure in between conferences. It is also a custodian of the resolutions that we took during the 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in 2007. This conference was a watershed conference which reaffirmed the role of the ANC as a broad church established to serve all the people. This conference further reaffirmed that "the task of all ANC members is to serve the people loyally and selflessly, without expectation of material reward or personal gain". The Strategy and Tactics Document which was adopted at this conference makes it clear that the ANC is a unifying force that seeks to mobilise all South Africans to contribute to the ongoing transformation of our country. It is your primary duty as cadres deployed by the ANC to this Legislature to ensure that you transform this Legislature into an effective and efficient people's Assembly that is responsive to the needs of our people and driven by the ideal of realising a better quality of life for all. You also have the responsibility to ensure that this Legislature acts as

a voice of the people in fulfilling its fiduciary duties and functions of passing laws and overseeing the implementation of programs to deliver on government priorities such as health, education, poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods, safety and security as well as access to water and sanitation.

These priorities are no longer those of the ANC only, but they are priorities of government as a whole, including the Western Cape government.

Thus you have a special duty to oversee and hold this government accountable to both the national government and the people of the Western Cape as a whole, both black and white.

Rationalisation and re-alignment of Parliamentary Constituency Offices

The Polokwane Conference resolutions provide a framework for oversight on the executive branch of government and to ensure accountability to the people through Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs).

The structure and management of these PCOs needs rationalisation and re-alignment with constitutional structures of the ANC in order to increase the capacity for oversight, monitoring, social mobilisation and ensuring accountability of

government.

The PCOs are organs of Parliament and Legislatures and serve as important mechanisms through which Parliament reaches out to the masses of our people, monitor implementation of legislation, delivery of services and holds the executive accountable to Parliament.

Thus these structures should be strengthened to serve as instruments for robust oversight, mutual accountability, collective leadership and discipline among cadres deployed to government, parliament, legislatures and municipalities.

The ANC structures should interface with Caucuses and Executives on their role in overseeing the implementation of the priorities of government which apply to all Provinces including Western Cape.

Furthermore, Caucuses and Study Groups are required to report to the Secretariat of the organization through Offices of the Chief Whip at all levels.

The sub-regions and zones are important structures responsible for co-ordination and mass mobilization.

For this purpose, these structures must be strengthened and aligned with PCOs as they require basic resources and space to operate



from.

Comrades who are deployed to Caucus and Provincial Legislature Committees including Study Groups and Portfolio Committees must at all time exercise discipline and ensure that they attend all meetings of these committees in order to advance the incorporation of ANC policy and priorities in all legislation adopted by this Legislature.

All the PCOs will be reviewed and transformed into one-stop centres. The initial step towards achieving this is that each deployee to a PCO should facilitate the establishment of a Management Committee for that specific PCO.

This should be done in consultation with ANC structures and local structures followed by a report to the Office of the Chief Whip of the ANC in Parliament. The PCO Management Committee will effectively be an extended organ of the ANC Parliamentary Caucus and an important instrument towards realizing our vision of rooting Parliament amongst the people in order to transform Parliament into an activist institution.

To transform PCOs into one-stop centres, National and Provincial PCOs should pool their resources and establish inclusive management committees including:

- An MP who will be the Convenor and Chair of the Committee by the Office of the Chief Whip
- An MPL who will be the Assistant Convenor and Deputy Chair deployed by the respective Provincial Caucus
- A Councillor, preferably a Whip deployed by the respective District/Local Municipality
- A representative of the ANC Regional/Sub-regional/Zonal/Executive Committee
- A Regional/Sub-regional/Zonal representative of the Alliance structures including SACP, COSATU and SANCO.

This representation of the Alliance is not negotiable, but a matter of principle and policy within the ANC.

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This rationalization of PCOs will result in greater co-alignment and synchronization of oversight responsibilities at national, provincial and local levels which will prevent dissonance in what takes place at various spheres of government and to ensure better and co-ordinated social mobilisation and accountability by the executives and various organs of the state.

Through the effective and efficient use of PCOs as one-stop centres, we are able to shift from unco-ordinated and ad hoc oversight to outcomes-based oversight which may result in greater co-operation from the executive thereby enhancing intergovernmental relations in common pursuit of our national objectives.

We must make good use of available mechanisms such as the President's hotline and other measures that will be set up by the Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency and create an enabling environment for greater accountability by government departments.

If managed properly, these one-stop centres may serve as important vehicles through which we may realize the provisions of section 154(1) of the Constitution which stipulates that "the national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own

affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions."

This section concretises intergovernmental relations and obliges the National and Provincial government to assume collective responsibility to support councillors and capacitate them to deliver quality services to the people.

At his recent address at NCOP's strategic planning, the Deputy President of the ANC, Cde Kgalema Motlanthe urged us to enhance the co-ordination of our oversight responsibilities when he observed that there have been problems in the past where National Assembly Portfolio Committees, NCOP Select Committees, Provincial Legislature Committees and Local Government Committees all conducted oversight visits separately to the same places. We need a co-ordinated and integrated oversight plan.

Constituency Offices have been established to ensure that we remain in touch with our people on the ground and so that we continually make ourselves familiar with their challenges and sufferings.

This is very important for us to monitor the quality and quantity of services delivered at local levels whilst ensuring that government programs remain relevant on addressing the challenges and hardships experienced by our people.

The importance of making sure that our Constituency Offices in the Western Cape are fully functional and responsive to the needs of our people cannot be emphasised enough.

This is one of the effective ways through which we can ensure that the ANC regains its historic and strategic role as the Majority Party in this Province.

We need to reclaim our status as the only liberation movement and political party that is well-equipped to deal with political and socio-economic challenges experienced by people of the Western Cape.



In fact, the ANC is the only political Party that has a comprehensive plan for the improvement of all people in South Africa including the Western Cape.

As custodians of the ANC policies and programs in this Legislature, we need to pursue the vision that is informed by the values of a caring society.

As per the ANC Strategy and Tactics document, it is our duty to entrench and deepen the values of democracy in this Province, the kind of democracy that leans towards the poor and vulnerable in our societies.

We need to recognise the leading role of the working class on social transformation.

We must utilise PCOs as springboards for social mobilisation so that we are able to reach out to all sectors of our society including interfaith formations, traditional leadership, traditional healers, social clubs and various community-based organisations.

We must harness and share limited resources in PCOs in order to reach out to our communities in vast and remote areas of this Province.

We must leverage the evolution of representative structures and form strategic partnerships for social development and moral regeneration using all available avenues as rallying points towards the creation of caring, cohesive and sustainable communities.

For example, social mobilisation within the interfaith sector has resulted in the evolution of the National Interfaith Leaders Council with sub-structures at provincial, regional and ward levels.

Our PCOs must work with these structures which are firmly rooted amongst our people.

PCOs must forge close working relationships with Ward Committees and honour their schedule of meetings so that we keep Councillors and communities informed of priority programs for national and provincial government and in turn empower them to support our initiatives.

As the Local Government Elections drew closer, we must work in unity and create cohesion within the ANC so that we permanently destroy factionalist tendencies that manifest themselves amongst our rank and file members

It is through this working relationship and partnerships at local levels that we will be able to regain the confidence of the people in the ANC as their only hope for the creation of decent work, education and health.

A situation that results in loss of popular electoral support is a clear signal that we have failed to achieve the primary task of the ANC being the vanguard for the poor and the only force for mass mobilisation in this Province.

We therefore have an urgent task of rebuilding our ANC structures from branches to regions and root them amongst the people.

These structures should serve as unifying forces within communities so as to consolidate the hegemony of the ANC as an agent of change in society.

We must re-establish the ANC as a prestigious organisation in this Province by ensuring that all communities both black and white must look at the ANC as the sole provider of solutions to the multitude of problems which they face on daily basis.

We must position members of the ANC as the most sought after community workers who lead by example and practice what they preach.

The Western Cape is the intellectual cradle of the ANC where the first Pan African leaders including Abduraman, the founder of the African Peoples Organisation used the word coloured to include African.

To be well-informed and effective, ANC structures at all levels should establish sub-committees and study groups for each sector as corresponding structures to portfolio committees and clusters at various levels of government. This will not only put ANC structures to be in a better position to speak on behalf of communities but will also empower the ANC to make informed and decisive policy inputs into the legislative programme of this Legislature. Our role as the opposition Party in this Province must be constructive and informed by the multitude of challenges and problems faced by our communities.

We must not copy and adopt bad political habits of criticising and opposing for the sake of scoring political points.

The ANC is not in a publicity contest with anyone, we have a political program to implement, and we should therefore advance sound and valid grounds for our criticisms and give credit whenever it is due.

The ANC in this Province must police the realisation of government priorities and not get involved in cheap politicking. As the Local Government Elections drew closer, we must work in unity and create cohesion within the ANC so that we permanently destroy factionalist tendencies that manifest themselves amongst our rank and file members.

We must bury the hatched, forgive and forget and swiftly move beyond differences that may have existed in the past.

To do this effectively, we must all heed President Jacob Zuma's emphasis who, when closing the Polokwane Conference, said that "the leadership collective will serve the entire ANC membership, regardless of whether a person voted for Thabo Mbeki or Jacob Zuma or any other member or leader.

We cannot have a Zuma camp or Mbeki camp, there is only one ANC. None among us is above the organisation or bigger than the ANC". In the ANC, we do not have



ideological differences but we only have preferences for leadership. Once a leader has been elected we must therefore throw our weight behind that leader for the realisation of our priorities.

Strengthening the Revolutionary Alliance for good governance and service delivery

The participation of our Alliance partners in the management committees of critical importance. This enhances the capacity of Parliament to reach out to the working class and the poor thereby contributing to our efforts to deepen and entrench democracy, monitor the realisation of our priorities and hold government accountable. Our partnership in the Alliance is never about the convenience and expediency of winning elections. As Oliver Tambo said during the 60th anniversary of the SACP in 1981 "Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. We have built it out of our separate and common experiences."

So this is not an Alliance born out of the likes and dislikes of individuals.

Our revolutionary leaders such as Moses Mabida, OR Tambo, Chris Hani, John Nkademeng and others have defined this Alliance. No national ANC conference has changed the content and purpose of this Alliance.

None of us has the right and authority to interfere with the unity in action and coherence of the Alliance including SANCO. Delegates to the respective Conferences of the ANC, COSATU and the SACP were always mindful of the truth of OR Tambo's words, when through different resolutions we, as individual components of the Alliance, committed ourselves. With the unbanning of the ANC and SACP in 1990, the ANC's 49th Conference declared that in order for "all our people to act as a united force to achieve the common goal of a democratic society, we commit ourselves, to the strengthening of the Tripartite alliance of the ANC, COSATU and the SACP."

The ANC 50th Conference in December 1997 at Mafikeng committed the liberation movement to "build and strengthen the Alliance at all levels, through a co-ordinated political programme around the current and concrete challenges of transformation of our society"

The 6th Congress of the COSATU in September 1997 said that "together with the policy of maintaining the Alliance, the Federation needs a plan to revitalise the alliance.

Such a plan must entail developing a clear transformation programme for the Alliance."

"Together as the Alliance, we will prove that there is no alternative to the ANC. Nobody has a better programme than the ANC, for the social and economic transformation of this country." - President Zuma

The 10th Congress of the SACP declared at its closing session in July 1998 that "the precondition for ongoing national democratic transformation is a powerful, robust Tripartite Alliance, based on a common strategic programme, and rooted in a common working class constituency - the overwhelming majority of our people who continue to be the victims of the apartheid legacy."

The 52nd ANC Conference in December 2007 enjoins all of us to "enhance the co-ordination amongst Alliance partners, and to strengthen organisational capacity of each individual component At the Alliance in 2008, we reaffirmed the importance of this Alliance and agreed on a joint Program of Action that will engage all our formations in mass work across the length and breadth of South Africa.

Amongst these is the fight against poverty, which has become even more critical given the current global challenges such as the rise in fuel and food prices. Nothing and none should be allowed to tamper with this commitment.

Addressing the SACP Policy conference last year President Jacob Zuma asserted the ANC's commitment to this Alliance when he said "Together as the Alliance, we will prove that there is no alternative to the ANC.

Nobody has a better programme than the ANC, for the social and economic transformation of this country."

Conclusion

In conclusion, the ANC expects robust political support and leadership from Caucus in order to regain its rightful place and status as a prestigious organisation in this Province.

We must reclaim our status as a force for mass mobilisation which served as a glue that held our people together. We will be able to achieve this because we are a key role player within the Alliance which has distinct characters and unique features that have enabled us to overcome adversity and the daunting challenges we have faced throughout the history of our co-existence.

We must draw lessons from similar experiences in KwaZulu Natal where we were able to turn the situation around and assumed overall control in that Province.

This achievement was only possible through enhanced service delivery, unity and proper co-ordination of programs of government at various levels which were strategically supported by the corresponding oversight and constitutional structures of the ANC at provincial, regional, sub-regional/zonal and branch levels.

■ ***This the Chief Whip's address to the ANC Caucus in the Western Cape Provincial Legislature on 27 August.***