



Volume 1 No 5 • 23 February - 1 March 2001

THIS WEEK:

- Letter from the President: [Transformation hinges on the ANC's ability to mobilise the people](#)
 - Budget 2001: [An investment in South Africa's people](#)
 - State and development : [Tackling poverty tops government's plans for 2001](#)
 - Crime statistics: [Moratorium needed to make the fight against crime more effective](#)
 - Anti-crime protests: [A safe society can't be built on the back of dishonesty and racial prejudice](#)

 - [Previous issues](#)
-

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Transformation hinges on the ANC's ability to mobilise the people

BOTH the State of the Nation Address and the Budget have now been presented to parliament and the nation. The country is therefore aware of the principal pillars of the government's programme of action for the year and the public financial resources available for the implementation of this programme.

As we have said before, the success of this programme, focused on accelerating the process towards a better life for all, will also depend on the involvement of the masses of the people in its implementation.

This presents a particular challenge and opportunity to the ANC, its allies and the rest of the democratic movement. This is so because a fundamental element of our strategy for transformation has always been to ensure that this becomes a people-driven process.

It has been a matter of concern to our movement as a whole that after the victory of the democratic revolution in 1994, both the masses of our



people and various formations of the democratic movement became immobilised.

They became passive observers of the process of change and mere recipients of the benefits of this process - the objects rather than the subjects of policy.

This has also affected the structures of our organisation, the ANC, as well as the Youth League and Women's League.

Among other things, this has resulted in a certain amount of disorientation among these structures as well as the membership in general, with the organisation being seen by some as merely an instrument to mobilise for elections and an institution for the advancement of selfish personal agendas.

Any genuine leader of our movement, who is in contact with our grassroots, knows that the masses of our people have consistently objected to this negative development.

For this reason, these masses have consistently demanded that the leadership should maintain continuous contact with them and report to them honestly on both the problems and the progress we experience, as we struggle to rebuild our country and move towards the realisation of the goal of a better life for all.

Because they define themselves, correctly, as part of the solution, these masses have sought that their movement, the ANC, should engage them as the central motive force of the movement for change.

Because of our own weaknesses with regard to the discharge of this task, various reactionary forces have sought to mobilise these masses against our movement and against their own interests, taking advantage of the vacuum created by our own mistakes.

Some of these reactionary forces have worn the clothes of the ANC and the rest of the democratic movement, pretending that they, and only they, are the genuine voice of the people.

The masses of our people have a long and unbroken history of direct involvement in the struggle for the fundamental transformation of our country. They are conscious of the task that faces them, of being their own liberator.

They trust the ANC as a political force that has stayed at the helm of our struggle, regardless of the sacrifices that its leaders and members had to make. Accordingly, they are not easily deceived. They are not ready to be swept off their feet by populists and demagogues. All efforts to turn them against the movement have therefore failed, despite a sustained and continuing political and media barrage directed at alienating them from their tried and tested political vanguard.

Nevertheless, we need to bear this in mind that the opposition does not sleep. It works patiently for the victory of its cause. It is convinced that all it has to do is steadily and incrementally to corrode our support. It believes that time is on its side.

The opposition plans carefully and in detail. Among other things, it works to turn members of our movement against the movement. It tries hard to foment division within our ranks so that we turn against one another rather than unite in action for progressive change. It works to confuse the people about who genuinely represents their interests, to demobilise them as an agent of change, to encourage disaffection among them and ultimately to detach them from our movement.

One of the goals our opponents pursue in this regard, is to ensure that in the 2004 general elections they reduce our popular support to less than 50 percent of our electorate.

These opponents know that they cannot achieve this highly ambitious objective without the active cooperation of elements within our own movement, whose supportive task is to divide us and oblige us to go for one



another's throats, in a scramble for positions of power within the ANC and the Leagues.

Thus do they seek to assume positions of political leadership in our country, so that they determine the direction and pace of change directly, rather than indirectly, as they have to in a situation in which the masses of our people have freely given the mandate to govern to our movement.

However, the present reality is that the ANC-led broad democratic movement is the most powerful political force in our country, with the strongest and most extensive mass base. It also represents the largest number of people in our country who stand to gain most from the implementation of the people-centred programme of action announced by the government.

The responsibility therefore rests on our democratic movement in all its formations to ensure that the masses of our people are indeed mobilised to join in action for their own upliftment. This is not a matter that can be left to other formations, least of all those that have positioned themselves as the opposition to change or those that have appointed themselves as 'watchdogs' over the democratically elected government.

Accordingly, we must accept that lack of mass involvement in the process of change contained in the government programmes will signify the failure of our movement to discharge its responsibilities as the leader of the masses of our people.

This critically important work of mass mobilisation for change will also require that all the genuinely democratic formations that will be involved will have to coordinate their activities to ensure that we unite in action and act in unity. This requires that only those ready and willing to act for progressive change should come into this united action for progressive change.

Those who reject the direction of change contained in the government programmes, as do the opposition parties of reaction, are therefore at liberty to stay away from the mass campaign for progressive change in which we must engage.

Genuine members of the Congress Movement will join this campaign of mass mobilisation and record yet another glorious chapter in the struggle to transform ours into a modern nation of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, peace and prosperity.

It is whether we act to mobilise the masses for change or act to demobilise them into inactivity, that will determine where we stand in the struggle of the day between the forces of progress on one hand and those of reaction on the other.

We are fortunate that it is not our words uttered for maximum effect that will settle this contest, but our actions, which necessarily must be carried out in broad daylight.

Thabo Mbeki.

BUDGET 2001

An investment in South Africa's people

MORE INFORMATION:

- [South African National](#)



THE NATIONAL BUDGET tabled in parliament this week by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel signals the beginning of a new cycle in government spending on the development of South Africa's people.

This has been made possible by the achievements of previous budgets in achieving macroeconomic stability and fiscal consolidation. Within the context of continued sound financial management, this year's budget is specifically targeted at encouraging greater economic growth, increasing social spending, improving investment in infrastructure and continuing tax reform.

This budget prioritises job creation linked to economic development, poverty alleviation, skills development and the levels of safety and security.

In line with programmes announced by President Thabo Mbeki in his state of the nation address, government spending over the next three years includes:

- R7.8 billion increased infrastructure spending directed to repair flood damage, new investments in school building, roads, water and sanitation projects and rural development initiatives.
- R16 billion in additional money to provinces to strengthen social service delivery and address HIV/AIDS.
- R4 billion to the criminal justice sector for an improved salary dispensation, equipment and other efficiency enhancing initiatives.
- R2.6 billion additional to local government for infrastructure and to support the provision of free basic services.

In addition, R600 million has been allocated for a wage incentive to encourage employment and learnerships. Three billion rand has been allocated over the next four years for investment incentives for strategic industrial projects.

Personal income taxes have been cut, putting R8.3 billion back into the pockets of low and middle income earners.

The budget is a bold statement of the ANC's determination to make good on its commitment, within the existing resource and capacity constraints of government, to build a better life for all South Africans.

STATE AND DEVELOPMENT

Tackling poverty tops government's plans for 2001

A CROSS-CUTTING PROGRAMME to tackle poverty and stimulate economic development forms the core of the government's plans for 2001. The elements of this programme were unveiled by President Thabo Mbeki in his state of the nation address and in a series of briefings by cabinet ministers last week.

[Treasury website](#)
• [IDASA's Budget Information Service](#)

MORE INFORMATION:

- [Government Media Briefing Week, 12-16 February 2001](#)
- [President Mbeki's response to debate on State of the Nation Address, 15](#)

"We cannot speak of the new South Africa if we fail to deal with the urgent challenge of poverty," President Thabo Mbeki said. "The majority of our people are poor. A significant minority among them is very poor."

February
2001

Urban renewal and rural development

Two important pillars of government's programme are the urban renewal and integrated rural development strategies. They represent a marked change in the way government provides infrastructure, services and economic opportunities. The strategies will coordinate the delivery of a basket of services in an integrated manner across a number of departments and spheres of government.

Eleven rural areas and eight urban areas have been identified as the initial nodal points. In each of these nodal points, the programmes will address issues such as housing, water, sanitation, health including HIV/AIDS, pension pay-outs, household food security and nutrition, poverty alleviation including the provision of certain amounts of free services, home affairs services, education and training, sport and culture. These programmes will, among other things, entail investment in economic and social infrastructure, human resource development, enterprise development, enhancement of the development capacity of local government, poverty alleviation and the strengthening of the criminal justice system. Success in this work should have a positive impact on such areas as job creation, crime and violence, health and the general quality of life of millions of South Africans.

Human resource development

Government also presented its Human Resource Development Strategy as part of the broad effort to fight poverty and maximise the potential of South Africa's people. The strategy aims to improve the foundations for human development by, among other things, improving health and nutrition levels, expanding participation in early childhood development, tackling illiteracy and increasing involvement in adult education.

The strategy aims to improve the supply of skills by increasing participation in further and higher education, providing incentives to promote learning in areas of scarce skills, where necessary recruit foreign skilled workers in the short term and increase the amount and level of scientific innovation. Employers will be encouraged to signal their skills needs and undertake their own training in support of these.

The strategy will support employment growth by targeting economic sectors with growth and employment potential, increasing research and development through support to science councils and by increasing the number of science-industry partnerships.

Economic development and employment

The government will undertake work this year to move the economy onto a high-growth path, increasing its competitiveness and efficiency, raising employment levels and reducing poverty and persistent inequalities. Among the initiatives to increase the competitiveness of the South African economy will be steps to reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of the energy, transport and telecommunications sectors in particular. This will be assisted

by the accelerated implementations of the restructuring of state-owned enterprises like Eskom, Transnet, Telkom and Denel.

Government's programme will focus on the development of identified growth sectors, including key export industries like car and component manufacturing, clothes and textiles and mining technologies. The growth sectors will also include agriculture, tourism, information and communications technologies, and cultural industries.

"We renew our call to business and organised labour themselves to respond positively to these initiatives, so that through united action, we can expedite our advance towards the eradication of poverty in our country, raising our level of development and restoring the dignity of all our citizens," President Mbeki said.

CRIME STATISTICS

Moratorium needed to make the fight against crime more effective

THE MORATORIUM on the release of crime statistics, in place since July last year, is meant to ensure the police have reliable information to guide their operation planning and the public is not misguided or misled about the crime situation in the country.

The moratorium will probably remain until mid-2001 while the South African Police Service (SAPS) completes an extensive overhaul of its statistic gathering and management system.

During a review of the first three months of Operation Crackdown in June 2000, National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi and his top management identified problems with the accuracy of crime statistics.

This followed the report of a special committee set up by then Minister Sydney Mufamadi to investigate first-hand the problems relating to the gathering of crime statistics. Headed by Dr Mark Orkin, then head of Statistics South Africa, the committee included international experts from Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

Among its recommendations, the committee said: "There are a spectrum of interventions for addressing the technological problems and achieving improved collection and processing of crime information. These range from improvements to the existing system, through coupling the improved system with a complimentary system, through to a comprehensively new system."

The reason the committee recommended "a comprehensively new system" was that the old system had very serious defects.

A task team was established and a plan to address the problems developed with target dates extending to mid-2001.

Addressing diplomats and journalists last week, safety and security minister Steve Tshwete said the task team discovered most of the problems existed at grassroots levels with members not defining crimes correctly and thus entering the wrong crimes onto the system, entering crime in the incorrect geographical areas onto the systems or using the wrong crime codes.

Calls by opposition groups for the moratorium to be lifted before the completion of this process suggests they have no interest in reliable crime figures nor effective police planning. They would rather score political points off the understandable public desire for information about crime. These groups will not be serious about addressing crime as long as they believe they have political gains to make from its devastating effect on the lives of South Africans.

Therefore, they unleashed a veritable campaign, vigorously supported by the allied media, to oblige the Ministry for Safety and Security and the Police Service to issue defective statistics. Underlying this campaign was the assumption of these forces that, necessarily, crime in our country must be on the increase. According to them, the moratorium could only be for the purpose of hiding this reality.

The reason this assumption is strongly held is that it is informed by the racist conviction that black people are inherently prone to crime. A predominantly black government would therefore never be able to contain crime precisely because it is black. According to this racist perspective, this black government is therefore withholding the crime statistics from the public to hide its collusion with the perpetration of anti-white crime.

Those convinced of this view have therefore resorted to all manner of measure to produce their own crime statistics, including the corruption of members of the South African Police Service to release whatever limited information they may have, provided that it proves that crime is escalating.

Consistent with its anti-democratic stance according to which it tries to position itself as the parallel government, the DA has both threaten to go to court to oblige the government to issue misleading statistics and undertaken to publish its own crime statistics. To do this, necessarily it would have to conspire with certain members of the Police Service secretly to supply it with information, provided that this helped to sustain the notion of the escalation of crime.

At the same time, this official opposition will make fulsome protestations about the value of 'good governance' when, in practice, it is involved in practical actions to make our country ungovernable. Our people have given us an overwhelming mandate to govern. We dare not betray that trust and mandate.

Politically motivated campaigns, however passionate, cleverly managed and supported by the media, cannot dictate how we should increase our effectiveness in the fight against crime. The resort to our courts to oblige the government to issue faulty crime information constitutes a gross abuse of the democratic freedoms for which our members and our followers paid the supreme price.

It does not help the centrally important cause of national reconciliation, that the captains and beneficiaries of apartheid are the first to use the benefits of our democratic victory to subvert the democratic order. In the interests of safety and security for all, our government must stand firm on its positions radically to improve the quality of our crime statistics. It must observe such a time frame as will be necessary and adequate for this purpose.

To date, over 3,000 SAPS members have been trained in the capturing, extraction and analysis of crime information. Standardised crime definitions and counting rules have been developed. Two hundred and sixty additional civilian members have been employed at key police stations to assist with the capturing of crime data.

Information technology systems are being improved and additional work stations, costing R1.3 million, will be installed during 2001.

"Indications at present are that I will be in a position to review the moratorium at the latest at the end of June 2001," Tshwete said.



ANTI-CRIME PROTESTS

A safe society can't be built on the back of dishonesty and racial prejudice

THE LETTER by Minister of Safety and Security, Steve Tshwete, to the Crime Awareness Committee is an appropriate response to a memorandum sent to the President in November last year, which is racist and dishonest.

Contrary to claims from opposition quarters, the minister's response was not an attack on those South Africans of Portuguese descent. The letter was instead a direct response to the authors and supporters of the memorandum. The minister correctly distinguishes in his letter between those who supported the memorandum and the many people of Portuguese descent who would distance themselves from the racist sentiments which it expresses.

Since his letter was published, Tshwete has received a number of letters from members of the South African Portuguese community distancing themselves from the views expressed in the memorandum.

In his letter, Tshwete reaffirms the government's commitment to "take all necessary and possible measures further to intensify the offensive against crime".

"The government and those of our citizens who are interested in joining hands in the struggle to build a new and better South Africa, including members of the Portuguese community, will continue to do everything they can to achieve this objective," Tshwete said.

The greatest indictment of those opposition groups, media institutions and individuals which were so quick to label Tshwete's response 'racist', is their inability to recognise the racial prejudice and moral deficiencies of the original memorandum.

The memorandum is profoundly dishonest. Its authors refuse, to the point of ridicule, to acknowledge the substantial work the government has done to address the problem of crime.

The memorandum makes sweeping claims of government inaction in the face of readily available evidence to the contrary. The authors of the memorandum clearly did not see fit to undertake even the most cursory of studies to establish the facts about crime in South Africa and the work being done to combat it.

The memorandum further ignores the causes of crime and violence in South Africa, presenting it as a creation of the new democratic state. It conveniently overlooks the institutional criminality and violence of apartheid, the social effects of South Africa's highly unequal distribution of income, and the decades-long neglect of the criminal justice system.

The memorandum reveals underlying racial prejudices, casting the officials of a democratic government as "callous and arrogant, corrupt, ineffectual and unaccountable". In the absence of any evidence, the memorandum draws on racially-inspired stereotypes of a bungling,

MORE INFORMATION:

- [Memorandum from the Crime Awareness Campaign](#), 15 November 2000
- [Letter from Minister Steve Tshwete to Projector Contra O Crime](#), February 2001
- [Letter from Conselho das Comunidades Portuguesas to Minister Tshwete](#), 12 February 2001

ineffective and corrupt state machinery. It claims South Africa could "follow the trend of the remainder of the African continent".

"We call on the government to switch allegiance from the self-destructive anarchies of Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo to focus all efforts on saving the lives of South Africans," the memorandum said.

The actions of the protesters are hypocritical. While protesting "the deaths of innocent people every day", which they blame on government callousness, the memorandum's authors are silent about South Africans that die daily from poverty-related illnesses. The authors were silent also when tens of thousands of South Africans were being detained, displaced, tortured and killed, not by common criminals, but by the government itself.

It is ironic that the suffering of these tens of thousands of South Africans has made it possible for the protesters to march on the Union Buildings without fear of repression. The people whose suffering they ignored have made possible a society in which they are free to express their views without fear of reprisal or censure.

Freedom of expression, freedom of association and the right to protest peacefully are central values of a democratic South Africa. But should anyone use these freedoms to propagate untruths, prejudice and hypocrisy, the government, like anyone else, has every right to condemn such views. As the ANC, we will not shy away from exercising that right.

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