

DECENT DELIVERY, DECENT DWELLINGS, DECENT EXISTENCE

MANIFESTO

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS: 2011-02-03

INTRODUCTION

COPE remembers and honours those who met in Bloemfontein on 16 December 2008 to chart a New Agenda for Change & Hope. Those who gathered there sought to breathe new life into the Freedom Charter of 1954. Our responsibility is to ensure that the vision of a new South Africa that the People's Congress had will be translated into reality in 2011.

COPE exists to ensure that the struggle for liberation does not die but is kept alive and extended to include the economic liberation of all the people. We want to achieve the full flowering of the human rights enshrined in the RSA Constitution as well as those that were articulated in the Freedom Charter.

Accordingly, COPE solemnly believes that political power resides with the people permanently and that during any election that power should not be merely surrendered to anyone. The ideal is for the people to exercise their power jointly with the elected representative after the elections. COPE advances this position because the party defines democracy, unlike other political parties, as "a government OF the people, BY the people, FOR the People, **WITH** the people. In order to give effect to this understanding of democracy, COPE advocates an ACTIVIST STATE where community activism and participation partnerships will receive structural and legal state support to strengthen communities in getting quality and efficient service delivery. If communities are legally and politically strong they will achieve their objectives with greater ease. If power is surrendered their hopes will be betrayed.

Local government in South Africa is teetering on failure. Bad and corrupt politicians presiding over incapable management have been the main culprits for this crisis.

Political infighting on the one hand and a failure to uplift poor communities on the other has eroded the confidence of the people. COPE offers an opportunity for close and continuous interaction, through a publicly witnessed contract in an assembly of the town's or city's people, to win back that confidence and thereby restore the proper and accountable functioning of local government.

A NEW AGENDA FOR CHANGE AND HOPE FOR ALL

The Congress of the People believe that local government is the cornerstone of an effective governing system. **Without an effective and transparent local government, run by active citizens**, the people have no voice and cannot enjoy the freedom that South Africa has established since 1994.

We strongly advocate that every citizen in South Africa is entitled to the rights enshrined in the Constitution and the delivery of basic services is recognised as such a right. Everyone who lives in a town or city has the right to an equitable share in receiving services. **Every citizen is constitutionally free to play an active role in the affairs of the town and city and should therefore be actively accommodated to participate in this manner so as to achieve to achieve a better life for everyone.**

CITIZEN DEMOCRACY: EMPOWERING THE PEOPLE

It is time that the voices of the people are finally heard and that the power for positive change is handed back to the citizens of South Africa. Municipalities should be held **accountable** by their communities for **service delivery** and the citizens have to be the **driving force** behind local government and **local development**.

Citizen activism and participation should be legislated in order for the people to be confident in empowering themselves. Service delivery is a **two way street** with the citizens and the institutions working and collaborating together to achieve **optimal service delivery**.

Community involvements in local development programmes are **essential** for local development in order to **enhance a good and positive community spirit**. Where people are allowed to frame their own responses to service delivery challenges, they can achieve **a better life for themselves instead of waiting for** a local government wanting to do everything on its own and at its own pace as though it had such a right when in reality the power belongs to the people.

The poor are not incapable. People in communities know exactly what they want and they need to have a range of options to choose from. They have a right to contribute their labour if they are lacking in resources to improve the conditions in which they live. COPE will search for **strong social engagement** and optimal **co-operation** from all stakeholders to achieve a **more equal society through a collective effort**.

It is time to empower the people to empower themselves.

LEADERSHIP

COPE will present South Africa with a leadership that is committed to serving the people, protecting and preserving public resources and assets, and ensuring with thorough determination that corruption, waste and mismanagement are eradicated. In order to make good on this promise, COPE will ensure that:

- candidates presented for elections publicly declare their assets to the Independent Electoral Commission;
- candidates publicly declare any criminal convictions to the Independent Electoral Commission;
- candidates will publicly report the source of the funds and material assistance they receive before each election day and annually;
- all candidates declare that they are fully tax compliant before accepting nomination;
- candidates give a written undertaking that they will adhere strictly to the procedures prescribed in municipal legislation for ward councillors to report regularly to their constituencies and for other councillors to hold quarterly meetings to report on budget expenditures, policies, governance and delivery.

AGITATING FOR ELECTORAL & GOVERNANCE TRANSFORMATION

Our country is full of good hard working people who deserve a government that is truly accountable and committed to serving them and does not tolerate dereliction of duty, incompetence, politicisation of office, corruption and personal greed. To achieve this objective, COPE will continue to canvass support for citizens to elect a Mayor directly so that in that way the mayor is accountable to the people and not to petty party bosses.

In the times in which we live people all over the world are clamouring for greater accountability and transparency from all public office-bearers and for a greater say in the running of their own affairs. We agree fully with this.

COPE strongly believes that local governments should have procedures defined in law to compel the Mayor to -

- regularly account to the people of the state of affairs in the town or city and to report on expenditure, procurement and delivery;
- entrench processes of public consultation as prescribed by the Constitutional Court report and to allow for greater participatory democracy;
- ensure that every council is obliged by law to work consistently to create a climate of tolerance for different points of view and to ensure that all segments of society are treated in a fair and equitable manner;
- take additional steps to ensure that our towns and cities are governed in a manner that strictly respects the Bill of Rights and every relevant provision of the Constitution;
- promote a free and responsible citizenry who live without fear or deprivation, proud of their respective towns and cities, yearning to contribute to their growth, and enjoying unparalleled opportunities to engage in all of its activities;
- institute a governance review process that will allow an independent assessment of the functioning of the council and enable the citizens to judge whether or not it is they who are indeed governing as the Freedom Charter laid down: “the people shall govern”!

GOVERNANCE

Together with the people, under COPE, communities and their elected representatives will jointly promote the following -

SERVICES

- regularise billing by adopting an international standard that allows for a simple, effective and user friendly way of efficiently tracking and reconciling accounts;
- establish an independent Service Commissioners Office to allow for complaints against the local government to be registered so that investigations can occur, quick remedies or solutions can be found, and justice can prevail;
- expand access to clean running water and electricity and ensure universal access to free basic services;

- maintain existing roads in the ward and tar those streets and roads which have high volume traffic and have still not been upgraded;
- light up the streets in the ward;
- improve waste removal services, clean up the streets, recycle materials optimally, increase composting of bio-degradable materials, green the area and establish community gardens and to do so, in part, by giving sustainable work to people in each ward to undertake these duties for that ward;
- maintain or develop parks, open spaces, and sporting and recreational facilities;
- improve the speed of processing and the quality of services in clinics, establish care facilities and actively promote preventive health care through;
- promote the interests of children, persons with disability, youth, women and older people in every ward by ensuring that ward committees have sub committees to cater for each of the above group;

EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF MUNICIPALITIES

COPE is insistent on appointing professionals who can improve productivity and guarantee service delivery rather than appointing political hangers on to key posts in local government. This process of appointment will therefore ensure the transformation of the Public Service.

COPE stands for an open and transparent local government that promotes citizen democracy and will establish the necessary structural mechanisms to enable communities to participate actively in democratic decision making and to hold public representatives accountable to them at all times and in all circumstances. This will be done through resolutions of the Council after a period of public participation.

COPE, in view of the above position, will –

- employ competent accounting, auditing and IT staff and implement effective financial management procedures as laid out in the Municipal Finance Management Act with no deviation from its provisions;
- ensure good management by requiring a strict adherence to the MFMA and through ensuring transparency in all matters;
- ensure that the awarding of tenders and contracts occurs every time only on the basis of open tendering, publication of results and allowing formal appeals.
- establish a well co-ordinated municipal call centre to -
 - o advise on job opportunities, tenders, and meetings,
 - o direct queries,
 - o provide information,
 - o receive information, and
 - o deal with emergencies.

EFFECTIVE & INNOVATIVE PLANNING

COPE understands that local governments have a significant role in undertaking spatial planning. Regrettably most planning in South Africa is stuck in time.

Today, as a result of that, people have to travel long distances to work. COPE believes that there is no need to strictly separate the economic zones from residential zones in every instance. Creating mixed zones will enable people to work from their own premises or to walk to work.

Cope also recognises that flooding and fires have ravaged many dwellings of vulnerable people and that planning attention must be given to preventing such tragedies.

COPE will therefore strive vigorously to –

- increase mix-use zones in the ward so that residential and economic needs are better met in one locality as is happening in Vietnam where workshops exist on the ground floor and people reside on the floor above;
- relocate homes to higher ground where homes are in constant danger of being flooded;
- improve layout in residential areas in each ward, especially in informal settlement areas, install fire fighting equipment in each ward, and take such other measures as are necessary to prevent fires from destroying homes and possessions as frequently as they do in the townships;

PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Within 6 months of the new Council being constituted, COPE undertakes to audit poverty levels in every ward it wins to present to the ward the extent of the poverty that exists there. Together with the community, the COPE ward councillor will formulate a plan to combat that poverty whether it is from joblessness or other causes. This plan will also provide for creation of economic opportunities for that particular ward.

COPE regards towns and cities as places where economic activity should be planned with an opportunity for citizens to participate. Economic activity should be free from politics because business should be conducted as business. **COPE will actively promote the formation of city based trading companies for metropolitan areas which will accumulate capital from all the citizens through the sale of shares and use the investment to undertake large projects, promote and support entrepreneurship, create profits for investors in the city and support social programmes in the area.**

Over and above that, COPE will also strive to –

- stimulate job creation in every ward through joint local planning and the creation of ward co-operatives which will work with the City Trading Company and receive managerial and marketing support;
- replace BEE with GBEE (Grassroots Black Economic Empowerment) so that the benefits of empowerment will flow to the people in the wards;
- support the strategic establishment of community banks to enable people to access micro level capital;

- stamp out the practice of nepotism where people in political office using their positions to economically benefit their children, family members, and close friends to the exclusion of all others.

ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY

COPE will strive to –

- reduce household expenditure by stimulating food production by householders and communities within the municipal boundaries so that essential food supplies remain constant, abundant and cheap;
- support the establishment of community nurseries to supply householders and community gardens with expertise, and cheap compost, manure, and seedlings;
- support the establishment of co-operatives to undertake agro-processing, value addition, and the operating of food and craft markets in the ward.

ACHIEVING ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

In the next five years the issue of energy will overtake almost every other consideration. Every household will be affected quite severely. COPE recognises the immense seriousness of this problem and will therefore –

- invest in city based wind, wave, and photovoltaic plants, like the city of Nixdorf did in Germany, to become an Independent Power Producer and thereby guarantee sustainable and affordable energy to householders, businesses, and industry and in the process create numerous long term jobs;
- promote the massive installation of solar geysers by leveraging Eskom subsidies, negotiated bulk discounts and special bank loans which will allow qualifying householders to borrow money for the purpose of installing solar geysers and paying off in a fixed amount over 60 months.

ENSURING BETTER WATER & SANITATION MANAGEMENT

COPE has noted with great concern that our country is water stressed. Almost all of the usable water is accounted for. As a country we have dammed more rivers than any other country. In other words we do not have spare capacity. Unless we use water wisely, we will experience great hardships and many job losses.

As we cannot live without water and as every economic activity is dependent on water, COPE will place considerable emphasis on guaranteeing water security. To this end COPE will –

- actively promote the harvesting of rain water and create a fund with partners in the private sector to allow householders to install water tanks obtained through bulk discounts which can be paid off over 36 months;
- deal with acid water in all mining areas before the problem gets out of control;
- encourage onsite recycling of water;
- promote the use of water wise plants;
- ensure that water sources are not contaminated or endangered in any way;

- ensure that all communities are provided with adequate sanitation and that toilet enclosures exist and benefit the dignity of the areas inhabitants.

PRACTISING ACCOUNTABILITY

In the apartheid era Parliament was supreme and the government could do whatever it pleased. That is no longer the case. In democratic South Africa the Constitution is supreme and the RSA Constitution requires government to be both transparent and accountable.

COPE is uniquely committed to upholding the Constitution and will therefore –

- require COPE councillors to call up compulsory quarterly meetings of the ward where they have been elected to report to the ward and in so doing assess progress, analyse failures and plot the way forward;
- require ward councillors to submit to stringent ward oversight;
- ensure that all councillors keep themselves fully accountable to the citizens or forfeit the right to represent those who elected them to office;

SUPPORTING A BETTER APPROACH TO DWELLINGS

- COPE will ensure that local government has a greater say in determining the quality, sizes and manner in which government funded houses are built and to allow intended beneficiaries to actively contribute their ideas and to provide whatever support they can so that a better product can materialise from the budgeted amount of money.
- COPE is startled that our country is an exception in the world in that government uses building materials that have very poor insulation so that houses are very hot in summer and very cold in winter;
- COPE wants the strict separation of residential and business areas to be abandoned so that whole streets may see businesses on the ground floor and residences on the first floor as is happening in Vietnam, for example, to allow businesses in communities to grow without high overhead costs and without travel implications.
- COPE will accelerate access to housing through a greater involvement with government departments and by allowing for increased individual involvement in the planning, supplementing, and building of government funded houses so that they better meet the actual needs of families rather than using a one size fits all that other parties are offering;
- COPE is the only party promoting “co-housing” to achieve advanced environmental, economic, and social objectives. This form of housing will begin with the establishment of an inter-racial and inter-generational community pursuing environmental objectives and at the same time accommodating both high and low income people in a mutually beneficial arrangement as befits a functioning and caring community. Co-housing requires choices to be made and undertakings to be agreed to so that a community with a community spirit can evolve.
- COPE believes that overcrowding of residential areas must be strictly controlled on account of fire and health hazards.
- COPE will ensure that all informal settlement areas receive planning attention at once so that there is order which will allow for people to improve their dwellings as their circumstances allow and thereby allow an informal settlement area to become formal in time.

CRIME

COPE believes that crime must be tackled at its root cause and not only through policing. A one sided plan will yield very limited results. A comprehensive plan which is formulated together by communities, the police, and other role players, and is owned by the community will produce the best solution to curbing crime. In COPE's view the city or town must collectively fight crime and especially the causes of crime. Where economic deprivation and substance abuse are involved, an active citizenry must with the organs of government unite to address these problems.

COPE will therefore ensure that local government will -

- maximise the role of community policing forums and neighbourhood watch groups;
- destroy crime dens, clean up areas and light up the streets;
- with other spheres of government, and private sector partners, improve the economic conditions of the poor;
- Implement technological solutions for the better and constant monitoring of crime infested areas;
- promote the emergence of an integrated and cohesive community and invest such a community with knowledge, responsibilities and resources to play a role in combating crime in its locality;
- seek support to centralise crime reporting and crime data capturing; and
- organise a monthly forum to analyse crime statistics and incidences.

THE GENERATION QUESTION & THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH

Young people must receive very special attention because families invest in their education and rely on them to improve the financial circumstances of the family. Young people must therefore become involved in economic activities soon after receiving their tertiary education and skills training. COPE will ensure that local government will have a desk to support young people with training to contribute to the economic growth of the city, either in their own enterprises or through some other means.

SPORTS, ARTS & RECREATION

COPE places heavy emphasis on sports, arts and recreation because we are a society still in transition trying to shake off the last vestiges of apartheid's impact on us and our attitudes. COPE therefore sees many social and economic benefits accruing from the strategic and constructive use of sports, arts and recreation and will fund and support these areas and build public private partnerships to achieve optimal results. Townships that were serially neglected will receive priority attention in this regard.

COPE recognises that across the country many sports facilities are lying unused or underutilised. In COPE run municipalities the mayor will be held directly responsible for not producing innovative solutions to improve the use and the upkeep of all sports facilities and other amenities.

THE MEDIA

A free media is pivotal to the functioning of a constitutional democracy. Media feeds on sensation and COPE recognises that it should therefore work strenuously to earn a good media and avoid being in the news for the wrong reasons. COPE is against any imposition of restrictions on the media as an adequate

number of laws already exist to keep the media in check. Where corruption, fraud, graft and impropriety exist it is right for the media to expose them regardless of who is involved.

NATIONAL QUESTION

Cope is unique among South African parties in addressing the issue of national identity openly. COPE knows that in division lies extreme danger. Only in unity is there guaranteed security for our people. Through long years of apartheid racial prejudices were entrenched, and even today race is regrettably a consideration in economics, politics and social expression.

COPE will address the national question boldly in order to achieve race harmony and unity as these are critical for the future of South Africa. Developments in North Africa have clearly shown how everything can change in the space of a week. While we in South Africa have the window of opportunity we should seize the time to make a new society glimpses of which we saw during the Soccer World Cup. Our growth and our safety require that we put this matter to rest.

Local government, COPE believes, must take a lead in forging racial harmony and unity. COPE run municipalities will vigorously strive for racial harmony and will therefore be better, more prosperous, and safer places to live in.

CONCLUSION

In supporting COPE you will support a policy which involves you as a genuine partner and driver in every programme. COPE is ahead of every other party in defining democracy as a government OF the people, BY the people, FOR the People, **WITH** the people.

COPE, by virtue of that definition, supports citizen activism and is undertaking to create institutional mechanisms where it governs to promote and support such activism so that the quality, efficiency and delivery of the local government is guaranteed.

COPE believes that voters must remain fully engaged before as well **as after the election**. COPE therefore asks people not to surrender the power that goes with a vote but to hang on to that power. It doesn't mean that if other parties didn't allow for this it cannot be done. People in South Africa must be alive to the power that they have thanks to our great RSA Constitution. **People power must and should prevail and if it was intended that the "people shall govern" then indeed they should.**

This MANIFESTO highlights some of the areas of concern to all of us. However, as COPE wants to work on a strictly contractual basis with the electorate, communities will drive the agenda within the ambits of COPE's policies and therefore whatever is lacking in this manifesto will be supplemented through mutual agreement in each electoral area. Once again, has anyone ever heard of such a democratic development in politics where politicians want to be all powerful and supreme?

As we have indicated our manifesto touches on some of the issues. For those who wish to access further information, please read the shorter consolidated COPE policy available on our website to understand

how we are proposing to **fundamentally alter the power relationship between politicians and the electorate and thereby give deeper expression to the RSA constitution.** ‘

Freedom dawned in South Africa in May 1994. Real freedom, inclusive of economic freedom, must now reach high noon in 2011 and that is what we are striving to achieve together with you.

Together we can ensure that decent delivery takes place, decent dwellings are created, and a decent existence for the people becomes achievable. This is our solemn promise and we undertake to be bound to that.