



To all media houses

14 February 2024

SPEECH BY **TEBOHO LOATE**, COPE MP, IN RESPONSE TO THE SONA BY THE PRESIDENT IN PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ON 14 FEBRUARY 2024

EMBARGOED UNTIL 14H00

Madam Speaker,

The President's speech indicated where our country should have been.

Unfortunately, we are still very far back, and worse still, we are regressing.

In 1994, apartheid was ended, but no real dent was made since then on apartheid's hegemonic nastiness: the spatial segregation enforced by the Group Areas Act of 1950. The apartheid-era townships are where approximately 40% of the working-age population and 60% of the country's poor and unemployed reside.

Initially designed as dormitories to meet the labour requirements of the mining industry and the apartheid economy, they continue to manifest limited economic opportunities, and people, therefore, have to compete for a share in minibus taxis, taverns, and temporary work offerings.

Townships lack diverse economic activities and formal job opportunities. High unemployment rates persist there, and residents hardly have upward mobility and economic or financial stability.

Essential services such as water, sanitation, and electricity are insufficient. Poor road networks and inadequate public transportation affect mobility and economic participation. The reproduction of urban sprawl and new development further away from economic centres condemn people with low incomes to the high cost of transportation from meagre wages/salaries.

Furthermore, a significant percentage of township residents lack the necessary skills for entrepreneurship and formal employment. Access to quality education and vocational training remains a challenge for township dwellers. Broadband connectivity and entry into the 4th industrial revolution remains a mirage.



In many of these townships, like Diepsloot, Dunoon, Botshabelo, and Olieverthoutbosh, among others, high crime rates prevail, exacerbated by gangsterism, mob justice, inadequate policing, and limited community safety measures. The people have been left in the lurch by the criminal justice system.

There is overcrowding, inadequate health services and no significant effort for revitalisation and social upliftment where the majority live.

There is no redress for most of the people living in townships from the ANC government, and the appalling legacy of apartheid continues to haunt the people who were forcibly dumped in these areas.

What will COPE do when given a strong mandate after the elections?

We shall prioritise urgent attention to the challenges of growing urbanisation, immigration, and climate change.

We shall implement sustainable programmes to improve the economic conditions in townships to achieve social cohesion, employment creation, and environmental improvement and sustainability.

Unlike your party keeping people trapped in poverty and underdevelopment, with social grants and kos pakkies, COPE shall ensure that we increase the quality and quantity of the middle-class family. They deserve better.

As for you, Mr President, you and the ANC dismally failed the people of South Africa.

Ke Nako!!

Time for Change!