

# ANC's 'empty promises'

*Ruling party's election manifesto shows it is unable to deal with unemployment crisis*

THE African National Congress launched its 2019 General Election Manifesto on Saturday in KwaZulu-Natal.

As part of the hot air blown by its president, one of the most devastating promises is a promise to create 275 000 jobs over the next five years.

What this promise entails is that between 2019 and 2024, the ANC wishes – without a clear plan – to create only 1 375 000 jobs.

This wish is part of many wishes in previous ANC manifestos, growth plans and policy confusion that defined the party since 1994.

Despite the fact that the job wish is insufficient and that it will not change the unemployment crisis of more than 9 million unemployed people, it also undermines another ANC policy called the National Development Plan (NDP).

The NDP is a product of the National Planning Commission, of which Mr Cyril Ramaphosa was deputy chairperson, and its intention is to create 11 million jobs by 2030 – which makes it 550 000 jobs a year.

The target of 275 000 effectively displaces the accompanying commitments made around economic growth and development linked to job creation and, of course, undermines plans around the reduction of poverty and inequalities.

It is a known fact that a job is the most primary means of access to a basic livelihood. For South Africa, defined by black landlessness, heavy indebtedness and almost no ownership of the means of production, this fact is even more relevant. Without an income, many people would be living in absolute poverty. The wish to create 1 375 000 jobs between 2019 and 2024 is made against the fact, acknowledged by the ANC president, that in terms of the expanded definition, the number of unemployed South Africans is more than 9 million.

It is a statistical fact that an absolute majority of the unemployed is young people. These people still have a lot of energy, the will and determination to earn a wage in exchange for their labour power. It is clear that the number of unemployed is likely to remain at 9 million in the next five years. The ANC only wishes to create 1 375 000 jobs over the same period.

This means a whopping 7 625 000 people will remain jobless. This is without taking into account that more and more young people will enter the labour market in search of jobs, creating a possibility that even in five years' time South Africa will still have more than 9 million unemployed people in

## COMMENT



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2024. Why should the ANC cling on to power even when it has made a public announcement that it cannot resolve the unemployment crisis?

The ANC does not take into account that some of the labour intensive sectors like the assemblage of automobiles have spent billions rebuilding their assembly plants into robotics to reduce their labour force. When BMW was refurbishing its plant in Rosslyn, the ANC government issued a celebratory statement, welcoming the labour-reducing robotics as a positive investment.

There are still many factory belts, automobile assembling factories and production lines which will be replaced by artificial intelligence, robotics and capital intensive industrial and manufacturing modes.

Now that the ANC has illustrated that it does not have a believable and cogent plan to create jobs, it is safe to conclude that they collectively and individually carry no sophistication to understand the labour reduction potential of the fourth industrial revolution. This means that they will not be able to reposition the schooling system, the state or workplace to adapt to the massive technological changes defining the world now. There is absolutely nothing lucid from the manifesto that says how jobs in the manufacturing belts will be saved.

As a result, the ANC should not be the future of South Africa because it has publicly admitted to its incapacity to create jobs. The massive joblessness that will come as a result of the ANC's incapacity, incompetence and directionlessness will have a huge negative impact on South Africa's social, economic and political stability. Massive joblessness is a primary ingredient of social and political implosion, and the ruling party does not know what to do with it.

In 1994, South Africa's population was about 40 million and in 2019,

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57 million. In its 2019 manifesto, the ANC celebrates that 7 million jobs were created during 25 years of population growth. The ANC cannot, however, point to significant industrial and manufacturing employment created as a result of its industrial, trade or procurement policies.

In 1994, the ANC Election Manifesto said, "The millions of people without jobs will be at the top of the ANC government's agenda. In establishing a dynamic and growing economy we will employ various means to create more jobs and opportunities."

This was obviously not achieved.

In 1999, the ANC Election Manifesto said, "An ANC government will immediately start a national public works programme which will address community needs and create jobs. Through this programme alone we will aim to provide employment and training for about 2.5 million people over the next 10 years, building roads and providing water, electricity, schools, clinics, housing and meeting other needs". This, too, did not happen.

In 2004, the ANC manifesto said, "The ANC will reduce unemployment by half through new jobs, skills development, assistance to small businesses, opportunities for self-employment and sustainable community livelihoods."

Because the unemployed population in 2004 was about 5 million, halving meant the creation of minimum of 2.5 million jobs – it did not happen.

In 2009, the ANC manifesto said, "The ANC will make the creation of decent work opportunities and sustainable livelihoods the primary focus of our economic policies. We will make maximum use of all the means at the disposal of the ANC government, to achieve this."

This objective should be reflected in the orientation and programme of development finance institutions and regulatory bodies, through government procurement and public

incentive rules, in industrial, trade, competition, labour market and other policies". This did not happen. Instead procurement was not used as an instrument for job creation, but an instrument to create a Gupta criminal syndicate that devoured the state for selfish purposes.

In 2014, the ANC manifesto said, "The ANC will consolidate the public works programme, creating 6 million work opportunities by 2019. Furthermore, the 2014 manifesto said, "As a contribution to boosting local manufacturing and creating jobs at home, the state will be directed to progressively implement the target of buying at least 75% of its goods and services from South African producers. The state's buying power will support small enterprises, co-operatives and broad-based black economic empowerment."

Despite the Economic Freedom Fighters' submission that the laws that govern state procurement should be amended, the ANC in Parliament refused.

All of the promises of the ANC did not materialise in as much as the lousy and uninspiring promise to create 275 000 jobs a year will not happen.

In the 25 years of its management of the state on behalf of the capitalist class, only 7 million jobs happened, and these were largely due to the increase of South Africa's population and the expansion of the state.

Overall, the majority of the 16 million South Africans with jobs in 2019 cannot claim to have decent jobs because they are largely underpaid domestic workers, farm workers, mine workers, security guards, petrol attendants, public servants and in other low-paying jobs.

The attempt to create jobs in the manufacturing sector through industrial zones and special economic zones produced less than 20 000 jobs in the entire period of the ANC's mismanagement of the state despite massive industrial subsidies and tax incentives given to mostly foreign and multinational investors.

We will patiently and consistently show young people who might be fooled into believing the ANC that it is not going to happen in their lifetime.

It is only the EFF that will create sustainable and quality jobs for all. This jobs plan will be unveiled on February 2 in Soshanguve when the EFF launches its programme of action, the People's Manifesto. Forward to creation of quality jobs for all!

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