

For Immediate Release
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JOINT STATEMENT ON ANC ENGAGEMENT WITH BLACK PROFESSIONALS

The African National Congress (ANC) held an engagement with organised bodies representing black professionals on Monday, 25 February 2019. The engagements followed unfortunate public exchanges that created an incorrect perception of the ANC's policy and position regarding black professionals. The discussions were robust and cordial and were conducted in a spirit of comradeship.

The ANC reiterates its firm support for black professionals and encourages ongoing engagements to create platforms for dialogue on matters of policy and implementation. The discussions further touched, amongst others, on the need to increase procurement spend targeting black-owned enterprises. This discussion was on the back of a perception that the ANC continued to support public spending that favoured established white enterprises. As part of the dialogue and finding each other, the ANC highlighted the tangible interventions implemented by government to radically alter the landscape in this regard.

The meeting noted concerns that the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA) is not advancing transformation as it should. In fact, the opposite is true. Established white-owned companies invariably trump black companies, which are mostly small enterprises on price when bidding for government work. This is further compounded by the fact that these companies have monopoly over material supply and are able to get the benefit of economies of scale and get preferential rates.

The meeting agreed on the need to close the communication gap between the ANC and black professionals through regular contact. In this regard, the meeting agreed on the following:

1. The ANC affirmed its commitment to black excellence and undertook to implement deliberate interventions that seek to build the black middle strata through its policies.
2. Establish a co-ordinating structure that will guide the interaction between the ANC and black professionals, from time to time.
3. Engage in ongoing discussions on sectoral issues.
4. Work together in ensuring that policies and laws that impact on the growth of small businesses, emergence of black middle strata and their participation in the mainstream economy create the necessary support system to enable growth.

5. Create an enabling environment to tap into the skills of black professionals to strengthen state-owned enterprises and public administration and to make a meaningful contribution towards the realisation of radical economic empowerment.
6. In advancing the radical economic transformation the legislative framework must support aggressive interventions which start with the repeal of the PPPFA and replaced with the Public Procurement law urgently.
7. In advancing our objective of growing the black middle class and advance black excellence, we must be guided by our Constitution which contextualises equality by acknowledging our past, that black people were not allowed by law to participate freely in all aspects of life. The ANC noted the submission that the process under the current PPPFA is not fair, equitable and competitive, as it unfairly discriminates against black companies as it puts more emphasis only on cost and does not take into account the total social and economic benefit for South Africa.

The meeting noted that black professionals are concerned about the slow pace of transformation in the workplace, especially in the JSE listed companies.

We will continue to work closely to realise meaningful economic transformation that ensures that black professionals are given the space and opportunity to make their contribution.

Issued by: African National Congress
Fikile Mbalula
Head of Elections

Mdu Mlaba
National Society of Black Engineers
President

Meta Mhlarhi Maponya
Black Energy Professionals Association (BEPA)
Chairperson
www.bepa.org.za

Andile Nomlala
Black Management Forum (BMF)
President

Sibongiseni Mbatha
Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals (ABSIP)
President

More Information:

Dakota Legoete

Acting National Spokesperson

072 718 5955

Enquiries:

Cornelius Tanana Monama

National Communication Manager

0825784063