

TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANC PROFESSIONALS' LEAGUE

[Bandile Hadebe ·Wednesday, 19 September 2018](#)

On Wednesday, 28 August 2018, as the organizing committee consisting of comrades from various parts of the country, we submitted to the office of the Secretary General of the ANC, founding documents, which included the concept note and the draft constitution, to register our intention to establish the ANC Professionals' League (ANCPL).

This motion is guided, inter alia, by the STRATEGY AND TACTICS of the African National Congress, as adopted by the 54th National Conference in 2017, which, aptly identifies that, *"Leadership of the motive forces includes contributing to the formation of, and co-operation with, progressive structures of civil society: including in communities and among youth, women, students, people with disability, the religious community, issue-based campaigns, traditional leaders and the business community. **A critical stratum in this regard is the intellectual community whose capacities must be harnessed to enrich critical thinking and mitigate the 'echo chamber' effect.**"*

The STRATEGY AND TACTICS continue to observe that *"The rise of the Black middle strata is a positive development which accords with the broader objectives of social transformation. These strata include the intelligentsia, professionals and small business operators. Expansion of access to education, including post-school opportunities, and empowerment programmes across society, have seen to massive increases in their numbers. Contradictory trends have played out in relation to this. Firstly, given that most of these strata are first-generation incumbents, their social position is tenuous, and this may subtract from their potential for social activism. Secondly, many within these strata are not dependent on state largesse; and so, act autonomously in relation to electoral politics: a fickleness that brings to the fore issues such as value systems and brand image. Thirdly, an element of these strata has emerged through the political arena, lending a desperation to political contestation that poses a mortal danger to social transformation."*

The ANC Professionals' League will enable the ANC to address these issues and many others that have been identified.

The foundational documents submitted to the SG identify the Triangular Objectives of the ANCPL:

1. Objective 1: Consolidate a highly educated skills base and intelligentsia to advance the agenda of the African National Congress, through providing scientific and evidence-based mechanisms to implement the aims and objectives of the ANC across the whole of society. – The Implement Objective
2. Objective 2: Address the needs of professionals, fight against challenges facing professionals in the workplace, and deal with the slow pace of "qualitative and quantitative transformation" within corporate South Africa. – The Serve & Defend Objective

3. Objective 3: Position the cosmopolitan outlook of professionals as leverage for recruiting all racial groups to the ANC and advancing the vision of a truly non-racial South Africa. – The Recruit Objective

During this greatest political discourse of our times, the project of rebuilding and renewal of the African National Congress (ANC), it is our call to action that the ANC must adapt to the fast changing sociopolitical landscape. It is our view that, for the ANC to remain as the leader of society, it must continue to claim its relevance and hegemony in all levels and strata of society.

The political distance between the ANC and professionals, and the “side-chic” relationship the party has maintained with this strategic layer of society is undesirable, and necessitates an establishment of a formalized and constitutional structure within the ANC that accommodates the needs of professionals, while concurrently leveraging on their skills and expertise to improve the lives of all our people.

The ad hoc relationship the ANC has with various professional associations and forums, which in the main, is ceremonial and is often activated when there are gala dinners and once-off engagement sessions, neither serves the interests of professionals in those bodies, nor does it serve the ANC. When it matters most, professionals struggle to secure a platform to engage the ANC on critical issues and employees in government tend to view these professional bodies as an irritation, constantly postpone meetings and do not grant them the same level of attention accorded to organized labour, for instance.

On the other hand, when serious policy discussions are conducted, you find the ANC scrapping for “progressive academics and subject matter experts”, who often hold no membership with the organization and have to be trusted at face-value. This was certainly the case at the recently held land summit. It is rather unfortunate that we would allow the organizational direction on a matter as intricate as the land issue to be driven by some independent experts whose allegiance cannot really be confirmed. The ANC must consolidate a highly educated internal intelligentsia through its own ANC Professionals’ League to drive policy direction.

Understanding the internal processes of the African National Congress, that such a league would have to be officially approved at the next National Conference in 2022, we have committed ourselves, in the meantime, to establish structures across all provinces, organize professionals under the banner of the ANC, develop relevant programmes and recruit members across all sectors, so that the deliberations at the National Conference in 2022 will not be debating an idea, but will be dealing with a practical formation that has proven members and has added value to the movement and society.

Drawing lessons from the Bantu Women’s League, which was in existence for 25 years before being incorporated into the ANC at the 1943 National Conference, we are committed to proving to the ANC and South Africa, at large, that the ANCPL is a necessary component to advance the agenda of the ANC to the next level. We are committed to prove that there are large numbers of professionals who, through an

appropriate structure such as the ANCPL, will be encouraged to come back to the ANC or join for the first time and become very active in organizational programmes.

The current branch structure presents several limitations and frustrations for the participation of professionals which are discussed at length in the foundational documents and may lead to the apathy we witness today. We would be lying to ourselves if we were to deny that our current structures are inadequate to service and utilize professionals optimally.

Significantly, the ANC as a liberation movement will become the first party to give a direct voice to this key stratum of society, the professionals. This will give the ANC greater political relevance in the public discourse and will enable the party to deliver better for our people. This move will not only dispel the irritating propaganda created by anti-revolutionary force who constantly claim that our leaders and members are less educated than theirs, but will also serve the purpose of making education fashionable.

In the following weeks will be also distributing foundational documents to all Provincial and Regional Executive Committees of the ANC to initiate the conversation internally.

Because we believe in strategizing by doing, amongst a range of issues we will be tackling as the ANCPL, we are prioritizing the following in the medium term:

1. Fixing the Public Healthcare System to ensure that the NHI becomes a success and benefits the majority of our people. Ensuring the safety of doctors, nurses and all hospital staff who are increasingly confronted with general abuse and physical attack from patients' relatives and criminals. In this regard, we will be pursuing the possibility of having a similar designation as that assigned to pilots and flight attendants, that deems it illegal to interfere with their work.

2. With regard to mining, there are enough voices contributing to the debate of nationalization and localization, but little attention is paid to the destructive effects of Transfer Pricing on our economy. 47 of the 49 JSE listed mining companies engage in transfer pricing. The amount of money siphoned by these mining conglomerates to offshore tax havens steals from South Africa's tax base and limits government's ability to deliver more services for our people. The ANCPL will be driving a campaign to abolish transfer pricing and demand that mineral resources mined out of South Africa soil must register all its taxes within South Africa.

3. Because of limited labour representation, professionals remain largely unprotected in corporate South Africa and endure several inequalities across races and genders. The financial services sector stands out mostly in this regard. The ANCPL will assume the bold responsibility of taking on individual and group cases that affect dissatisfied professionals in their work environment and also push for acceleration of transformation across all industries, with particular attention paid to companies and industries that remain male and white dominated.

4. The ANCPL believes the land debate is too theoretic at the current moment and this will delay progress. To expedite the process, we have decided to conduct pilot projects

of an actual expropriation without compensation in order to assess the strength of the constitution in this regard and enable us to assist the ANC to identify gaps in policy and develop an orderly national programme for expropriation. Several pieces of land across the country will be identified and used in this pilot project which seeks to document and develop a practical strategy for expropriation of land without compensation. These pieces of land will include areas where a black community was removed and thrown elsewhere, game lodges, crop and cattle farms, vineyards, and privately owned dams.

5. The ANCPL finds it difficult to embrace BBBEE blindly in its current form and shape, especially now that it has been revealed that since its initiation in 1998, only 20% of the population has benefited from it. The amendments in the PPPFA are strongly welcomed and, in line with the 54th National Conference resolutions, we believe that we should use the state budget to improve economic participation of black people. We will be supporting all initiatives that are geared towards social enterprises as critical drivers for Radical Economic Transformation, especially at a ward level and in indigent communities, so that we increase beneficiaries of BBBEE beyond this 20% of the well-connected individuals.

6. While there is an understanding that the country should be focusing on the 4th Industrial Revolution, there are several misconceptions of what 4IR is and at what stage of development the rest of the world is. The ANCPL believes that there is an urgent need to conclude the country's strategy for 4IR in order to position South Africans as producers and not consumers. This narrative of 4IR as if it's something coming in the future that we need to get ready for is misleading and will once again leave us with little or no real benefits. 4IR is here and has been here for a while now and as such we need urgent interventions from government and business to ensure we benefit as a nation. The ANCPL will assemble a committee of experts to draft the first framework for a country strategy in this regard.

7. Amongst factors that drive economic growth is regional trade. Intra-Africa trade remains low at around 15% compared to Europe (59%), Asia (51%), and North America (37%). ANCPL, in consultation with partners in other countries, and regional bodies, will drive a campaign that improves access to trade and market information, and promotes enabling policy environment and e-commerce across Africa. A strong intra-Africa trade agenda will enable the country and continent to counteract the negative impact of the erratic trade wars driven by the United States which can put developing economies like ours at risk.

8. The ANCPL believes that we need to acknowledge that the quality of our education system is not something we agree on as a nation. While there are those who would want to defend and advocate for the status quo, there are many others who believe there is a lot that needs to be improved and our pass marks suggests a lowering of the bar which is consistent with some negative reports reflected in several domestic and international studies. The ANCPL believes education is one issue that the whole country should be on the same page about. ANCPL will drive a multi-stakeholder on-going programmes geared towards improving the quality of our education, starting with Early Childhood

Development all the way to tertiary, with a keen focus on future jobs and the digital economy.

Leading up to 2019 elections, we will be mobilizing professionals around these issue and many others that are important to them in order to influence the manifesto of the ANC and ensure greater participation of professionals to deliver victory for the ANC at the polls.

We would like to invite all professionals to register for membership of the ANCPL through this link <https://form.myjotform.com/82113765838564>

The full concept note is available through this link <https://cloud.acrobat.com/file/977f253f-af28-4b01-8939-1725ab6f5a5b>