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# Be Part of Making Your Dream Come True!

## Constitutional Guidelines for a Free, Democratic, Non-Racist, Non-Sexist South Africa

### A Document to Discuss

The African National Congress (ANC) has drawn up a document called the Constitutional Guidelines. This document sets out an idea of the ANC's plan for a future South Africa. The ANC wants people and organisations in South Africa to discuss the Constitutional Guidelines.

In this way, people in South Africa can be part of shaping our future.

For hundreds of years the majority of people in South Africa have struggled against a government that has been only interested in the needs of a small minority - the white South Africans. Black people and workers have had to



fight against the oppressive laws made by this white government. As part of this fight, the people of South Africa, with their organisations, were involved in drawing up the Freedom Charter in 1955. At this time, the ANC was a legal organisation, organising in South Africa. The ANC's Constitutional Guidelines were drawn up in 1987 by the ANC outside of South Africa. They have been drawn up because we seem to be much closer to a free South Africa. The Guidelines spell out more clearly how the demands of the Freedom Charter can become a real part of the future South Africa.

### **Shaping the New Society**

Many organisations have started to discuss the Guidelines. It is important that they are discussed all over South Africa. Women and men need to say what it is we want to see in a new South Africa. It is now that we have the chance to play a part, not only in struggling against the old system, but also in shaping the new society. As Nomvula, a woman active in the unions, said: "It is important to discuss these Guidelines. We can be part of adding to or changing them. We can say what we want in a post-apartheid South Africa. When freedom comes, we must know what we want to do with it. It will also prove to those who say we don't know what we want, that we do know what we want!"

The Guidelines are based on democracy, an end to racism and an end to sexism. The document talks about creating a society where people will be able to lead normal, decent lives, as free citizens in a free country. It talks about having a government where the people will have a say at all levels. It talks about having a mixed

economy. It deals with issues of land, of workers, women and the family.

### **Women's Rights**

The section of the Guidelines that deals with women says that women shall have the same rights as men at home, at work and in the community. And that the state will give women special help to make up for the inequalities of the past. SPEAK asked some women what they understood by this. And what they wanted to see for women in a future free South Africa.

"What will it mean to have have the same rights as men at home, at work and in the community?" we asked.

Shinaez, a women activist in women's organisation talked about what this meant for her. She said: "This section shows that the ANC wants a situation where women will no longer be exploited and oppressed. And that this goes for the outside world and in the home. So they are talking of democracy and equal rights in the home and in the workplace and everywhere. Women will have to stand up for their rights. And men will have to learn that they can't have everything their own way. It will mean that we can look forward to a new South Africa, where we will be able to fight things like rape, and wife-beating. It will mean that as women we will have a place in the new society that we can be proud of. That the struggles alongside our men against apartheid and capitalism, is also going to mean a real change for us as women."

### **Sharing at Home**

Nomvula said: "At home, marriage mustn't be like a burden, it must be like a partnership. At home, the duty of bringing up children mustn't be seen as the duty of the women. Men must take part in everything from washing the napkins to feeding the babies. I must be able to decide what I want with my future if I am married. Most of the time the husband tells you that you can't go to this meeting or go there, forgetting that you are part of the struggle. This needs to change."

Nomvula went on to talk about her idea of what equality means at work and in the community. She said: "This means the opening of jobs for everybody. We need new laws that will make



everybody acceptable irrespective of sex, creed, or race. Tax must be done equally. Married women must not be discriminated against. There must be the same salary for the same job. There mustn't be separate jobs for men and women. Women often end up doing the dirty jobs."

### **An End to Sexual Harassment**

"Sexual harassment must come to an end. Men must stop seeing women as sex objects. They must stop thinking of sex each and every time they see women. They must discuss with us things that are relevant. You don't have to sell a car by having a half-naked woman on top of the car."

"There must be equality at work and everywhere in the society. We've got organisations like community organisations - even there they have got that old belief that women can't be in the forefront and taken seriously. This will change with a new government."

### **Educating People for a New Society**

Malindi, an activist in women's organisation and trade unions for many, many years said: "What I know is that there is discrimination against women at work and at home. As a family discussing something, we have no say because you are a woman. It is very, very important that a future government changes things for women. All along, women have not been recognised. This is changing slowly. At work, you find that a post is for a man. I believe that all jobs should be for everybody so long as you are qualified. It has been planted in our minds that the best person to have privileges is a man. We need to root out that idea. The new government must do this by educating people. Each and everything to do with violence against women must be discussed by the people, so that we can get rid of it. Men harass their wives. The children get scared. The husband is seen as the lion of the house. They must be tamed. There must be education. This government has ruled our minds so we can't use our own minds."

Nomsa, is active in the church. She said: "Women shall be considered and recognised on merit. There must be no tokenism. We must be considered by our skills, ability and creativity. Not by sex and gender. The Constitutional

Guidelines implies doing away with sexism and racism."

She went on to talk about what it means to have the same rights as men at home. She said: "It means a human rights declaration in the home front. This means bringing equality into the home. Like with lobola, and the marital contract. We have to decide on the good things from our culture. But the things that are outdated and are oppressive to woman must be addressed. We are going to have a radical transformation. The traditional value system favours men. So we need to look at that. What oppresses women is attractive to men. And some women support their own oppression."

"What does it mean by saying the state will give women special help to make up for the inequalities of the past?" we asked.

### **Women Must Be Trained in Leadership**

Malindi feels that women must be trained in leadership. She said: "Women must be trained so that we can take up positions in the new government. Men are the very ones who oppress us."

Shinaez said: "It must mean that the government will see to it that things like childcare, maternity rights and that will be provided. That women will have equal rights to education - so that the damage done by the present system which keeps women down will have to be put right through things like special education programmes."

### **A Big Need to Discuss the Guidelines**

All the people we talked to felt that there is a big need to discuss and debate the Constitutional Guidelines as far and wide as possible. Because it is our future South Africa that we are planning. Many organisations are discussing these Guidelines. Everybody needs to be able to make informed choices and decisions for the new South Africa. For it is in this way that true democracy must work. All the people of South Africa should be involved in this process of making a contribution to our future.

Write to us with your ideas of a new South Africa. Share with our readers what you think needs to happen and be done so that all women, men, youth and children shall have a decent life in a free South Africa. Let us continue the discussion and debate so that we lead ourselves to a society that is truly democratic, non-sexist and non-racist.●