VF PLUS

A **RECOVERY PLAN** TO MAKE
MUNICIPALITIES WORK FOR YOU

IT IS TIME

VF PLUS

MANIFESTO

2026

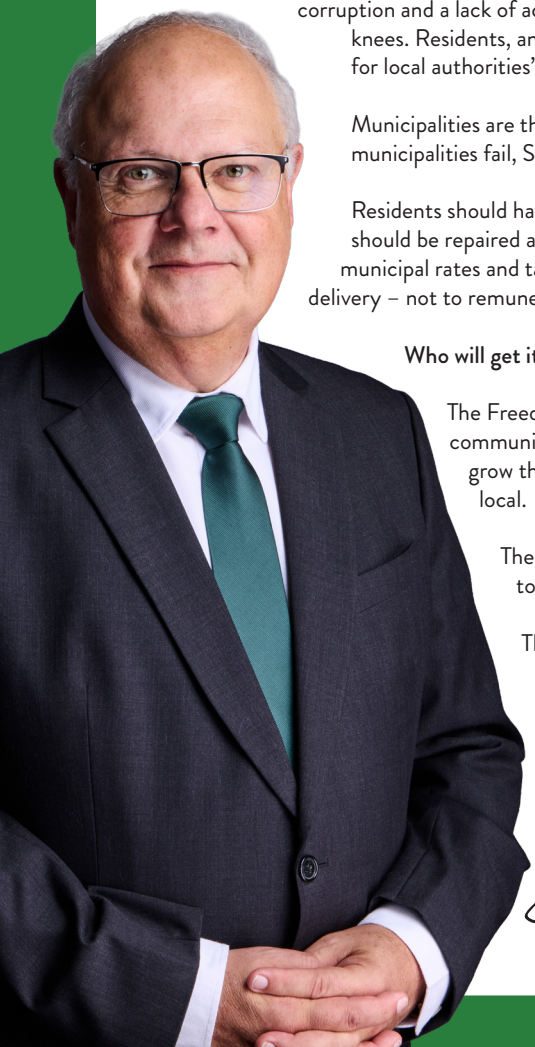
VF PLUS

IT IS TIME

LEADER'S MESSAGE

With its 2026 Manifesto the Freedom Front Plus (VF Plus) is drawing a line in the sand. South Africa has had enough.

Over the past few decades, misguided priorities and policy directions, incompetent officials, corruption and a lack of accountability have forced our municipalities to their knees. Residents, and especially loyal ratepayers, are paying the price for local authorities' failures.



Municipalities are the building blocks of a prosperous country. If our municipalities fail, South Africa fails.

Residents should have more say in their communities. Infrastructure should be repaired and expanded. Residents deserve affordable municipal rates and taxes. Tax money should go towards service delivery – not to remunerating officials who cannot or will not do their jobs.

Who will get it done?

The Freedom Front Plus will keep fighting until communities are afforded more powers and local economies grow through job creation. Local government should be local.

The party's Manifesto offers a practical ten-point plan to make municipalities work for us again.

The Freedom Front Plus has a plan. It is our time to put that plan into action.

Strengthen the hand of the Freedom Front Plus in your municipality on 4 November.

GREEN WILL GET IT DONE.

Corné Mulder

DR CORNÉ MULDER | VF PLUS LEADER

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30 YEARS OF DECLINE AND EXORBITANT SALARIES

Local government in South Africa has been plunged into total chaos. Service delivery is failing, while most municipalities are unsustainable and on the verge of bankruptcy. Even in the few municipalities where the decline is less obvious, it is a fact that service delivery and infrastructure are steadily deteriorating.

Over the past 30 years, towns have been merged to form larger municipalities or metro councils, but the only notable improvement has been to councillors' and senior officials' remuneration.

IT IS TIME

Now is the time to turn our towns and cities around. The Freedom Front Plus offers a viable plan to restore municipalities and establish a new dispensation of accountability.

The Freedom Front Plus is drawing the line to say, "Enough is enough – it is time for our recovery plan!"

IT'S OUR TIME

The Freedom Front Plus is contesting the local government elections under the theme "It is our time". Every voter needs to realise that the election is his or her time to take control, stop the decay and vote for much-needed improvement.

The Freedom Front Plus offers a recovery plan for our local governments. This Manifesto contains a concise background on municipal issues and problems, the causes of these problems, and presents a ten-point plan to solve these problems.

ACTUAL CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

Simply changing the governing party of a municipality will not solve the deeper underlying causes of the problems. What needs to change are policy directions and the model of local government.

South Africans deserve a new dispensation that will benefit all communities.
The ANC is seeking a scapegoat for everything that is wrong in South Africa, for all its own failures, and for the utter decay of towns and cities. It uses white people as the scapegoat; it is desperately trying to retain its voters by blaming white people and Apartheid for the crises affecting the country. Racial polarisation is employed for short-term political gain.

The underlying causes of the decay, however, are rooted in the current policy, which has created a fertile breeding ground for mismanagement, corruption and fraud.

THERE IS HOPE – GREEN WILL GET IT DONE

The people of South Africa could unite around a new vision for the future. A vision of everyone shouldering the responsibility of taking control of their own and their descendants' future, motivated by values such as integrity, honesty, hard work, mutual respect and neighbourly love.

The Freedom Front Plus's 2026 Manifesto details a recovery plan that instils hope for building a better future. It is based on the Freedom Front Plus's vision for your town or city.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS'S VISION FOR YOUR TOWN OR CITY:

A place where there is water in the taps; the lights stay on; sewerage works are functioning; streets are clean; potholes are repaired; experts are appointed; ratepayers get value for money; businesses can grow; communities are safe; and residents actually have a say in how their area is governed.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS'S VISION CAN BE REALISED THROUGH IMPLEMENTING THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THIS MANIFESTO. THAT IS WHAT THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS OFFERS VOTERS..

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS'S 2026 OFFER TO VOTERS:

- YOUR COMMUNITY FIRST: DEVOLVE DECISION-MAKING AND POWER CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE.
- MERIT AND EXPERTISE: THE BEST PERSON FOR THE JOB SHOULD BE APPOINTED.
- MAKING YOUR MONEY WORK FOR YOU: ENSURE FAIR RATES AND TAXES, VALUE FOR MONEY AND REINVEST TAX MONEY IN COMMUNITIES.
- FREEDOM TO BUILD AND GROW: PROTECT PROPERTY RIGHTS, BUSINESSES, THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND PRIVATE INITIATIVE.
- STABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: PRINCIPLED COALITIONS THAT GOVERN WITH THE AIM OF RESTORING SERVICES – NOT OBTAINING POSITIONS OF POWER.

KEY PROBLEMS AND CAUSES

INFRASTRUCTURE DECAY

Water shortages, contaminated water, pothole-ridden roads, streetlights that are either out of order or burning all day, traffic lights that do not work and sewage flowing in the streets are everyday occurrences in South African municipalities. Wherever this is not yet the norm, there are still signs of systematic decay.

South Africa is a water-scarce country frequently affected by severe droughts. This natural phenomenon is not the sole cause of the water shortages, though.

The lack of proper maintenance of water infrastructure, such as pipelines, dams, water purification plants and water pumps, is a major contributing factor to the problem. An enormous amount of water is lost due to water leaks and failing infrastructure. There is also a lack of expertise in water management.

In addition, newly built roads crumble within a year or two due to incompetent contractors and/or no routine maintenance.

Tenders for infrastructure projects are awarded to companies that all too often exploit the government and deliver substandard work. These companies' work is not monitored to ensure value for money. Some contractors are paid in advance, but never complete the work. In other cases, companies are not paid what they are due, leading to abandoned and incomplete infrastructure projects.

These companies are appointed on the basis of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) criteria, while value for money, their ability to execute the project and a proven record of experience are not taken into account.

Available funds are misused due to a lack of expertise, and the infrastructure grants that municipalities receive from the national fiscus are generally underspent.

These are the reasons for the lack of maintenance and overall decay of infrastructure. The mandatory requirement that municipalities must spend at least 8% of the book value of property, plant and equipment on maintenance annually is not complied with.

There is a serious shortage of engineers at municipal level, which leads to poor planning, monitoring, implementation and execution of infrastructure projects. This is mainly due to Affirmative Action (AA), which is implemented in such a way that positions are only filled when a candidate of the preferred race applies, if not, the position simply remains vacant.

POOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Most municipalities are unable to provide adequate services to their entire service area. The main service delivery issues include refuse removal, sewerage, water and electricity supply, and issuing correct utility bills to consumers.

Municipalities' service areas are unrealistically vast. In 1994, there were 1 262 local municipalities – a stark contrast to the 213 (local and metros) currently in existence.
It was a mistake to centralise the function of service delivery seeing as it created distance between local government and communities, thus hampering service delivery.

In addition, there is a shortage of dedicated and competent municipal officials. Affirmative Action has led to low morale, a lack of dedication, vacancies and incompetence.
Most municipalities have too many senior officials as well as too many political office-bearers who do not contribute to service delivery. Meanwhile, there is a general shortage of tradesmen, such as electricians, who contribute directly to proper service delivery.

Municipal trade unions are given too much leeway to make unreasonable demands and regularly organise strikes. These frequent strikes by municipal workers also contribute to poor service delivery.

Furthermore, vandalism and theft of municipal property also hamper service delivery while exacerbating municipalities' dire financial positions. This is mainly the result of inadequate security and law enforcement.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

South Africa has breathtaking natural beauty. Our natural environment and resources are, however, being destroyed by incompetent local governments with misguided priorities.

Our towns and cities are filthy, illegal dumping sites abound, sewage spills into rivers and the sea, and the municipal by-laws that are supposed to prevent pollution either do not exist or are not enforced.

Crumbling infrastructure and failing waste water treatment plants are the main contributors to this countrywide crisis.

In many cities and towns, there is no refuse removal for months on end. All too often, recycling projects are only for show – most plastic waste ends up in our oceans instead of being recycled.

FINANCIAL SHORTFALLS

South Africa is experiencing extremely high unemployment and inadequate economic growth. This crisis is shrinking state revenue, while needs and expenditure keep growing.

Municipalities' equitable share and conditional grants from the national fiscus are, therefore, disproportionate to the demand for infrastructure development and service delivery.

Municipalities view excessive increases in property rates and tariffs as a solution to financial shortfalls. Annually, property rates and tariff hikes generally exceed the inflation rate, while strange new levies are introduced in an attempt to supplement revenue streams. This is not achieving the desired outcome, though, it has the opposite effect. The exorbitant increases and levies only further impoverish residents, leading them to default, which is directly detrimental to municipalities. Small to medium businesses close their doors because of these unaffordable increases, leading to greater unemployment and further impoverishment of the municipality as a whole.

Seeing as municipalities' own revenue streams dry up as residents become impoverished and businesses close down, these municipalities are plunged into serious financial crises. Rural municipalities, in particular, experience the negative impact of depopulation as industries and manufacturing plants either close down or relocate due to poor basic service delivery.

A vicious cycle forms where municipalities fail to deliver services while hiking up tariffs, which hampers development and growth in the private sector. This, in turn, leads to an impoverished population and unemployment, which further reduces municipalities' revenue, rendering it unable to deliver basic services.

Conditional grants and allocations for infrastructure development are underspent in some cases; while in others, conditional grants are used for paying salaries and not for infrastructure maintenance or development.

The causes of the dire financial position in which municipalities currently find themselves include years of financial mismanagement, corruption, self-enrichment, wasteful expenditure and misguided priorities. There is a complete lack of fiscal discipline at local government level – mayors, municipal managers and others are paid excessive salaries and living in luxury.

Municipal officials' remuneration has skyrocketed over the past decade. A lack of oversight and political will resulted in unbridled salary increases. Consequently, municipalities do not have sufficient funds in their operational budgets so they spend capital budgets and conditional grants on salaries. Many of these senior officials who earn excessive salaries are not experts or persons who contribute directly to service delivery, instead, they are political office-bearers who provide support to politicians.

Due to the enormous unemployment crisis and severe poverty in South Africa there is tremendous financial strain on municipalities, as many residents cannot pay for their water, sanitation, refuse removal and electricity consumption. Municipalities have, however, failed to keep their indigent registers up to date. As a result, many residents who qualify as indigent, and should receive free basic services, based on their level of income are not on the register. For decades, these residents were incorrectly regarded as paying consumers who received monthly utility bills. Consequently, municipalities' books reflect extremely large amounts of outstanding and irrecoverable debt. On the other hand, some residents whose income levels mean they do not qualify as indigent have been placed on the register.

Ultimately, municipalities find themselves in a financial position where they are unable to pay their creditors such as Eskom and water boards, cannot effectively deliver services or maintain infrastructure.

MALADMINISTRATION

In many cases, municipal managers, chief financial officers and other senior officials were not appointed on the basis of merit and do not possess the necessary expertise, experience and skills.

Affirmative Action shifted the focus from merit to other grounds, such as skin colour, political affiliation and ties to political party factions. These politically motivated appointments, cadre deployment and inadequate oversight by municipal councils have led to severe maladministration.

Weak leadership, along with dysfunctional councils, oversight committees and management structures, contributes to poor fiscal discipline and financial mismanagement. There is tremendous instability in municipalities' leadership, both politically and administratively. Staggering amounts of irregular, fruitless and wasteful as well as unauthorised expenditure due to mismanagement contribute greatly to the financial and service delivery crisis.

This failure in governance has led to the total collapse of municipalities. Decisions are oftentimes based on political ideals and not on sound governance principles. In addition, officials who violate legislation usually face little to no consequences. And councillors who adopt unlawful practices act with impunity.

TIME FOR COMMUNITIES TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES

The keystone of the Freedom Front Plus's policy is that communities are the building blocks of local government. Decision-making capacity should be as close to the people as possible; and communities should have greater control over their taxes, services, safety, development and heritage.

This requires a revision of the entire local government system. Local communities should serve as the most basic level of government.

The Freedom Front Plus endorses the principle of subsidiarity (devolving power). This means all authority should be exercised at the lowest possible level (self-determination).

The Freedom Front Plus advocates a dispensation that facilitates sustainable and self-reliant communities. As the building blocks of a broader society, such local communities should be enabled to ensure their own well-being.

The principle of keeping government as close as possible to communities has to be promoted. At the moment, the global trend is to minimize the distance between decision-making and service delivery, and the communities they affect. Switzerland is a good example of the successful implementation of this. Switzerland has approximately 8,5 million inhabitants and covers an area of 41 285 km^2 served by 2 212 municipal councils. South Africa, with nearly 64 million inhabitants and an area of 1 219 090 km^2, has only 213 municipalities.

Municipal areas have become so vast that it is no longer governance on local level. To make matters worse, the ANC is exploiting municipalities for the deployment of cadres.

Local municipalities should encompass only one town. There is no evidence that the system of merged municipalities, implemented since 2000, is in any way beneficial, except for the small elite of councillors and top officials.

Therefore, the existing system of megacities and local municipalities consisting of several towns should be revised to bring local government back to local communities. Moreover, the taxes paid by these communities should also be ploughed back into the relevant community.

Although the decision-making capacity to bring about changes in this system is not vested at local level, the Freedom Front Plus will do all it can to promote the devolution of power and decision-making capacity.

Public participation at grass-roots level should

be encouraged and submissions carefully considered when amending integrated development plans, spatial development and budgets.

When communities take steps to ensure their own safety, for example, such initiatives should be welcomed and supported. Where a municipality does not have the capacity to deliver a service properly, the community, businesses and civil organisations should be given leeway to form part of the solution – this includes water and electricity supply, refuse removal, recycling, security and maintenance.

In the Freedom Front Plus's view, diversity is an asset for South Africa. So, diversity ought to be recognised and promoted in all spheres of government. This includes cultivating mutual respect for all communities' symbols, historical names and heritage.

The Freedom Front Plus's ongoing political battles to oppose needless name changes demonstrates this view.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- DEVOLVE DECISION-MAKING AND POWER TO THE COMMUNITY.
- PROMOTE A RICH COMMUNITY LIFE WHERE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EXTENDS FAR BEYOND PERIODIC ELECTIONS, AND WHERE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AND DECISION-MAKING.
- THE RATES AND TAXES PAID BY A PARTICULAR COMMUNITY SHOULD BE PLOUGHED BACK INTO THE RELEVANT AREA.
- CAREFULLY CONSIDER AND INCLUDE THE SUBMISSIONS AND PROPOSALS OBTAINED FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES WHEN DRAFTING BUDGETS, INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANS, ETC.
- PROMOTE SUBSIDIARITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE. PROMOTE THE RIGHT OF COMMUNITIES TO HAVE A SAY IN THE CONSERVATION AND CELEBRATION OF THEIR HERITAGE.
- PROMOTE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES.
- PROMOTE MULTILINGUALISM.
- PROTECT HERITAGE AND RESPECT DIVERSITY.
- STOP NEEDLESSLY CHANGING PLACE AND STREET NAMES.

TIME FOR YOUR **TAX MONEY** TO WORK FOR YOU

Due to the high cost of living, most ratepayers are finding it increasingly hard to pay rates and taxes. So, the money they do pay should not go towards funding unproductive municipal expenditure, but every cent should be wisely spent.

The exorbitant salaries paid to senior officials, in particular, serve as an example of such unproductive expenditure. In most cases, these senior officials contribute little to concrete service delivery. There are too many "bosses" and too few officials, such as tradesmen, who truly add value. There is a shortage of skilled officials who can repair water leaks, do electrical repairs and fix potholes. In contrast, there are too many political support staff and superfluous administrative officials.

When in power, the Freedom Front Plus will reduce the number of senior and middle-management positions; revise salaries and bring them in line with expertise, skills and the value of the position (functionality); and appoint more tradesmen who will contribute to concrete service delivery.

Rates and levies should be ring-fenced and systematically earmarked. This means that a substantial portion of rates and levies must be ploughed back into the wards where the tax was collected. The principle of basic services for all, including providing low-income households with access to services, is important and is recognised. Municipal revenue should be redistributed to provide in all residents' needs, however, this may not result in paying residents getting little to no value for their tax money in their wards.

It is unfair to overtax loyal ratepayers, who have developed a culture of regularly and faithfully paying rates and taxes, in order to subsidise non-payers. The culture of non-payment must be addressed, as there are many non-payers who can afford to pay.

The equitable share that municipalities receive should be used for its intended purpose of delivering basic services to the poor. Fiscal discipline and intentional expenditure will ensure that services are delivered to the poor, upliftment takes place and taxes are spent where they were collected.

It is unfair to expect residents to faithfully keep paying for services that are not delivered. Municipalities should earn rates, levies and tariffs, and not simply collect them. There should be value for money paid in rates and taxes.

Quality service delivery and effective governance should be facilitated through efficient oversight to ensure transparency regarding expenditure. This means, among other things, that the exorbitant salaries paid to officials who are unable to ensure proper service delivery must be stopped.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE TAX MONEY COLLECTED IN YOUR WARD (YOUR PROPERTY RATES AND LEVIES) SHOULD BE REINVESTED THERE. THE BETTER THE COLLECTION RATE OF A WARD, THE MORE MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT ON THAT WARD'S PRIORITIES.
- CUT BACK ON UNPRODUCTIVE EXPENDITURE, INCLUDING SUPERFLUOUS POSITIONS.
- FEWER "BOSSES" AND MORE EXPERTS AND TRADESMEN WHO MAKE A CONCRETE CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE DELIVERY.
- USE THE EQUITABLE SHARE TO PROVIDE BASIC SERVICES TO THE INDIGENT.
- ENSURE QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE THROUGH EFFICIENT OVERSIGHT.

TIME FOR **FAIR RATES AND TAXES**

Paying rates, taxes and tariffs is essential for the survival of municipalities and service delivery. Municipalities should do everything in their power to prevent raising taxes and tariffs through cutting back on needless expenditure.

Unfair annual tax and tariff hikes that exceed the inflation rate result in more non-payers, which hampers municipalities' economic growth.

A standardised rates system and uniform service tariffs for the same category of consumers should be implemented. This entails equal payment for equal services and a focus on actively eradicating the culture of non-payment. This will make it easier to implement the principle of basic services for all, including providing low-income households with access to services.

Regularly issuing accurate utility bills is crucial. Municipalities should upgrade their billing systems and invest in modern technology to integrate systems effectively. Municipalities should consider implementing cell phone applications to enable residents to check and pay their accounts promptly.

Meter reading needs to be modernised and estimated readings must be avoided. It has, unfortunately, become customary to estimate readings instead of actually taking meter readings. The use of tamper-proof smart meters whereby illegal electricity connections can be prevented should be prioritised. Area meters must be installed to record any losses and immediately detect electricity theft.

The unfair taxes levied on agricultural land, with farmers receiving minimal municipal services, should be decisively addressed.
Negligible municipal revenue sources, such as trade permit fees, should be scrapped to provide much-needed relief to businesses in difficult economic circumstances.

Property values in existing neighbourhoods should be safeguarded;

urban expansion should occur in an orderly fashion through proper planning and management so it does not negatively impact property values.

The Freedom Front Plus will protect property rights and ensure that municipal policy, spatial development, land use and rates respect the lawful interests of property owners and safeguard property values.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- A STANDARDISED RATES SYSTEM AND UNIFORM SERVICE TARIFFS.
- PREVENT RAISING TAXES AND TARIFFS BY CUTTING BACK ON NEEDLESS EXPENDITURE.
- TAX AND TARIFF HIKES SHOULD NOT EXCEED THE INFLATION RATE.
- REGULAR AND ACCURATE UTILITY BILLS.
- MODERNISED METER READINGS, SMART METERS AND AREA METERS.
- STOP ILLEGAL ELECTRICITY CONNECTIONS AND ELECTRICITY THEFT.
- ADDRESS THE UNFAIR TAXES LEVIED ON AGRICULTURAL LAND.
- PROTECT PROPERTY RIGHTS AND RESPECT PROPERTY OWNERS' LAWFUL INTERESTS.
- ORDERLY URBANISATION TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PROPERTY VALUES OF EXISTING NEIGHBOURHOODS.

TIME TO REPAIR AND BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE

The conditional grants received from the national fiscus and earmarked for the development and maintenance of infrastructure should be used solely for that purpose. There may be no underspending.

Funds and conditional grants must be spent on critical infrastructure – sewerage, water, electricity and roads – before any funds are spent on the construction of, for example, sports stadiums.

To prevent infrastructure decay, at least 8% of the book value of property, plant and equipment should be spent on maintenance annually.

Infrastructure projects and maintenance should be properly planned. Appointing experts, such as engineers and tradesmen, has to be prioritised.

Effective oversight of infrastructure projects must be ensured; and contractors should be sensibly appointed based on expertise and the best value for money. Contractors' progress with projects should be continuously monitored.

Upgrading and maintaining sewerage treatment works has to be top priority. Infrastructure grants should be spent on upgrading existing sewerage infrastructure. Likewise, water infrastructure is also a priority. Modern technology should be employed to detect water leaks, proactively do the necessary repairs and prevent large-scale water outages. It is important to first upgrade existing water infrastructure before investing in new infrastructure.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- SPEND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS (CONDITIONAL GRANTS) IN FULL.
- SPEND AT LEAST 8% OF THE BOOK VALUE OF PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT ANNUALLY ON MAINTENANCE.
- PLAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE THOROUGHLY.
- APPOINT EXPERTS AND SKILLED TRADESMEN.

TIME FOR FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Municipalities need to invest in preventive control mechanisms to ensure accountability, and to prevent financial losses, fraud and corruption, the mismanagement of public resources and service delivery failures.

To improve financial management, transactions should be stringently monitored, reviewed and overseen. Municipalities' current record-keeping of transactions is inadequate, resulting in a lack of financial transparency.

There is an arsenal of local government legislation, regulations and codes of conduct meant to govern the actions of municipal administrators and councillors. Councillors and officials, however, frequently violate these stipulations and are never held accountable. This has to change. Compliance with legislation and regulations has to be ensured.

It is crucial for municipalities to budget and plan realistically. This warrants urgent attention as the budgets of most municipalities are either unfunded or unrealistic. A lack of proper planning has created an environment where crisis management is the norm.

Debt collection has to be prioritised. At the same time, mechanisms need to be implemented to ensure that accurate utility bills are issued on time.

It is vital to professionalise municipal management and in order to do that, competent officials with the required skills and qualifications must be appointed. As long as municipal managers, chief financial officers and senior management are not qualified to do the job for which they were appointed, financial mismanagement will prevail.

It is absolutely necessary to ensure that Municipal Public Accounts Committees function properly to exercise oversight and conduct investigations. Simply condoning irregular and fruitless expenditure year after year with impunity serves no purpose. Officials responsible for squandering public funds must face consequences.

All contracts concluded between municipal councils and service providers should be disclosed for public scrutiny.

A decisive effort must be made to collect government departments' outstanding debt to municipalities.

There has to be stability in political and administrative leadership. Municipal councils should be fully functional and effectively exercise oversight.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- CONTROL MECHANISMS SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND PREVENT FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT.
- IMPROVE RECORD-KEEPING AND THE MONITORING, REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND DECISIONS.
- PROFESSIONALISE MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT AND APPOINT COMPETENT OFFICIALS BASED ON MERIT.
- MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES SHOULD EFFECTIVELY EXERCISE OVERSIGHT, CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS AND IMPLEMENT CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT.
- MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES SHOULD FUNCTION PROPERLY AND THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATE IRREGULAR, FRUITLESS AND WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE.
- IRREGULARITIES, SQUANDERING AND MISMANAGEMENT MAY NOT GO UNPUNISHED.
- POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP SHOULD BE STABLE.
- UNLAWFUL CONTRACTS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS MUST BE TERMINATED.
- MUNICIPAL TENDER PROCESSES NEED TO BE REVIEWED AND ADJUSTED TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY.
- ONLY CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS WHO POSSESS THE EXPERTISE AND HAVE A PROVEN RECORD OF PERFORMANCE SHOULD BE APPOINTED.
- RECOVER FUNDS LOST DUE TO CORRUPTION, FRAUD AND IRREGULAR CONTRACTS.
- COLLECT OUTSTANDING DEBT FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS BY TAKING DECISIVE STEPS.
- COUNCILLORS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO BOOK FOR UNLAWFUL PRACTICES, SUCH AS ADOPTING UNFUNDED BUDGETS.

TIME FOR A **SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

The environment needs to be protected through effectively policing pollution and the violation of relevant legislation.

At present, municipalities themselves are the biggest culprits and responsible for the most severe pollution of, among other things, water sources.

When a municipality is guilty of pollution and violating environmental legislation, the accountable official should be criminally prosecuted.

Practical solutions to prevent litter pollution of rivers, dams and the sea should be looked into. One such example is drainage nets. Municipalities should install nets at stormwater drainage pipes to prevent plastic litter, in particular, from ending up in water sources.

The pollution of natural water sources as a result of dysfunctional waste water treatment plants must not be tolerated. Maintaining critical sewerage infrastructure is a top priority; while municipalities themselves should regularly test water sources for any possible sewage pollution. This will ensure swift action is taken to do repairs when needed.

Water losses must be curbed through modernising water management, investing in existing infrastructure and the prompt detection of water leaks. The first step is thorough record-keeping of all water purchases, distribution and sales. This will ensure that the amount of non-revenue-generating water is accurately reported and water losses can be determined.

Upgrading landfill sites is essential. Steps should be taken to secure these sites and to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation. Each municipality should encourage a culture of recycling and initiate projects that provide the unemployed with opportunities to participate in the organised recycling of litter – ultimately benefiting both local communities and the environment. These projects should entail the actual recycling of appropriate material. Plastic should not end up in our oceans.

Municipalities should create a favourable environment for residents to switch to renewable energy sources. This should include, among other things, rebates for residents who switch to renewable electricity supply.

Municipalities should encourage the private generation of electricity, while also launching affordable and sustainable alternative electricity generation projects.

Although developing and expanding towns and cities is important for progress, parks and "green areas" have to be retained as far as possible by deliberately including them in spatial development plans. Planting trees and other appropriate vegetation on sidewalks and traffic islands is crucial for creating a sustainable environment for the future and counteracting the effect of air pollution.

District municipalities need to prioritise disaster management and spend the relevant conditional grants on providing functional fire-fighting services to local municipalities. All the towns in a specific municipal area should have fire-fighting equipment and vehicles at their disposal. Fire-fighting equipment specifically adapted to combat veldfires must be provided to rural areas.

It is important to create an environment that is not only healthy, but also safe. The only way to effectively curb crime is to ensure that the various role players, such as the police, civil rights organisations, community policing forums, neighbourhood watches, rural safety structures, metro or municipal police and private security firms, work together and not in isolation.

The Freedom Front Plus will take on the role of facilitating and ensuring cooperation. It is equally important to involve the community in crime prevention. Local communities should be encouraged to report crime.

At present, municipal law enforcement is falling far short. This contributes to a lawless society. It is essential to consistently police and enforce municipal by-laws. First, however, a process must be undertaken to review these by-laws and ensure that they are in line with current realities and modern society.

A safe environment should be created, free from circumstances favourable for criminality. Such an environment will have working streetlights, security cameras and no vacant or abandoned municipal property.

Municipal property must be protected against vandalism. Millions are currently spent on hiring security contractors to protect municipal buildings and other property. These contracts should be reviewed to ensure efficiency and value for money. Where possible, security cameras should be installed to protect municipal assets.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- ENSURE MUNICIPAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION.
- SPEND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS ON UPGRADING AND MAINTAINING SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.
- IMPLEMENT MODERNISED WATER MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE RECORD-KEEPING IS ACCURATE, AND WATER LEAKS ARE PROMPTLY DETECTED AND REPAIRED.
- FOLLOW A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO TRACKING WATER LOSSES.
- PREVENT LITTER POLLUTION OF WATER SOURCES WITH DRAINAGE NETS.
- PROMOTE A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ENCOURAGING CLEAN-UP PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.
- ENSURE FUNCTIONAL REFUSE REMOVAL SERVICES AND LAWFUL LANDFILL SITES WITH RECYCLING PROJECTS.
- IMPLEMENT INCENTIVE REBATES FOR USING ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES.
- CRIMINALLY PROSECUTE ACCOUNTABLE OFFICERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION VIOLATIONS.
- EFFECTIVELY POLICE POLLUTION AND THE VIOLATION OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION.
- ENSURE EFFECTIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT WHERE FIRE-FIGHTING AND PREVENTION ARE PRIORITISED.
- CONSERVE AND DEVELOP PARKS AND GREEN AREAS.
- FACILITATE COOPERATION BETWEEN VARIOUS ROLE PLAYERS TO PREVENT CRIME AND APPREHEND CRIMINALS.
- CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WITH CCTV CAMERAS AND WORKING STREETLIGHTS.
- ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF VACANT OR ABANDONED MUNICIPAL PROPERTY.
- PROMOTE EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND REVIEW OUTDATED MUNICIPAL BY-LAWS.

TIME FOR JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Unemployment is a tremendous crisis in South Africa. The high unemployment rate is a major contributing factor to urbanisation, greater dependence on free services and, ultimately, the utter impoverishment of municipalities.

Unemployment should urgently be addressed. No government can sustainably create jobs. Therefore, the Freedom Front Plus is convinced that unemployment can only be overcome by creating a favourable environment for job creation and investment by the private sector.

Economic empowerment in South Africa should not aim to enrich a select few, but be focused on uplifting and empowering entire communities. In the Freedom Front Plus's view, skin colour cannot be used as a generalised indication of being disadvantaged, so, it should not serve as a condition for empowerment. Instead, measurable socio-economic circumstances, such as poverty, unemployment and a lack of access to quality education, should serve as the basis for empowerment.

Poverty is a national problem affecting a large portion of our society – people from all communities. Over the years, involving the community in poverty alleviation by encouraging community-driven initiatives has proven to be the most effective way to combat poverty. The Freedom Front Plus will, therefore, strive to promote community-based social services.

Facilitating development and growth is the only sustainable method of empowerment. To achieve economic growth, municipalities should create a favourable environment through reliable service delivery, infrastructure development and maintenance, and fair rates and taxes.

A prerequisite for local economic development is public confidence in the municipal management and council. Such confidence creates investment certainty for the private sector to invest and expand. Confidence is instilled through transparent and responsible governance where public funds are sensibly spent, a safe environment is created, and the community's interests are safeguarded and promoted.

The needless administrative red tape concerning rezoning applications, trading permits, etc. should be done away with. It should be easy to start and successfully operate a local business.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- FUNCTIONAL MUNICIPALITIES WILL STIMULATE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITIES, CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND REDUCE POVERTY.
- MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD NOT ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE MORE JOBS, INSTEAD, THEY SHOULD ESTABLISH A FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL ENABLE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO EXPAND AND CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES.
- MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD CREATE A FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RELIABLE SERVICE DELIVERY, I NFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE, AND FAIR RATES AND TAXES.
- DO AWAY WITH NEEDLESS ADMINISTRATIVE RED TAPE.

TIME FOR **PUBLIC SERVANTS** TO SERVE THE PEOPLE

The Freedom Front Plus is convinced that one of the root causes of poor service delivery is the unchecked implementation of Affirmative Action, whereby experienced managers and professionals have been forced out of municipalities and replaced by ANC cadres. Consequently, individuals with limited or no capacity to properly serve the public – as required by municipal legislation – have taken control of essential and basic services, which are now collapsing countrywide.

Another cause of financial shortfalls and subsequent decline is municipalities' unbridled appointment of senior officials, employment of too many administrative and political support staff, and payment of exorbitant salaries. Many of the senior positions that have been created are superfluous and do not contribute to service delivery. Meanwhile, there is a general shortage of experts and tradesmen, such as engineers, electricians, etc.

The Freedom Front Plus will, therefore, strive to appoint, and retain, competent and qualified officials based on merit. The chaos in municipalities' service delivery and management can only be resolved by appointing the most competent candidates. Nepotism as well as other forms of favouritism, such as political affiliations, must be eradicated. Furthermore, the Freedom Front Plus will not hesitate to reduce superfluous senior, administrative and political support staff positions to make way for appointing tradesmen and officials who will contribute directly and meaningfully to service delivery.

Where a municipality does not have the capacity to deliver services properly, communities and the private sector should be given the opportunity to form part of the solution.

Poor governance and infighting, characteristic of ANC-controlled municipal governments, should be eradicated. Political office-bearers and public officials are meant to serve the people. The Freedom Front Plus representatives in each municipal council will work towards either destabilising the ANC through forming a coalition or fulfilling an effective watchdog function to ensure that the relevant municipality works for its residents.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- PROMOTE A CULTURE OF SERVICE.
- APPOINT THE BEST PERSON FOR THE JOB, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SKIN COLOUR AND POLITICAL AFFILIATION.
- ESTABLISH AN ACCOUNTABLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY EXERCISE OVERSIGHT OVER MUNICIPAL FINANCES AND OFFICIALS, WHILE ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS RESIDENTS AND PROTECTING THEIR BASIC RIGHTS.
- MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS SHOULD ACT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND PARTY-POLITICAL FACTIONS SHOULD NOT INFLUENCE HOW THEY FULFIL THEIR DUTIES.
- FREEDOM FRONT PLUS COUNCILLORS WILL SERVE AS FACILITATORS TO RESOLVE VOTERS' MUNICIPAL PROBLEMS.
- FREEDOM FRONT PLUS COUNCILLORS WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS, NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND OTHER ROLE PLAYERS TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY EFFECTIVELY.

TIME FOR A **NEW DISPENSATION WITH SOUND VALUES**

The Freedom Front Plus strives for a political order where Christian values apply and which is characterised by the principles of integrity, justice, honesty, mutual respect, neighbourly love, respect for life, loyalty and peaceful co-existence. The Freedom Front Plus will promote sound and accountable administrations in accordance with these principles.

The Freedom Front Plus is committed to a fair dispensation for all. This does not only apply to the majority, but also to minority groups. The party, therefore, strongly condemns measures that introduce post-apartheid discrimination against people on the basis of race, such as Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment.

It is time for a new dispensation where equal rights are actually realised and promoted, and where no community is alienated.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- PROMOTE THE VALUES OF INTEGRITY, JUSTICE, HONESTY, NEIGHBOURLY LOVE, RESPECT FOR LIFE, LOYALTY AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE.
- PROMOTE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES.

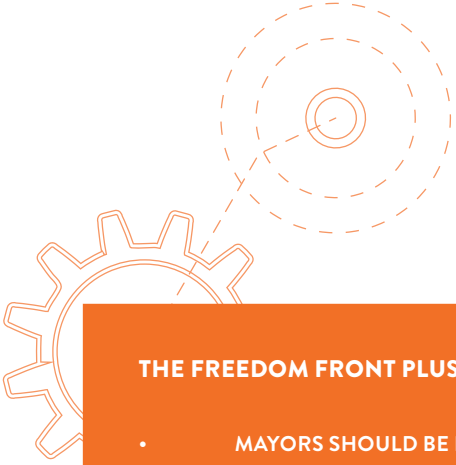
TIME FOR **EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT**

The absence of political will leads to a lack of oversight over municipal officials and governance practices, which results in irregularities and a lack of accountability.

It is of cardinal importance that municipal councils exercise their oversight role over municipal management and the executive authority. This entails ensuring the proper functioning of oversight committees, thorough investigation of all unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure, and holding officials accountable for transgressions.

A municipal council ought to serve the interests of the community and govern the municipality responsibly. It is important that councillors fulfil their oversight role to ensure that municipalities comply with legislation and function effectively.

Freedom Front Plus candidates possess the necessary skills and where they are elected as councillors, who are part of the larger Freedom Front Plus team, they will employ their expertise and experience for the benefit of both the municipality and the community. The Freedom Front Plus will diligently fulfil a watchdog role in municipal councils.



THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- MAYORS SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE MORE EFFECTIVELY; AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS SHOULD PLAY A MORE DECISIVE ROLE IN MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP.
- FREEDOM FRONT PLUS COUNCILLORS WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN MUNICIPAL COUNCILS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES, DYNAMICALLY EMPLOYING THEIR COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT TO ACHIEVE MORE ACCOUNTABLE MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE.
- FREEDOM FRONT PLUS COUNCILLORS WILL SERVE AS EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION TO IRREGULARITIES, CORRUPTION, MISMANAGEMENT AND MISGUIDED PRIORITIES.
- CORRUPTION, POOR SERVICE DELIVERY, NEPOTISM, INCOMPETENCE, MISMANAGEMENT AND THE CONTRAVENTION OF LEGISLATION WILL BE EXPOSED BY THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS; AND COMPLAINTS WILL BE LODGED WITH SUPERVISORY INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE PUBLIC PROTECTOR, THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE AND THE HAWKS TO HOLD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE.
- ACCOUNTABLE OFFICERS (MUNICIPAL AND CITY MANAGERS) MUST BE CRIMINALLY PROSECUTED FOR VIOLATING LEGISLATION.

TIME FOR STABLE COALITION GOVERNMENTS

Following the elections, the Freedom Front Plus will, without sacrificing its independent identity or principles, cooperate with other parties and organisations if the party is convinced that such cooperation will promote the objectives of the community and this Manifesto – particularly to oust the ANC from power in municipal governments.

Research and polls indicate that at several municipalities no single party will secure an outright 51% majority in the upcoming elections.

Multiparty or coalition governments will enable opposition parties to join hands after the elections, and play a major part in certain metro and local municipalities. The advantage of multiparty governments is that they minimise the abuse of power, while better representing the values and schools of thought of the general public, including minority groups.

At the moment, though, instability characterises coalition governments in the local government sphere. In the past, negotiations between coalition partners have come to loggerheads due to certain partners' pettiness and their relentless focus on positions of power. Oftentimes, these coalitions struggled to resolve one disagreement after the other and, in some cases, this constant instability eventually resulted in the termination of the coalition.

The Freedom Front Plus is of the opinion that coalition negotiations should centre on finding common ground and establishing a shared governance model that embraces the values and policy directions of all the partners, it should not focus solely on negotiating for power and positions.

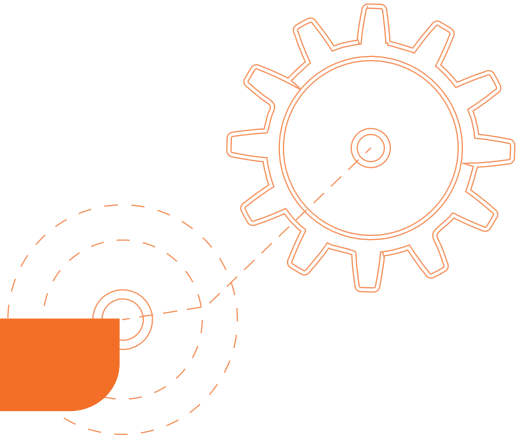
The agreed-upon governance model should direct all future decision-making by the coalition government. If such a model is carefully negotiated and agreed upon at the beginning of the municipal term, instability caused by coalition partners' differences of opinion will be mitigated. From the outset, there should be certainty regarding the coalition government's negotiated positions on aspects such as appointments, budgets,

rates and taxes, and spatial development. Coalition governments should be about responsible power-sharing, collective decision-making and joint accountability.

So, in cases where no single party can govern on its own, the Freedom Front Plus will step up as a stable and principled partner that steers coalitions to focus on service delivery, financial discipline and accountability, rather than on positions and political power.

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS SAYS:

- THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS WILL PARTICIPATE IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT TO OPPOSE THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICY, WHICH HAS LED TO THE UTTER DECLINE OF MUNICIPALITIES.
- AS A PARTNER IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT, THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS WILL KEEP FIGHTING FOR ITS VOTERS' RIGHTS AND TAKE A STRONG STAND AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND UNFAIR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION APPOINTMENTS.
- THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS WILL SEE TO IT THAT ITS POLICY DIRECTIONS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE COALITION AGREEMENTS OF THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT WILL BE ESTABLISHED.
- THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS WILL INSIST ON NEGOTIATED GOVERNANCE MODELS THAT PROMOTE JOINT DECISION-MAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY.
- THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS WILL NEGOTIATE AND ACT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ENSURE STABLE COALITIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE.



CONCLUSION

The objective of local government is to provide an accountable government for local communities, to ensure that services are delivered to communities in a sustainable manner, to promote social and economic development, to promote a safe and healthy environment, and to encourage the participation of communities and community organisations in local government matters.

The Freedom Front Plus's objective of the devolution of power can hardly be realised as long as municipal councils remain the most incompetent level of government. The problem is not too much power at local level, but too little.

This Manifesto is a recovery plan for municipalities, offering viable solutions to curb the current maladministration, infrastructure decay, severe financial mismanagement and service delivery failures. It is based on a vision of prosperous towns and cities.

What the Freedom Front Plus offers voters: local governments where the community comes first; where appointments are based on merit and expertise; where tax money works for taxpayers; where there is freedom to build and grow; and where stable, accountable and principled coalitions govern.

It is time to turn things around, take control and secure a better future.

THE GREEN WILL GET IT DONE TEN-POINT PLAN

THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS'S CONCRETE TEN-POINT PLAN FOR IMPROVING MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY CAN BE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Time for communities to decide for themselves:** Devolve decision-making capacity and power to as close as possible to the community; and give communities greater control over their taxes, services, safety, development and heritage.

2. **Time for your tax money to work for you:** A substantial portion of the tax money collected in your ward (your property rates and levies) should be reinvested there; use the equitable share to provide basic services to the indigent; reduce superfluous management positions and appoint more tradesmen to effectively deliver services; and ensure value for tax money through quality service delivery and effective governance.

3. **Time for fair rates and taxes:** Stop tariff hikes exceeding inflation; avoid implementing increases by cutting back on needless expenditure instead; implement a standardised rates system and uniform service tariffs; implement smart meters and ensure accurate utility bills; and protect property rights and property value.

4. **Time to repair and build infrastructure:** Spend infrastructure grants in full; spend at least 8% of the book value of property, plant and equipment annually on maintenance; and appoint experts and skilled tradesmen.

5. **Time for financial accountability:** Competent and professional officials; ensure functional oversight by councils and committees; consequences for transgressions; and recover funds lost due to fraud and corruption.

6. **Time for a safe and healthy environment:** Stop environmental pollution; prioritise maintaining and upgrading sewage treatment plants and landfill sites; ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and effective policing; stop water losses

caused by burst pipes and leaks; facilitate cooperation between various role players to fight crime and apprehend criminals; and promote a safe environment through CCTV cameras and working streetlights.

7. **Time for job creation and economic development:** Create a favourable environment for the private sector to stimulate economic growth and create sustainable job opportunities; do away with needless administrative red tape and make it easy to do business; and promote an environment that instils investor confidence.

8. **Time for public servants to serve the people:** Stop appointments that are not based on merit; appoint the best person for the job – regardless of skin colour or political affiliation; reduce superfluous senior and administrative positions and appoint more experts and tradesmen, such as engineers, electricians, etc.; and promote a culture of service.

9. **Time for a new dispensation with sound values:** Establish proper and accountable governments based on Christian values; and usher in a dispensation where all groups and communities enjoy equal rights.

10. **Time for effective oversight and stable coalition governments:** Act as a stable, principled coalition partner and fight for the rights of Freedom Front Plus voters within coalition governments; act as effective watchdogs against mismanagement, corruption and incompetence; and ensure transparency and accountability through proper oversight.

IT IS TIME

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SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR THIS MANIFESTO OFFERING VIABLE SOLUTIONS – **GREEN WILL GET IT DONE.**