

Phosa Admits ANC Mistakes

Written by Rudi Prinsloo
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The ANC has made serious mistakes on public service deployment, black economic empowerment and land reform that must be corrected after the elections, ANC treasurer-general Mathews Phosa said on Wednesday.

"People have been given jobs without the necessary qualifications and then could not do the job properly. There were very outrageous cases. Mistakes were made and we must correct them," he told the Cape Town Press Club.

Phosa said the African National Congress was aware that in the creation of a post-apartheid public service "there was not an even hand" and that this triggered a brain drain that hampered delivery.

"Let's be blunt about it, most of those who left were white. They are now in the private sector, in Australia, in Vancouver. We need to correct these things.

"We need to make the public service attractive for people. If we don't deal with it service delivery is not going to take place."

Phosa said the next administration would reward public servants who delivered and penalise those who did not perform.

Likewise, he said, land reform policy had often failed to achieve its aims, notably in Limpopo province, because the beneficiaries were not given the help they needed to cultivate land.

"Seventy percent of land returned into black hands collapsed and there are lessons to be learned. This sunk in with the government after Limpopo, we made mistakes and need to correct those.

"They need counselling, advice on what to do with land to avoid the disaster of Limpopo."

Phosa also conceded that black economic empowerment had been "manipulated for the benefit of a few people" instead of being used to give a large percentage of black people a meaningful stake in the economy.

"We must correct that and start at the bottom of the pyramid rather than say we should all be given shares in Anglo-American."

He was adamant that the next government would focus on the plight of the poorest of the poor.

But he said this should not be read as a sign that it would veer to the left to appease its alliance partners, Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the SA Communist Party, whose support helped secure Jacob Zuma the ANC presidency.

"Some 60 percent of South Africans live in rural areas and are poor. We will not ignore the poor.

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We worry about the unemployed. Cosatu worries about those who already have jobs and are unionised.

He added that economists should be assured that in trying to alleviate poverty "we will not spend money if we don't have money".

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