

It's time to eat. ANC's feasting will lead to its downfall

Irrespective of potential economic risks to the country, the ANC's primary voter base - the approximately 25.6-million rural voters, many dependent on social grants - is the government's focus. "You have to put yourselves in the ANC's shoes, where for over 100 years they've been deprived, so now it's their turn at the table. To invest and grow the economy requires saving, and they've decided to put that off to the next generation," Moeletsi Mbeki, deputy chairman of the South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) and a member of the Council for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, told financial journalist, Bruce Whitfield, during the latest of PSG's 2021 Think Big webinars.

"So, they're eating. And they must keep their voters eating too, to stay in power. As a result, there's no money left for financing investments in the economy. We are one of the highest-taxed countries in the world, yet, together with Egypt, we have one of the highest unemployment rates in Africa and the lowest investment as a percentage GDP.

“ You can't both eat and grow the economy, you have to make a choice, and the ANC has made that choice. ”

Mbeki said black South Africans have been angry for a long time, now they are sitting at the dinner table, and having three helpings. "Everyone knows that eating that much isn't sustainable and will probably kill you."

The younger generation doesn't feel deprived to the same extent. Better educated and more professional, they're changing their mindset away from one of grievance to one of building the country. Unfortunately, they are not really finding a political home, Mbeki said.

ANC is declining

South Africa is still in a long transition cycle, with one-party dominance; but this is changing. The ANC is declining. At one stage the party was 70% of the electorate but at the last local elections, it lost control of the biggest metros in the country. How will it fare in 2021?

Julius Malema has recommended that local elections be postponed because of Covid-19, but Mbeki dismissed this saying that countries around the world are holding elections during the pandemic.

Vaccine fiasco

Turning to the vaccine, Whitfield asked if the government's handling of it could negatively impact it in the voting booths.

"The vaccine fiasco is showing the incredible level of incompetence the ANC government has sunk into. We know the party has been in trouble for a while in terms of managing its own internal affairs. Now we are seeing the lives of literally thousands of people being put at risk due to this incompetence."

Bungling the acquisition of the vaccine affects every South African, irrespective of colour or class. This will certainly impact the vote in the coming elections. Add this to the fact that the urban population has started to abandon the ANC anyway, and it will be interesting to see what happens at the polls," he said.

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