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South Africa's Growing Democracy



South Africa witnessed its first democratic elections on 27th April of 1994, the day which is now celebrated as Freedom Day. In 1995 and 1996 municipal elections took place in South Africa. The election was held in two periods due to delays in the boundary demarcation disputes. Over the years, the number of participants in the local or municipal elections has increased tremendously. During the 1995 and 1996 municipal elections, the candidates who participated in these elections were mostly from political parties of that period.

However, the 2016 municipal elections have seen a growth of independent candidates and political parties participating in the local election. This shows the growth of the South African democracy since the dawn of democracy. South Africans now can decide their respective representatives regardless of their political affiliation. This is a significant growth; the 2016 local elections was one of the most contested elections; with political parties having their eyes on metros such as Nelson Mandela bay and Gauteng.



The number of registered candidates for the 2016 municipal elections both from political parties and independent candidate is the highest South Africa has witnessed thus far. The Eastern Cape has 8 494 registered candidates, Free State 4 132, Gauteng 9 686, Kwa Zulu-Natal 10 905, Limpopo 9 264, Mpumalanga 5 584, Northern Cape 2 349, North West 5 379, Western Cape 7 870. Overall there are 63 663 candidates who will contest in the South African s municipal election of 2016. This is a victory for democracy and the people of South Africa, who have realized the importance of the local government elections. This is shown by the number of people who have registered to participate in the 2016 elections which have increased by eleven per cent (11%). This is about 2 678 307 million people.

BY: Phathutshedzo Munaka

The Art of Coalitions

South Africa witnessed a massive turn out for the 2016 local elections, as a result, the elections were highly contested. With current ruling party and opposition parties in South Africa competing for the major metros in South Africa, namely Tshwane, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay a majority victory was not possible, this led to the possibility of a coalition. For example, if we use the Johannesburg Metropolitan there are 270 seats. In order for a party to rule, they need a total of 136 seats. If a political party has not won majority votes outright, but would also like to maintain their winning over other political parties, they need to align themselves with other political parties. A coalition with smaller political parties may enable the larger political party to maintain their dominance. This is where the 'art of coalition' comes into play.

A coalition is similar to a marriage of sorts. The only difference is that a coalition is established on temporary a basis. This means that those parties involved would have to compromise some of their values, beliefs and policies in order to have an understating. A coalition that involves a big political party and a small political party has the potential to give the small party an opportunity to influence municipal or provincial policies. While this might be beneficial for the small political party to have some of its policies being implemented, a coalition might lead to setbacks for the bigger political party. Furthermore, the smaller political parties have bargaining power in the sense that the larger political parties need to form a coalition in order to further their agendas.

In the pursuit of retaining power over a certain municipality or province, this might lead to reversal or contradiction of policies or values that compromises a political party's ideals. As such, a coalition provides small political parties the capacity to fast track service delivery while also giving these small parties an opportunity to lead. At the same time testing the validity of their policies if they can be implemented nation-wide. Such a coalition further exposes the nation as a whole to alternative policies which can be implemented.

Although a coalition provides a political party with the opportunity to retain control of certain municipalities, smaller parties have the opportunity to administer some of their policies. This could lead to a success, in which the political party would gain followers, or failure which would result in the loss of followers completely. Additionally, a coalition has the potential to fast track service delivery, employment opportunities and other socio-economic challenges that a country is facing. However, the 'united' parties need to reach consensus in order to govern the municipalities effectively.

BY: Phathutshedzo Munaka and Tatum Tahneé Kok



Government warns on ineffective coalitions



GOVERNMENT was ready to intervene if coalition talks between political parties failed to see clear winners emerge in any of the 27 hung councils across SA following the local government elections. Co-operative Governance Minister Des van Rooyen told a post-election media briefing that the Constitution provided for national or provincial government to intervene to place councils under administration, should coalition talks fail and service delivery be affected negatively. Key metros such as the economically significant Johannesburg and the capital city, Tshwane, may have to be governed by coalitions after the ANC and the DA obtained the largest share of the votes in respective order, but failed to win outright majorities.

The ANC and DA are wooing the EFF to form coalitions to run the 27 hung councils, but the key Gauteng metros will be the most closely watched as talks escalate this week, with parties having until August 20 to form coalition governments. Preliminary talks were held on Saturday and Sunday, with the EFF meeting both the national leadership of the DA and the ANC, excluding President Jacob Zuma. On Monday, the DA holds a federal executive committee meeting — its highest decision-making structure. The DA will also take part in a meeting of all opposition parties due on the same day.



Van Rooyen said government was ready if necessary to use the Constitution's Section 139, which provides for councils to be placed under administration: "So, definitely, the provisions of Section 139 (of the Constitution) will kick in, in a situation where we feel that service delivery is compromised because of no agreement between political parties." It is understood that at the meeting on Monday, the EFF was to set its "preconditions". The party is said to want a "package deal" across all the metros, and also wants to know to what extent it can negotiate with potential coalition partners over national issues, such as its demands for land reform.

Smaller parties are also being courted as coalition partners, even though their share of the vote was hit hard by the rise of the DA and EFF. A number of them confirmed that the DA and ANC had approached them with a view to coalitions. African Christian Democratic Party national chairman Jo-Ann Downs said the party had been contacted by the ANC and DA. She said that there was need for smaller parties to sit down to talk among themselves and then also with the larger parties. Downs said that the smaller parties needed to make a stand, particularly against the DA, which had campaigned on an antismall party platform. She said that form of rhetoric during the campaign had hurt their chance to secure more votes, and was one of the issues that they would raise

with the DA.

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