

OPEN MANIFESTO FROM LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDERED AND INTER-SEXED PEOPLE: WE DEMAND LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO FULL EQUALITY FOR ALL

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 We as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sexed people (LGBTI), activists in the human and legal rights sector, feminists, trade unions, activists in the women and HIV/AIDS sectors as well as individuals from diverse backgrounds, constituting the South African civil society;
- 1.2 Gathered on this day, the 5th of December 2007, here at **Constitution Hill** – the home of the founding document that articulates our liberation; And
- 1.3 Reflected on the promise of 'freedom, justice and equality for all' as enshrined in the Constitution that the African National Congress (ANC) has been given the historic responsibility to implement as a democratically elected government;
- 1.4 In our collective and plural reflection, we concluded that in our daily lives, the promise of the Constitution is not a reality and that if this remains unchallenged, then that its aspirations will remain a pipe dream.
- 1.5 Therefore, we resolved to claim our rights as full and equal citizens of a democratic South Africa by submitting this open manifesto of LGBTI demands to the ANC, all State Institutions, civil society, social movements and political parties in South Africa.

2. WE CALL ON THE ANC TO MAKE EQUALITY A REALITY

- 2.1 We call on the ANC to advance the rights, interests, needs and demands of the LGBTI in South Africa.
- 2.2 Consequently we call on the ANC to:
 - 2.2.1 Fully and publicly affirm the rights of LGBTI people as full and equal citizens;
 - 2.2.2 Make the recognition of the full rights of LGBTI people as full and equal citizens a living reality;
 - 2.2.3 Fully and publicly affirm LGBTI issues as part of gender issues instead of the current silence in gender debates on LGBTI issues as well as address the hetero-sexist bias against LGBTI issues;
 - 2.2.4 Commit to defend and protect Human Rights Defenders in the country;
 - 2.2.5 Address the exclusion of the reality, concerns, interests and needs of LGBTI people in the programmes and policies on HIV/AIDS;
 - 2.2.6 Address the exclusion of the reality, concerns, interests and needs of LGBTI people in the delivery of all services and opportunities in our society specifically calling for:
 - i) appropriate access to medical rights for the distinct needs of LGBTI people;
 - ii) commit state resources to LGBTI needs;
 - iii) make access to land to all unmarried women, lesbian and gay people, in communal lands;
 - iv) include the rights and needs of LGBTI children in the Children's Act;
 - v) Integrate sexual orientation education in gender and sexuality education in all schools
 - 2.2.7 Take effective and consistent action to end hate crimes against LGBTI people, in particular black lesbians and to commit to the education, conscientisation and mobilisation of all of society against hate crimes;
 - 2.2.8 Take effective and consistent action to eliminate hate speech against LGBTI people;
 - 2.2.9 Issue a public declaration against hate crimes and speech against LGBTI people;
 - 2.2.10 Take decisive disciplinary action and other sanctions against homophobes and all who violate the Constitution;
 - 2.2.11 Create a climate of openness and non-discrimination within the Alliance in order to make it possible for LGBTI members to come out and claim their space;
 - 2.2.12 Create an open forum/caucus of LGBTI members within the ANC; and
 - 2.2.13 Establish a special commission to investigate how to implement these demands.

3 WE STAND FOR NON-RACIALISM, NON-SEXISM, GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC JUSTICE

3.1 As LGBTI people, we are also democrats who are committed to non-racialism, non-sexism, gender equality, and socio-economic justice. We oppose racism. We are concerned and affected by the gendered and racialised socio-economic inequalities we see in our homes and communities which despite the promise of constitutional equality reproduce inequality and under-development. We are angry at the extremely high and misogynist levels of violence against the women and children of our country.

3.2 Consequently, we call on the ANC to:

3.2.1 Ensure that the all legislation on rape, gender-based violence and sexual violence is strengthened and improved in order to provide effective protection for the victims of sexual attacks and violence against women;

3.2.2 We demand a pro-poor president and political leaders who stand for full equality. We call on the ANC's President and political leaders to:

- I) Actively demonstrate and promote a commitment to the equality and liberation of women, and who regard women as equal;
- II) Genuinely have be pro-poor and focus on the eradication of poverty and social inequality;
- III) Support the redistribution of wealth to the least advantaged
- IV) Oppose populist and reactionary rhetoric to opportunistically garner support
- V) Take effective action to ensure the provision of high quality and free basic services (water, sanitation, health, housing, education, and public transport) to all as a basic right and condition for meaningful equality;
- VI) Actively act against stigma and discrimination of all kinds in particular homophobia, xenophobia, sexism and racism;
- VII) Demonstrate a sound approach to the challenges of HIV/AIDS, not AIDS denialism and mobilise and lead society in the struggle against the pandemic;
- VIII) Committ to democracy and encourages debate, both within the ANC and in the country as a whole;
- IX) Recognise, respect and promote the separation of powers through an accountable legislature, the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, and the judiciary as independent.

4 OUR COMMITMENT

4.1 As LGBTI people, we recommit ourselves to political engagement with the ANC and all political parties who espouse vibrant and self-sustaining popular democracy. We also commit ourselves to continue struggle for a democracy that brings about full social liberation, justice, equality, and a South Africa free from all forms of social oppression, discrimination and exclusion. We will take these demands and our commitments to every branch of the ANC and all political parties.

