15 August 2024

To all media houses

**COPE SLAMS THE GNU'S 100-DAY STATEMENT AMID ONGOING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISES**

For immediate release:

As the so-called Government of National Unity (GNU) marks its 100 days, the celebration matters only to the privileged few. Ordinary South Africans cannot celebrate while being subjected to brutal austerity measures that deny them basic services.

Big capital interests drive this GNU and have failed to address the concerns of the majority, sustaining a legacy of inequality, exclusion and hardship for the poor, unemployed and vulnerable. While the privileged minority, black and white, in power enjoy wealth and influence, as many as 9 million South Africans are left begging for survival through the meagre R350 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant. This grant, while necessary, is a mere band-aid on a deeply flawed economic system that continues to deny people access to sustainable economic opportunities.

The so-called GNU has shown no commitment to transforming the structural economy dominated by monopolies. This fuels deindustrialisation and neglects support for small businesses, which are the very backbone of job creation and economic empowerment.

We continue to witness the detrimental effects of this systemic exclusion, with mass unemployment surging to over 32.9% (as of 2024) and youth unemployment hovering around a staggering 60%. To have 8.4 million people out of work is a betrayal of epic proportions.

Public services crumble, with mass shootings, water shortages and an education crisis exacerbated by the impending retrenchment of teachers. The government has also failed to address the growing water crisis, leaving millions of citizens without access to clean drinking water - a fundamental human right.

Instead of crafting and implementing a clear policy framework to uplift the majority from poverty, the elitist focus remains on power, positions and maintaining subservience to neoliberal entities and multinational corporations. This alliance benefits only a select few

while neglecting the masses who go to bed hungry and not knowing where their meal will come from the next day.

The Congress of the People (COPE) asserts that this is not the South Africa our people fought for. There is nothing for the majority to enjoy in this country as long as inequality, exclusion and exploitation persist. The Government of National Unity’s failure to elaborate a clear and bold policy framework to tackle deindustrialisation, unemployment and social crises is evidence of their lack of commitment to the people’s struggles.

COPE demands urgent policy reform for inclusive economic transformation, strong support for small businesses, reindustrialisation and enhanced social security. We seek a government that prioritizes all citizens, not just the privileged elite serving big business interests.

The party stands firm in advocating for true socio-economic justice, equity and inclusion for all South Africans. We must build an inclusive economy that benefits the majority, not just the elite.

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