

Message of Support by the Deputy Convener of ANC Norman Mashabane Region Elective Meeting of SATDU Ritavi North Tivumbeni EMPC – 8 May 2025

Programme Director,
Fellow Comrades,
Shop Stewards,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly an honour to address you today at this important elective meeting of SATDU Ritavi North. Elective conferences are a defining moment in the life of any organisation — a time to reflect, to renew, and to chart the way forward. It is also a moment of accountability, where current leaders are tested to see if their leadership still resonates with the membership, and where new leaders may emerge to take the baton forward.

Today, I stand before you wearing two hats — one as the Mayor of Greater Tzaneen Municipality, and the other as the Deputy Convener of the mighty ANC Norman Mashabane Region.

Comrades, we are at a critical juncture, not only in the life of our organisations but in the future of our country. Public confidence in us, as leaders and as public servants, is diminishing. People are growing impatient — and rightly so. The recent electoral losses we have suffered as the ANC are a clear message from our people. Rebuilding and renewing our movement, our government, and our alliance must start with us — here, now, and together.

As shop stewards, you carry the immense responsibility of being the voice of our members. You must continue advocating for better working conditions for educators and for the improvement of the environments in which our children learn. Infrastructure, learning resources, and basic services — these must be non-negotiable.

Why do former model C schools still enjoy top-tier sporting facilities while many of our township and rural schools are neglected? Why are so many of us sending our own children to predominantly white schools? That should be a wake-up call. It either means we doubt our capabilities as educators or we lack confidence in the quality of education and the environment in our own schools.

This must change. It is our duty and mission to work tirelessly to transform our schools into institutions that provide excellent, holistic education — schools we can proudly send our own children to.

As the Mayor of Greater Tzaneen Municipality, I want to assure you that we are committed to supporting the education sector. We will prioritise issues affecting access to schools, infrastructure, and the broader learning environment. Where matters fall beyond our jurisdiction, we will work with other government institutions to seek solutions.

Education is a priority for us. That is why we continue to invest in libraries, student financial support, experiential training programmes, and campaigns like “Back to School” and the Excellence Awards. These are practical expressions of our commitment.

Comrades, as you prepare to elect new leadership today, we in the ANC are also preparing for our own elective conference this weekend. Yes, the contest is tough — as it often is in democratic processes — but we must remember that once the ballots are counted, we all have one duty: to unite behind the elected leadership and focus on rebuilding our movement, our government, and our communities.

Next year, we head into local government elections. Let us not forget the sobering lessons of last year's general elections. If we do not act now — if we do not renew and rebuild — our movement faces an uncertain future.

To all the candidates contesting today: I wish you strength and wisdom. To those who will be elected — congratulations in advance. But remember: leadership is not about personal victory, it is about collective unity. Unite your membership. Embrace those who stood against you. The organisation is bigger than all of us.

I thank you. All the best in your deliberations and elections. Amandla!