

Looking ahead for 2018: Local and International Socio-Political Change Scenarios

BREAKFAST SERIES ON THE CONSTITUTION AND GOOD PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

“The future of South Africa depends on how much emphasis will be set on prioritizing economic growth and building a unified political and civil society” was the leading argument by Dr. Jakkie Cilliers from the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) at the first breakfast briefing, jointly hosted by the School for Public Leadership (SPL) at Stellenbosch University, the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CFCR) and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) on 15th February 2018 at the Sun Square Hotel in Cape Town.

The breakfast under the title *“Looking Ahead for 2018: Local and International Socio-Political Change Scenarios”* forms part of an event series that focuses on the Constitution and Good Public Leadership.

Guest speakers at this breakfast included Dr. Jakkie Cilliers, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and Head of African Futures and Innova-

tion at ISS, and Prof. Silviu Rogobete, Professor in Political Science at the West University Timisoara and former Consul-General of Romania to South Africa. The breakfast discussion took place just a day after South Africa’s President Jacob Zuma announced his resignation with immediate effect and former deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa became his successor.

The discussion was opened by Dr. Dirk Brand from the School of Public Leadership, giving a warm welcome and introducing the series’ aim at enhancing the awareness and understanding for constitutional democracy as well as debating how the dialogue on the South African Constitution as a living document can be improved. Ms. Christina Teichmann, Project Manager of the KAS Cape Town office, thanked the organisers for the great collaboration on the event series, which is now in its fifth year. She elaborated on the im-

portance to anticipate future events and developments in order to be able to actively promote scenarios that are most favourable and come up with corrective measures in case the country follows a negative trajectory.

Dr. Jakkie Cilliers explained how he creates future scenarios by analysing strings of data. One of his first forecasts concentrated on the water supply. In his opinion water represents the single most important constraint of South Africa's economic growth and in the past has been overexploited and will continue to be, if nothing will change. He elaborated on failed growth strategies by the South African government since 1994 and took the National Development Plan (NDP) 2011-2030 as an example, which is an ambitious document but lacks the use of a coherent set of methods for its scenario planning.

Exemplary for the incoherence of the document, was for example the underestimation of South Africa's population growth concentrated in Gauteng and in the Western Cape, which did not take the influx of immigrants into account. This underestimation, so Dr. Cilliers, makes it very difficult for the authorities to provide adequate infrastructure and education in the future.

Furthermore, Dr. Cilliers elaborated on the resignation of Jacob Zuma. South Africa could be described as stuck in a 'Bafana Bafana'- Scenario

referring to the unsuccessful South African soccer team, who are stagnating in their performance, lack strong leadership and consequently are more or less muddling along. Under President Zuma the ANC has lost its moral compass and is divided into different fractions. Cyril Ramaphosa's biggest task now will be to modernise, unify and reinvent the ANC.

Dr. Cilliers said the biggest worry for the ANC would be the shift voters. In the 2014 general election, the ANC gained 62 per cent of the votes. Dr. Cilliers estimates that the election results for the ANC in 2019 will decrease due to the damage Zuma has done to the reputation of the party during his presidency but that the ANC will stay with ca. 53-55 per cent above the crucial 50%-line, if Ramaphosa is able to achieve high economic growth for South Africa. This economic development will require labour intensive growth and a shift from the informal to the formal employment sector. The ANC has invested in long-term growth and South Africa has all the potential to grow, but it will depend on the states management of the private sector to ensure sustainable growth and enhanced equality. At the moment South Africa, scoring the highest value of the Gini Index worldwide, is one of the most unequal countries in the world. To reach a positive election outcome Ramaphosa has to fight corruption and state capture and appoint a new and

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

SOUTH AFRICA
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February 2018

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smaller cabinet with competent ministers. Dr. Cilliers added, that the deputy president would most likely be a woman. The election outcome will strongly be decided in Gauteng, as this province represents 35 per cent of South Africa's economic power and 25 per cent of South Africa's population. To win this province "Ramaphosa is the best bet the ANC has", so Dr. Cilliers. Concerning the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Dr. Cilliers predicted an election outcome of between 6 and 8 per cent, leading to the audience protesting, that this was a too high estimate.

Zuma was elected during one of the worst global recessions, so whilst western economies were in recession, business partnerships were made with the east, especially with China, and relationships amongst the BRICS countries were strengthened, Dr. Cilliers analysed. The future economic challenge for South Africa will be to strengthen the business relationships with the West. Moreover, the future of South Africa's economy lies on the African continent and an increase in regional integration and trade with other African countries. It is important not only for South Africa but for the continent as a whole to establish value chains in order to stimulate sustainable economic growth and to create jobs. Dr. Cilliers added that manufacturing is a crucial sector in this context and needs to be actively promoted.

As a former diplomat Prof. Rogobete reminded the audience that South Africa is a shining light on the African continent. He continued that despite all the political challenges South Africa is currently facing, South Africans have to consider that President Mbeki as well as Zuma stepped down from office on the directive of the party and that power was handed over without violence or bloodshed. This was a strong sign of democracy. Moreover, Prof. Rogobete said, that the entire world is increasingly confronted with uncertainty of political situations and relationships and changing collaboration between transnational partners. He finished his presentation by citing French philosopher Voltaire: *"Uncertainty is an uncomfortable position, but certainty is an absurd one."*

The report is online accessible.



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