

ACDP



Founded:	1993
Leader:	Reverend Kenneth Meshoe
Political position:	Centre right
Ideology:	Christian conservatism

History

42 The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) constitution speaks of a Christian party founded on biblical principles wanting to deliver a civil government of trust and integrity, based on peace, security, personal freedom, national unity, and reconciliation (22). The party believes that healthy families should be the foundation of a South African society driven by traditional values. Recently, the party has strongly opposed the mandate of Covid-19 vaccinations, attempting to halt it in court and has called for South Africa to withdraw from all World Health Organisation (WHO) protocol. The party draws the bulk of its support from the Western Cape, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal, however, is represented at a municipal level in all provinces.

Although quadrupling its support from the 1994 to 2004 national elections, the ACDP has swung between 0.8 per cent and 0.4 per cent since 2009, regaining some lost ground in 2019. However, the ACDP has formed part of many coalition governments across the country having occupied the Deputy Mayor's post in Cape Town as well as several Member of Mayoral Committee (MMC) positions in Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Mogale City, and Nelson Mandela Bay.

Electoral record (23)

- 1994: 0.45%
- 1999: 1.43%

- 2004: 1.60%
- 2009: 0.81%
- 2014: 0.57%
- 2019: 0.84%

Positions

(Source: Email correspondence with party communications director Joshua Meshoe)

Economic growth and job creation

The ACDP strives to create a conducive environment for economic growth by removing structural obstacles in the economy and better link business, education, and training to produce skills that are needed in South Africa.

The party will also deal swiftly with corruption in all sectors, since the ACDP believes corruption ultimately steals from the poor, the marginalised, and the impoverished. The ACDP government would reduce red tape and relax labour laws without compromising the health and safety and the well-being of workers.

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Safety and security

To make South Africa safer, the ACDP would implement an anti-crime strategy ensuring criminals are swiftly arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced; review political appointments, promotions, and qualifications in the SAPS, the National Prosecuting Association, the Hawks, and other sectors of the criminal justice system as well as expedite outstanding disciplinary and criminal proceedings against any public servants accused of corruption.

The party would reintroduce specialised police units and strengthen the training of police officers and prosecutors to ensure investigations result in successful prosecutions.

Foreign affairs

The ACDP believes South Africa's foreign affairs policy must seek to uphold the sovereignty of all legitimately established and internationally recognised nation-states. An ACDP government would prioritise diplomacy and dialogue over war, including trade wars. The party would also foster bilateral and multilateral relations to safeguard South Africa's economic interests and ensure all embassies are well-resourced, both administratively and technically, to perform this function and to provide strong support for citizens abroad.

Energy security

The ACDP regards energy security as critical to South Africa's economic and social advancement as well as being key to service delivery. As such, the party will prioritise energy security with the goal of making electricity available, affordable, and accessible to all South Africans to improve service delivery. It believes in a combination of renewable energy and fossil fuels for the country's energy mix. The ACDP would also ensure all critical skill positions at Eskom be filled based on merit.

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Education

The ACDP's vision is to realise a South Africa in which everyone has access to quality basic education in safe and well-maintained facilities with parents playing a central role in the education of their children. The party would ensure all schools have a pupil to teacher ratio of 1 to 25, while reintroducing school inspectors to maintain norms and standards. The ACDP would also ensure teacher salaries are competitive and fair to attract skills to the sector. The party would refocus tertiary education and vocational training to better cater for skills shortages in the economy.

Mineral resources

An ACDP government would capitalise on South Africa's status as a leading mineral producer in Africa by providing policy certainty and unleashing investment. The ACDP would grow the beneficiation sector by boosting South Africa's industrial capacity through grants and tax breaks. This would be complemented by embarking on a technical skill drive to ensure the requisite trained workers are available to the mining sector. The party would also aggressively tackle infrastructure bottlenecks in the country, particularly railways.

Youth development

In addressing the pressing issue of youth unemployment, the ACDP proposes implementing a comprehensive strategy focusing on education and vocational training. The party emphasises the need for a symbiotic relationship between businesses and educational institutions in this regard—so that tertiary institutions train young people for jobs needed in the economy. Accordingly, an ACDP government would set up strategic funding for degrees and diplomas that align with the demands of the job market. Additionally, the ACDP advocates for the reinstatement of apprenticeship programmes, offering tax incentives to businesses actively engaged in providing training. To further incentivise youth employment, the party proposes the creation of a dedicated fund to support businesses willing to employ young, unskilled workers.

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Housing

The ACDP proposes a multifaceted approach to address South Africa's severe housing shortage. The party would establish an open, transparent, and fair housing waiting list. An ACDP government would also provide serviced sites for people to construct their own homes, encouraging a collaborative "sweat equity" approach where basic building skills can

be acquired by the unemployed. The ACDP would also pursue joint solutions between first-time buyers and financial service providers to ensure more South Africans qualify for home loans. An ACDP government would also offer incentives to financial institutions to reduce the capital amount required for purchasing a house.

The environment and climate change

The ACDP accepts climate change as a reality and recognises the importance of preserving the environment for current and future generations. However, the party emphasises collective responsibility among all citizens in being custodians of the planet, advocating for individual actions that protect and enhance the environment, waterways, and biodiversity. Accordingly, the ACDP rejects carbon taxes as the sole solution for environmental protection, instead endorsing ongoing engagement and education with communities as priorities in safeguarding the planet.

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Tourism

To rejuvenate the tourism sector, the ACDP proposes a legislative overhaul on immigration and tourism, aiming to enhance sector benefits. The party advocates for streamlined processing of tourist visas, prioritising efficiency, especially for visitors from the African continent. An ACDP government would also deploy more police within the tourism sector, specifically to ensure the safety of visitors. Additionally, the party aims to promote inclusivity by involving local communities and previously marginalised groups in the tourism industry.

Immigration and xenophobia

The ACDP rejects xenophobia wholeheartedly and believes South Africa has a responsibility to protect all vulnerable groups who have fled their

countries to preserve their lives because of war or political violence.

However, the party believes the protection and provision of sanctuary to refugees cannot operate without effective legislation. The party would pass emergency immigration legislation and enforce the documentation of all immigrants to prevent the competing of scarce resources in South Africa.

An ACDP government would prioritise proper manning of borders and immigration posts to prevent criminals and drug and human traffickers from entering South Africa.

LGBTIQA+ rights

An ACDP government would guarantee that all South Africans will be afforded the protection and rights as envisioned in our constitution. However, the party argues there must be an appreciation of all different world views, cultural, linguistic, and religious within South Africa.

In this spirit, the ACDP rejects the imposition of opposing lifestyles and world views on the religious sector. While the party does not condone LGBTIQA+ lifestyles, it also will not tolerate any acts of violence or discrimination against these groups.

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South Africa's twelve official languages

The ACDP recognises the rich diversity of cultures, religions, tribes, ethnicities, and languages in South Africa. The party would enact a language policy that ensures equal and meaningful access to education, emphasising instruction in the mother tongue, especially during the formative years of learners.

Artificial intelligence

The ACDP acknowledges the debate raging over the positive or negative use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), recognising the risk to the creative

industries and potential for a spike in unemployment in a low-skill dominated economy, such as South Africa. An ACDP government would enact legislation to promote the beneficial use of AI and penalise its inappropriate use.

Sources:

- (22) ACDP constitution <https://www.acdp.org.za/constitution>
 - (23) Independent Electoral Council 2019 National & Provincial elections - <https://results.elections.org.za/dashboards/npe/app/dashboard.html>
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