



## BRIEFING PAPER

### African Congress for Transformation (ACT) Participation in the 2026 Conference of the Left

#### 1. Introduction and Rationale for Participation

The African Congress for Transformation (ACT), as a democratic socialist and pan-Africanist formation, formally declares its commitment to the 2026 Conference of the Left.

In an era of significant voter fragmentation and rising disillusionment—evidenced by the 2024 national elections where turnout dropped to approximately 59%—the need for a unified "**Left movement for working-class and popular power**" is an urgent historical necessity.

ACT joins this convergence to amplify its voice, secure institutional legitimacy, and transition from an isolated splinter into a pillar of a broader, coordinated left bloc.

#### 2. Strategic Objectives

ACT views the Conference not as a precursor to a new political party, but as a vital mechanism for coordination and shared action. Our participation is centered on three core objectives:

- **Institutional Unity:** Active contribution to the establishment of the **Council of the Left** to ensure ongoing coordination and accountability beyond the three-day event.
- **Legitimacy and Visibility:** Leveraging the shared platforms of established partners like the SACP, EFF, and MKP to reach left-leaning and disillusioned ANC and DA voters.
- **Resource and Infrastructure Sharing:** Accessing the deep organizational networks of trade unions (such as NUMSA and NEHAWU) and social movements to bolster ACT's grassroots capacity.

#### 3. Policy Pillars: The Programme of Action

ACT advocates for a **Programme of Action** that prioritizes material "bread-and-butter" issues over abstract ideology to effectively counter voter fatigue. Our priority pillars include:

Priority Pillar	Key Demand / Action
Land and Food Sovereignty	Radical land reform and support for smallholder/cooperative production to ensure community dignity.

<b>Cost of Living and Jobs</b>	Direct intervention in the crises of high double-digit youth unemployment, energy costs, and food insecurity.
<b>Local Accountability</b>	Community monitoring of service delivery, budgets, and local government procurement to combat corruption.
<b>Defending 1994 Gains</b>	Protecting social provision and democratic rights while pushing for deeper structural change.

#### 4. 2026 Local Government and Campaign Strategy

To avoid the detrimental splitting of the progressive vote, which historically benefits neoliberal rivals, ACT proposes the following tactical frameworks for the 2026 local government elections:

- **Targeted Deployment:** Utilizing the Council of the Left to map wards realistically, ensuring the strongest local formation leads while others stand down or endorse.
- **Unified Platform, Distinct Branding:** Running under a shared "Left/Progressive" manifesto while maintaining individual party identities to respect pluralism.
- **Tactical Voting:** Explicitly directing supporters to back the "strongest progressive" in competitive wards to maximize seat gains.
- **Mobilization of Abstainers:** Focusing on youth and urban township populations through transport, education, and community events rather than pure persuasion.

#### 5. Campaign Resource Mobilization and Rationalization

To ensure that the collective strength of the Left is not undermined by duplication or internal competition, ACT proposes a strategic framework for the mobilization and rationalization of resources through the **Council of the Left**:

- **Coordinated Infrastructure and Logistics:** ACT advocates for the pooling of campaigning infrastructure, such as shared transport fleets, digital mobilization tools, and media platforms, to support smaller formations that lack independent scale. This includes prioritizing "logistics over persuasion" by directing funds toward getting abstainers to the polls via community-based transport and localized events.
- **Leveraging Union and Movement Networks:** Partners must leverage the existing organizational depth of trade unions and social movements to provide the "ground game" and volunteer base required for effective door-to-door organizing. This approach shifts campaign focus from top-down advertising to site-specific mobilization where the working class actually lives.
- **Resource Rationalization through Targeted Deployment:** To maximize impact, resources must be rationalized via "non-aggression pacts" and ward-level mapping. This ensures that funding and personnel are concentrated on the strongest local contenders rather than being thinned out across multiple competing left-wing candidates in the same ward.
- **The Council of the Left as a Resource Clearinghouse:** The proposed Council should serve as a transparent platform for joint fundraising and the allocation of shared campaign materials. This mechanism is essential to prevent a "patronage-heavy, personality-driven" distribution of funds and to ensure that all participating formations remain accountable to a shared Programme of Action.

- **Shared Political Education:** Mobilization efforts should be underpinned by a shared political education program across all organizations to build strategic clarity and ensure that campaigners on the ground are delivering a unified message regarding ownership and structural transformation.

## 6. Organisational Commitment and Growth

ACT recognizes that the measure of the Conference's success lies in sustained, post-event organizing. We commit to:

- Building **grassroots structures** through door-to-door organizing and community forums rather than top-down mandates.
- Participating in thematic working groups on the **solidarity economy** and **macroeconomic alternatives**.
- Strengthening our internal **anti-corruption mechanisms** to ensure ACT remains a credible alternative for voters who have left established parties over governance failures.

The African Congress for Transformation views the Conference of the Left as a strategic turning point. By moving beyond isolated competition toward principled coordination, we can transform voter disillusionment into a positive vision for land, jobs, and dignity. We stand ready to build a movement that is stronger six and twelve months from now than it is today.

**Forward to working-class and popular power.**