

SUNDAY TRIBUNE

SA's in safe hands with Gordhan

LAST year, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan had a simple message for long-suffering South Africans looking for a way out of the murky economic marsh we were in.

As we count down to another Budget speech on Wednesday, some of his words are worth repeating.

"We are strong enough, resilient enough and creative enough to manage and overcome our economic challenges. All of us want jobs, thriving businesses, engaged professionals, narrowing inequality, fewer in poverty.

"All of us want a new values paradigm, a society at peace with itself, a nation energised by the task of building stronger foundations for our future society and economy.

"We want our government to function effectively, our people to work in dignity, with resources for their families, decent homes and opportunities for their children.

"We want to see progress throughout our land, in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, construction, tourism, science and research, sport and leisure, trade and commerce.

"It is within our grasp to achieve this future. It requires bold and constructive leadership in all sectors, a shared vision, a common purpose, and the will to find common ground. Above all we need action, not just words."

The conditions were much gloomier then. This time around some green shoots are visible. The drought is easing and commodity prices have improved. Looking back and acknowledging how far we have come should embolden the minister and give us all more hope.

We have seen some action after wise words like these that no patriot can disagree with. This includes work done to establish a minimum wage and improve stability in the labour sector.

Recognising that the more inclusive the economy the greater its scope for growth, some bold steps have been taken to transform our economy.

The importance of a finance minister's annual moves cannot be exaggerated.

Gordhan will set out the government's collection and spending plans for the next few years that affect us all. But he can only build on the foundation of initiatives put together over the years since 1994. We need to stay strong, hopeful and resilient and continue putting our shoulders to the wheel as we build the South Africa we want.

While the pace of transformation and reduction of inequality needs to be accelerated, we should not expect miracles.

Why we should review land claims cut-off

THE Dr John Langalibalele Dube Institute has made a submission to Parliament for the amendment of section 25(7) of the constitution.

The submission was in response to an invitation from the Joint Constitutional Review Committee to the public to make written submissions on specific sections of the constitution they feel need to be reviewed. In terms of section 45(1)(c), the committee must review the constitution annually.

The constitution, adopted 20 years ago, has served the country well. While keeping its basic principles inviolate, it has become necessary to examine the experience of the past two decades to better achieve the ideals enshrined in it.

The issue of land rights, specifically the right to restitution or equitable redress is an important human rights concern that must be addressed.

This right is contained within the constitution. However, after two decades of attempting land reform

with little progress, there is enough evidence that a review of legislation is necessary.

Section 25(7) states that "a person or community dispossessed of property after June 19, 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices is entitled, to the extent provided by an act of Parliament, either to tenure which is legally secure or to comparable redress".

Based on my experiences, I believe the date of June 19, 1913 is problematic as a cut-off date for land claims because land dispossession occurred long before 1913.

After the institute was charged with the responsibility of conducting research regarding stagnant land claims, it emerged there was discontent among dispossessed Africans over the cut-off date for claiming loss of their rights to land.

Many have argued that a failure to amend the June 19, 1913 date will present an obstacle to the vision of creating inclusive and shared prosperity as contained in the

MyView

Thandi Ngcobo

National Development Plan, which will in turn undermine the promotion and protection of human rights for all South Africans.

It is well documented that land dispossession began in the mid-17th century. It is also commonly known that the greatest accelerated land dispossession occurred during the 19th century when the British took over the Cape colony.

As the Voortrekkers moved away from the Cape Colony to escape British rule, they fought, seized and confiscated the land of the Khoi, San and other native communities in the process.

This included but is not limited to the wars of dispossession of the AmaXhosa (1779 to 1878); the wars of

dispossession of the AmaNdebele and baPedi in what became the Transvaal (1837 to 1845); the defeat and land dispossession of the AmaZulu in the Battles of Blood River and Ulundi (1838 and 1879 respectively); the gun wars with the baSotho which eventually led to the formation of the Lesotho kingdom (1858); and eventually the defeat of the baVhenda and the subsequent incorporation of their land into the Transvaal in 1898. Land dispossession of African tribes was systematic and targeted natives as a people, not isolated groups.

I would like to see Parliament debate the issues and ultimately remove the date from the constitution because it leaves out thousands of originally dispossessed people. I, with the institute, have done the work on behalf of the landless and made a submission for the review and amendment of this section of the constitution.

The submission is based on, but not limited to, the following:

- The June 19, 1913 cut-off date

does not reflect the true history of dispossession of native Africans in this country.

• The use of this date may have been agreed to by negotiators, but my experiences have taught me it is not practical.

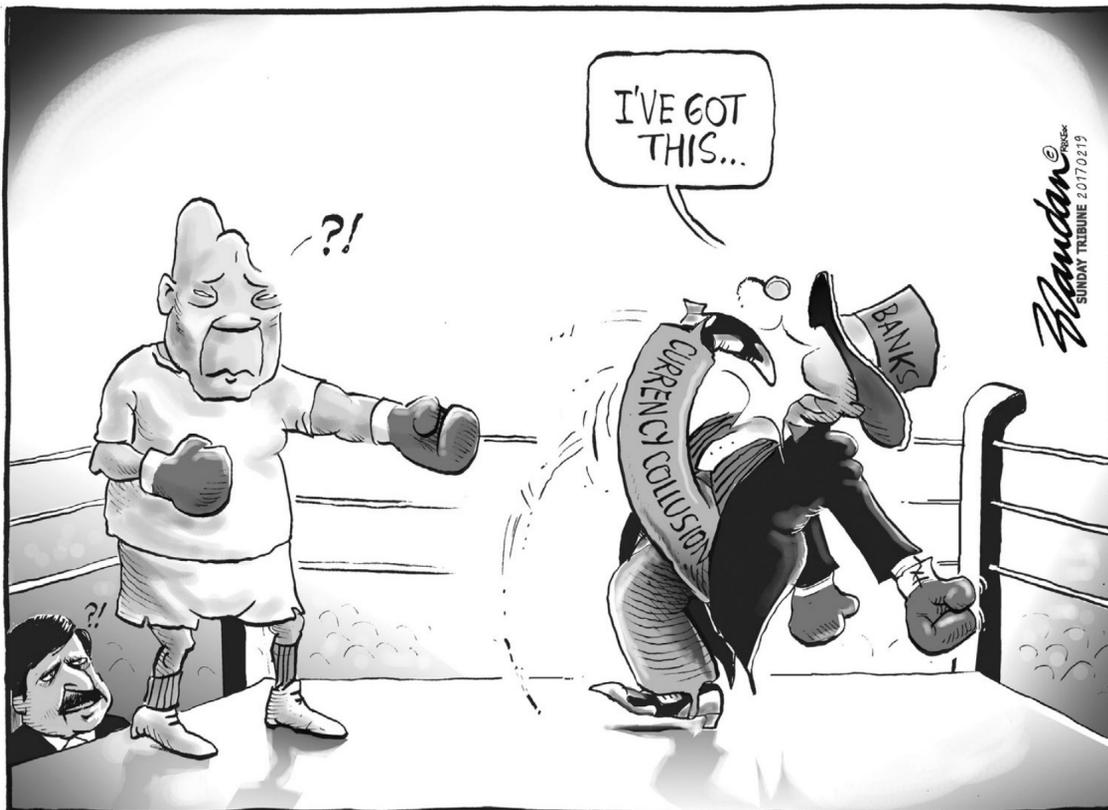
• The inclusion of the date in Chapter 2 of the constitution (the Bill of Rights) is itself a violation of the rights of those racially dispossessed of their land before June 19, 1913.

• The issue of land reform is critical to the upliftment of the millions of Africans who still languish in poverty because of landlessness.

Proactive dialogue sessions were held to debate the cut-off.

The debating has made me confident the amendment will gain enough support in the National Assembly.

• Ngcobo is executive director of the Dr John Langalibalele Dube Institute for Humanitarian and Development Praxis and writes in her personal capacity.



Logie, stay away from that button

TAKE nothing away from Logie Naidoo. The former Speaker of the eThekweni Council is a charming, affable, good natured and middle-of-the-road ANC loyalist.

Although not in the league of the firebrands, I reckon he's earned his colours as an activist, having fought his battles in the ratepayer trenches on the north coast.

Besides, he's popular socially. Logie doesn't miss a trick in cultivating a strong rapport with journalists and public relations people and, as a rule, never declines an invitation, as long as he can earn a spot on the social pages.

It was joked Logie would attend the opening of an envelope.

But now that his days in the public limelight are fast receding, he should think seriously about taking up local community causes or just fading into retirement while his civic reputation is still intact.

The man appeared out of his depth when he decided to enter the fray over the shenanigans at last week's State of the Nation address, when parliamentary bouncers roughed up opposition MPs and unceremoniously ejected them.

The scenes of bedlam and chaos put our nation to shame.

As far as Logie is concerned, all that could have been avoided had the Speaker of the National Assembly nipped the problem in the bud by pressing that little mute button on her sound system.

When he was Speaker, he boasted to a newspaper last week, he would press the mute button next to his microphone to cut off any "out-of-order" councillor and zap them into silence.

"When you have a ruling, whether right or wrong, it is final, and you have to obey the rules," he bragged.

Wait a minute, Logie, you sound like you're rushing in where angels fear to tread. What you're advocating is dictatorial censorship – not much different from what your party leaders did at last year's Sona proceedings when they activated a signal jammer to block all cellphone and internet signals in the House.

The signal jamming, which the courts have now deemed to have been unconstitutional and unlawful, made it impossible for the media to report on the proceedings.

I realise the parliamentary Speaker has a tough time maintaining order, but you cannot promote open and transparent debate by gagging people who happen to hold a differing opinion.

Our country's problems can only be resolved through open, transparent and constructive debate across party, ideological and racial lines.

And the media must play a pivotal role in this national discourse.

By all means, maintain order in unruly debates, but keep your itchy finger off that mute button.

dennis.pather@elkomsa.net

ANC paving new path to prosperity

SOUTH Africa is at a crossroads. It must choose between dying a slow, painful death by clinging to an untenable status quo and changing course to bring into being a national democratic society characterised by unity, equality and prosperity.

Having the majority languish in poverty while the elite few control the means of production, in line with the pre-1994 construct, is a recipe for disaster.

Twenty-three years since the democratic breakthrough, South Africa is still battling with the ramifications of centuries of colonial and apartheid misuse.

Unemployment, poverty and inequality persist, with black people bearing the brunt of these ills.

The employment figures of the last quarter of 2016 reflect a nation poised at the precipice.

In KwaZulu-Natal, according to the expanded definition of unemployment, the percentage of unemployed people is 40.7%. When it comes to Africans in KZN, about 56% of the unemployed have no matric; 37.7% have matric; 5.1% have other tertiary qualifications and only 1.4% are university graduates.

This means that the lower the level of education, the less the chances of being employed.

And, we all know that the main reason Africans rate poorly in education is the systematic and historical denial of quality education. Two decades after 1994, we are still feeling the effects of Bantu Education.

Similar reasons could be advanced for the unacceptable rates of poverty and inequality, particularly among Africans. As a result of the hollow freedom that is becoming a lived experience for the majority, the revolutionary government of the ANC had to intervene decisively.

The ANC realised that South



Africa was sitting on a powder keg and drastic action was needed, not only to avert the looming disaster but to put South Africa on a course that the party's presidents, Albert Lutuli, Oliver Tambo and Madiba, fought for.

We were, therefore, pleased that in his State of the Nation address and in line with the adopted policy position of the ANC, President Jacob Zuma gave a clear message of hope to the toiling masses that, notwithstanding the challenges, their government will not forsake them.

The address and plans he outlined indicated a government hard at work to improve the lives of all South Africans, particularly the historically disadvantaged.

In the face of a barrage of attacks from certain quarters, the president led the country to avoid a credit downgrade, which was the objective of the enemy. We all know that had we been downgraded, the severe consequences would have been felt mostly by the poor.

The era of radical economic transformation, itself a response to the urgent socio-economic challenges we face, demands that we wrestle economic ownership and control from monopolies and cartels.

The pursuit of the black industrialists' programme must take centre stage to bring more black people into the ownership and control of the economy.

We must never shy away from using state power to benefit the historically disadvantaged.

And we are acutely aware that radical economic transformation will remain a pipe dream if we do not restore land to the people.

It cannot be that 23 years after democracy, the majority of African people own less than 20% of the land in the country of their birth.

Africans cannot continue to work the land for the benefit of the few who stole it. Land remains a catalyst for mainstream economic participation, ownership and control.

In this regard, the ANC will use its majority to fast-track the Expropriation Act and fully implement the Strengthening of Relatives Rights programme.

Where the land can be restituted, the government must discourage financial compensation as this undermines the transformation of agriculture as a critical economic sector.

To provide material benefit to the masses, we must advance the local economic development agenda using government buying power and enact regulations to force capital to invest in local economic development.

In this regard, we are inspired by South Korea whose principal strategy was to promote the economy through state-buying power.

State institutions and state-supported companies in South Korea were compelled to procure from local businesses, particularly from the co-operatives and SMMEs.

Even foreign companies had to produce evidence that imported materials were not available locally.

This is the approach we must adopt to transform the living conditions of our people.

We welcome the finalisation of new regulations that make it compulsory for big companies to

sub-contract 30% of their business to black-owned enterprises. This must be implemented immediately by all state departments, provinces and municipalities.

However, we must go beyond sub-contracting to ensure infrastructure material is procured locally.

Companies awarded tenders for infrastructure development and building low-cost housing must be compelled to procure the building material from local manufacturers, in particular blacks and Africans.

If not, they must prove imported material was not available locally.

As we adopt a more radical approach in our local economic development, we must create, through local government in particular, a conducive environment for business to thrive.

Our approach will focus on creating a more supportive and competitive business environment, investing in infrastructure to reduce the cost of doing business, and providing institutional support to new sectors with high growth and employment potential.

As we engage in this task, we are aware there are those who will work to derail and distract us. Their actions are based on preserving their ill-gotten and unjustifiable privileges as super citizens.

We stand firm with President Jacob Zuma, his cabinet and all South Africans of goodwill who have taken it upon themselves to carve a new, brighter future for our country out of the ruins of apartheid and colonial misuse.

Both as a collective and as individuals, we pledge to stand up and be counted in the pursuit of new democratic society in South Africa.

• Zikalala is head of the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal and MEC for Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs.

TRIBUNE TEAM

EDITOR
Mazwi Xaba
031 308 2316
mazwi.xaba@inl.co.za

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Carol Campbell
031 308 2220
carol.campbell@inl.co.za

NEWS DESK
Annie Dorasamy
031 308 2378
annie.dorasamy@inl.co.za

PRODUCTION
Greg Hutson
031 308 2150
greg.hutson@inl.co.za

SPORTS EDITOR
Murray Staats
031 308 2319
murray.staats@inl.co.za

HERALD
Annie Dorasamy
031 308 2378
annie.dorasamy@inl.co.za

SM
Buhle Mbonambi
031 308 2395
buhle.mbonambi@inl.co.za

TRAVEL
Clinton Moodley
clinton.moodley@inl.co.za
Tribune fax: 031 308 2357

Subscriptions
031 308 2022
fax 031 308 2440

Switchboard: 031 308 2911

CLASSIFIEDS:
0860 238 377
fax 031 308 2444
classified@inl.co.za



PRESS OMBUDSMAN
Jovial Rantao has been appointed Independent Media's Press Ombudsman. Rantao is one of the most experienced editors in South Africa. He is the chairperson of The African Editors Forum and the Southern African Editors Forum. His editorships include African Independent, Sunday Independent and Sunday Tribune. Complaints relating to editorial content can be sent to him via complaints@inl.co.za