



Conference of the Left

Conference of the Left Steering Committee Statement

Monday, 25 May 2026: From 29 to 31 May 2026, South African organisations of the left will converge at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg for a national Conference of the Left, convened under the theme “Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power”.

The established steering committee of the Conference of the Left is responsible for the overall coordination of all processes towards the conference and ensuring a successful conference. The conference preparatory process began around February 2026, while the idea of the conference itself was conceived among various organisations of the left at least six years ago as part of a shared discourse aiming to build strategic coherence of progressives as we pursue the vision of transformation and change.

The Conference of the Left seeks to unite the forces of the left in constructing and crystallising a shared campaign-based programme that advances the objectives of the total liberation of the oppressed, the emancipation of the working class, the transformation of our society and the reversal of neoliberal policies that have rolled back our national progress. The conference seeks to develop a concrete campaign framework shared by organisations of the left, with the objective of deepening the unity of the working class, revitalising its activism and articulating a unifying medium-term agenda based on the objective demands of the working class.

The conference is not an attempt to undo the existing organisations of the left nor undermine their work; it seeks, rather, to create a framework to coordinate, elevate and strengthen their work through a common platform and common programme. The conference serves as a forum for equals within the left, founded on mutual respect and an understanding of the diverse and varied nature of the terrain of struggle where the working class pursues its struggles. The diversity of terrain of struggle strengthens the capacity of the working-class forces and creates an effective division of labour.

From struggles on the shop floor where workers fight for a living wage in deteriorating working conditions to those in communities where the working class claims concrete power in decision-making as part of the agenda for the transfer of power and democratisation of society from below, the working class will utilise the conference to organise itself, unite and consolidate its programme. The conference does not seek to create new political parties out of it as suggested by a few of its critics.

The conference will be composed of left political formations, trade unions and their respective federations, social and community organisations, youth and student formations, environmental justice organisations, research and education

organisations, solidarity economy organisations, left-leaning and progressive legacy organisations, international working-class and socialist organisations, public intellectuals and individuals aligned to the left.

The three-day conference programme will consist of plenary speeches and response sessions, conference commissions, plenary presentations, debate exchanges and the adoption of a shared resolution that will be the basis of a forward-looking programme of action.

The work of the steering committee has been made public for the benefit of the working class, progressives and all in society who share an interest in its work.

The registration of interested organisations and individuals is still possible until Monday 25 May. The following forms of organisations have registered for the Conference of the Left:

- 14 political parties
- 14 trade unions
- 3 trade union federations
- 20 social and community organisations
- 4 organisations in the solidarity economy sector
- 5 legacy organisations
- 11 international solidarity organisations

Other organisations have also registered. The work of the conference is available for viewing, contributions and further registration on our website: www.leftconferencesa.co.za.

The steering committee of the conference will hold a pre-conference media briefing on Thursday, 28 May as well as the post-conference press briefing on Sunday, 31 May.

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ISSUED BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE LEFT

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