
CONFERENCE OF THE LEFT

Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power

DRAFT RESOLUTION

On the Establishment of the Council of the Left

Draft for Conference Consideration

Prepared for	Conference of the Left
Purpose	To establish a Council of the Left as a durable platform for coordination, campaigns, political education, and unity in action
Basis	Draft Framework for the Conference of the Left, Version 5
Status	Draft resolution for discussion, amendment, and adoption

This draft is intended as a working text for refinement by participating Left formations.

Draft Resolution on the Establishment of the Council of the Left

Preamble

The Conference of the Left, meeting under the theme “Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power,” recognises that South Africa is facing a deep structural crisis rooted in capitalist accumulation, racialised inequality, patriarchal oppression, mass unemployment, financial domination, land dispossession, and the continued concentration of ownership in the hands of capital.

The Conference affirms that the democratic breakthrough of 1994 was a historic victory won through mass struggle. It expanded political rights, opened democratic institutions, and improved the lives of millions. However, political democracy was not accompanied by the fundamental transformation of economic power. Ownership of land, finance, mining, energy, retail, infrastructure, and productive capacity remains concentrated, while the working class continues to carry the burden of unemployment, poverty, debt, precarious work, gendered inequality, rising costs of living, and collapsing public services.

The Conference further recognises that the South African crisis is inseparable from the global capitalist and imperialist order. Africa remains subordinated through extraction, debt, financial dependence, military interference, and unequal trade. The struggles of the people of Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other oppressed peoples are part of the same international struggle against imperialism and domination.

The Conference notes that the current balance of forces does not favour the working class. Capital holds the commanding heights of the economy. Neoliberal forces manage the crisis in the interests of capital. Reactionary forces exploit popular suffering while redirecting anger towards false enemies, including migrants and other scapegoats. The Left remains fragmented, unevenly organised, and insufficiently rooted in the daily struggles of the working class and popular strata.

The Conference therefore declares that the present moment demands more than discussion, statements, or symbolic unity. It requires durable organisation, practical coordination, political education, and united action across the diverse traditions, movements, organisations, generations, and formations of the South African Left.

Resolution

The Conference of the Left resolves to establish the Council of the Left as a broad, democratic, accountable, and non-sectarian coordination platform of Left, working-class, socialist, feminist, anti-imperialist, community, labour, youth, women, co-operative, civic, cultural, research, and popular formations.

The Council shall serve as an instrument for unity in action, not as a command structure. It shall not be a new political party. It shall not contest elections in its own name. It shall not dissolve existing organisations or impose ideological uniformity. Its purpose shall be to coordinate common campaigns, strengthen political education, support popular struggles, develop shared platforms, and build working-class and popular power from the ground up.

The Council shall be guided by the principle that transformation is not delivered from above. It is won through organised struggle.

Character and Principles of the Council

The Council of the Left shall be based on the following principles:

Working-class leadership. The Council shall place the interests, struggles, and organised power of the working class, the unemployed, precarious workers, women, youth, rural communities, informal workers, and the poor at the centre of its work.

Unity in action without enforced uniformity. The Council shall respect the political independence, identity, programme, and internal life of participating organisations. It shall coordinate common action where there is convergence, while recognising the historical plurality of the Left.

Anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist orientation. The Council shall confront the concentrated power of capital, oppose neoliberal austerity, resist privatisation, reject imperialist domination, and advance public, social, co-operative, worker, and community ownership.

Democratic accountability. The Council shall be accountable to the organisations and formations that constitute it. It shall not be controlled by self-appointed leaders, dominant organisations, funders, or personalities. Its resources, decisions, and campaigns shall be subject to democratic oversight.

Popular rootedness. The Council shall be rooted in workplaces, communities, villages, townships, campuses, informal settlements, farms, and sites of social reproduction where the working class lives, works, studies, organises, and struggles.

Ethical and accountable leadership. The Council shall reject careerism, patronage, corruption, patriarchy, authoritarianism, sectarianism, and the reproduction of the very extractive practices the Left seeks to defeat.

International solidarity. The Council shall deepen practical solidarity with oppressed peoples and liberation struggles across Africa and the world, including Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela, Western Sahara, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and all peoples resisting imperialism, occupation, sanctions, war, and exploitation.

Mandate of the Council

The Council of the Left shall be mandated to:

1. Coordinate joint campaigns of the Left on agreed priority struggles.
2. Develop shared political education programmes, including teach-ins, reading groups, popular education materials, cadre development programmes, and public seminars.
3. Build practical solidarity between labour, community, youth, women, rural, co-operative, informal worker, student, cultural, and civic struggles.
4. Develop policy alternatives rooted in working-class interests, including alternatives to austerity, financial domination, privatisation, unemployment, land concentration, food insecurity, and corporate control.
5. Support local struggles and connect them to national campaigns.

6. Promote forms of public, social, co-operative, worker, and community ownership as immediate terrains of struggle.
7. Convene regular forums for strategic discussion, campaign planning, accountability, and review.
8. Report publicly on progress, challenges, finances, campaigns, and agreed priorities.
9. Prepare for future Conferences of the Left and ensure continuity between conferences.

First-Phase Campaign Priorities

The Conference resolves that, during its first twelve months, the Council of the Left shall prioritise the following areas of work:

1. Cost of Living Campaign

The Council shall launch a coordinated campaign against the rising cost of food, electricity, transport, housing, water, education, healthcare, and debt. This campaign must connect household suffering to the structural power of monopolies, financial capital, privatised provision, tariff increases, corporate profiteering, and austerity. The campaign shall popularise the demand that basic needs must not be subordinated to profit.

2. Employment, Public Investment and Macroeconomic Alternatives

The Council shall develop and campaign for a working-class alternative to austerity, inflation-targeting orthodoxy, fiscal cuts, and investor-confidence governance. This shall include demands for public investment, developmental finance, industrial expansion, labour-intensive production, and democratic direction of finance towards employment and social need.

4

3. Property Relations and the Commanding Heights

The Council shall advance a programme for transforming ownership and control over the commanding heights of the economy. This shall include campaigns for public ownership, democratic control of finance, social ownership, worker ownership, co-operative development, land redistribution, and defence of public assets against privatisation and looting.

4. Land, Food Sovereignty and Rural Struggle

The Council shall support struggles for land redistribution, smallholder production, village and community-based agricultural co-operatives, food sovereignty, local markets, public procurement from small producers, and resistance to land concentration and agribusiness domination.

5. Public Services and Local Government Accountability

The Council shall coordinate community-based campaigns for water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal, housing, public transport, clinics, schools, and accountable municipalities. It shall support democratic monitoring of municipal budgets, procurement, service delivery, and local development plans.

6. Climate, Energy Sovereignty and a Worker-Led Just Transition

The Council shall campaign for a just transition that is publicly planned, worker-led, socially owned, and directed towards employment creation, energy sovereignty, ecological repair, and protection of working-class communities. It shall reject market-led transition models that destroy livelihoods while enriching capital.

7. Safety, Security and Organised Community Power

The Council shall develop a Left approach to safety and security that addresses gender-based violence, organised crime, substance abuse, extortion, community insecurity, and social disintegration as class questions. The response must go beyond policing and must include organised community power, democratic local structures, social support, youth programmes, and economic alternatives.

8. Youth and Women's Economic Participation

The Council shall prioritise the struggles of young people and women against unemployment, unpaid care work, precarious labour, exclusion from productive resources, violence, and marginalisation. Campaigns shall link skills, employment, co-operative development, political education, and social protection.

9. Political Education and Cadre Development

The Council shall establish a common political education programme to rebuild ideological clarity, class analysis, historical memory, anti-imperialist consciousness, feminist politics, socialist theory, and practical organising capacity across Left formations.

Working Groups

The Conference resolves that each priority campaign shall be supported by a dedicated Working Group.

Each Working Group shall:

1. Have a clear convenor or convening collective.
2. Include participating organisations with relevant experience and capacity.
3. Develop a six-month and twelve-month action plan.
4. Identify practical campaign activities, educational materials, public actions, policy proposals, and mobilisation targets.
5. Report regularly to the Council.
6. Ensure participation by youth, women, workers, community formations, and affected constituencies.

The initial Working Groups shall include:

1. Cost of Living Working Group
2. Employment and Macroeconomic Alternatives Working Group
3. Property Relations and Social Ownership Working Group
4. Land, Food Sovereignty and Rural Struggle Working Group

5. Local Government and Public Services Working Group
6. Climate, Energy and Just Transition Working Group
7. Community Safety and Social Power Working Group
8. Youth and Women's Economic Participation Working Group
9. Political Education Working Group
10. International Solidarity Working Group

Composition and Participation

The Council shall be composed of organisations and formations that accept this resolution, support the broad political direction of the Conference of the Left, and commit to active participation in agreed work.

Participation shall be open to labour formations, community organisations, socialist and Left political formations, women's organisations, youth and student formations, rural organisations, co-operative movements, informal worker organisations, civic movements, cultural workers, progressive faith-based formations, research institutes, activist networks, anti-imperialist solidarity formations, and other popular organisations committed to working-class and popular power.

Participation in the Council shall require:

1. Commitment to the basic principles of the Council.
2. Respect for the autonomy of participating organisations.
3. Participation in at least one agreed campaign or working group.
4. Commitment to democratic conduct, non-sectarian engagement, anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-xenophobia, and accountability.
5. Rejection of corruption, abuse, patriarchy, authoritarian conduct, and reactionary politics.

6

Interim Coordination Structure

The Conference resolves to establish an Interim Coordinating Committee of the Council of the Left for a period of twelve months.

The Interim Coordinating Committee shall:

1. Coordinate the establishment of the Council.
2. Convene the first meeting of the Council within thirty days after the Conference.
3. Facilitate the formation of Working Groups.
4. Develop draft terms of reference for the Council.
5. Propose democratic procedures for decision-making, representation, accountability, finance, and reporting.
6. Coordinate the first twelve-month programme of action.
7. Ensure that no single organisation dominates the Council.
8. Present a progress report within six months.
9. Prepare for a review conference or national assembly within twelve months.

The Interim Coordinating Committee must reflect the diversity of the Conference, including labour, community, youth, women, rural, co-operative, political, intellectual, and popular formations.

Accountability and Reporting

The Council shall operate with full accountability to participating formations.

It shall produce:

1. A public programme of action.
2. Regular campaign reports.
3. Financial reports where resources are raised or used.
4. Minutes or summaries of major decisions.
5. Six-month and twelve-month political and organisational reports.
6. A public assessment of progress against agreed priorities.

The Council shall not become a platform for symbolic declarations without practical work. Its credibility shall be measured by whether working-class and popular formations are stronger, more coordinated, and more effective six and twelve months after the Conference.

Immediate Tasks After the Conference

The Conference mandates the Interim Coordinating Committee to implement the following immediate tasks:

1. Circulate this resolution to all participating organisations within seven days.
2. Convene the first Council meeting within thirty days.
3. Confirm participating organisations and their designated representatives.
4. Establish the priority Working Groups.
5. Draft the first twelve-month programme of action.
6. Develop a shared political education calendar.
7. Identify immediate campaign moments around the cost of living, unemployment, land, public services, and international solidarity.
8. Develop communication platforms for coordination.
9. Prepare a public statement announcing the establishment of the Council of the Left.
10. Report back to participating formations within six months.

Conclusion

The Conference of the Left affirms that the crisis facing South Africa will not be resolved by neoliberal adjustment, technocratic management, reactionary scapegoating, or fragmented protest. It requires organised working-class and popular power.

The Council of the Left is established as a practical instrument to build that power. It is a commitment to coordinated struggle, political education, democratic accountability, international solidarity, and transformation of ownership and power in South Africa.

The Conference therefore declares:

Forward to the Council of the Left.
Forward to working-class and popular power.
Forward to unity in action.
Forward to socialism.

Adoption

Adopted by the Conference of the Left, subject to amendments agreed by the Conference.

Date of adoption	
Place of adoption	
Chairperson / Presiding Officer	
Signature	