

Quizzing the candidates

DO YOU know what you're voting for, and why? Voters are receiving different messages from all sides, and the confusion is likely to increase as the electioneering pace steps up. Before you place that cross you'll want to find out everything you need to know to make that important decision. The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) has compiled a list of questions that voters may find useful. You could use it to challenge political parties, to scrutinise their policy manifestos and to question individual candidates and leaders. The answers should show which party is likely to contribute most to national unity, political and economic progress and social justice.

Political policy

- Will you adopt a free-market system?
- What criteria did you use in selecting your candidates?
- What will you do if your party loses the election?
- Do you want a unitary or federal state? Why?
- How do you intend to restructure the police and security forces so that they will enjoy credibility among all the people?
- How do you intend to counteract violence?
- How will you deal with militant opposition groups?

Economic policy

- Do you intend to nationalise key economic resources?
- If neither of the above, what form of state intervention in the economy do you plan? What will be the implications of this?
- What is your policy on multi-national corporations operating in South Africa?
- Do you intend to raise loans from the World Bank? How do you intend to use them, and to repay them?
- What is your policy on taxation, for example Vat, PAYE, company tax and tax on wealth and inheritance?
- How do you intend to tackle the problem of unemployment?

Social policy

- What is your policy on land redistribution and how will you finance it?
- What is your position on promoting black workers through affirmative action?
- How do you intend to deal with the backlog in black education resulting from apartheid and how will you finance your reforms?
- How will you deal with the seven million homeless people in the country? How do you intend to finance housing?
- How do you intend to provide primary health services for all?
- How will you help those who were neglected under apartheid, especially the rural poor, the alienated youth and the generally marginalised?

Human rights policy

- What is your policy on a Bill of Human Rights, especially on women's rights and family and cultural values?
- What is your position on the right to life from the moment of conception until death. What, therefore, is your position on abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment?
- Will you allow free activity for non-political organisations and how will you support non-government organisations?

This is a shortened version of the SACBC's list of questions.

PARTY NAME	ACRONYM	NATIONAL	PROVINCES
African Christian Democratic Party	ACDP	X	All
African Democratic Party	ADM	X	All
African National Congress	ANC	X	All
Democratic Party	DP	X	All
Dekwankwetla Party of SA	DPSA	X	OFS, PWV
Islamic Party			Western Cape
Keep It Straight and Simple Party	KISS	X	
Merit Party			Western Cape
Minority Front		X	Natal
National Party	NP	X	All
North West Democrats		X	
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania	PAC	X	All
Realists' Party			PWV
South African Women's Party			Western Cape
United People's Front	UPF		PWV, Northern Transvaal
Women's Rights Peace Party		X	
Workers' International to rebuild the 4th International			Western Cape
Workers' List Party		X	
Ximoko Progressive Party	XPP	X	PWV, Northern Transvaal

ON THE LIST: This is a provisional list of the parties that had registered by the 12 February deadline.

Did you know?

DID you know ... it is true that one quarter of one percent of all the votes will be enough for a party to get one seat in the national assembly. But this will not secure a cabinet seat - for that a party must get five percent of the national vote.

Did you know ... to win a seat in a provincial legislature requires fewer votes, but as a percentage the number of votes required will be between one and three percent. It depends on the ratio of voters to seats allocated to that province.

Your vote will count, even if you, by law, have to sit on tenterhooks until at least May 2 to hear the results.