

Social responsibility and political accountability: Two sides of the same coin

By [Andy Du Plessis](#)

13 Oct 2020

South Africans are truly remarkable and unique. Despite our very brutal past and the legacy we still live with, along with our very different cultures and sub-cultures that tend to divide us, we also have much in common. We are resilient people. We live in hope. We remain positive in spite of the circumstances around us. We understand the value of hard work and we get things done. We inspire one another and love to hear about and share stories that lift our spirits.



Andy Du Plessis, MD of FoodForward SA

According to recent Statistics South Africa and South African Police Services data, in South Africa a car is hijacked every 32 minutes, 58 people are murdered each day and more than 3,600 homes are broken into daily. We spend huge amounts of money to secure our homes and businesses. Our sexual offences crime rates are among the highest in the world. South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world. In a country with 59,62 million people, 40% are unemployed - taking into account the expanded definition of unemployment. Load shedding aggravates us and corruption is rife in government and the private sector.

South Africans are strangely optimistic

All this miserable data paints a bleak picture for our children's future and is enough to make one depressed and contemplate leaving SA for greener pastures. Despite all this negativity that we constantly hear about, read about, see around us or experience daily, South Africans are strangely optimistic. We joke about things that could lead others to depression. We are tenacious - in spite of the odds stacked against us. We are naturally altruistic and display care and empathy quite generously. We tend to unite around and get involved in social causes and we love to support charities.

We have deep roots in South Africa and the soil connects us in very strange ways. Yes, thoughts of emigrating are considered, but this is just not an option for most of us. We all, generally speaking, love South Africa and hate the negativity that surrounds us. We constantly envisage a thriving South Africa. We are keen to do what's necessary to reconstruct this beautiful country of ours so that we can build a future in which we imagine our children feel safe, are growing and, especially, thriving.

New social contract

For this new birth to materialise, we need a new social contract. One where we see social activism (citizens/civil society) and political accountability (parliament and government) as two sides of the same coin. We need both to work well and do what is necessary to bring about the change we want to see.

We have what it takes to make South Africa great. And this is what frustrates us because we can visualise the amazing possibilities. Yet, daily we hear about the negative things that occur and we see the missed opportunities sliding away that could improve the lives of all our people.

Civic responsibility and social activism are part of our DNA. We must not stop doing good where we have the opportunity to effect change. Even the smallest gesture has the power to transform a person, a family, a community and a nation. We have media freedom, an independent judiciary, a strong civil society and more than enough people that are willing to work together towards a common goal – a united and prosperous South Africa. We must continue to expose corruption, hold people in power to account, be intolerant of where our government is failing, fight against the inhumane treatment of people, care for those in our communities who are vulnerable and demand ethical leadership in government and business.

Political accountability

The flip side of this coin is political accountability. For far too long, President Cyril Ramaphosa has been silent on the corrupt activities of high-ranking ANC members and government officials. Thankfully, we are starting to see some encouraging action against perpetrators. But given that we have 10 years of state capture to unearth, we have a long way to go to regain some of the past losses. We must see constant waves of action by the National Prosecuting Authority, the Special Investigating Unit and the Hawks against corruption. Treasury must continue to tighten spending and be diligent and transparent of where the funds are directed so that we start to see constructive growth and development. We must demand ethical leadership from our politicians and take swift action against those who fall short.

Much work ahead of us

In September 2020, the *Wave 2* report published by the National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM) describes our current state of the nation as one that “resembles a post-civil war country facing a humanitarian crisis”. We have much work ahead of us. But this beautiful country and all its people are worth fighting for.

I am making a renewed call to all of us to work together to create a future where our children can thrive. Let’s do this!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Du Plessis, MD of FoodForward SA

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>