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WOULD YOU VOTE FOR ME?

- By Dawie Roodt

I plan to analyse and discuss the policies, as set out in their manifestos, of the different political parties over the next few weeks. With the election around the corner, understanding what the different political parties stand for may assist in our decision on where to place our X.

But before I dissect the policies of our political suitors, why not prepare a benchmark against which these policies can be compared? Why not prepare my own election manifesto?

I do realise that (economic) policies are not the only reason for people to vote for a party. Policy, track record and quality of leadership, I reckon, should be the most important considerations when deciding who to vote for. And "track record" already disqualifies the ANC, but that is for another note...

Anyway, in thinking about my policy suggestions and reading through it again, I realise that I am probably unrealistic and hopelessly idealistic in my plans for the country.

Here are some of my policy proposals. Let me know if you would have voted for me if my (economic) policies contained the following:

- + Change the constitution to strengthen private property rights.
- + Strengthen the independence of the Reserve Bank and lower the inflation target to 2%.
- + Investigate and support the use of new technologies, like the blockchain for payment systems, asset registers and the like.
- + Dramatically alter the tax system by, amongst others, abolishing all taxes on capital, like capital gains tax, transfer duties, estate duties, etc.
- + Abolish our myriad small and irritating taxes, like vehicle taxes and financial transaction taxes.
- + Increase the tax on fuel and reduce the number of personal income tax categories to only three. Personal income tax rates may have to be increased.
- + Reduce company income taxes and abolish taxes on dividends.
- + Establish an independent "Fiscal Board" that uses VAT (by changing the VAT rate) as an instrument to assure balanced fiscal accounts over the economic cycle.
- + Scrap all exemptions to VAT — except for exports.
- + Establish means tests before anybody qualifies for a child support grant — like proof of inoculation, school attendance and so on.
- + Increase the qualifying age for state pension gradually (say over 20 years) to 70 years of age.
- + Issue coupons to parents and allow them to decide themselves to which school they want to send their kids. Limit the number of annual coupons to 12 per child.
- + Provide student loans to the best students and require them to repay these loans.
- + Reinstate education colleges and launch a project to make SA's primary education system world class.

- + Declare a state of emergency for education, increase the length of school days, consider school on Saturdays and ban trade unions in education until our standards are the same as the world's average.
- + Allow state hospitals and clinics more autonomy and convert the department of health into state-funded medical funds for all. Once you reach your limit on your medical fund you will be required to go to a medical training facility for treatment, for "free".
- + Place Eskom, SAA and the other state-owned paracitals under business rescue. Take over their debt and privatise, sell or close them down, depending on the circumstances.
- + Launch a program to dramatically reduce the number of civil "servants" and pay the rest what they are worth. Many thousands will lose their "jobs".
- + Reduce the cabinet to a maximum of ten ministers. Abolish departments like sport (what on earth does the minister of sport do?), small business, women and so on.
- + Develop basic infrastructure for housing on state-owned land and transfer full title to the poor.
- + Sell other state land to fund this.
- + Fire all policemen and allow communities to reappoint their own policemen.
- + Build police stations from glass.
- + Abolish all exchange control regulations and allow trustees greater discretion on investment decisions with no prescribed assets.
- + Change the government's employers pension fund to a defined contribution fund and allow members to migrate to funds of their choice.
- + Thereafter abolish the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) — except for non-pension fund related functions.
- + Abolish the minimum wage and the unemployment insurance fund.
- + Abolish all forms of BEE and official race-based discrimination and replace it with a poverty development program.

I am sure I can make this list much longer...

What is important for all of us to understand is that this country is so deep in trouble that we are way past the point where minor tweaks can still save us from further economic ruin. I have no doubt that many people will be opposed to my suggestions. But I also have no doubt that the implementation of these suggestions will lead to amazing economic growth, poverty reduction and real job creation.

Don't think that these suggestions are silly. Many of these suggestions have been tried by other countries, usually with great success.

Alas, I doubt that I would be elected with these policies. There are just too many people that learned that they can benefit from the system by voting for those politicians that will transfer wealth from the productive to the unproductive.

So, this is probably wishful thinking, but nobody can say I didn't try...

Would you vote for me?