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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2021

The 2021 municipal elections have come and gone. Voter turnout was disappointingly low, but we trust that NAPTOSA members, being model citizens, utilized the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Poor management, corruption, inter- and intra-political party tussles and a general disregard for the citizens have beleaguered the South African municipal system for many years, on top of which coalition municipal governments have proven to be riddled with problems.

The election results indicate that we could be in for even more coalitions. This does not bode well for our country if political parties continue the coalition trend displayed up to now.

As NAPTOSA we can only hope that past coalition government experiences will lead to greater maturity among political parties this time around. We can no longer allow party political differences to undermine service delivery to our people. Self-interest has no place in local government. The sole focus must be on providing effective and efficient services to residents. Campaign pledges must translate to good governance and proper service delivery, whether a single political party governs a municipality or whether a coalition government is in place.

Protest action, as the only avenue for citizens to have their voices heard on poor service delivery, has become part of our local government fabric. There, however, ought not be a need for this if national and provincial governments were to properly execute their oversight roles over local government. NAPTOSA therefore calls on national and provincial governments to enhance their reaction time to act against local authorities that fail to provide the required services to the local population.

Poor service delivery unfortunately, in many instances, lies not only with the politicians but often with the officials. It is therefore incumbent upon local authorities to take strong action against employees that deliberately undermine or retard service delivery to residents.

Only when Batho Pele (people first) becomes action and not lip service will we see an improvement in local government services.

To our NAPTOSA members, make sure you know who your local councilors are and report poor service delivery problems to them, be it for the area you live or the school you teach in. Hold them to account. We have for far too long been passive bystanders to poor service delivery.

BASIL MANUEL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR