

ConCourt property debt judgment provides clarity - Msimanga

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Johannesburg – The Constitutional Court judgment on property owners inheriting debt from previous owners has provided much-needed clarity for municipalities, Tshwane mayor Solly Msimanga said on Tuesday.

He would study the court’s ruling and provide a more comprehensive response, he said in Braamfontein, where DA leader Mmusi Maimane was tabling a jobs plan for cities under the party’s control.

The court ruled that new property owners cannot be held liable for the municipal debt of previous homeowners, contrary to what the Ekurhuleni, Tshwane, and Ethekewini municipalities had argued.

The DA took control of the Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay metros after the local government elections in August 2016. It has run Cape Town since 2006.

Maimane said the party wanted to boost investor confidence and gain business confidence. This would be coupled with a plan to reduce red tape, eradicate laws that made it difficult to trade, and cut down the costs of doing business.

There would be infrastructure development to create more jobs, he said, citing the City of Cape Town as an example where this had happened.

Johannesburg mayor Herman Mashaba and Msimanga said they were dealing with the corruption-riddled legacy of the previous ANC administration. As a result, he said they should not be judged too harshly because the budget they were working with was put in place just two months before the DA came into power.

“For the first nine months of the first year, we had to manage their [ANC] budget based on vanity projects, based on corruption, based on mismanagement,” Mashaba said.

He was responding to a question about the ANC in the Johannesburg region grading him an H for his first 100 days in office, in its report card last week. Overall, the DA in Johannesburg got a 20% mark.

All mayors agreed to eliminate corruption in their cities to make them attractive to business.

Maimane said the DA could not invest in systems that consumed taxpayers’ money for corrupt purposes and that only benefit some individuals. He said cases had been opened against city officials for corruption allegedly committed when the ANC was in charge. Mashaba previously said the city was investigating 1920 cases of corruption.

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