

After initially being expressed in hushed tones, it seems that voices have been raised in recent times within the African National Congress, the ruling party in South Africa to demand an improvement in relations with the Kingdom of Morocco.

Indeed, several sections of the ANC called, in a Memorandum delivered on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 to the Party Secretariat in Johannesburg, for the strengthening of bilateral relations with Morocco and to recognize the invaluable support of the Kingdom in the fight against apartheid.

*“We call on the ANC to recognize Morocco’s pioneering support for the struggle against apartheid, as acknowledged by President Nelson Mandela in his speeches, books, magazines and through several visits to Morocco,”* the manifesto signatories stressed.

In addition, the local South African press reported that these demands have become louder and clearer within the party, while the South African leadership continues to ignore these growing voices.

These pressures come at a time when the Moroccan Sahara is experiencing growing support from major countries such as United States of America, France, Germany, Spain, in addition to many European, African and Arab countries, which led to a strong call in South Africa for improved relations with Morocco.

This change in international position pushed many people within the ruling party in South Africa to put pressure on its leaders to review their hostile policies towards Morocco, demanding a change in the current context.

Similarly, the CEO of Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA), the agency of the government of the province of Gauteng in South Africa, Stembiso Dlamini, called, Thursday, December 5, 2024 in Rabat, to strengthen economic collaboration with Morocco and South Africa.

*“We believe that Morocco is positioning itself as a leader in the tourism sector and the automotive industry,”* emphasized Ms. Dlamini during a panel discussion held on the sidelines of the Africa Forum Investment (AIF) held last week in Rabat, highlighting the need to encourage investments and develop skills, particularly through exchange programs.

For his part, Saki Zamaxka, CEO of the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency

(GGDA), said during the same forum “collaboration between Morocco and South Africa, and more particularly in the Gauteng region, considered the largest economic region in the country, can cover several sectors.”

*“Morocco is active in tourism, renewable energy, industry, and financial services. We believe that exchanges can focus on these areas to further develop investment opportunities,”* he said.

In the same context, the Minister of the Provincial Government of the Gauteng region (which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria) in charge of development and economy and a prominent member of the African National Congress (ANC-Gauteng), Lebogang Maile, noted that investments play a key role in accelerating growth.

In this regard, he stressed the importance of establishing the right conditions to encourage partnerships and foster-shared prosperity between South Africa and partners across Africa and the world.

This economic pragmatism, emanating from the most important region of South Africa, illustrates the growing gap between official ideological positions and national economic interests. The fact that these statements come from officials linked to the ANC-Gauteng is particularly significant.

In the same vein, Morocco has experienced remarkable growth in the areas of industry, trade and tourism, as well as in the organization of major international events, particularly sporting events. These achievements have played a major role in motivating many members of the ruling party in South Africa to demand a complete improvement in relations with Morocco.

These truths should challenge South Africa’s leadership to advocate for a rapprochement with Morocco, in recognition of its leadership in Africa, and especially in recognition of its historical support for Nelson Mandela, and to learn from the great international support for the Moroccan autonomy initiative.

A rapprochement with Morocco, a partner that is always reliable, available, and serious and a hub of stability will contribute to building a stable and prosperous future for our beloved Africa.