**Title: South Africa's 2024 Election Manifestos: A Missed Opportunity in the Face of Planetary Warming**

**Introduction:**

Addressing the climate crisis is paramount in the Anthropocene epoch, characterized by significant human impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems. Recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlight the urgency of this issue. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) provides a comprehensive overview of the state of climate science, emphasising the need for immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors to limit global warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F) ​ ([IPCC](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/))​. Despite its relatively small population size, South Africa ranks among the top 20 carbon emitters globally due to its coal-dependent energy sector, highlighting the disproportionate impact of its carbon intensity on global emissions. As South Africa approaches its 2024 national election, analysing the major political parties' manifestos reveals a concerning lack of commitment to tackling the climate crisis, which is especially critical given the country's significant contribution to global carbon emissions.

**Analysis of Party Manifestos:**

The manifestos of the Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), African National Congress (ANC), GOOD, RISE Mzansi, and Action SA were evaluated for their approach to the climate crisis. These parties were chosen based on an initial review that identified some mention of climate-related topics in their manifestos. However, the analysis reveals a concerning lack of depth and specificity in their climate policies.

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| **Criteria** | ANC | DA | EFF | GOOD | RISE Mzansi | ActionSA |
| Climate Policy and Commitment | Acknowledges the need for a diverse energy mix, including renewables | Supports the creation of a national registry of mitigation actions | Commits to decarbonising the electricity sector | Not explicitly mentioned | Prioritises balancing inclusive development with the transition to a low-carbon economy | Promotes environmental sustainability and economic justice in the transition to renewable energy, commits to the gradual shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources |
| Renewable Energy and Decarbonization | Not explicitly mentioned | Advocates for renewable energy projects and energy efficiency | Focuses on a mix of energy sources, including clean coal, gas, nuclear, and renewable energy | Not explicitly mentioned | Supports a balanced green energy mix and incentives for green hydrogen use | Advocates for the use of renewable energy sources for electricity generation and incentivises the installation of solar panels |
| Adaptation and Resilience | Not explicitly mentioned | Emphasises building climate resilience through disaster management, agriculture, and water infrastructure | Not explicitly mentioned | Not explicitly mentioned | Aims to help communities mitigate climate change impacts | Promotes resilience against natural disasters and effective response to climate-related challenges |
| Sustainable Development and Green Economy | Not explicitly mentioned | Pursues policies for sustainable economic development and job creation in the green economy | Advocates for the "one million climate jobs" initiative | Not explicitly mentioned | Focuses on green industries and participation in green value chains | Supports investment in projects that develop reliable infrastructure and enhance economic competitiveness, including green energy |
| Climate Finance and Investment | Not explicitly mentioned | Mentions investments in infrastructure to improve energy security | Commits to funding research and infrastructure for electrification | Not explicitly mentioned | Supports tax deductions for residential rooftop solar and financial mechanisms for green hydrogen | Advocates for investing in infrastructure and economic development projects that align with environmental sustainability |
| Public Engagement and Education | Not explicitly mentioned | Aims to improve public awareness campaigns for disaster management | Not explicitly mentioned | Promotes e-learning to bring children into the digital economy | Not explicitly mentioned | Emphasizes the importance of public participation and engagement in the transition to renewable energy sources |
| Regulation and Enforcement | Not explicitly mentioned | Advocates for stringent regulations for hydraulic fracturing and marine offshore seismic exploration | Plans to streamline environmental authorisation procedures | Not explicitly mentioned | Not explicitly mentioned | Supports the implementation of environmental protection measures and regulations to reduce pollution and protect ecosystems |

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| **Criteria** | ANC | DA | EFF | GOOD | RISE Mzansi | ActionSA |
| Climate Policy and Commitment | **1/3** | **2/3** | **1/3** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **2/3** |
| **Renewable Energy and Decarbonization** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **2/3** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **2/3** |
| **Adaptation and Resilience** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **0/3** | **0/3** | **1/3** | **2/3** |
| **Sustainable Development and Green Economy** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **1/3** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **2/3** |
| **Climate Finance and Investment** | **0/3** | **1/3** | **1/3** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **2/3** |
| **Public Engagement and Education** | **0/3** | **1/3** | **0/3** | **1/3** | **0/3** | **2/3** |
| **Regulation and Enforcement** | **0/3** | **2/3** | **1/3** | **0/3** | **0/3** | **2/3** |
| **Total Score (out of 21)** | **1/21** | **12/21** | **6/21** | **1/21** | **9/21** | **14/21** |

**Conclusion:**

The evaluation of the political parties manifestos on their approach to the climate crisis is based on the following scoring criteria:

* 0/3: The issue is not mentioned or lacks detail.
* 1/3: The issue is mentioned but lacks specific plans or details.
* 2/3: Detailed plans or commitments are mentioned.
* 3/3: The manifesto provides comprehensive and detailed plans or commitments.

Based on this scoring framework, ActionSA emerges as the frontrunner with a score of 14/21, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to addressing climate change in their manifesto. The Democratic Alliance (DA) follows with a respectable score of 12/21, indicating a commitment to climate action but with room for further development. RISE Mzansi, with a score of 9/21, focuses on sustainable development and the green economy. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) score 6/21, highlighting some emphasis on renewable energy and decarbonisation. The African National Congress (ANC) and GOOD score a modest 1/21, suggesting limited detail in their manifestos regarding climate change policies and actions.

As South Africa confronts escalating climate-related challenges such as intensified heatwaves, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and extreme weather events, the urgency for robust and ambitious climate policies is more pronounced than ever. The upcoming election presents a critical opportunity for political parties to place the climate crisis at the forefront of their agendas and to align their policies with the scientific consensus on the need for immediate and substantial action to mitigate global warming.

Voters have a pivotal role in demanding more from their political representatives, advocating for clear and comprehensive strategies to address and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The future of South Africa, and indeed the planet, hinges on our collective ability to meet this unprecedented challenge head-on, embracing the responsibilities of the Anthropocene era with determination and resolve

**References:**

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