



# AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

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## Speeches

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### Political Report by President Jacob Zuma to the 53rd National Conference of the ANC

16 December 2012

#### UNITY IN ACTION TOWARDS SOCIO-ECONOMIC FREEDOM

National Chairperson, Ms Baleka Mbete,  
Deputy President Comrade Kgalema Mottlanthe,  
ANC Officials and Members of the National Executive Committee,  
Our Alliance partners and other representatives of the mass democratic movement,  
Representatives of fraternal parties in Africa and the world,  
Members of the diplomatic corps and other observers;  
Traditional leaders and religious leaders,  
Delegates,  
Comrades and friends,

Comrade Chairperson,

It is a great pleasure to welcome all delegates to this 53rd National Conference of the African National Congress, taking place at the birthplace of the ANC, Mangaung.

Present here are 4,500 delegates representing thousands of branches, located across the length and breadth of our country.

The ANC has grown phenomenally since the last three conferences.

In 2002 at the Stellenbosch conference membership stood at 416 846. In 2007 at the 52nd National Conference in Polokwane, the total membership was 621 237 members.

It has now grown to 1 220 057 audited members in good standing, thus meeting the directive of the 1942 conference, that the ANC should have one million members. The ANC remains very popular with the masses of our people, not only to vote for it, but to join it as members.

Comrades,

Today, the 16th of December is the day on which the ANC launched the people's army, Umkhonto Wesizwe in 1961.

In the free and democratic South Africa, we mark the 16th as the National Day of Reconciliation, a day of promoting unity, social cohesion, forgiveness and a non-racial society.

We salute all generations of MK many of whom sacrificed their youth for the struggle for liberation.

We pay tribute in particular to Isithwalandwe President Mandela, the first commander-in-chief of MK, who is currently hospitalised in Pretoria. He is receiving good care from a competent and caring medical team. We wish him and family all the best during this time.

Comrades,

We are coming to the end of our exciting centenary programme.

The Polokwane conference mandated us to mobilize the vast majority of our people to take part fully in the ANC centenary celebrations.

Working together with all our structures, we carried out this mandate with great pride.

We are proud to report to this conference that the centenary celebrations were a great success.

They have left an indelible mark in the memories of the vast majority of our people here at home and abroad.

The most important achievement of these celebrations was the realisation of just how much the ANC is deeply rooted amongst the people of South Africa and what it means to them.

These celebrations revealed to us that the ANC remains the only hope for the poor and marginalized.

We saw those who were disillusioned becoming reenergized and reaffirming their support and pledging their participation in the ANC's cause for fundamental social transformation.

We discovered that the ANC is way bigger than its membership figures. It is actually loved by many more people who stand

#### The African National Congress

The ANC is a national liberation movement. It was formed in 1912 to unite the African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.

The ANC's key objective is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society.

This means the liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor.

#### The Tripartite Alliance

The ANC is in an alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Each Alliance partner is an independent organisation with its own constitution, membership and programmes. The Alliance is founded on a common commitment to the objectives of the National Democratic Revolution, and the need to unite the largest possible cross-section of South Africans behind these objectives.

- #### Former Leaders
- | The Officials     |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Zaccheus Mahabane | Albert Luthuli |
| Josiah Gumede     | Oliver Tambo   |
| Pixley Seme       | Nelson Mandela |
| Alfred Xuma       | Govan Mbeki    |
| James Moroka      | Walter Sisulu  |
|                   | Thabo Mbeki    |

#### Follow ANC on




for progressive change.

We are truly proud of our movement.

Comrades,

We meet five years after that watershed conference in Polokwane.

This 53rd Conference is of great significance, occurring as it does at the beginning of the decisive second phase of our long transition from Colonialism of a Special Type to a National Democratic Society.

The theme of Conference, which is "Unity in Action towards Socio-Economic Freedom," launches us to press ahead with the task of radically transforming our society.

#### ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

Today we reflect on the road travelled since 2007, in both organisational work and that of the ANC in government.

The Polokwane conference was unique in its own way. It re-affirmed the ANC as a strategic centre of power to provide leadership to the state and society as a whole.

In this context one of the most tangible achievements was the reaffirmation that power lies with branches, thus emphasising as well the need to capacitate the branches with resources so that they can function optimally.

Polokwane also reaffirmed the Freedom Charter as a strategic document, and charted the way forward for us to change the ANC and its government for the better.

The road to Polokwane was full of divisions and turbulence. It was necessary therefore that we begin healing the organisation and working for unity immediately after the conference.

The leadership of the ANC criss-crossed the country speaking to and working with structures of the movement.

Some successes were scored while some provinces and regions still face pockets of factionalism and divisions.

The renewal includes rebuilding ANC branches, the basic units of our movement. We need to ensure that branches are genuine and have genuine members.

This means that our audit and verification of membership procedures should be improved so that only branches in good standing determine the policy and leadership direction of the organisation.

In some instances, some branches contain members who belong to other members.

Other alien tendencies to be eliminated from the movement as part of renewal is the negative lobbying for positions which includes smear campaigns in the media as well as gossip and rumour-mongering about one another.

Also common are the disrespectful public spats as well as hurling insults at other comrades or members of the public, thereby bringing the ANC into disrepute.

More seriously, we have experienced the shocking occurrences where armed comrades disrupt ANC meetings.

This then raises the question what exactly could be so much at stake, that people would go so far to get their own way in the organisation.

We condemn the use of violence, and strongly condemn the killings of ANC leaders including the ANC Dr Kenneth Kaunda regional secretary in North West, Comrade Obuti Chika. We condemn the killing of other comrades in other provinces as well, earlier in the year.

Comrades, we must also frown upon other alien practices such as the use of money to buy the support of ANC members. We should not allow a situation where those who have money turn members of the ANC into commodities.

Comrades the ANC should also revisit this matter of people who take the ANC to court when they are unhappy with a particular decision. Some comrades do this even before exhausting internal processes. It is totally unacceptable.

All these tendencies have been creeping into the movement gradually, and need to be dealt with.

The National General Council in 2010 drew the line on ill-discipline.

It said; "The NEC in particular and all structures in general need to act with firmness, fairness and consistency in enforcing Rule 25 of the ANC Constitution. There should be no confusing signals and messages from the leadership on matters of discipline", said the NGC.

Acting on the mandate of the NGC and informed by the Constitution of the ANC, the leadership dealt with some cases of ill-discipline and some members were expelled and others were suspended.

The lapses in organisational discipline indicate that the incoming NEC would need to prioritise political education. There is no need to wait for a formal ANC political school building before we start!

The renewal and rebuilding also applies to the Leagues of the ANC and the Alliance.

Historically, both the Youth League and the Women's League have played an important role in the life of the African National Congress. Their role remains relevant and crucial, as we move into the second phase in which we will focus on achieving meaningful socio-economic freedom.

We had stated at the NGC and reiterate here, that the Leagues are structures of the ANC which are subject to the discipline of the ANC.

We acknowledge the positive role played by the Leagues, the Alliance, MKMVA and SANCO in 2009 during the national

general elections and the 2011 local government elections.

We scored a decisive victory in the elections due to the dedication and commitment to the campaign by the Leagues and alliance partners.

Comrades,

President Oliver Tambo reminded us eloquently of the need for the unity of the ANC-led Alliance a few years ago. He emphasised that it was "a living organism that has grown out of struggle".

We worked together to bring about freedom, justice and human rights during the struggle for liberation and currently as we fight poverty, inequality and unemployment together.

We bring various strengths into the relationship. The SACP brings specific ideological input as the vanguard of the working class.

The progressive federation Cosatu stands solely and squarely for the interests of the workers. It is not a political party, while the ANC stands for the interests of the entire nation irrespective of class or station in society.

The relationship amongst components of the Alliance needs to be handled with the greatest of care because if we don't do so, we can polarise the Alliance.

Our disagreements need to be handled with the understanding that we are allies and not opponents, and that neither COSATU nor the SACP are in opposition to the ANC.

Thus, we reiterate that public spats and shouting from podiums if one partner is unhappy with the other will do little to build or strengthen the Alliance.

Direct engagement on the other hand, would yield results and strengthen the Alliance.

Comrades

Conference will deliberate on various Organisational Renewal proposals including the proposed declaration of the Decade of the Cadre.

These recommendations are designed to strengthen the position of the ANC as a disciplined force of the left with a bias towards the poor and the working class, and also as a leader of society.

It will also include recommendations on how we should fight corruption and promote ethics and integrity within the ANC as well, instead of leaving action against corruption to government alone.

We look forward to fruitful discussions on organisational renewal in the Commissions.

Comrades and friends,

The ANC-led Alliance needs to revisit its understanding of the balance of forces currently in light of occurrences such as the tragedy in Marikana, where 40 people died violently.

The Marikana Judicial Commission of Inquiry led by Judge Ian Farlam will assist us to establish the circumstances around the painful incident.

We once again extend our deepest condolences to the families of all who died in Marikana.

At the time, the ANC met with the CEOs of the mining companies to discuss the living conditions of workers on the mines.

Government convened a Presidential High Level Dialogue on the economy to deal with the various socio-economic challenges in the mining towns.

At a political level, the Marikana tragedy exposed the organisational challenges we face both at the workplace and in the community.

Strong shop floor organisation and strong ANC and SACP plus SANCO in and around Marikana, would have anticipated the challenges facing the workers and acted accordingly.

We need to avoid the danger of distance between leaders and members, both at the workplace and in the communities.

Marikana also exposed the seemingly deep rooted culture of violence and intimidation that still exists in our society.

The Marikana tragedy served as a springboard for more wild cat strikes and protests, which were also marred by violence.

These labour strikes were illegal, violent and appeared designed to undermine collective bargaining in general and the National Union of Mineworkers in particular.

At a governance level, we need to reflect on the implementation of the Mining Charter, as mining companies should meet their obligations regarding the social and labour plans.

We need to also reflect on the protests generally that have taken place in the country last year, and the unacceptable violent nature thereof.

It is important for the ANC to maintain ongoing contact with the masses at all times. We should explain to people when services are coming to them, and if there is going to be a delay, they also need to be told.

We should engage our people more, even on the question of unacceptable violence that accompanies some of the strikes and protests, which we condemn in the strongest terms.

Thus, we must not lose sight of our political work, which is the lifeblood of political organisations.

## PART 2

## GOVERNANCE

## THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY

In 2009 the fourth ANC administration took office and set out to implement the directives of Polokwane.

The ANC Government adopted five priorities, which were education, health, rural development and land reform, the fight against crime and creating decent work.

The 2009 Election Manifesto, unpacking the resolutions of Polokwane, called for the reconfiguration of government to enhance delivery on the five priorities and general work.

The Manifesto said;

"We will ensure a more effective government; improve the coordination and planning efforts of the developmental state by means of a planning entity to ensure faster change. A review of the structure of government will be undertaken, to ensure effective service delivery".

Indeed the structure of government was reviewed.

Some new departments were created and others were reshaped to enhance delivery.

Departments that were reconfigured were the following;

- Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs, to enable us to put into action our goal of changing the face of rural areas through meaningful socio-economic development initiatives.
- We decided to split Agriculture and Land Affairs and created a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The special focus on agriculture was prioritized to better support the commercial and emerging sectors. Fisheries are a critical part of the limited natural resource base of the country and would require special focus, especially with regard to regulation and oversight.
- Housing was changed to Human Settlements, a paradigm shift towards transforming our cities and towns and building communities with closer access to work, social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities.
- Mineral Resources, Energy and Tourism were made stand alone ministries and were no longer clubbed with others, to enable focus.
- We split basic and higher education as we realized that Basic Education had been not receiving as much attention as it should have previously.
- The International Relations and Cooperation configuration refined the mandate of the former Department of Foreign Affairs to include peace efforts and developmental cooperation on the continent.
- A Ministry was established to deal with issues relating to women, children and persons with disability.

The ANC Government also laid the foundation for a more performance-oriented government in 2009, with the introduction of the Ministry of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency.

There is already evidence that these changes are bearing fruit.

For the first time, Ministers signed performance agreements with the President and with their colleagues with whom they work on aspects of their work, which has increased levels of accountability.

Ministers are assessed quarterly on their work, while on-site visits are also undertaken around the country for hands-on monitoring.

The monitoring of management practices is starting to bear fruit in a number of areas too. For example, the average time taken to fill a funded vacancy in national and provincial departments improved from 9 months in 2010 to 4 months in 2012.

The responsiveness of departments to cases referred to them from Chapter 9 institutions and from the national Anti-Corruption Hotline has improved.

Compliance rates have improved regarding important issues such as finalising performance agreements for heads of department and submission of financial disclosure forms by senior managers.

Turn-around times have also improved in some areas of service delivery. For example, the average time taken to issue an ID book has been reduced from about 150 days to about 30 days.

The average time taken to process an application for a social grant decreased from 30 days in 2010 to 21 days in 2012. There has also been an improvement in the average time taken for police to respond to calls for assistance.

However, there is still much room for improvement in departments, particularly in areas such as payment of suppliers within 30 days.

Comrades,

Another crucial establishment in the Presidency, referred to in the ANC Manifesto, is the National Planning Commission that the President launched in 2009.

The NPC this year produced the country's ground-breaking National Development Plan a major achievement for the fourth administration.

The plan is comprehensive and covers a number of sectors.

These include tackling the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment, infrastructure, education and skills development, small business development, education and the national health insurance.

We now have a plan that has been welcomed by all sectors of society and not just government and the ruling party alone.

Comrades,

When we took the decision on national developmental planning, we were very conscious of the fact that, firstly, the transition to a national democratic society will face complex challenges which cannot be addressed on an ad-hoc fashion or solely left to the forces of the market.

We knew that the existence of a national planning mechanism will ensure that there is coherent programme and strategic discipline within the state and hopefully eliminate silos.

Also, our economy is integrated in the global economy which often exposes us to turbulences and uncertainties such as the present global economic crisis.

In such conditions, it is easy to lose sight of our vision and strategic priorities, in favour of short-term solutions. Having a national strategic vision as a country helps us stay on track.

Thirdly, we must accept that the process of overcoming unemployment, poverty and inequality, of building a national democratic society will be long and hard.

It is for this reason that we should always make sure that our people, the motive forces, remain mobilised and focused around our national development vision, otherwise society may lose sense of direction.

The long-duration of our transition also means that our movement must consistently provide leadership to society and to the state.

Having a long-term planning blueprint creates certainty about where we are going and how we intend to go there.

Comrades,

We look to the NDP and economic programmes to help us resolve the impact of inequality which remains is deep and glaring as revealed in Census 2011 income levels.

The income of the average white household remains six times that of the average African household.

The average annual African household income is R60 613 and the white household income is at R365 164. Close to 1.9 million African households reported no income at all, indicating the challenges.

Comrades,

We discuss our economic development plans in the middle of a global economic crisis in Europe and the United States, our big export partners.

The big emerging economies are also slowing down. The atmosphere is not too rosy.

In addition, we had our country's credit rating downgraded by two rating agencies recently.

We will not delve into the reasons for downgrading but we want to dismiss the perceptions that our country is falling apart because of the downgrades. We continue to do our development work, we continue to plan for a recovery.

Today, the ratings agencies and investors are asking whether the ANC can continue to manage this economy so that we can grow, create jobs, manage our debt and provide policy certainty.

Yes, the ANC will continue to provide strong economic leadership and steer our economy boldly, and we do have a plan to grow the economy and create jobs.

Central to that plan is our overarching National Development Plan which clearly identifies our challenges but also our opportunities to transform the economy, and build a thriving developmental state.

The destination we are heading towards is a mixed economy, where the state, private capital, cooperative and other forms of social ownership complement each other in an integrated way to eliminate poverty and foster shared economic growth.

Some of the instruments we are using, within the NDP framework, is our New Growth Path, which identifies the drivers of job creation.

These are agriculture, infrastructure, agro-processing and rural development, mining and beneficiation, manufacturing, the green economy and tourism.

We launched an ambitious infrastructure programme, which is gathering momentum every day. Large public investments in energy, ports, railway lines and roads will help alleviate supply bottlenecks in the economy.

The Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission adds a value to the National Development Plan in the manner in which it coordinates all infrastructure projects across municipalities, provinces and governments.

Our industrial and trade policies are also active and well resourced.

These include the Industrial Policy Action Plan, the Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme and others.

Informed by Polokwane economic transformation resolution on state owned enterprises and development finance institutions, we have begun to reorient development finance institutions such as the IDC, to place jobs at the centre of their mandates.

We established the Presidential State Owned Enterprises Review Committee which undertook a study of state owned enterprises, including the role of SOEs in a developmental state.

Issues that were looked at included governance, ownership, oversight establishment and dis-establishment, management, remuneration, effectiveness and efficiency, funding, and viability.

The report covers over 700 SOEs and public entities, including the regulatory framework.

In addition, we are in the process of amending the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act and have also agreed to revise the points in the scorecards so that we prioritise local industrial development, skills and small business development.

Comrades,

The Polokwane economic resolution calls for an economy that is integrated with the SADC region.

Last year South Africa hosted 26 heads of state and government, convened to launch talks on a free trade area stretching from Cape Town to Cairo, and comprising of 600 million Africans.

Major investments have also taken place in industrial and business activities on the continent, by South Africans in the public and private sectors.

Our focus is now on further industrialisation of the continent, to expand growth drivers beyond mining, oil and agriculture. The massive growth in African consumption provides a source of demand for African factories.

Comrades and friends,

A particularly important part of ANC policies has been to emphasise the economic South in global affairs. This includes increasing south-south trade.

These concerns were highlighted again in the Polokwane resolutions. I am pleased to say that we are making solid progress.

Last year, South Africa joined the BRICS grouping, which brings together China, Russia, India and Brazil in a forum that meets annually at heads of state level and develops common positions on social, economic and political issues.

In 2013, we will host the first BRICS Summit to be held on African soil.

These developments coincide with a significant expansion in our trade with other BRICS countries, and with the growth in the economic weight of BRICS in the global system.

Comrades, global conditions might make our task and all these plans more difficult.

However, the challenges we face – unemployment, poverty and inequality – are South African in their origin, and are deep and structural.

This is why we have said that economic transformation is at the heart of the second phase of our transition from apartheid to a national democratic society. We need to accelerate growth and intensify our programme of structural change.

This programme of change rests on the solid foundation of the ANC's vision. It is a vision that is clear and unambiguous.

It builds on the Freedom Charter's clarion call that the people shall share in the South Africa's wealth. It is a vision of an equitable society in which there is decent work for all.

We know that our most effective weapon in the campaign against poverty is the creation of decent work, and creating work requires faster and more inclusive economic growth.

Accelerating growth, and ensuring a more inclusive economy, requires a radical improvement in the outcomes generated from the use of public resources.

But the public sector acting alone cannot achieve the goal of a sustained acceleration in growth. Implementing this programme will require that we unite all South Africans around our movement's vision.

We must create a momentum for change that inspires all our people to put their shoulder to the wheel of common effort.

As we accelerate growth along the path of change, we should draw in investors, both international and South African, to support our programme in the certainty that we will succeed in creating prosperity for all.

Polokwane called on the ANC to take the lead in mobilising and uniting all South Africans behind a common vision of economic transformation.

The National Development Plan articulates a programme. The critical task for Mangaung is to take this forward by creating a stronger sense of unity and purpose around the direction of economic change.

Comrades, the ANC has a proud record of creating maximum unity among all social forces to meet the challenges that have faced it.

Our people require the same spirit of united action from all ANC members, indeed from all South Africans that want our motherland to succeed in its great mission to create a better life for all.

We will work with Business, labour, the community sector and other sectors to make these plans succeed.

With single-minded determination, let us commit ourselves to transform our economy and society so that all our people can benefit from the fruits of a growing economy.

#### SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Comrades,

We continue to invest in achieving quality health care, water, sanitation, electricity, roads and housing, social grants and

other necessities so that our children, especially the black majority, can have a better future than their parents and grandparents.

In education, we have done well to expand access. More than eight million children at primary and secondary schools benefit from school-feeding schemes, and nine million do not pay school fees.

Grade R enrolments have doubled, while at tertiary, students benefit from the conversion of loans to bursaries.

We are now investing more effort in improving basic education, especially the Annual National Assessments programme.

The programme is government's barometer of the performance of the education system. We initiated the ANAs as we wanted to see the real performance levels of the learners and intervene correctly and timeously, which we have done.

The 2012 ANA results are better than last years', except for the dismal grade 9 maths results.

Some measures introduced by government already to improve school performance include the training of teachers and principals.

It also includes improving the school environment, through enforcing more discipline, hence the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign.

In this regard, let me repeat the call to all our teachers, that they should be in school, in class, on time, teaching for seven hours every school day next year.

The delivery of textbooks must also improve. The failure to deliver books to grades 3,6,9 and 10 this year in Limpopo is an occurrence that must not be repeated.

To improve the learning environment, there are currently more than 2 000 school refurbishment projects across the country, eliminating mud schools and other inappropriate structures.

Comrades, Crime statistics show a decrease in most crimes, including armed robberies, housebreakings and contact crimes.

But we must work harder to reduce and ultimately eliminate crimes against women and children, which have not abated.

The campaign against corruption continues. Our country is one of the most transparent societies when it comes to the fight against corruption, it is talked about often in the public domain as there is a unified effort by all in society to build a corruption-free South Africa.

Government has established institutions that probe corruption including the Special Investigating Unit, and units within the SA Police Service, Treasury and other departments.

We urge the public to continue assisting these units with information so that we can stop corruption in its tracks.

One area of vulnerability in government is the tender system. Conference may wish to deliberate on tendering which is often open to abuse currently.

Comrades, another matter that is currently generating outrage in the country is the loss of 618 rhinos to rhino poaching in 2012, with 257 people having been arrested in relation to rhino poaching.

The swift action of the numerous law enforcement agencies is commendable as are the strict sentences imposed on those involved in rhino poaching and related crimes. Just last month, a stiff 40-year sentence was handed down to a Thai national.

The SA National Defence Force has also returned to the 350km of national border in Kruger National Park and other country borders.

We urge the communities living near borders and nature reserves to assist the campaign against rhino poaching. Let us save our rhino population from these ruthless poachers and criminals.

Comrades and friends,

With regards to health care, steady progress is being made in implementing the National Health Insurance scheme, with pilot projects in 10 districts.

This scheme will enable all South Africans to receive quality health care and not only those who can afford to be on medical aid schemes.

Dramatic achievements have been scored in the fight against HIV and AIDS since the turnaround strategy was announced in 2009, leading to a rise in life expectancy.

We have more people on treatment, we have reduced the rate of mother to child transmission of the virus by half, and over 20 million people have been tested for HIV, voluntarily.

Ketlaphela, a joint venture initiative between government and a leading global pharmaceutical company is at an advanced stage and will lead to bulk of our ARV supply being produced domestically at a lower cost. On land, Polokwane reaffirmed these important principles of the freedom charter when it resolved that we should change the patterns of land ownership through the redistribution of 30% of agricultural land before 2014.

We are not likely to achieve the 2014 target due to a number of factors such as the fundamental policy design flaws inherent in the 'willing buyer, willing seller' paradigm.

The ANC government has developed a green paper on land reform and proposals were made by the policy conference. This conference should produce a resolution that will take us forward in addressing the land question faster and within the ambit of the law.

Comrade Chairperson, this 53rd conference must take youth development and empowerment to another level. The Polokwane conference directed that we merge the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and the National Youth Commission into a Youth Development Agency, and this was done.

Beyond this, the ANC government has since 2009 pursued various programmes for youth development located in a number of departments, some of which are very successful.

Conference will deliberate on a number of measures, including proposals for youth employment.

Comrades,

The ANC government is steadily improving the position of women in public office and is moving towards 50-50 parity in the holding of leadership public positions.

The National Policy Conference recommended the inclusion of more women in economic empowerment programmes in the second phase of the transition, a matter that we trust will feature prominently in this conference.

#### INTERNATIONAL WORK AND THE GLOBAL BALANCE OF FORCES

Comrades,

The ANC's agenda in the international arena is based on its belief and commitment to progressive internationalism.

During our liberation struggle as the ANC it was the solidarity with our cause from the progressive forces internationally that assisted us to defeat apartheid.

Our struggle as progressive forces of the world is against political systems which undermine global governance and exploit the natural resources of the developing countries, in particular Africa.

At Polokwane we acknowledged the radical changes taking place in the world.

We resolved to gather all progressive forces on the African continent.

To this end, the ANC has successfully engaged with former liberation movements and consolidated our partnership agenda based on serving the poor in our region and the continent as a whole.

With regards to international solidarity, the ANC hosted the Socialist International and it became very clear, that progressive movements need to play a more active role in shaping the direction of the SI.

As part of our centenary celebrations we hosted an International Solidarity conference where far reaching resolutions were taken including support for Palestine, Western Sahara and the Cubans who continue to face an economic blockade.

When assessing the balance of forces, as they apply to Africa, we need sharpen our understanding of the role of anti-imperialist motive forces in the present world situation. This is even more crucial in the context of the global capitalist crisis.

We should ask a few questions in this conference.

Who are the motive forces of the African revolution? What is the role and contribution that our revolution is making to the regeneration of Africa?

This calls for stronger cooperation among liberation movements in the region to ensure that the gains of liberation and decolonisation are not reversed.

We also need to be alive to lessons from North Africa, especially the aftermath of the political changes that took place there last year, referred to as the Arab Spring.

We must analyse foreign interventions that bring about regime change which leave the people leaderless and allow military formations and right wing organizations to lead.

Comrades at a practical level, we have done well in implementing the resolutions on international work.

With regards to African Union government, we anticipate progress since the election of Comrade Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the new Chairperson of the AU Commission.

Meanwhile, our National Chairperson Comrade Baleka Mbete serves on the Panel of the AU's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

To take forward the African agenda, we have escalated our continental focus on infrastructure to the level of Heads of State and Government through a NEPAD committee of champion that we lead.

On peace and security, we played an active role as member of the SADC Troika, the AU Peace and Security Council, and the United Nations Security Council.

We are proud to have been among the 138 countries that voted in the UN General Assembly a few days ago in favour of Palestinians' statehood bid.

Comrades,

A few international events that were helpful for the stature of the country were hosted in the last five years.

South Africa successfully hosted the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, the biggest sporting spectacle in the world.

In the same year, we hosted the biggest meeting of young people from around the world, the World Festival of Youth and Students.

South Africa hosted successfully in 2011, the United Nations climate change conference or COP 17 and concluded the

Durban Platform of action.

South Africa also hosted a number of conferences and meetings of the left during this term.

These include the Communist and Workers' Parties Conference, the Socialist International, the World Federation of Trade Unions and most recently, the International Solidarity Conference.

Comrades,

The future of our revolution and of our country is in our hands, and we must carry forward the work needed for the social and economic emancipation of our people.

We need to prepare ourselves for this journey, starting today, towards socio-economic freedom for all our people.

I now declare the 53rd National Conference open!

Amandla!

Matla!

All power!

Issued by:

African National Congress

54 Sauer Street

Johannesburg

2001

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